# A Sensible Faith
## A Philosophical Reconstruction of the Theology of Charles Chauncy

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**Abstract**

The following dissertation intends the exposition, through the tools of analytic philosophy, of the theology of the New England divine Charles Chauncy (1705-1787), minister for over sixty years of Boston's prominent First Church.

Particularly, our aim has been to explicate our subject's theology on the doctrines of original sin, the atonement, and his thoughts concerning the afterlife. It has been also our attempt to lay out the manner in which these strands of his theological reflection can be made rigorous, and the contribution his ideas could make to contemporary philosophical theology.

As the pages of this work will reveal, he had an original doctrinal proposal for the dogma of original sin, an exemplarist understanding of the doctrine of atonement, and a novel, and in various respects forward-looking proposal for the process by which indeterministically free and rational creatures attain salvation, and hence union with their maker.

Our theologian was probably the most eminent representative of a religious movement that in a relatively short period of time would break away from traditional Puritan orthodoxy and would come to embrace more rational, and thus liberal, forms of religious expression. We believe that a closer look at his theology, something which has been rather neglected by academic research, could shed new light on a period of history that proved crucial in the evolution of American religion.

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## Acknowledgments

To David Efird

**Author's Declaration**

I declare that this thesis is a presentation of original work and I am the sole author. This work has not previously been presented for an award at this, or any other university. All sources are acknowledged as references.

## Introduction

This work has for its main purpose the inquiry and exposition —through the tools of analytic philosophy— of the theology of the reverend Charles Chauncy of Boston's prominent First Church (*Old Brick*). And since introductions, so I am told, are supposed to both provide a synopsis for the text they are supposed to present and must also attempt to entice the reader, I will begin by mentioning the reasons that drew me to this subject in the hope that whoever reads these words will find them appealing and worthy of a study such as this one.

As the first chapter will make clear, we are not dealing with an obscure theologian or monastic hermit, but with a relatively well-known preacher and public figure of his time. He was an embattled figure who took a leading role in some of the most significant controversies during the period prior and after the North American colonies' war of independence—whether in ecclesiastical matters as the preeminent spokesman in the colonies' rejection of an Anglican Bishopric in British North America; or in more elevated theological disputes as exemplified by his exchanges with Jonathan Edwards and their divergences concerning the awakenings that characterized the middle and second half of the eighteenth century; and even in more secular terrain as one of the leading ministers in the struggle for political independence from England (some writers attribute him the title of the 'theologian of the American Revolution' [Gibbs & Gibbs 1990: 259]); among others.

Now it should be obvious that an individual with so many noticeable facets for his time could not have gone entirely unnoticed by historical and academic research, and in this respect a couple of works could prove of some interest for those in search of knowledge of his life and thought: Charles H. Lippy's *Seasonable Revolutionary: The Mind of Charles Chauncy* (1981); Edward M. Griffin's *Old Brick: Charles Chauncy of Boston, 1705-1787* (1980), and Norman B. Gibbs' *The Life and Thought of Charles Chauncy* (2011). All these books provide some valuable historical and biographical information, but particularly Lippy's ideas concerning Chauncy's theology have come under some criticism by Norman Gibbs.

Furthermore, in the generation that succeeded Chauncy in New England, particularly among his Congregationalist brethren in Boston, one can discern a progressive distancing from orthodox Puritan and Calvinistic dogma; a steady liberal tendency in theological (if not social) reflection that will eventuate in the early 1800s in schisms like that of the Unitarians and Universalists.[1] The exact relation of Chauncy's reinterpretation of Puritan and Calvinistic theology to these developments in New England has been a

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[1] Norman B. Gibbs and Arthur B. Ellis talk of a Unitarian takeover, shortly after Chauncy's death, of the First Church of Boston by no later than 1808 (Gibbs & Gibbs 1992: 218; Ellis 1881: 228; cited in Gibbs & Gibbs 1992).

topic of contention since the nineteenth century, for though it is clear that some of the earliest leaders of Unitarianism like William Ellery Channing claimed Chauncy as a sort of 'forerunner of their own movement', they tended to so do rather uncritically and with little documented support from Chauncy's own work (Gibbs & Gibbs 1992: 218). We are afraid that issues of Christology and the Incarnation lie outside the scope of the present work, but they surely represent a possible focus of future research on our author.

It is also important to bring to the reader's attention a theological kinship Chauncy has with some ancient Greek non-apostolic fathers of the church such as Clement of Alexandria, Irenaeus of Lyon, and specially Origen. And we mention this since it is believed that the origenistic influence in theology reappeared only with the work of the German theologian F. D. E. Schleiermacher in the nineteenth century. We trust this dissertation will prove that some years prior to Schleiermacher's publications Chauncy was already reconnecting with this ancient and more rational and ethical manner of theological reflection. But before providing a summary and layout of this dissertation, we think a few words concerning the questions that guided this work are warranted.

After learning more about the life of our subject and of the theological environment in which he moved —particularly as pertains a theological debate concerning the doctrine of Original Sin to which we will briefly allude to in the first chapter of this work— it became clear that Chauncy was in a sense bound to tackle this issue. He had been dragged into the debate, and as it was not altogether uncommon in him, he had managed to disappoint those he was supposed to support (Peter Clark and his defence of orthodoxy) without necessarily ingratiating himself with the other side of the argument (Samuel Webster and his pro-John Taylor tract) (Griffin 1980: 121-122). In doing so Chauncy had shown that he had by then abandoned the traditional position in this matter, but he had likewise manifested serious misgivings about John Taylor's reinterpretation of the doctrine (*ibid.*, p.122). So upon stumbling with Chauncy's major theological work on this topic, our first research question became apparent: what was Chauncy's reinterpretation of the doctrine of Original Sin, and in what sense did it differ from both traditional North American Calvinism and from the optimistic views on human nature that were beginning to influence New England clergy?

As for our other major research question, this was the outcome of our early engagement with our theologian's new *body of divinity*. We were aware that he was a soteriological Universalist, but in the title page of one of these major works, he makes it clear that he advocates a rather strong (indeterministic) conception of free will. As our reader will no doubt understand, we wondered how he had managed to piece together these apparently incongruous components of his thought. To state it more precisely, our second major research question became: how did Chauncy manage to reconcile the idea of universal

salvation with an indeterministic understanding of free will?

Now linking these two major dimensions of his theology—human nature (or his take on the doctrine of Original Sin) and our ultimate destiny (Universalism)— is the work of Christ on the cross. So we were, in a sense, pushed to unearth his ideas on the doctrine of atonement, which is a rather tricky endeavour because it is a doctrine he is less explicit about; but it is clear that, to the best of our knowledge, the motif of Christ's life and death as an example to believers is at the centre of his ideas on the doctrine.

Our overall research questions could thus be stated as: what is Chauncy's theology of the doctrine of Original Sin, the atonement, and the afterlife? how might it be made rigorous? and what contribution might it make to contemporary philosophical theology? The following work attempts to answer these questions.

The layout of this thesis is the following. There are three major themes around which this work is organized: Original Sin, Redemption, and the afterlife. Each of these sections is subdivided into a theological chapter where we will advance our author's main ideas on these issues (Chapters 2, 4, and 6), and a philosophical chapter where we will analyse in greater detail the philosophical implications and problems that his views give rise to (Chapters 3, 5, and 7).

With the intention of better contextualizing Chauncy's theological concerns, we commence with a concise historical chapter aimed at describing the main theological and intellectual currents in eighteenth century North America. Special attention will be devoted there to the social and cultural phenomenon of the awakenings—particularly to what was called the 'First Great Awakening' of the 1740s—and to the role that Chauncy played in the theological debates that ensued as the leader of those segments of New England society who were decidedly against them. As anyone acquainted with that period of American history can tell, Chauncy's theological rival was the most prolific and sophisticated defender of the revivals: Jonathan Edwards. As the following pages of this work will reveal, this was not the only point of disagreement between them.

Chapter 2 sets out to provide Chauncy's main theological ideas on the topic of Original Sin, and as will be the case with chapters 4 and 6, we provide at the outset a brief historical background to the theological topic at hand and then describe our author's theological conceptions more directly related to each of these headings. The topics to be covered in this chapter will revolve around the concepts of human nature and the *Imago Dei*; the importance of moral agency for Chauncy's overall theology; his Lockean epistemology; his rather instrumental conception of moral evil; and his ideas regarding sin and Original Sin, and therein his attack on theological realism on this doctrine, and the views of Jonathan Edwards. We will be presented in this chapter with, *inter alia*, Chauncy's conception of man as an indeterministically free moral agent; with his empiricist epistemology and its ramifications in his account

of the Fall; his conception of an *a priori* moral sense that is similar to Aquinas's (optimistic) objective moral standard; the manner in which sinning is unavoidably connected to the exercise of our moral agency; and the indirect manner in which the original lapse became the source of our own sinning. The connection our author draws between what some have called metaphysical evil and our proclivity to wrongdoing will be analysed as well.

In chapter 3 we embark on a philosophical reconstruction of our subject's theology on Original Sin. To do so we bring attention to what we consider is the main philosophical problem that the doctrine gives rise to, and we list the solutions (ethical and metaphysical) that have historically been offered. In our framing of the problem and its solutions, we are indebted to the work of Michael Rea and Gary Watson. It was precisely Watson's work that provided us with the conceptual tools to organize the solutions that have been given to the doctrine of Original Sin: a distinction between aretaic responsibility (understood as attributability), and responsibility as accountability; and the issue of control in a given moral situation. In this respect we believe that the views of Chauncy are novel and thus worthy to be highlighted: a position that eschews any notion of inherited guilt, but that nonetheless sees us as rightfully attributed with the primeval transgression of the first couple.

In the fourth chapter we advance our author's thoughts regarding the process of redemption, but before doing so and in part owing to the richness of theological reflection on the issue, we both concern ourselves with providing an overview of the different models or theories of the atonement available, to then pay due attention to some ancient accounts of the doctrine that evince significant similarities with Chauncy's ideas on this issue—from some noted non-apostolic Greek fathers of the church like Clement of Alexandria, Irenaeus of Lyon, and Origen, to the eminent medieval theologian Peter Abelard. It will be our purpose there to not only advance our reasons for portraying Chauncy as an exemplarist, but to bring to the fore those plausible (though never made explicit) sources of inspiration for our author in the topic of redemption. The last part of this chapter is reserved for Chauncy's thoughts more directly concerned with the redemption process.

In our fifth chapter our aim will be to situate Chauncy's exemplarist understanding of the doctrine of atonement in the current philosophical debate about theories of the doctrine. We do this by providing a summary of some of the most relevant literature on the topic, starting with Richard Swinburne's well-known satisfaction account of the doctrine; to continue with Steven Porter's utilitarian (and reformative) rehabilitation of the theory of penal substitution as a response to Swinburne; Mark Murphy's vicarious punishment account as, among other things, an attempt to circumvent what has become one of the most known points of contention in this debate —the semantic and/or logical incoherence (under an expressivist understanding of punishment) of punishing an innocent person; to finally describe William

Lane Craig's renewed defence of penal substitution as a response to Murphy's criticisms against the penal substitutionary account. Now, as we will make clear in the chapter, Chauncy's theory of the doctrine not only avoids the logical (or semantic) concerns raised by Murphy, but also rejects any model of the doctrine in which a transaction of some sort, be this a ransom payment, a compensation, or some form of retribution (whether imparted in a substitute or a vicar) was necessary for mankind's redemption.

We will also dedicate a section to analyse the different conceptions of divine punishment, *viz.*, what are known as the Augustinian (or Calvinistic) and the Irenaean positions on the topic, with the hope that in exposing their merits and drawbacks, we come to a better understanding of Chauncy's stance.

Finally, we pay attention to some criticisms—coming mostly from feminist theology—raised against exemplarist versions of the doctrine of atonement, owing to what these theologians rightfully believe to be the nefarious consequences in both pastoral efficacy, and in the general cultural context, where this understanding of the doctrine seems to raise concerns of epistemic injustice.

Chapter 6, the last of our theological chapters, presents Chauncy's ideas more directly related to the topic of the afterlife. As with chapters 2 and 4, we begin with a brief historical exposition to eschatological locations, where we will explicate the main contours of a Christian understanding of the nature of heaven—chief among them the concept of the beatific vision—, and hell. We then move to summarize our author's concerns on these issues, beginning with a cardinal theme for Chauncy, and probably the centre of his entire theology—love as the essential moral trait or feature of divinity. Other important and related concepts to the divine nature will be: Chauncy's use of the concept of Middle Knowledge and its role in his entire soteriological scheme, and the analogy of God as our heavenly father. The remainder of the chapter covers other significant ideas of our theologian such as the adequate interpretation of the word *everlasting* in Scripture; his belief in the existence of afterlife purgatorial stages or locations; his enunciation of an argument that in the course of the next century will become known as the 'proportionality objection' against the traditional doctrine of hell; and his Millennialism. We will also devote a segment to describe his more scriptural reasons in favour of a universal understanding of salvation, and particularly to the Pauline parallel he draws between Adam (as our first representative) and Christ (as a second Adam).

In the last chapter (7) we make use of Chauncy's ideas on redemption to provide what we believe is a possible solution to a philosophical debate that confronted Thomas Talbott and William Lane Craig in the early 1990s; a debate that we term as a 'problem of hell'. This problem arises from an orthodox understanding of divinity in which He is both omnibenevolent (filled with a perfect form of love for His creatures) and omnipotent; and an equally orthodox conception of hell according to which at least some of His creatures will forever be separated from Him, and (for some) subjected as well to perennial physical

torments. In general terms the debate alluded to pits William Craig's Arminian or free-will theist position, in which, God's sincere desire for universal salvation notwithstanding, He is unable (in a morally permissible way) to bring about the redemption of all of His creatures, and Talbott's Universalism, which carries with it the unfortunate prospect of divine tampering with the free-will of those obdurate creatures unwilling to become redeemed. We will explain the demerits of each of these positions and explain how Chauncy's alternative (his eschatology) overcomes such problems and allows us to reach a dialectically superior solution to the problem of hell. Suffice it to say at this point that Chauncy's solution is based on three elements: his conception of the divine nature as essentially loving, his use of the Argument from Infinite Opportunity (AIO), and his Molinism for universal salvation.

# Chapter 1.

# Theological and Intellectual Environment in XVIII C. British North America.

*Theological Streams*

At the beginning of the XVIII C., religion in what was then British North America seemed ossified, lacking the original impetus that its earlier settlers had infused it with; particularly in the Northeastern colonies of New England (Congregationalists in Massachusetts and Connecticut) and in the Middle colonies of New Jersey and Pennsylvania (Presbyterians), where Puritanism had gained its strongest footing. Membership began to decline. The new Massachusetts Charter of 1691, which transformed the colony from a private and religiously oriented enterprise into a royal colony where franchise no longer depended on religious profession, and a series of scandals (e.g. Salem in 1692) all eroded the prestige and credibility of Puritan institutions within the region (McGrath 2007: 155; Reichley 1985: 61; Brockway 2003: 9, 46, 201).

Perhaps even more decisive to the substantial changes in the religious landscape that ensued, the continuous and growing influx of immigrants into the hinterland[2]—particularly of German Pietists in the Middle colonies of Pennsylvania and of Scotch-Irish Presbyterians coming from Northern Ireland (Ulster)—, coupled with the rapid modernization of social and economic life in the colonies (Kelleter 2009: 163; Brockway 2003: 33), paved the road for the series of revivals that began in Northampton, Hampshire County in late 1734 (what some historians termed the 'Little Awakening of 1735'[Gura 2005: 71]) and years later spread to the rest of the colonies.

Other factors that contributed to this growing sense of anxiety in prerevolutionary colonial population were the still present fear of invasion or attack from the wilderness (the French and Indian Wars [1754-1760]), epidemics that periodically ravaged cities and towns (e.g., diphtheria alone kills between the years 1735-1737 over 20,000 people in the colonies), and as it is sadly common nowadays, economic modernization for those in the lower echelons of colonial society did not translate into an improved economic situation; in fact, by 1745 the colonies' standard of living reached its lowest point for that century (Ferguson 1997: 50). Therefore, one distinguishing and defining feature of 'prerevolutionary revivalism' is 'its insistence upon crisis' (*id.*).

Although it has always been a topic of contention among historians, especially since Jon Butler's publication in 1982 of *Enthusiasm Described and Decried: The Great Awakening as Interpretative Fiction*, we will

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[2] The colonial population not only moves substantially during the first two thirds of the eighteenth century, but rises from under 300,000 in 1700, to over 2,000,000 by 1770 (Ferguson 1997: 50).

side with those who prefer to consider them in hindsight as part of a single event and label them The (first) Great Awakening of the mid 1730s and early 1740s in colonial North America. But academic debates aside, massive religious gatherings (of up to 20,000 people at times) between 1735 and 1745 in New England reverted a downward trend in both assistance and church membership, and perhaps more consequential, in the role of religion in public life (McGrath 2008: 157). It also endowed American religion with its evangelical *ethos* (*e.g.*, a penchant for extempore preaching), and among its detractors, it fostered the 'proto-Unitarian tendencies' that eventuated during the following century (Brockway 2003: 18).

The scope and impact of the revivals was greatly aided by 'two literary circumstances': (1) by the fact that the writings of famous revivalist preachers like Jonathan Edwards, Gilbert Tennent, or Samuel Davies were available to both popular and educated segments of the colonies, and in this respect it is important to bear in mind that until 1765, religious publications in British North America outnumbered all other publications combined (Ferguson 1997: 45, 53); and, of still greater significance for this work, (2) that these publications in defence of revivalism generated a response in kind, that is, literary, among those sectors of colonial society who were decidedly against them, such as our own Charles Chauncy.

As a clarifying note, way before the events just described, there was already a widening gap within Puritanism during the first decade of the eighteenth century having to do with preaching style, notwithstanding the still prevailing doctrinal consensus among both Congregationalists and Presbyterians, the two major branches of Puritanism in the colonies. Conservatives tended to favour a 'scholarly and restrained' approach, while others espoused a more emotional preaching style, one that more directly spoke to the emotions of its flock. Already too, a critical point of contention was a growing debate about the nature and spiritual reliability of 'sudden conversion experiences' (Brockway 2003: 9) which came to characterize the revivals a few years later. Thus, the philosophical principles of the experience of conversion and the roles assigned in it to emotions (affections) and reason became one of the main points of contention in the religious debates of the time, as evidenced by the theological exchanges on this issue between Edwards and Chauncy. This is an issue to which we will return to a few lines below.

Among the promoters of this new outlook and practice within Puritanism, Jonathan Edwards figures second to none not only on account of having been among the first to promote a more emotional and much less doctrinal approach to Calvinism, but also for becoming the most prolific and sophisticated apologist for the movement. Following the footsteps of his grandfather Solomon Stoddard, who perceived that the legalistic and rigid type of Calvinism endorsed by the New England establishment would not satiate the spiritual needs of people in a frontier context, Edwards advocated a religious praxis undoubtedly aimed at stirring the emotions of his parish. This Pietist thrust was encapsulated in the

famous phrase first used by the *Hernhutters* in Saxony but adopted by revivalists[3] in America: *a religion of the heart*, rather than the mind: a renewed appreciation of the affections (emotions) and their role in spiritual conversion (Kelleter 2009: 169; McGrath 2008: 147; Reichley 1985: 69).

An important consideration to bear in mind before continuing has to do with the nature of the Calvinism prevalent in the North American colonies in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. It was not classical or orthodox Calvinism (that of the Reformation) of the kind one would associate for example with the *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (1536), but rather the one found in the creeds of the Westminster Confession (1646) and regarded by historians as *federal* or *covenant theology* (Brockway 2003: 50-51). It was federal in the sense that God does not 'deal with humanity on an individual basis, but only through his federal representatives, Adam and Christ' (*id.*); and it was covenant for the belief that divinity's relationship with mankind has consisted in a series of contracts or compacts, of which the most important for our work are the so-called Covenant of Works between God and Adam—abrogated by Adam's disobedience and which render 'works' as meaningless for salvation, at least in the mind of theological determinists—, and the Covenant of Grace, brought about by Jesus' coming and through His sacrifice on the cross 'the promise of deliverance in the life to come' (*ibid.*, p.185). We will return to this topic when dealing with Chauncy's understanding of the process of salvation.

It is also worth mentioning that contrary to popular opinion, Puritan orthodoxy was not a rigid and 'harshly imposed complex of beliefs that stifled all creativity and individual expression in its desire to enforce uniformity'; it tolerated a certain degree of freedom and discord 'over the finer points of faith and practice' (Chamberlain 1992: 336). Historical, geographical, social, and even structural (or ecclesiological) circumstances no doubt contributed to this doctrinal flexibility—in the absence of an 'external order' against which to react, theological self-definition became increasingly important; the scattered nature, in a vast and poorly communicated region, of small congregations; the high literacy and disposition to debate theological issues among the population; and even the structure of congregational churches, that 'undermined by design the imposition of any hierarchical authority', all contributed to this doctrinal flexibility (*ibid.*, pp.337, 339).

Central in the revivalists' scheme was the concept of immediate grace, *i.e.*, the idea (opposed to orthodox Calvinism) that the reception of divine grace by the convert occurred in a single, momentous and clearly identifiable occasion. With no need of intermediaries of any sort and after which the convert was a new creature; he had been *born again* due to the influx of grace rendered by the Holy Spirit (Kelleter 2009: 166). It was precisely this understanding of the operation of divine grace that seemed so

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[3] Revivalism is, according to the definition given by Philip Gura (2005), 'the encouragement of religious renewal as communal experience' (p.49), or what Solomon Stoddard called *harvests of souls*.

troublesome to orthodox Puritans and could easily culminate, from their perspective, in Enthusiasm and Antinomianism. Enthusiasm refers to the belief in unmediated personal communication with God, while Antinomianism to the charge, commonly hurled to groups such as the Quakers and other Anabaptists, of believing that God manifests 'in impulses and impressions, [in] special revelations to individual persons' (Brockway 2003: 187); and, as previously mentioned, and particularly vexing to the patrician Puritans of the age, in their conviction that God does not operate through mediators like ministers or priests.

It was against this background of detractors and supporters of the awakenings, of Old Lights or Arminians (Old Sides for their Presbyterian allies in the Middle colonies) and New Lights (New Sides in New Jersey and Pennsylvania) or Antinomians respectively, that the writings and sermons of Charles Chauncy, minister of Boston's prominent First Church, gained increased prestige and became, along with Jonathan Mayhew of Boston's West Church, the leader of the defenders of the *New England Way*, of orthodoxy: the Old Lights (Robinson 2012: 27; Gura 2005: 123; Brockway 2003: 10).

A word concerning Arminianism seems warranted at this point. In opposition to theological determinism or predestination that characterized conventional or orthodox Calvinism, Arminians, named after the Dutch theologian Jacobus Arminius (1560-1619), believed that human beings do have a role to play in the story of their eternal destinies. Through the exercise of free will, they can choose what is good and hence be among the elect. Therefore, for Arminians, Jesus' sacrifice on the cross is atonement in a universal sense, not just for the elect as orthodox Puritans would claim. Also in a more general sense, Arminianism became a libel to be pronounced against anyone espousing or exhibiting any type of liberal thought or behaviour in religion (Gura 2005).

But Arminianism was not the only religious response in the face of Puritan theological determinism (i.e., Calvinistic predestinarianism). If Arminianism tended to be the stance of educated clergy (of Old Lights), revivalism came up with optimistic millennialism (Ferguson 1997: 51-52). Joseph Bellamy, sharing the millennial leanings of his mentor Edwards, writes in one of the most widely read sermons of the time (*The Millenium* [1758]) about how Christ's re-entrance into human history and His establishment of a thousand year reign 'will change the nature and meaning of history' (*ibid.*, p.52); and in so doing, it will also erase the dreaded prospect of eternal damnation as the outcome of divine predestination. It is not unwarranted as well to speculate about the role that this millennialist optimism might have played in the growing sense of national identity and in the ensuing call to arms that separation from England entailed; for as Robert Ferguson remarks, millennialist optimism 'pushes revivalism inexorably toward the notion of harmony and union in this world, and, for that purpose, toward the need for conviction and action by a united people' (*id.*). Edwards, particularly in *Some Thoughts Concerning the*

*Present Revival* [1743], is illustrative in this respect, but millennialist concerns were commonplace during the eighteenth century. As this work will also make clear, these were concerns also shared by Chauncy (*id.*).

Antinomianism and Arminianism, 'the classical heresies of the Puritan tradition', might deserve a few more words owing to their importance for our work, especially in the dialectical relation that they have with each other as latent tendencies inherent to Puritan orthodoxy (Chamberlain 1992: 340-341). Among the divine attributes, Christianity has historically given preeminence to divine benevolence and omnipotence; and in their intention to dispose of the contradiction that seems to exist between them, theologians have emphasized or given relevance to one in detriment of the other. Orthodox Puritans for instance, and Reformed theology more generally, provide us with a picture of divinity that subordinates divine benevolence to divine omnipotence, and that claims to preserve the former by emphasizing 'the original goodness of created nature' (*ibid.*, p.341).

Now this precarious equilibrium is clear to see in the Puritan quarrels over the process of redemption. Accordingly, orthodox divines, in their attempt to preserve the divine sovereignty through the redemption process, held fast to concepts such as free grace and solfidianism and presented a corresponding image of human nature that 'in its radical sinfulness is incapable of effecting its own salvation' (*id.*). The classical heresies in Puritanism just mentioned could thus be seen as exaggerations of inclinations or tendencies inherent to Puritan doctrine, and hence defined accordingly: antinomianism, 'out of a desire to glorify God and debase the creature', unduly overestimates the role of divine grace in the salvation process to the extent that it makes us mere spectators in the drama of our own redemption; contrastingly, by empowering our capacity for achieving our own salvation, Arminianism appears to lose sight of the divine initiative, with the result that 'redemption becomes the product not of God's good pleasure but [solely] of human effort' (*ibid.*, p.432).

As the awakenings spread and the heightened emotionalism associated with them seemed to spiral out of control, Edwards commences a series of publications aimed at both discerning clearly what constituted affections that were the genuine outcome of a work of divine grace from those that did not (*The Distinguishing Marks of a Work of the Spirit of God* [1741] and *A Treatise Concerning Religious Affections* [1746]), as well as to defend the revivals from their growing critics (*Some Thoughts Concerning the Present Revival of Religion in New England* [1742]). It was as a response to *Distinguishing Marks* that Chauncy dived into the pamphlet battle with *The Late Religious Commotions in New England Considered* (1743), although he had already made a name for himself a year before with his *Enthusiasm Described and Cautioned Against*, a hallmark of anti-revivalist literature (Gura 2005: 123).

A Harvard graduate and a patrician through and through (grandson of Harvard's second President), Chauncy was an educated reader interested in both Science (Newton) and Philosophy (e.g.

Locke and the moral philosophers of the Scottish Enlightenment) (Kelleter 2009: 173-174). He was also a charter member of the American Society of Arts and Sciences in 1780, and the undisputed intellectual leader of the Arminian clergy and the chosen one among his camp to counter and give response to Edwards' publications (Gura 2005: 123).

To be sure, the issues that disturbed and angered most Old Lights had to do with the behaviour displayed by the revivalists that tended to unsettle traditional church structure and order. As professor Philip Gura (2005) explains, the attack of Old Lights tended to revolve around three topics: (1) the conduct of itinerant preachers and lay exhorters, that is, people without formal training in pastoral duties and who embarked in preaching and exhorting;[4] (2) the antinomian tendency observed in the converts of the awakenings, and this associated with the concomitant tendency to rash judgment as to the spiritual state of other people, particularly aimed at what they regarded as unconverted ministers (those having not experienced a spiritual rebirth); and, (3) the excessive emotionalism of the awakened (p.111). All these topics are lengthy dealt with in Chauncy's book *Seasonable Thoughts on the State of Religion in New England* (1743).

But there were certainly other, more ethical objections raised by Old Lights like Chauncy against the behaviour displayed by revivalist preachers. Ava Chamberlain, drawing on the work of the political theorist Judith Shklar, argues that the post-awakening Arminian ascendancy in New England was driven, to a large extent, by a revulsion to cruelty; a cruelty to be found not only in the uncharitable behaviour of these itinerant preachers, but as well in some key aspects of Puritan doctrine like double predestination or the belief in complete human impotence in matters of salvation (1992: 347). Making use of Shklar's concept of 'ordinary vices', she claims that the premodern moral world of Puritanism, with its emphasis on sin against God (and therein with pride as the chief transgression) tended to downplay more 'ordinary vices' (or sins) like cruelty, hypocrisy, treachery, snobbery, or misanthropy (Shklar 1984: 2; cited in Chamberlain). Chamberlain claims that the appearance of cruelty and hypocrisy in revivalism—a cruelty that Chauncy saw clearly, for example, in the rhetoric of the revivalist preachers and their use of terror; and a hypocrisy evinced for our theologian not only in the censoriousness displayed by these itinerants against established ministers, but as well in the many he had believed to have been converted during the revivals, but that he saw going swiftly to their old ways— is central to explicating a 'new sensitivity…[against] cruelty in orthodox Puritanism, [that] culminated some ten years later in an

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[4] For instance, one of the most popular sermons of the period—*The Danger of an Unconverted Ministry* [1740] by Gilbert Tennent likens those ministers opposed to the revivals to Pharisees and blames them for lacking the courage or 'honesty to thrust the Nail of Terror into sleeping souls' (Tennent 1740: cited in Ferguson 1997: 54).

unabashed support for Arminianism by such prominent divines as Charles Chancy, Jonathan Mayhew, and Ebenezer Gay' (Chamberlain 1992: 347).

Now one of the fortunate outcomes of the revivalists' quarrels over ministerial preaching style and training was the creation of a series of educational institutions throughout the colonies during the middle and second half of the century. As expected, New Lights took the initiative by founding the College of New Jersey (later Princeton University) in 1746. As a response, Anglicans established King's College (afterwards Columbia University) in New York in 1754. In 1764, Brown University commenced as a Baptist enterprise in Rhode Island. And in 1776, Dutch New Lights constituted Queen's College, later Rutgers University in New Jersey (Ferguson 1997: 57). We should not forget as well the importance of Harvard College for Old Light theology.

Since, as we have explained, the concept of conversion (of being born again) through immediate grace was cardinal to the revivals, we deem it necessary to say a few more words about it, as well as the doctrinal or dogmatic context in which it operated: Puritanism and Evangelicalism. As Robert Brockway (2003) points out, theologically, the sources of Puritanism include, along with Calvin, the writings of the apostle Paul and those of Augustine (354-430). All of their soteriologies give an uppermost relevance to the concept of New Birth, and all three also are predestinarians,[5] *i.e.*, they hold to the notion that God has decided or predestined all persons to 'either damnation or redemption' (p.180). In this scheme, the pious actions of individual human beings (what was then called 'works') are of no consequence to the decrees of divinity. Redemption comes, if at all, through a free and largely unmerited gift of grace endowed by the operation of the Holy Ghost.

And having in mind the Anglo-American political tensions of the time, it seems important to bring our attention to other intellectual sources of Puritanism, such as its inherent aversion to centralized authority, its primitivism, 'the legalism of covenant theology, and biblical exegesis as a regular cultural practice' (Ferguson 1997: 46). Such sources, according to many, lend themselves easily to oppositional rhetoric, and do so, among other reasons, because a Puritan conversion experience 'ritually exposes the sinful heart to public judgement [and] it also contrasts good and evil and relates individual morality to communal prosperity in compulsive ways' (*id.*). Under such an ideological framework, the prospect of identifying and resisting an 'unworthy leadership' becomes more tenable (*id.*).

As for Evangelicalism, it is customary among historians of religion in North America to regard the awakenings as the crucial period when religion in that part of the world acquired its characteristic

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[5] While many, perhaps even a majority, of Christian theologians would bracket the apostle Paul in this predestinarian category with the likes of Augustine or Calvin, there is a different strand of Christian scholars that picture Paul as nothing less than a universalist (e.g. John Hick).

evangelical *ethos*, exemplified by the enormous gains in membership that sects like the Methodists and Baptists reaped during those years. And since sudden, dramatic conversions—of the kind epitomized by the narratives of Paul and his conversion on the road to Damascus, or of Augustine's touching conversion scene that we encounter in his *Confessions*—constitutes one, if not the most fundamental aspect of Evangelical religion, we felt the urge to at least mention here the stages of what an evangelical religious experience consists in: 'conviction, conversion, and sanctification' (Brockway 2003: 65). A process encountered in virtually all examples given by Edwards in his *Faithfull Narrative of the Surprising Work of God in the Conversion of Many Hundred Souls* (1737), which is the work that catapulted him from provincial irrelevance to 'the chief American spokesperson for transatlantic evangelism' (Gura 2005: 79, 85).

The Great Awakening in sum had convinced Chauncy that New England theology required revision, for he believed that a theology that insisted so severely in God's rejection of human depravity and that moreover 'hammered home the [high] probability of damnation' for everyone, 'lent itself by its very nature to abuse' (Griffin 1980: 110). If social and ecclesiastical disorder were the assured outcomes of an emotional religious reaction to dour Calvinism, then the tenets themselves might need some revision (*id.*). Thus, between the years 1745 and 1761 our author, with his characteristic intensity and diligence, embarked on the task of creating a new 'body of divinity' which he hoped would preclude the appearance of other would-be Edwards or Whitefields, which he believed preyed on the fears and irrationality that he saw as the quid of New Light theology (*id.*). In this task, however, he did not entirely reject his Puritan heritage, as the influence of theologians like Richard Baxter or John Taylor evince, but it is clear that, as Norman Brantley Gibbs remarked and the pages of this work will make clear, Chauncy was also open to eighteenth century optimism.

Before moving to our analysis of the intellectual and political climate of those years, we believe it is probably worth mentioning here as well what became the most significant theological debate in British North America in those years: the debate about the doctrine of Original Sin. It was the work of John Taylor (1694-1761) and his reinterpretation of the moral condition of the first couple—one in which, unlike orthodox Puritan belief, they were not the beneficiaries of the preternatural gift of original righteousness, but would be more accurately described as in a condition of moral primitiveness—that precipitated the rebuttals of defenders of the ancient doctrine, chief among them Jonathan Edwards (*The Great Christian Doctrine of Original Sin Defended* [1758]) (Griffin 1981: 121-122). Chauncy knew and respected Taylor's work, but he believed him ultimately mistaken in his reinterpretation of the doctrine. As the pages of this work will reveal, Chauncy would come up with a theoretical proposal of his own for the doctrine. Symptomatic of the theological times, in a relatively short period of time New England Puritans would

pass from unanimous adherence to orthodoxy in this doctrine prior to 1750 to considerable modifications 'by some of the most liberal thinkers' (Smith 1955: 1; cited in Griffin 1981).

*Enlightenment and Politics*

An overview, however brief, of the cultural context of British North America in the eighteenth century must also take into account two variables of relevance—one political and the other intellectual in kind—but both of them closely linked to each other, as well as to the Puritan religion that was the outcome of seventeenth century New England: the Enlightenment, in the particular shape it took in that part of the British Empire, and the war of independence that in many respects officialised the relative autonomy of the North American colonies from England.

Americans receive, or better yet borrow, enlightened ideas within a context of political conflict with London. Therefore, unlike the European Enlightenment and its belated sense of urgency and historical crisis, in North America the Enlightenment 'begins in the political arena, where it unleashes the earliest recognitions of stress and disjuncture' (Ferguson 1997: 38); *i.e.*, it is not 'the celebration of knowledge' so much as the 'struggle towards realization', towards national and political realization that is, 'that creates meaning and interest' in the American version of enlightened thought (*ibid.*, p.41).

American intellectuals of the time, despite their penchant for enlightened ideas, are not so much concerned with the provenance or with the 'details of systems of thought', but with the adaptation and application of those ideas in a context of a new world and elitist republicanism (*ibid.*, pp.34-35). This strange blend of 'decontextualized thought' and of yet sincere belief in abstractions is made evident by the writings of the leaders of the American political revolt such as Thomas Jefferson (e.g. The Declaration of Independence [1776]). This however should not be understood as an outright American rejection of intellectual traditions or as mere opportunism as Robert Ferguson remarks, but there is definitely, one could argue, a pragmatic and utilitarian approach to the way in which colonial intellectuals select, appropriate, and recast those ideas that would better suit with their political and social needs. These are the beginnings of an intellectual tradition in North America that shuns all major social and philosophical systems of thought; without a real centre of intellectual gravity, and always prone to select and use, but as well to condemn and discard, those elements which it encounters in its path. But returning to our matter at hand, these colonial intellectuals came to understand such enlightened ideas, above all, 'within the praxis of a successful revolution' (*id.*).

As for the countries and intellectual currents from which they borrowed—from England empirical investigation and epistemology; 'Newtonian science and Lockean psychology; the Whig theory of history... and the rights of English subjects' (*ibid.*, pp.35-36). From France the application of a philosophy of

history to political science, 'a distrust of organized religion', the concept of the man of science or *philosophe* as citizen of the world, and 'a belief in a natural order' (*id.*). From Scotland the conservative tendency, plain to see in the political writings of the time in the colonies, to furnish 'a secular vocabulary that nevertheless keeps providence safely in mind' (*ibid.*, p.36); an emphasis on the importance of public education, and the ideological basis for a colony's right to revolt. And from continental natural lawyers (e.g. Grotius, von Pufendorf, Burlamaqui or Vattel) the idea of a government that is the outcome of a contract or 'compact under the law' (*id.*); and naturally, natural law.

As will become clear in the following chapters, there is a definite strand of natural law in the moral and theological reasoning of our minister. While some have attributed this to Chauncy's acquaintance with the moral philosophers of the Scottish Enlightenment—some of which have a distant kinship with natural law—, it is perhaps worth remembering that 'Grotian ideas of natural law' were fairly known in the English-speaking world of the time, including British North America (Haakonssen 1985: 48). Moreover, natural law ideas of Germanic and Swiss writers like Pufendorf, Vattel or Burlamaqui were commonly used in conjunction with conventional English law in both Britain and North America (*id.*). And it might not be entirely unwarranted on our part to draw a parallel—albeit with considerable provisions for differences in context and time— between how a Grotian appeal of natural law was part of a more general 'Arminian contribution to the upsurge of religious and ethical rationalism in the face of orthodox Calvinism' and Antinomianism in England, and a North American colonial context who was likewise reacting to both dour Calvinistic dogma and Antinomianism. In England antinomian concerns reached their peak in the 1640s, while in North America they are usually associated to the times of the revivals (*id.*). In this respect it is safe to state that this work will present Chauncy as both a decided enemy of Antinomianism as well as a religious rationalist.

But harkening back to the American Enlightenment and its similarities with its French counterpart and their shared distrust to organized religion notwithstanding, North American intellectuals avail themselves of religious topics and vocabulary to advance their political agenda. They find it both safer and more effective to at least couch their social and political concerns in religious language. Thus, one of the distinctive features of the American Enlightenment is that it rests 'in the common or shared rhythms and patterns that the Enlightenment has taken from Christianity' (Ferguson, 1997: 42). In this manner the congregational dislike for centralized authority and its strong belief in self-government pairs or joins the enlightened 'use of reason against mere authority' (*ibid.*, p.43). In keeping with the times, it should come as no surprise then that Chauncy rejects as immoral theological conceptions such as divine command theory. In sum, there is simply no way of understanding this period of American history without recognizing this 'interplay between religion and politics as a source of liberty' (*ibid.*, p.45).

Now this antiauthoritarian religious bent is plain to see in the apprehensions generated by the prospect of the establishment of an American Episcopacy, fears that reached their zenith between the years 1767-1770 and brought about significant acrimony throughout the colonies against the Church of England (*ibid.*, p.47). And as proof of its significance, it fostered even more publications than the Stamp Act dispute ever did (*id.*). It is hence correct to regard such fears, however unfounded they might have been, as one of the chief factors in the ensuing revolt against England.

It is in this embattled context once again that Chauncy gains notoriety by becoming the most vocal minister in the struggle against the Church of England in this matter (*id.*). Though it is likewise true that these publications served other purposes as well, such as that of identification beyond religious lines, of ministers that tended to share a general political outlook that could be best described as separatist (from England that is) in kind; i.e., publications like Chauncy's *A Letter to a Friend* [1767], written as a response to John Lord Bishop of Landaff, not only served the cause of antiepiscopacy, but are used by ministers and their readers to 'recognize each other across denominational affiliations' (*id.*). Such publications, moreover, play a crucial role in the growing 'colonial self-recognition' in the years prior to war with England, and one recurrent device for doing so is by portraying Britain in the most ominous terms possible. Again, Chauncy is illustrative in this respect, and the dichotomies he relies on usually posit an innocent and virtuous America, against a corrupted England; between 'American piety' and 'British manipulation'; in sum, the whole contrast is reduced to a confrontation of good versus evil (*ibid.*, p.48). And under the context of liberty of conscience that made ecclesiastical differences permissible in the colonies, Chauncy can excoriate British culture and yet remain free of political charges of dissent (*id.*). It is important to mention in this respect, that for the upper echelons of Anglo-American society of the time, the biggest concern was not heresy, but treason (*id.*).

# Chapter 2. Chauncy's theology of Sin and Original Sin

Before our philosophical treatment of Charles Chauncy's theology, we will devote the following chapter, as well as chapters 4 and 6, to outlining our author's main theological ideas bracketed under the rubrics of Original Sin, Redemption, and the Afterlife respectively. Due to the nature of the topics to be covered and in order to better situate Chauncy's ideas within a bigger theological framework, a brief historical background seems warranted and will therefore be provided at the outset of each of these chapters.

The structure of the following chapter is as follows: (1) we will provide a brief historical survey of the concept of Original Sin, and then move to consider Chauncy's theological ideas gathered around the concepts of (2) Human nature (and *Imago Dei*), (3) Moral Agency (and Empiricism), (4) Covenants, (5) The Problem of Evil, (6) Original Sin, and finally (7) his attack on both theological Realism and some of the ideas of Jonathan Edwards.

*1.Theological and Scriptural Background to the Doctrine of Original Sin.*
Christian thinking assumes that the created order, and humanity in particular, have fallen into disarray. That things are not, to borrow a phrase from a noted theologian, what they were meant to be and that this is mainly owing to the universality of sin (McGrath 2011: 315). Since Paul, it has been argued that the prevalence of misery in the world, the sinful proclivities that men evince, and the universal death that they are subjected to cannot be understood apart from the original lapse of the first couple; a sin that is inherited by all of his descendants (John Paul II 1993). Original sin has been the principal explanation given by Christianity to account for this pervasive turpitude, but as well for the connected assertion that everyone is in need of a saviour (Rea 2007: 320).

It seems appropriate at this point to draw attention to some distinctions traditionally made by orthodoxy regarding sin. There are of course regular or conventional types of sin, usually termed *actual sins*, which have to do with particular breaches of God's law or will; but there is as well *Original Sin*, understood as the 'radical and universal sinful human condition' that is a direct consequence of the primary lapse of Adam[6](Migliore 2004: 155). Our interest in this section of our work will gravitate naturally towards this latter type of sin. But there is another and more commonsensical distinction worthy to be mentioned here as well, a distinction related to the gravity of the sin: there are *mortal sins*, that is, serious transgressions of God's law that supposedly 'bring death to the soul, unless repentance follows'; and *venial sins*, lesser wrongdoings that do not compromise our relationship to God (Curtis 1950: 65).

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[6] By radical we are to understand that this sinful condition affects every aspect of our lives (Migliore 2004: 155).

It is likewise significant to add that our understanding of sin would be insufficient if we see it merely as the violation of certain rules or standards as encountered in a given moral code (the Decalogue). Instead, theologians down the ages have emphasized its relational aspect, *viz.*, that sin is fundamentally a disruption of our relationship with God (Migliore 2004: 151); a relationship that can be amended only through divine grace. A treatment of the relationship of grace with salvation will be deferred to a latter chapter of this work, where the soteriological aspects of Chauncy's theology will be analysed (Ch.4).

It certainly would be misleading to claim that there has historically been an agreed upon definition of the doctrine of Original Sin (from hereupon DOS). However, there are some distinctions that might prove of help in our making sense of the concept and that have been accepted by many theologians and philosophers alike: (1) the (sinful) disobedience by the first couple that initiated this corruption of our nature (Crisp 2009: 227); (2) Original Sin as the inherited morally corrupt or vitiated condition that we receive from the first couple and that makes it certain that we will sin for ourselves; and, (3) our guilty condition from birth as a consequence of this original lapse (*id.*). Point number three is usually referred to as the doctrine of original guilt, and even though it is now sometimes treated as separate from the DOS, we will follow those that consider it as an integral component of the doctrine, at least in this part of our work (a distinction of importance in our subsequent analysis of Chauncy's treatment of this matter) (Rea 2007: 319).

It seems that, however brief, a historical account of the DOS would be incomplete without some attention paid to the biblical account of the Fall and the significance such an account has for both Catholic and protestant-oriented narratives of the doctrine. The Catholic narrative of the Fall—largely as encountered in the Council of Trent, itself heavily reflecting medieval Scholastic theology—, besides favouring a consideration of it as an actual event in time, argues that the Fall did not corrupt human nature entirely (it is better to think of it, as Catholicism does, as 'a deprivation of original holiness and justice... it is wounded in the natural powers proper to it, subject to ignorance, suffering and the dominion of death, and inclined to sin' [John Paul II 1993]), but that what was lost by the first couple, and for their posterity as well, was a sort of supernatural or preternatural gift that purportedly enabled the first humans to always properly order their inclinations so as to always abstain from sinning; *i.e.*, 'an ordering of the powers of the human soul, and body, such that all of them, including all the emotions and desires and all the functions of the body, obeyed the highest part of the soul, the reason' (Adams 1999: 235). This supernatural gift is called 'original justice' or 'original righteousness' (*justitia originalis*), and it is not completely restored by baptism. What baptism does provide in its place is what is termed 'sanctifying grace', which although it potentially enables the soul to properly love God again—that is, provided the person makes due use of its freedom—, it does not restore the previous and preternatural ordering of all

the human powers; so that desires and emotions remain in an autonomous condition from our reason, a condition of (natural) disorder termed concupiscence (*id.*).

However undesirable this disorder might be, being natural, it is not altogether sinful according to Catholic theology. It could be called, as the Catholic Catechism does, 'tinder for sin' in the sense that this disagreement between desires and reason 'can burst into flames if sin comes along to set it off' (*id.*). Therefore on the Catholic view, any sin committed by a person after baptism would not be 'original', but 'actual' sin (*id.*). Whereas the Reformers believed that the Fall did not entail the loss of a supernatural gift, but something that could be regarded as belonging to human nature itself. It would be more precise to describe it, as M. Rea does, as a sort of 'positive addition of a new kind of wickedness to a once pristine human nature' (2007: 323); that is, as a sort of disposition or inclination to disobey God and which renders human nature (*v.gr.* Augustine and Calvin) as thoroughly corrupted. Since what we talk about here is of our own nature becoming corrupted, the following disorder, also labeled concupiscence by the Reformers, cannot be excused on the grounds that it is 'natural' (Adams 1999: 235). For these writers, concupiscence itself is sin (*id.*).

From what has been mentioned, it could be argued that the Catholic and Protestant accounts of the DOS have both epistemological foundations as well as subject matters that differ from each other (*ibid.,* p.236). The Protestant account could be considered as empirical in the sense that it takes as its starting point (in a manner similar to Kant) the behavior of both adults and children as encountered in everyday life, and from there assumes that this morally corrupt disposition must have existed in us before the commission of any actual sins; a fact that also sheds light on the tendency observable within some sector of Protestant theology (*e.g.* Schleiermacher, and Reinhold Niebuhr) to downplay the role that the traditional narrative of the Fall plays in their conception of the DOS and to regard it mainly in illustrative terms, that is, as being a sort of parable, of providing a kind of model for the recognition of our own baseness[7] (*ibid.,* p.235). Kant's use of Horace's phrase sums up this outlook on the traditional narrative of the Fall—'*Mutate nomine de te fabula narratur* '(change but the name, of thee the tale is told) (Kant 1949: 37; cited in Crisp 2009).

It should be noted though, that the Fall narrative, as well as the concept of Original Sin itself, has always encountered some resistance within Christianity or at the very least has never enjoyed unanimous acceptance. To provide but a few examples, in the patristic period, particularly among some Greek patristic

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[7] Indeed, we can see the strength of the claim that the Protestant doctrine of the DOS is not entirely, or even primarily, about infants, whereas the Catholic doctrine is fundamentally about infants and based on the political context of the time about non-Christian inhabitants of newfound territories (Adams 1999: 235).

writers, there is a conspicuous absence of a Fall narrative, at least in terms of a doctrine of Original Sin as would become later associated with Augustine. For these classical theologians, sin is the outcome of an abuse of human free will.[8] With the advent of the Enlightenment and its desire to revise under rational and moral lenses every aspect of Christian thought, the very notion of inherited guilt as expressed in the DOS became increasingly suspicious. And in the nineteenth century, liberal Protestantism emerging from Germany considered that the DOS as construed by Augustine was due to a misreading of Scripture by the North African writer, whose 'judgement on these matters had become clouded by his over-involvement with a fatalist sect (the Manichees)' (McGrath 2011: 82, 329).

Despite the different versions of the DOS, Christian thought on this topic was heavily influenced by the ideas of Augustine of Hippo (354 – 430), so that a brief perusal of his thought seems warranted at this point. As is well known, the Pelagian controversy of the fifth century was the catalyst that brought Augustine's and the Church's attention to issues related with sin, but also with human nature more generally as well as with grace and free will. We will therefore go over Augustine's ideas on these issues within the bigger context of such theological dispute (*ibid.*, p.351*),* that is, as they were articulated in response to the Pelagian challenge.[9]

As a corollary to the Fall, Augustine believed humanity had been fundamentally affected by sin. Among its consequences, the chief casualties would be our minds and wills—so that our minds are unable to think clearly as they have become darkened by sin; whilst our wills have been weakened or incapacitated, though not entirely destroyed through sin[10] (*ibid.,* p.352). Furthermore, we have no control over such condition, and our predicament is further increased by the fact that as it inhabits and pollutes our lives from the very beginning, this inherent bias towards evil guarantees that we will commit individual acts of sin thereafter (*id.*); that is, to what we previously referred to as actual sins.

In order to describe the nature of Original Sin, Augustine relied heavily on analogies of which we consider the following four to be particularly illustrative: (1) Original Sin as a disease, as some form of hereditary disease that is; a condition to which no human cure can be provided, and which in turn helps to account for Augustine's conviction that the church should be regarded as a sort of hospital, and where

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[8] In stark contrast to what Augustine would later express, Gregory of Nazianzus and Gregory of Niza believed that children are born sinless (McGrath 2011: 350).

[9] Even though the key figures in this dispute were indeed Pelagius and Augustine, Pelagianism is better understood as a movement based on the ideas of various writers located in Rome during the last years of the fourth century—Pelagius mostly, but Caelestius and Rufinus of Syria as well (McGrath 2011: 351).

[10] In order for free will to be restored or healed on the Augustinian (and orthodox) account, the operation of divine grace is imperative. Therefore, although Augustine does not deny the existence of free will, it is nonetheless in our sinful postlapsarian condition 'distorted, compromised, and weakened by sin' (McGrath 2011: 351).

Christians are merely those that have come to recognize their illness (*ibid.*, p.355); (2) the Good Samaritan parable comes to mind at this point as well, where Augustine considered human nature to be like the man left for dead by the roadside and Christ as the Samaritan who rescues and heals our wounded nature (*id.*); (3) sin as a power that holds us captives: our free will on such analogy, and human nature in general, 'is captivated by the power of sin' (*liberum arbitrium captivatum*), and can only be liberated by the power of divine grace (*liberum arbitrium liberatum*) (*ibid.*, pp.353, 355); and (4) sin as guilt, as inherited guilt; one of the central features of Augustine's doctrine on Original Sin and where Christ is regarded as bringing forth mercy and absolution (*ibid.*, p.353).

From what has been mentioned so far, it is clear that there is a very close theological connection between issues of human nature, sin, salvation, and the doctrine of divine grace. Accordingly, these topics will be given special attention during the following pages of this chapter as we now embark on the exposition of Chauncy's theological ideas on sin and Original Sin, starting with his thoughts on our common nature and the ways in which it relates to the divine.

*2. Human Nature and Imago Dei*

Christianity has historically regarded mankind as the epitome of creation: that man alone was created in God's image (Gen. 1:26a). Unlike the rest of creatures, man was not created through the 'instrumentality of second causes, operating according to established laws' says Chauncy, but through a direct exertion of divine power (1785: 6). One way of interpreting this likeness to God's image is in the sense of man, in his bodily (or outward) form, being of a more eminent or excellent kind than the rest of creatures, which is not to be confused with a corporeal likeness to God (anthropomorphism), 'who is a pure spirit' (*ibid.*, pp.13-14). Similar to Augustine's or Calvin's interpretation of the account of creation in Genesis, Chauncy considers that when the biblical authors ascribe bodily parts or motion to God it is so done as a form of concession to our limited understandings.

Although the origins of this tendency within theological language are to be found in Greek classical rhetorical theory—*v.gr.* Origen's insistence that just as a father must adapt or, better yet, accommodate his language such as to be better understood by the limited intellectual resources of his children, so God had to condescend and 'come down to us, accommodating to our weakness' so that we could comprehend his message and intentions [McGrath 2011: 192]—, it was Calvin in the sixteenth century who developed the theory now referred to as *accommodation* and that purports to explain how this immense gulf between creator and creature is to be bridged in order for communication to take place[11]

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[11] There is, according to a prominent Calvin scholar, 'at least a twofold accommodation of God's nature' to our limited capacities: (1) one connected to our inability to think and speak of God in any other form

(Helm 2009: 28-29).

Moreover, says Chauncy, there are some that interpret this likeness to divinity in the sense of God having endowed mankind with dominion over the rest of creatures; a claim not without biblical warrant (Gen. 1:26) as our author himself points out. On such an interpretation, man 'resembles God in its exercise of power and dominion over the other creatures' (Migliore 2004: 140), but surely, according to Chauncy, this is not the entire meaning or 'the whole of that likeness to God in which man was created' (1785: 14). This is the first instance of a topic characteristic to eighteenth century intellectual life and to which our author, particularly in his major work on theodicy (*The Benevolence of the Deity...*), gives endorsement to: The Great Chain of Being as that overall system of living creatures bound together by innumerable links, and arranged in a hierarchical scale from the lowest forms of life, to the highest (God) (Griffin 1980: 114).

Being made in the image of God is to be understood in His having endowed man with a constitution of nature such that his intellectual and moral faculties could be developed gradually—under God's guidance and due use of them—towards perfection (Chauncy 1785: 18). Our author's position on this is closer to another patristic position and generally regarded as the dominant interpretation, at least in the Western theological tradition, and which tended to interpret the image of God in man in terms of human rational faculty; a faculty that somehow 'mirrors the wisdom of God'[12] (McGrath 2011: 349; Migliore 2004: 140). It accordingly should not be read as if the first couple was created already perfect in both moral and intellectual faculties. Therefore, Adam and Eve, despite having been created as adults when considering their bodily form, were completely deprived of experiential or practical knowledge and could be considered as infants in this respect; an assertion with significant moral and epistemological implications as the following chapters of this work will reveal (Chauncy 1785: 16-19, 23, 24).

In answering the claim that it would have perhaps evinced a greater goodness on God's part if He had created us in an already perfect state (morally and intellectually), Chauncy points to the Thomist connection between intellectual and moral improvements. The key concept here is the happiness or pleasure that is the outcome 'of a due use of the faculties we are endowed with' (*ibid.*, p.32). Had God given to us this perfection as an 'absolute gift', there would have been no occasion or opportunity on our

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other than our ordinary human language, which is characterized by 'subject-predicate' articulation and by the necessity of advancing from premises about God to conclusions about His nature; and (2) the other is the result of God's habit of making Himself known to us 'in language that implies embodiment in human form, as well as him having passions and suffering change' (Helm 2009: 28-29).

[12] For Aquinas and other classical theologians, this human rational faculty is 'a participation in and reflection of the divine *logos* or reason by which the world was created' (Aquinas 1981: Pt. 1, q.93, a.4; cited in Migliore).

part for the attainment of such pleasure, which is necessarily connected 'with the idea of any valuable quality' (*id.*).

The corrupt nature of Adam after the Fall is to be regarded as a superinduced quality, not essential to his character as instrument or medium, that, based on the law of propagation, mediated the creation of the rest of mankind. What we essentially derived from him was our quality as humans, as opposed to the rest of creation, but in no way does this entail that we inherited his moral state or nature—for 'neither virtuous or vicious character is transmitted by *propagation*' (*ibid.*, p.170) says our writer; just in the same way that experience teaches us that children do not necessarily inherit the qualities of their parents, either virtuous or vicious. This could be regarded as another instance of Chauncy's theological heterodoxy concerning the doctrine of Original Sin, and which leads him, as will become evident in the following chapter, to do away entirely with the concept of inherited guilt.

All in all, we derive a nature from Adam that is neither totally depraved or devoid of the principles that render love and obedience to our maker possible. But this is not the same as to favor an account that would portray it 'as perfect as our first father received it from the creating hand of God', in the way of making us capable, as he was in his innocent state, to comply with His commands (*ibid.*, pp.206-207). It should thus be manifest, says Chauncy, to anyone who is conversant with Paul's epistles, particularly Romans, that we come into the world 'under a disadvantageous state of nature', by which we are supposed to understand, incapable of being justified or sanctified, upon the foot of strict law (*ibid.*, p.208).

Just as divinity thought fit for ourselves to inherit physical attributes from our immediate ancestry—attributes that doubtless posit some among mankind under considerable disadvantages from the outset, whether in mental or moral attainments—it is likewise prudent, and not in any way nefarious on His part, that we are brought upon in a condition that resembles that of our fallen father:[13] an inheritance of attributes, it should be remembered, that is a direct consequence of our creation taking place through the instrumentality of our progenitors; that is, according to a settled course of nature, and that in turn explains our disadvantage when compared to Adam, of our derived and tainted natures. We inherit therefore the essential features that constitute us as human beings, but we do so in a less perfect state owing basically to the folly of those instruments God saw fit to establish as 'intermediate secondary causes' (*ibid.*, p.235). This disadvantage in our inherited natures, it should be noted, was for our author an outcome sort of bound to happen since there was nothing naturally inhibiting Adam to misuse his implanted powers. So for Chauncy, even if Adam 'had continued innocent, it is not certain that his posterity, from generation to generation, would have had his nature transmitted to them in the same

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[13] Keith Wyma in *Innocent Sinfulness, Guilty Sin: Original Sin and Divine Justice* [2009] spouses a position similar to Chauncy.

perfect degree' he had received it from God's hands (*ibid.,* p.234).

And to conclude this section of our chapter, in a rather Augustinian (and Neo-platonic) manner, Chauncy defines man as a compound of 'organized matter and an animating principle of life'; *i.e.*, a union of body and soul (*ibid.*, p.125). Chauncy's animating principle or soul is likewise similar to Augustine's definition of it as the principle that 'confers life on the body' (Curtis 1950: 16)—the body, says Chauncy, is but 'a mere useless machine [unless] actuated by the soul' (Chauncy 1785: 126). Its characteristics sound also Augustinian: a simple immaterial substance that remains undissolved after its separation from the body. From all this, death is to be regarded not necessarily as the destruction of either body or soul, but of their disunion for the purposes of life. Ultimately and based on the 'gospel scheme of redemption', they are capable of being reunited in the 'same percipient individuals' (*ibid.*, p.127). We will come back to the issue of death and its connection to sin a few pages ahead; for the moment, let us turn our attention to Chauncy's thoughts regarding moral agency and his definite empiricist outlook.

*3. Moral Agency, Empiricism and Death*

Like the rest of us, Adam was brought into the world completely deprived of the 'objects of knowledge' (*Tabula Rasa*) (*ibid.*, p.25). Other than immediate communication from God, the only manner he had for attaining such objects bears a clear resemblance to Lockean epistemology, *viz.*, by the mediate agency of our bodily organs (the senses) that receive the impressions from the material world and transmit them to our minds. These sensorial impressions and the reflections that the mind makes of them are the real 'inlets to our knowledge, and the original source of all our attainments in it' (*id.*).

Moreover, as humans we are compounded of both a material body, integrated by many and admirably combined parts, as well as of a spiritual element or substance (its nobler part according to Chauncy) endowed with faculties such as thought, consciousness, and capable of experiencing pleasure and pain. Between these two main components, divinity saw fit to establish a close union or connection such that the body is but a 'mere useless machine, only as it is actuated by the soul, [nor] can the soul actuate it, to any of the valuable purposes of life, till by the organs of sensation, it is furnished with the materials of knowledge' (Chauncy 1784: 280). This is the sense or manner in which we are constituted as 'living active agents' for our author (*id.*).

Our faculties when we arrive into the world are mere 'implanted powers, absolutely incapable of moral exertion' (Chauncy 1785: 162): powers or faculties that are the outcome of a 'course of nature' that divine wisdom saw fit to establish (*ibid.*, p.163). The only manner therefore in which we could be held accountable or blameworthy for our nature depends entirely on the use, 'good culture, and proper exercise' of these implanted powers (*id.*). To illustrate this point, he rhetorically asks who could blame infants for their lack of understanding in such an inexperienced condition—'is it now any fault of ours, that we come

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into existence thus destitute of actual knowledge?' (*id.*). Once again, it could be only due to misuse or neglect on our part with respect to our rational faculties, and hence only after becoming moral agents that an attribution of blame, sin, or vice could be hurled against us. And what has been said of our rational faculties extends, on Chauncy's thought, to the rest of our capacities—'They are all, at first, mere capacities only, neither fitted nor designed for present moral exertion' (*ibid.*, p.164); to speak of moral perversion in them necessarily presupposes personal wrongdoing as to their use or exertion.

This empiricist demeanor in Chauncy's thought can be directly attributed to his readings of John Locke, but there are other important influences in our writer in this respect, such as that of the eighteenth century British philosopher David Hartley and his *Observations on Man, His Frame, His Duty, and His Expectations* [1749], or more generally that of Thomas Aquinas. Aquinas, though naturally not an empiricist in a modern sense of the term, did emphasize repeatedly the complete dependence of the human intellect on data gathered through sense-perception. And as with many other dimensions of his thought, Aquinas here is heavily indebted to Aristotle (Curtis 1950: 160-161).

This emphasis on our character as rational moral creatures leads Chauncy to endorse a rather optimistic view of human nature in the sense that God has created us in such a way that we are unable, unless due to some perversion in our understanding that would ultimately be chargeable to ourselves, to not recognize through our 'natural power of discernment' what is right and wrong; 'or to perceive the beauty of the former, and the deformity of the latter' (1785:204), which is why on his account those that choose evil over good do so at the expense of acting against their consciences. So, it appears that one could lawfully suppose that a Thomist narrative of human nature is present in our author, as he clearly conveys the idea that an objective moral standard is accessible to any normally functioning human intellect; an objective moral standard discernible through an a priori principle of moral sense (or common sense) by which we become 'enabled at once, without the labor of a long train of reasoning, to distinguish between moral good, and moral evil, in all instances that are of primary importance...' (Chauncy 1784b: 120).

In order to better understand this Thomistic connection between moral obligation and human rational faculty that our author seems to endorse, it is necessary to say a few words regarding Aquinas' very hierarchical general theory of law. It is likewise important to state at the outset of this fourfold classification of law to which we now proceed that for Aquinas law was, as G. Sabine remarks, a cosmic fact; that is, he conceived of human interactions and its institutions as just one more level of the entire cosmic order, 'in which the same principles obtain that manifest themselves in different forms on the other levels' (Sabine 1961: 252). There is therefore no place in Aquinas' thought (nor in that of Chauncy) for the idea that either nature or society is governed by the (arbitrary) will of God; by a mere *fiat* of His

will (*id.*).

The first and highest law is what he calls the Eternal Law (*Lex Aeterna*), which can be equated with divine reason itself: a law that, though above and beyond the comprehension of finite rational creatures like ourselves, is not contrary to reason. Next in this descending order we encounter Divine Law (*Lex Divina*), by which we ought to understand revelation as encountered in Scripture; accordingly, this level is further subdivided into the old law (*Lex Vetus*) and the new law (*Lex Nova*). We then have Natural Law (*Lex Naturalis*), and since it is impossible for man to know 'by a direct vision of the divine nature' the commands he is bound to obey in the Eternal Law, this latter is imprinted in his soul or could as well be considered as a 'reflection of divine reason in created things' (*ibid.*, p.253). This (natural) law is manifested in all creatures' tendency to seek the good and avoid evil, and more generally in their attempt to lead a life better suited to their natures, which in the case of man translates into the 'desire for a life in which the rational nature may be realized' (*id.*). Lastly, we have Human (positive) Law, as those binding regulations which aim principally to regulate the interactions among people in society.

Thence, the spring of moral obligation on such a narrative is encountered in Natural Law as the reflection of God's wisdom or reason in the minds of men. Since both in society or in the natural order or in the celestial sphere as well, everything is governed according to reasons or at the very least operates according to clear ends; and furthermore, since God himself is 'very reason' and created man in His own image, the moral law is part of man's nature and it is undoubtedly his duty to obey it (Curtis 1950: 189). If man acts contrary to reason then, if through an abuse of his free will he disobeys such internal moral code, he is at fault intellectually; a 'disobedience to the will of God [that] is called sin by the theologian' (*id.*).

Now moving to the topic of the relation of death with sin, and when pondering the interpretations of noticed theologians of his time, among which those of Samuel Shuckford (1693-1738) and Henry Grove (1684-1754) stand out, and that take Paul's words, 'for that all have sinned' in a rather literal sense, that is, that though it was by Adam's lapse that sin entered into the world, and death by sin, this death would not have 'actually *passed upon all men*, if all, as they grew up to reason, had not actually sinned'; that is, 'had actual sins of their own' (Chauncy 1785: 257). To say that death is the outcome of our own sinning is to contradict the apostle, for the real cause of our dying 'is to be fetched, not from the sins which men have committed in their own persons, but from the *one offense of the one man*, Adam' (*ibid.*, p.258). Furthermore, such writers seem to forget that many of those who die do so before they are able to be regarded as moral agents (children), and therefore it would be preposterous to consider them as having properly sinned (*ibid.*, p.259). An issue which will be dealt with in greater detail in the following chapter of this work.

His own version of Paul's words is—'By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and thus, in this way, death passed upon all men, UPON WHICH, they have all sinned'[14] (*ibid.*, pp.273-274). It is doubtless then for our author that the original cause of death and sin was indeed the original lapse of Adam. But since death and sin are different sorts of evil—the former a natural, while the latter a moral one—, it is impossible that Adam should be the source of both in the same manner. Death indeed came to pass upon all men due to the judicial sentence by God, but not sin since no judicial sentence, either from God or man, can ascribe sin to anyone without agency on their part; no one can be made a sinner 'without their own wicked choice' according to our author (*ibid.*, p.274). Chauncy points in support of this interpretation the fact that Paul's words don't mention that death and sin passed upon all men, only death. Chauncy argues that we are to read 'death' in Paul's epistles in the same complex sense as Moses uses it in Genesis, *viz.*, as death accompanied by its appendages of 'vanity, toil, sorrow, and suffering', and not just death itself, simply understood as the termination of our physical life (*ibid.* p.275).

It is precisely this understanding of death connected with 'the whole disadvantage[s] under which we hold life since the [F]all' that explains how we 'all become sinners UPON, or IN CONSEQUENCE OF' our subjection to it (death) (*ibid.*, p.275), and this because our temptations to sin are essentially connected to our mortal bodies: to their 'situation and circumstances' (*id.*). The fear of losing one's life, the desire to acquire the good things in life and avoid the evil ones, all circumstances having to do with our frail mortal condition provide the occasion for sinning in all its forms. A mortal condition that likewise explains our inability to reign in our sinful proclivities and hence go against our better judgement—'IN CONSEQUENCE of our present *suffering mortal state*, we are often induced to do that, which upon sober reflection, we cannot but condemn ourselves for' (*ibid.*, p.276). Insomuch that it is impossible we earn 'moral rectitude, as will avail to our justification, unless placed under a more favourable dispensation than that of rigid law' (*id.*). Chauncy's picture here is akin to what the more philosophical heirs of Augustine called metaphysical evil, or the disheartening fact of finitude for any creature. As we will afterwards explicate, however, and similar to Catholic theology on this point, there is sufficient reason to believe that Chauncy does not regard the fact of finitude as an evil in itself but considers instead that if there is to be a creaturely realm at all, physical finitude was necessary (Hick 2010: 38).

Connected with what was just mentioned, our author asserts that there are two different senses of bondage that the apostle Paul writes about: (1) of man as being 'under bonds to death', as subjected to the mortal and frail bodily condition already mentioned; and, (2) as a consequence of such bondage and upon the foot of strict law and without the assistance of grace, of being in bondage to animal (bodily) appetites

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[14] Capital letters here and after as encountered in the original.

and inclinations (Chauncy 1784: 109). Chauncy mentions in vindication of his interpretation the fact that Paul, a couple of chapters onwards, intends to convey this same idea of sanctification (or moral rectitude) being unattainable on the base of rigid law, and this owing, essentially, to the 'operation of appetites and inclinations, seated in our mortal bodies', which render us ineluctably to perform that which our reason disapproves (Chauncy 1785: 276-277). Human nature, declares Chauncy again following Paul, is subject to an inherent internal warring condition between two opposing principles: one being what he terms the law of our member, or the flesh, while the other as the law of the mind, or the inward man. The apostle, according to the Bostonian, had it in view to show that it is owing to the former principle of action (the flesh) that we both do what our conscience advices to the contrary, and we do not perform that which our reason suggests we should (*ibid.*, p.277).

In order to dispel any possible confusion that might arise in connection with the manner of writing that Paul employs when he speaks of men having sinned in their own persons (as a consequence of the original lapse) as that 'all have sinned', when it was true that legions of them had not even come into existence, and many of those that had, had not properly sinned, since they had not yet arrived to a capacity for moral agency, Chauncy mentions that this is not an unusual thing to find in Scripture, *viz.,* 'as already come into fact, [that] which in time will certainly do so' (*ibid.*, p.297). Which is why in the same epistle the apostle also speaks of death having passed upon all men, not because this was literally true, but because in due time, inevitably, this will become true for all men. Likewise with sin, for even though it is impossible to speak of children as having sinned, as they reach to a capacity of moral agency they will certainly do so. This is why, Chauncy argues, the whole of mankind is in such a state as a consequence of the Fall, 'that they may be spoken of, in the virtual and constructive sense, both as dead men and sinners' (*id.*).

And just as was mentioned previously that death and sin are different types of evil—the first a natural while the latter a moral one, and therefore with a different relationship to our moral agency—so too respectively are the advantages of life and righteousness gained through Jesus' exemplar obedience on the cross. In the same way that death, being a natural evil, could come upon mankind by virtue of a divine constitution or decree without the intervention of a misused moral agency, so too 'deliverance from death may, by a like constitution of God, be secured to the same mankind without any regard had to their own well-used agency' (*ibid.*, p.307).

Chauncy aligns himself with historical orthodox Christianity on this topic, as the relationship between sin and death, at least since the Pauline assertion that 'the wages of sin is death' (Rom. 6:23) has tended to believe that the first couple was created immortal and that death entered the world as a consequence of their original lapse. This view however has been questioned in modern theology for

obvious reasons, of which the following seem pertinent to mention: (1) owing to the fact that mortality marked life on earth from the outset; and (2) just as with Chauncy's defence of metaphysical evil, because to 'speak of immortality as intrinsic to our created humanity obscures human finitude and threatens to blur the distinction between creator and creature' (Migliore 2004: 157).

But exactly how did Christ's perfect obedience become the reason for our righteousness? Chauncy claims that 'as in consequence of this obedience […], and the constitution of God grounded thereon, they are rendered capable, in a moral way of becoming RIGHTEOUS persons' (1785: 308-9). To think otherwise would be a moral impossibility, argues Chauncy, for 'we can no more be made personally righteous by the righteousness of another transferred to us, than we can be made sinners by the sin of another, transferred in like manner' (*ibid.*, p.309). Therefore, moral agency has a different connection for our author to both the disadvantages owed to Adam as well as the advantages available through Jesus Christ. In the case of death and its deliverance, being a natural disadvantage and advantage respectively, they come upon men without a consideration being paid to their misused or well used moral agency. Whereas in the other part of the effects, *viz.*, sin and righteousness, as they are moral qualities, they are invariably dependent on moral agency.

We surely have clear by now the way in which our author affirms that the ascription of sin for ourselves comes about. But how does the attribution of righteousness apply to us through Jesus Christ? Because, in consequence of His perfect obedience 'and the constitution of God grounded thereon, [we] will be wrought upon, sooner or later, in a moral way, such an one as is adjusted to moral agents, to become righteous persons' (Chauncy 1784: 85). The exact manner in which this is to take place is the subject matter of another chapter of this work.

*4. Intellect and Covenants*

Our author devotes considerable attention to the interactions between intellect and will, and particularly between the intellect and the passions; *viz.*, the undue influence the latter could have in the operations of the mind. All of which resembles Aquinas' treatment of intellect and will as part of a dynamic system (ST, pp. IV, 2, 16, 418-419, 422; cited in Stump 2003). He accordingly exhibits a pervasive dislike for the excessive emotionalism characteristic of the itinerant preaching and the revivalist *ethos* of the time. When describing *Enthusiasm* for instance, he mentions that it discovers itself in the disregard such persons hold against the dictates of reason (Chauncy 1743). Moreover, there is also a traceable influence of Supernatural Rationalism in his consideration of the affections as lesser or subordinate to the nobler operations of the intellect. All of which predispose him to favor what he terms a religion of the understanding (*ibid.*, pp. 2, 418, 419, 422).

A Thomist understanding of the dynamic interactions between intellect and will reappears in his

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treatment of the differences he encounters between men and the rest of created beings. He does not seem to believe that animals are completely deprived of thought—for Aquinas the beasts were capable of forming mental images anyway (Curtis 1950)—, but since they do so in so low a degree, it is impossible for them to properly distinguish between moral good and wrong (Chauncy 1785: 38). For Aquinas, following Aristotle, believed that the will makes no determinations of this sort on its own: judging of things as good or bad is the business of the intellect, which then presents them as such to the will (Stump 2003: 278). The other creatures then are unable of resembling the deity, of being images of God in His moral and intellectual attributes (*id.*).

In Thomist fashion as well, our author grounds the essential difference between vegetative and animal life in the ability to think. The subsequent hierarchy Chauncy develops—based on an ever higher cognitive faculty from the lower animals to the purely spiritual beings such as the angels and God at its summit—brings to mind a similar one suggested by Aristotle but developed by both Dionysius The Areopagite and Aquinas, and that regarded mankind as a sort of 'mean between the pure intelligences [God and the angels] and the rest of animal creation' (Curtis 1950: 138); in Chauncy's own words men are the 'lowest order of intelligent moral beings' (Chauncy 1785: 39). Likewise, this is another example of Chauncy's endorsement of the widely diffused concept during the eighteenth century of the Great Chain of Being, here underpinned by the principles of plenitude, gradation and continuity (Griffin 1981: 114). By the principle of plenitude—again adopted by Augustine from Neo-Platonism—we are to conceive of the creation as a *plenum formarum* where every possibility of creaturely existence is actualized or exemplified in the world of sense, and where the 'extent and abundance of the creation must be... commensurate with the productive capacity of a 'perfect' and inexhaustible Source' (Lovejoy 1957: 52; cited in Griffin). Gradation refers to the hierarchical nature of this living structure where the lower forms of life are subordinated to the higher ones (Griffin 1981: 114). And by continuity, the idea that in this ascending order there are no gaps or voids, that is, missing species or links in the hierarchy (Lovejoy 1957: 56-57; cited in Griffin).

Now concerning the covenants established between the deity and mankind, Chauncy expresses that the law of trial man was placed under in his innocent state, contrary to orthodox opinions, is not a covenant of works. Such views are connected to the aforementioned misconception according to which Adam was portrayed to be, in his innocent state as endowed with a supposed perfection in his qualities, both moral and intellectual, that would have enabled him not only to discern what was expected of him by every instance of God's law (intellectual perfection), but to actually comply with it (holy or moral perfection); *i.e.*, to what we referred to before as the quality of original righteousness (*justitia originalis*). Such a covenant or dispensation would have been too harsh on an otherwise intellectually and morally

infant creature like Adam (and Eve) was in his prelapsarian condition (Chauncy 1785: 50-51). The rule of trial Adam and Eve were placed under was a positive law given in a single instance through immediate divine revelation (Gen.II:16,17). It was as if, as E. M. Griffin remarked, God, in recognition of their inexperience, gave them special help by pointing out clearly what was forbidden for them to do (1981: 123). It was then by a 'law of faith', in the sense that the obedience required could only have come through faith in God, that our first parents were tested in the great affair of their eternal life (Chauncy 1785: 54).

And for those who question why God decided to try Adam with a single positive command, Chauncy expounds that this was owing to the singular condition in which the first man found himself in. It would have been futile to test him in something that couldn't simply be done (*v.gr.* Adultery), and certainly no merit or virtue could have been found in the abstention from something that provoked no temptation in the first place—covetousness or stealing, for God had placed him in possession of everything that then existed. He could only be tried then with a command that in a way invited him to transgress (*ibid.*, p.56). Temptation, apart from being a natural trait of the world in which mankind is sent to, was, considering the singular situation in which the first couple found themselves in, possibly the only way 'in which innocent man could have been induced to sin' (*ibid.*, p.74). And as for the predicament that such a temptation was provoked by an evil spirit, our author claims that it is not unreasonable to conceive of the existence of superior intelligent moral beings, that is, of good or bad angels. Nor is it unreasonable to conceive that God makes instruments of both in His divine government of the world; so that good angels are to be thought of as pastors 'sent forth to minister to them who are heirs of salvation', whilst evil ones are permitted by Him to 'work in those who are already the children of disobedience', and, most importantly for our matter at hand, for others, 'in order to tempt them to be so' (*id.*).

Likewise, it is not against reason to presume that God permitted this exertion of Satan's influence over them. The important issue here for Chauncy is that this takes place provided that He 'superintends and governs the temptation'; *i.e.*, that it be a 'proper trial of virtue', adjusted to their then precarious intellectual and moral attainments (*ibid.*, p.78).

How did it come to pass that such a temptation took place in human beings so deprived of the necessary experience to be able to overcome it? Chauncy time and again mentions that the expression of God's prohibition was a trial well suited to the first couple's condition. A state that though lacking in experience, surely enabled them to overcome the temptation, and therefore in their failure it rendered them 'justly chargeable with sin' (*id.*).

*5. The Problem of Evil*

Contravening those who claim that God's confining Himself to bestowing existence on the posterity of Adam—not through a direct exertion of His power, but attributable to an established course of nature, such that owing to 'the fatality of settled connections in nature' (*ibid.*, p.225) they might suffer under the disadvantages they inherit from their ancestry—might speak unfavourably of the divine wisdom and benevolence, Chauncy has the following remarks: (1) it is pointless and absurd to find fault with general laws unless one is able to show that a better outcome might reasonably have been procured with different or no laws at all; (2) as for those that think that the absence of provisions or, as Chauncy calls them, 'interpositions' in order to prevent the undesired suffering here talked about, likewise reflects unflatteringly on the deity, Chauncy replies that there is no way of knowing that the only effect of such interpositions would indeed be the prevention of moral and natural evil. Our author clearly states that perhaps the only possible effective provisions would be those that imply the loss of moral agency itself, which he terms the foundation of the 'greatest and most valuable happiness' God has communicated to us (*ibid.*, p.227), a position with significant philosophical and moral implications as a subsequent chapter of this work will demonstrate.

Two remarks pertaining to this position are worthy to be highlighted at this point: (1) evidently, he seems to bring his by now old Thomist tenet that divinity would not act in a way that would undermine the nature of His creatures, which here should be taken as portending that the deity would not impinge upon their freedom of will, that is, in their being proper moral agents, capable of deciding in an incorrect or morally wrong sense, if such be the case; and (2) he also seems to align himself with a philosophical tradition that finds a use and place for our proclivity to moral wrongdoing, in the sense of making serious moral decisions (*Cfr.* Swinburne) and hence genuine virtuous moral choices possible (Stump 2012: 153-154). In this view of the matter at hand, without a propensity to do what is advantageous to oneself, independently if this is morally laudable or not, we would be incapable of exercising genuine free will, and with it, it would be difficult to properly speak of ourselves as making morally sound decisions. The idea implied is that it is as if God had concluded that the only possible worlds containing significant instances of moral or righteous behaviour, and therefore worthy of being created, were ones that also included significant instances of moral wrongdoing, in the sense of making moral decisions possible.[15] This however should not be interpreted in a way that would place Chauncy in the eighteenth century optimistic

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[15] Another instance of this is to be found in Chauncy's theodicy (*The Benevolence of the Deity, Fairly and Impartially Considered* [1784]), where our author decries what he considers as inadequate conceptions of the deity's benevolence as that of an 'uncontroulable impulsive principle, necessarily urging on to the greatest communication of good, and the total prevention of evil; its prevention so as that it should have no place in the creation, in any shape or view whatsoever' (1784b: VII).

view (such as that of Leibniz for example) that this world is the best of all possible worlds.[16]

From such a stance, it is easier to understand our author's endorsement of what was commonly called the two governments or kingdoms of divinity. This distinction between the two governments of God—the moral government and the government of power—is practically identical to the distinction established in some of his works by Samuel Clarke, the Anglican theologian and philosopher (one of the *rationalists* and main supporters of the *a posteriori* design argument at the beginning of the eighteenth century in England), to whose authority our author appeals to in a rather lengthy footnote, to which we now proceed (Gaskin 1992: XXII). The natural kingdom of God, the kingdom of his power, says Clarke, cannot be resisted; our very being lies in His hands and He could therefore reduce us all into nothing in the blink of an eye. Which is why, Clarke argues, those who entertain such fantastic notions, such as the idea of the devil's rebellion against God as consisting of an actual defiance, in terms of force, for the dominion of the universe, are very much mistaken. The devil's rebellion is similar to that of wicked men, in the sense of disobeying God's will (not in presuming to resist His power), precisely in those things 'wherein the nature of virtue and vice, and the very essence of moral government, necessarily requires that they should not be over-ruled and compelled by force, for here, the thing which God requires is the free consent of the will', a thing which in its very nature, says Clarke, is not subject to compulsion (Clarke 1742: 198; cited in Chauncy 1784: 181).

Therefore, the kingdom of God essentially consists 'in his government of reasonable and intelligent creatures; in his being served and obeyed by those, who, at the same time, are capable of disobeying' (*ibid.*, p.180). And in the same way that Chauncy argues, for Clarke, this kingdom of God, 'this his government over the hearts and wills of the rational part of creation, is opposed and withstood' by sin (*id.*).

A similar contemporary account of such a view can be found in what is one of the most influential of modern theodicies: person-making theodicy, of which John Hick is probably its most adroit representative (Cfr. *Evil and the God of Love*, and *An Irenaean Theodicy* in *Encountering Evil* [1966]). Hick draws a line between what he calls an Augustinian and an Irenaean theodicy, and argues that while in the former evil is to be regarded as the consequence of sin, in the latter, 'the possibility and experience of evil are conditions of the possibility of growth toward free and mature humanity in the image of God' (Migliore 2004: 130). To be sure, such potential for growth can be misused, but 'without the real choice between good and evil, and without the possibility of learning through hard experience, the formation of character is simply impossible' (*id.*). Just like Clarke's account of God's moral government or kingdom, Hick

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[16] Chauncy reasoned that a 'better world than this, more perfect, and more powerfully adapted to make [men] happy, might be created by the Deity' (1784b: 288).

contends that what the deity requests or longs for in this respect is the free consent and worship of undetermined creatures; God desires not puppets, but beings who 'freely participate in the process by which they come to be what God intends them to be' (*id.*). We will devote further attention to explicating Hick's theodicy, particularly his earlier works, when going over Chauncy's theological ideas concerning redemption (Ch.4).

Chauncy was thus convinced that evil and sufferings have a purpose, that is, that such misfortunes 'whether present or future, in this world or another, are a disciplinary mean wisely and powerfully adapted to promote the good of the patients themselves' (1784: 366). Far from being a disproof or contradiction with God's nature as infinitely benevolent, they 'coincide with, wise and reasonable benevolence' (*ibid.*, p.367). This is an old theological argument (*Cfr.* Augustine) and a pervasive theme in our author's work, and usually referred to as the *divine pedagogy*, and according to which earthly sufferings are instruments in our moral development.[17] In the words of a contemporary theologian, we are to regard misery and misfortune, and all other calamities that befell upon us, as an opportunity for spiritual growth, for 'God exercises sovereignty over evil by bringing good out of what by itself is only negative and destructive' (Migliore 2004: 124, 122).

*6. Original Sin*

In accord with what has been mentioned so far and with what will be illustrated in the subsequent chapter, Chauncy's take on the DOS endorses a view of mediate imputation of guilt, in the sense that we could only be guilty of our own misdeeds; it is true, we inherit a corruption that makes us invariably liable to future sinning, but we are not guilty of the original lapse that is the origin of our own sinful proclivity.

Sin is in its nature fundamentally personal— 'the sin of one man cannot be the sin of another', says Chauncy (1785: 151). Moral wrongdoing presupposes, as has been mentioned previously, moral agency, and how could it be possible for Adam's posterity, thousands of years before coming into existence to be regarded as moral agents capable of sinning and of being guilty? (*id.*). We may, his posterity that is, be afflicted with grief, but it would be a great 'moral contradiction' to suppose that any of us actually consider his original transgression as a fault of our own (*id.*). Fault and its concomitant feeling of guilt could only be the outcome of personal sinning, and this precisely Chauncy considers to be undisputable proof that God does not look on Adam's posterity as having sinned when their first father did[18] (*id.*). A

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[17] For instance, Augustine writes: 'by the ineffable mercy of God even the penalty of man's offense is turned into an instrument of virtue' (*City of God*, 13.4; cited in Migliore).

[18] Beyond our powers of perception (sensation), which are instrumental for our intellectual faculties, Chauncy believed that we were also endowed with what he called 'moral powers', 'fitting us for moral happiness, the highest any being can be made capable of' (1784b: 120). The moral abilities are the already

contention that our author considers to be validated by certain Scripture passages such as 'through the offence of one, the many are dead' (Rom. 5:15), or 'the judgment was by one to condemnation' (Rom. 5:16); or even more so 'by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation' (Rom. 5:18) (*ibid.*, p.153). Sin then for Chauncy is always personal. One might be a 'sufferer, in consequence of the sin of another, but one man cannot be guilty of another man's sin' (*ibid.*, p.131). Sins, therefore, as moral agency itself, are untransferable things.

Our author's position finds a significant historical counterpart in Peter Abelard (1079-1142). This illustrious medieval philosopher contributed two important distinctions that bear a clear similarity to Chauncy's ideas on the matter: (1) a differentiation between sin, which for the Breton philosopher was essentially tied to the concept of personal consent,[19] and the defect or weakness of human nature that is a consequence of the Fall, and which ought not to be considered sinful *per se;* and (2) a distinction between guilt and punishment. Abelard claimed that Adam's posterity does not inherit his guilt, though they are 'liable to the punishment incurred by the first act of disobedience' (Curtis 1950: 67). But given Chauncy's theological convictions and the fact that he was at least nominally in the Reformed tradition, there are other possible sources of inspiration for our author on this topic; such as the already mentioned ideas regarding the moral condition of the first couple by his contemporary John Taylor, or owing to its importance for the Reformed churches in America, the Belgic Confession and its treatment of this issue in its fifteenth article.[20]

Moreover in the parallel Paul traces in verses 15, 16, and 17 of the fifth chapter of Romans between Adam and Christ, Chauncy finds further evidence in support of his position. Just as through Christ's sacrifice and selfless act of love and obedience we gain, through a divine establishment or constitution, the benefit of justification, so too due to one man's transgression, and not any fault of our own, we were subjected to death and its accompanying miseries (Chauncy 1785: 153-154). In both cases then, our moral agency plays no part whatsoever in the resulting dispensations.

Additionally, our author points to the absence of Scriptural references that would countenance those that portray Adam as a thoroughly corrupted creature. Furthermore, it would be hard to conceive

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mentioned *moral sense*; *self-determination*, by which we exert control over our volitions and impulses (Griffin, 1981: 116); and *conscience*, which Chauncy conceives as an unerring internal witness or 'testifier for, or against us, as we have done that which we know to be right, or wrong' (1784b: 144).

[19]'We are, that is, inclined to consent to what we ought not to do, or to leave undone what we ought to do. Consent of this kind we rightly call sin' (McCallum 1935: 18; cited in Curtis, 1950).

[20] The article states,

> We believe that by the disobedience of Adam original sin has been spread through the whole human race […] Nevertheless, it is not imputed to God's children for their condemnation but is forgiven by his grace and mercy… (Various, 2020).

how such a single instance of disobedience could have had such an effect on his whole nature by either 'natural operation or divine infliction' (*ibid.*, p.169).

Having thus far described the cause and way in which Adam's posterity weren't subjected to a state of lifelong suffering culminating in death, it is time to explain in exactly what manner our author considers that this was eventuated. It is by virtue of Adam being, together with Eve, the instrument or medium, through which God established that the rest of mankind forever should come into being, that the judicial sentence upon the first couple was 'consequentially extended to their children' (*ibid.*, pp.159-160). Since Adam was the head or root from where all of humanity was to be created, the conditions or circumstances in which this act of propagation took place would inevitably be communicated to all his descendants.

Chauncy's view on the lawfulness of the judicial sentence seems very similar to the one worded by Anselm of Canterbury (1033-1109) several centuries before. An argument that pretty bluntly states that this divine judicial sentence 'is not unlike the verdicts of human beings' (Anselm 1969: 209-10; cited in Rea). Anselm's argument goes something like this: suppose a couple were made the subjects of some dignity and state, without merit of their own, but as a complete favour or gift. Then, due to a grave crime on their part, they render themselves liable to the loss of this favour and also to a life of misery and sorrow. Who, given this context, could claim that their children, born long after their condemnation, should be reinstated to the favourable situation that their parents enjoyed before their transgression? 'having been justly condemned to be cast from happiness to misery for their fault, they bring forth their offspring in the same banishment' (*id.*). Anselm's position here, as well as his rather grim notion of sin itself,[21] are interpreted by some scholars as the undue influence that feudal assumptions of his time had upon his thinking. In this line of interpretation, God would be conceived as the 'equivalent of the lord of the manor' (McGrath 2011: 327).

At one point our author also ponders, for the sake of his argument, a federalist theory of original guilt, which is commonly one of the principal responses given to the question of the justice of divinity imposing guilt on us for something in which we had no participation whatsoever (for alien guilt theories of immediate imputation that is), just to dismiss it along the same lines; that is, even if Adam acted as the 'constituted representative of his posterity, it would not follow therefrom that they were guilty of his sin; but only that they might have been sufferers in consequence of it' (Chauncy 1785: 131).

Chauncy flatly denies that one is to read Paul in the sense of mankind coming into existence as

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[21] Anselm believed that any sin was of infinite seriousness since it was an offense committed against a 'being of infinite worth and honour' (Crisp 2009b: 442-443). His position seemed to be that the greatness of the one against the transgression is committed, and not the degree of harm done (or even potential or intended harm), is what determines the gravity of the sin (Talbott 2014: 141).

morally corrupt beings, 'as having derived from their first father a positively sinful nature' (*ibid.*, p.132). Adam was, in Chauncy's thought, 'no more than the medium or instrument' through which God 'communicated to men the nature they have', that is, 'without the intervention of any agency' of their own (*id.*). He concedes that we come into the world with animal tendencies, that if unchecked could become what he calls sinful principles of action; he therefore speaks of our nature as being imperfect, of being in a disadvantageous state as a result of the original lapse, though not sinful or corrupted since it was the nature 'God was pleased to give us, previous to any agency of our own' (*id.*).

As stated before, Chauncy denies that through Adam's sin we were made sinners ourselves, and therefore 'included in the judicial sentence of *God*' (Realism) (*ibid.*, p.149*).* To affirm that through any sort of alleged relation or metaphysical union between Adam and ourselves, we were somehow involved with Adam in the commission of the original lapse is completely false and the invention of man according to our theologian. He therefore denies any theory of immediate imputation of Adam's sin to his posterity. He claims that such reading is completely absent from Scripture and that the few phrases one might encounter in the New Testament that could be taken in such sense—'death hath passed upon all men, for that all have sinned' (Rom. 5:12), or, 'by one man's disobedience many were made sinners' (Rom. 5:19)—ought not be interpreted in the way of supposing that the apostle meant to convey that 'Adam's posterity sinned when he sinned' and that this is the reason why we are all subject to death (*id.*). To do so would be as absurd, he claims, as to believe in Transubstantiation or to endorse anthropomorphist readings of Scripture. Chauncy's opposition to Realism in the DOS, and to Jonathan Edward's ideas in particular, will be discussed in greater detail a few lines below in the final section of this chapter.

Chauncy then gives response to a series of arguments that purport to explain why we supposedly come into the world with a morally depraved or sinful nature. First, he answers that it is virtually impossible to perceive, as some claim, a supposed original corruption or a 'corruption communicated with existence itself' within ourselves (*ibid.*, p.171). At most, we are capable of recognizing our current wickedness in our condition of moral agents, but to speak of anyone being able to perceive their original corruption is wholly implausible.

Next he tackles one of the best known arguments wielded in favour of the theory of Original Sin, *viz.* the prevalence of sin among the majority of mankind since the beginnings of our race. Despite the scarcity of pious men, this is not a valid contention in support of the argument of an innate corrupt nature for our theologian. Our first parents were created sinless, and yet they transgressed by disobeying the commands of their maker; and according to our writer, this is a valid criterion for the claim that sin can take place in the absence of an alleged original sinful nature (*ibid.*, pp.172-173). Furthermore, when our author brings up the issue of the fall from grace of other beings that were allegedly created sinless

(e.g. fallen angels as described in Scripture), he concludes that neither angels or Adam, nor ourselves as his descendants for that matter, were created as 'impeccable creatures' (*ibid.*, p.174). The possibility, therefore, of their making themselves sinners is essentially founded in their original constitution as 'fallible mutable creatures' (*id.*).

Finally, in response to those that affirm that the supposed immoral behaviour we encounter in children is sure evidence of the innate depravity here talked about, Chauncy affirms that the peevishness, wilful or unrestrained behaviour displayed by small children cannot be considered properly sinful for, as mentioned repeatedly before, sin entails or presupposes moral agency.

Additionally, and during his counterclaim of the biblical passages that the advocates of the view of an innate depraved or sinful nature seem to rely on, we come across a couple of themes that reiterate what was mentioned previously: (1) moral uncleanness 'cannot proceed naturally from parents to children' (*ibid.*, p.179) [Job, XIV.4]; (2) various other passages are to be read in an allegorical sense or, as Chauncy calls it, as 'hyperbolical modes of diction', as in Psalm, LI. 5 (a key passage for advocates of the view of an inherent original corruption)—'Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me' (*sic*). Here, the intention of David was to express his youthful penchant for sinning, for otherwise it would be absurd to suppose that David was referring to his mother as a 'filthy woman', but even more ludicrous to represent God in the former part of this quote as the one who 'shaped him in iniquity' according to our author (*ibid.*, p.180).


*7. Against Edwards and Realism in the DOS*

After mentioning his opposition to the doctrine of a total incapacity in our nature for performing that which is morally good, *i.e.*, of a universal native and total corruption of heart, he brackets it with what he calls the more refined and consistent Calvinists of his time, among whom he has particularly in mind Jonathan Edwards and his position as he expounds it in his writing on Original Sin (*The Great Christian Doctrine of Original Sin Defended* [1758]).

Chauncy goes on to give a lengthy quote of Edwards' book on this issue, only to attack it point by point in the following manner: (1) by stating that original corruption is not to be thought of as the outcome of any infusion or implantation of an evil quality or any kind of positive cause or influence, either from God or man, he not only fails to provide an intelligible reason as to how this original corruption took place, but also contradicts the sense in which this innate depravity is understood by most Calvinists (Chauncy 1785: 191); (2) the peculiarity of Edwards, as he terms it, lies in his supposition that although God never infused nor provoked by positive influence our native corruption, He nonetheless

withdrew from Adam what he calls supernatural principles:[22] divine principles enabling man to love and obey his maker. Without the influence of these supernatural principles, the natural principles that compel man to gratify his own pleasure, that is, the ones to be associated with man's appetites and passions, were left unbridled and hence became the origin of man's original corruption; and since Adam was dealt with by God as the head of all mankind, his posterity came into existence with this same unfavorable trait (*ibid.*, pp.192-193

Firstly, Chauncy clearly dismisses as unscriptural the idea that the principles by which we love and obey our maker are in any way supernatural. He concedes that God created us with principles that differ from each other; that some might be termed superior to others even, but this in no way denies the evident fact that they are all equally natural in the sense of belonging to him as a creature of a certain 'order in the scale of beings' (*ibid.*, p.195). But even more important for our author is to refute Edwards' claim of a purported withdrawal by God of our capacity for honoring and obeying divinity that was a consequence of the original lapse. To do so would not only go against reason—it would be 'a contradiction to all the ideas we have of that which is right and fit'—, but it would be a dishonor to divinity to suppose Him capable of deciding in such a morally unjust manner (*ibid.*, p.196); for if we commit ourselves to orthodoxy in the way of thinking of God as requiring of man 'love, gratitude and constant obedience', it is necessary He should have endowed us with the principles that would render this service possible in us (Kant) (*id.*). This explains Chauncy's framing of this issue in terms not so much of grace but of justice.

Likewise, he also states that such a withdrawal by divinity is nowhere found in Scripture (*ibid.*, p.197); in fact, the new covenant of grace through Christ, the new state of trial man was placed under, is indissoluble of the exercise of such principles or faculties as our author elsewhere remarks (*ibid.*, pp.99,202). The truth of the matter is that in practical terms to suppose, as Edwards does, that our corruption is due to privative principles is the same thing as to imagine it as the effect of a positive imputation or 'infusion of principles that are corrupt' (*ibid.*, p.200).

Chauncy finally takes on what he regards as the most common interpretation in this matter, and that would have Paul as intending to affirm that we all indeed sinned in Adam; that we are deservedly punished for it because his sin was as truly ours as it was his. He unsurprisingly chooses to expose at length, as an example of this interpretation, the view of Jonathan Edwards, particularly his device of considering a sort of metaphysical identity or oneness between Adam and his posterity (based on a sovereign constitution by God) that would explain both the manner in which this took place as well as the

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[22] These supernatural principles are for Edwards 'concreated supernatural endowments of God', and the ones that allow man to obey His commands and lead a righteous and holy life (Crisp 2005: 29). The natural principles by contrast include 'such things as self-love, natural appetites, and [our] passions…' (*id.*).

alleged justice of divinity in acting this way. Even though Edwards' account of Original Sin is well known, we think it will render Chauncy's rebut clearer if we offer a brief summary of his interpretation here, and particularly those aspects that Chauncy finds more problematic.

The traditional (Augustinian) account of the DOS was becoming increasingly criticized during the eighteenth century for issues related mainly to its transmission (from Adam to us) (Crisp 2015:111). This is because on the orthodox account of the doctrine God ascribes to us both the crime and guilt associated to someone else's wrongdoing: namely, Adam's original lapse (*id.*). It is fair to state that our moral intuitions go against the idea of punishing a descendant for the crime(s) committed by his or her forebear. Applied to the DOS, this would generate what Crisp labels as an injustice problem. This then would be an objection against the transmission of such lapse. As for its guilt, the obvious criticism would be directed at the immorality of being ascribed with responsibility, and hence guilt, for Adam's lapse: what Crisp called a morality problem (*ibid.*, p.112).

Edwards' answer to these moral concerns was to construct a metaphysical story designed to explain the transmission of original sin by means of which you, me, and everyone else together with Adam constitute 'one metaphysical whole' existing through time (*ibid.*, p.113). In order to better understand Edwards' intricate version of the doctrine, however, we will have to indulge in a brief digression covering other aspects of his theology; aspects concerned mainly to his take on the creation of the world (panentheism and continuous creation), his ideas on causality (occasionalism), and his views on persistence through time (perdurantism). Since it is beyond the scope of this work to provide a comprehensive account of each of these concepts, we will attempt to provide a succinct definition for them, to then lay out Edwards' realist account of the transmission of original sin.

We begin with Edwards' version of panentheism. The first thing that should be mentioned here is that Edwards was in many ways a product of his philosophical time, and thus that his entire theology is heavily influenced by Idealism (*ibid.*, p.12). To put it shortly, he holds that 'the world is contained in God' (*id.*); that the world is a sort of shadow or emanation of the deity (*ibid.*, p.74). As with other 'idealisms', there is here a denial of the reality of matter and a corresponding belief that what is truly real are minds and ideas (*ibid.*, p.12), and in his case obviously, a divine mind and divine ideas essentially.

Occasionalism is the doctrine that states that God is the 'sole causal agent in the world' and that creatures are 'merely the occasions of God's actions' (*ibid.*, p.170). To use one of Crisp's examples, when I raise my hand, I intend to raise it, this much is uncontroversial, but the original or real cause of it being raised is God Himself (*ibid.*, pp.170-171). My intention, on this picture of radical divine causality, 'was merely the occasion of a divine action that brought about the raising of my arm' (*ibid.*, p.172).

Edwards also subscribed to a peculiar version of the doctrine of continuous creation, according to

which after God creates everything that exists (a world), it would thereafter immediately cease to exist (*ibid.*, p.12). Then God would create again, out of nothing (ex-nihilo), a successive world-stage that would be, qualitatively speaking, near identical to the previous and already vanished world-stage; a world-stage that although practically identical with the previous one, is numerically distinct from it (*ibid.*, p.13). This new world-stage however with the difference of 'incremental changes' added to it (*id.*). God segues this series of successive world-stages together giving the impression of 'action across time', and as we have seen, projects them outside Himself 'like a series of momentary photographic stills run together into a motion picture' (*id.*). This in turn leads us into Edwards' theory of persistence through time.

Since nothing, on Edwards' account, persists across time; that is, by being numerically identical one moment to the next (endurantism), objects and beings persist by virtue of having temporal parts that exist at different times of those beings' and objects' lifetimes and durations (perdurantism) (*ibid.*, p.8 ; Rea 2007: 335). In the same way that objects are extended in space by virtue of having spatial parts that occupy different (sub) areas  of the entire area or region of those entire objects at any given time, so they have temporal parts that are extended through time (Rea 2007: 335). An object or being persists through time then only in case it has multiple temporal parts existing at different times; a numerically different temporal part for each successive moment of that object's duration or career (*id.*). This explains why on such a theory of persistence through time objects and beings that do perdure are called spacetime worms. A more detailed account of perdurantism will be taken in the following chapter.

Let us now see how all these theological concepts play a role in Edwards' realist understanding of the transmission of original sin. So, as mentioned a few lines above, Edwards maintains that God decided to create a union or oneness between Adam and his posterity. Similarly to Aquinas, he relies on the metaphor of a body, but even more so on that of a tree, leading our thoughts to imagine that through a law of nature established by God we are united to Adam just as the members of a body are related to the head or the branches of a tree to its root or stock. His version could then be classified under what Michael Rea calls an *Organic Whole Theory* of original guilt, where the non-adamic parts of this 'single, spatiotemporally extended object' called mankind, despite not taking part in the original transgression, still can be said to bear responsibility for it (Rea 2007: 334). Edwards states that owing to this law of union Adam and his descendants are to be regarded as one moral whole or one complex person; and just as sin, guilt, and depravity of heart all descended upon the head, root or stock of this complex being, so too it must have been with its other organs, branches or parts (Edwards 1758: 327; cited in Chauncy 1785). This is a theory of 'communion and co-existence in acts and affections' that as well decidedly rejects Presentism, *viz.*, the idea that only presently existing things could be said to constitute a union—'And if he might, by his sovereign constitution, have established such an union of the various branches of mankind,

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when existing in *different places*, I do not see why he might not also do the same, though they exist in *different times*' argues Edwards; and continues: 'I know not why succession, or *diversity of time*, should make any such constituted union more unreasonable than *diversity of place*' (*id.*). An object persists through time, we had mentioned, by virtue of having distinct temporal parts at each moment of such an object's lifetime or duration, and it is divine constitution, what God desires to be the case, that grounds this 'sameness at different times' (Crisp 2015: 116).

Since no created thing exists numerically the same one moment to the next, they cannot be considered as the causal agents of things that happen afterwards, and this since what is created immediately ceases to exist at the next moment for, let us remember, God always creates things out of nothing (*ibid.*, p.117). God treats all these different things as one, binding them according to His purposes, 'communicating to them like properties, relations and circumstances' (*id.*). Now in relation to our matter at hand, God deals with Adam and his descendants as one entity for the purposes of the transmission of original sin. What constitutes reality for this union as in all others, according to Edwards, is the outcome of divine fiat (*id.*).

This temporal parts doctrine by Crisp is but one of two possible metaphysical interpretations of the transmission of original sin; that is, that try to make sense of Edwards' ontological realism. The other is called stage theory and it is the work of Michael Rea, but we will go over the latter in our following chapter. For now, let us go over Chauncy response to Edward's rather quixotic account for the transmission of sin from Adam to us.

Chauncy's dissent follows his by now familiar argument where responsibility is unavoidably linked to moral agency; but before going over the points where our author considers Edwards' account to go against reason or against 'that moral discernment mankind are naturally endowed with' (Chauncy 1785: 264), lets us first recapitulate what he considers to be the scriptural grounds for disproving Edwards' exegesis in this matter.

For our author, Paul, in the fifth chapter of Romans, is unquestionably not in favor of considering any sort of metaphysical union between Adam and his posterity, for he clearly and repeatedly 'distinguishes between him and them' (*id.*)—ver.12: 'The 'one man', Adam, by whose sin death[…]entered into the world, is directly pointed out as a *person distinct* from the 'all men', upon *whom* death, by this sin of *his*, has passed' (*id.*); ver.15: 'where the 'offence of one', and 'death to many' is spoken of, the *one* and *many* are represented as *severally distinct* from each other' (*ibid.*, p.265). It would likewise contradict Scripture, specifically in the assertion that it was by the offence of one man that death entered into the world, 'if his eating of the forbidden fruit was the sin of all his posterity together with himself, made ONE COMPLEX PERSON' (*id.*).

And finally the 14th verse of the same epistle constitutes irrefutable proof for Chauncy that an alleged metaphysical unity is not at all warranted on scriptural grounds—'death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression' (*ibid.*, p.266). This could not be true if Adam, Chauncy argues, together with the rest of mankind, indeed constituted one moral whole (*ibid.*, p.266). To believe this to be so would be tantamount to accepting that all of Adam's posterity, thousands of years before having an actual being, were sinners with him, an idea that our author dismisses as a shocking absurdity.

It is likewise evident to our understandings, says Chauncy, that we exist personally and not as part of a single complex entity shared with Adam. We are conscious that it was he, and not us, who ate of the forbidden tree, and hence we are assured that it would be impossible for the original transgression to be an act for which we could be accountable for in a moral and, even more so, in a natural sense. For if conscience is indeed that perfect interpreter of life Karl Barth spoke of, then in the absence of guilt we must rest confident that this was not our fault (Barth 1958: 451). We may surely feel grief as this was 'the occasion of the introduction of so much evil in the world', but a remorseful conscience is only to be found in the commission or concurrence with a sin, according to Chauncy (Abelard) (1785: 267). To think that such a grave offence (the original lapse) could be chargeable on us, who are naturally deprived of any feeling of remorse or guilt within our consciences, would be a 'downright inconsistency with the whole system of moral government; a mere metaphysical invention, contrived for no other purpose than to serve a previously imbibed hypothesis' (*ibid.*, p.268).

Besides, if consciousness in intelligent creatures is, as Edwards acknowledges, constitutive to personal identity, 'How then could Adam and his posterity be the same complex one, to the purposes of sin and wrath, without the same principle of consciousness?' (*ibid.*, p.269).

We are not branches of a single tree, concurring in actions and volitions, but many distinct and different trees, 'the branches of which grow out of their own root, […] not with the root of Adam' (*id.*). As moral agents that we are, our affections, actions, and volitions emanate from ourselves, not from a supposed common root or stock, Chauncy would argue. The truth is that we don't share any more of the guilt for any of the crimes committed by our immediate ancestors than we do for those of our common father in the one instance where he was tried.

And so as to leave no room for doubt on this issue, our author rejects the idea that it is ultimately up to God to establish such a metaphysical unity if He desired it to be so. He unequivocally states that this is not a faculty that would lie within the powers of divinity—'No establishment by God or man, can make the volitions and acts of any moral agent what they are not'; and then again: 'No pretended law of union could make them so' (*ibid.*, p.271). As in other of his works, and unlike Edwards' position on this matter,

Chauncy clearly conveys the idea of the existence of a moral order that is independent of any will whatsoever, even that of God Himself.

As a sort of conclusion to this part of our work, we think Chauncy's definition of sin might be appropriate at this point: our character, says the Bostonian, is but the result of the use we make of the naked capacities that we come into the world with; 'if our natural powers are neglected, misimproved, and turned aside from their proper use, we become morally corrupt or sinful' (*ibid.*, p.186). Again, it all comes down to our activity as rational moral agents.

## Chapter 3. A Philosophical Reconstruction of Chauncy's Theology of Original Sin

*Introduction*

In the following chapter I will: (1) outline the doctrine of original sin; (2) state the main philosophical problem that the doctrine gives rise to; (3) describe the solutions available in the literature for dealing with this problem; and (4) present the solution that I believe Chauncy advocates, so that later in the thesis I can give a rigorous treatment of Chauncy's philosophical theology, comprising the interconnected doctrines of original sin, redemption, and salvation.

### 1.The Doctrine of Original Sin

Most succinctly stated, the doctrine of original sin is the claim that:

> (OS1) All human beings are the victims of a sort of corruption that makes it inevitable that they will fall into sin (Rea 2007: 319).[23]

This claim is then supported by two further claims, the first we may term 'original corruption' and the second typically termed 'original guilt':

> (OS2) All human beings are the victims of a sort of corruption that makes it inevitable that they will fall into sin, a corrupted condition that is a direct consequence of the original lapse of the first man (Adam); and

> (OS3) All human beings are guilty from birth in the eyes of God; a guilty condition that is a direct consequence of the first sin of the first man (Rea 2007: 319).

The claim at issue in this chapter will be (OS2), and so I turn now to articulating the philosophical problem it gives rise to.

### 2. The Philosophical Problem with the Doctrine of Original Sin[24]

Following from Harry Frankfurt's (1969) principle of alternative possibilities,

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[23] There are some exceptions though to this statement, and these would include: Adam, Eve, Jesus of Nazareth, and Mary the mother of Jesus for those that believe in the immaculate conception of Christ's mother.

[24] My presentation of this problem is drawn from Rea 2007.

(PAP) A person is morally responsible for her act only if she could have done otherwise than she does.

Michael Rea states a principle he terms 'the principle of possible prevention':

(MR) A person P is morally responsible for the obtaining of a state of affairs S only if S obtains (or obtained) and P could have prevented S from obtaining (Rea 2007: 320).

This principle, he takes it, forms part of our ordinary thinking about moral responsibility. But, given what seems to be obvious:

(A1) No human being who was born after Adam's first sin could have done anything to prevent Adam's first sin; and no human being who is born corrupt could have done anything to prevent her own corruption.

It follows that (OS2) is false. So, if (OS2) is true, i.e. that the doctrine of original corruption is true, either (MR) or (A1) is false. The philosophical problem with the doctrine of Original Sin then is to determine which of (MR) or (A1) to deny and how best to do that.

## 3. Solutions to this Problem

*Theoretical Background*

Since (MR) is a principle about moral responsibility and (A1) is a principle about metaphysics, there are then two families of solutions to this philosophical problem: ethical and metaphysical. Corresponding to each of these families is a group of theological positions pertaining to the sense in which Adam's sin is to be imputed to his posterity: corresponding to the metaphysical family of solutions, Adam's guilt is *immediately imputed* to us since we were, in a sense, Adam; corresponding to the ethical family of solutions, Adam's guilt is *mediately imputed* to us since, in no sense, we were Adam yet we are nevertheless guilty for his sin, guilt mediated by Adam. For theories of immediate imputation the most pressing question is in the way of asking how we could be guilty for Adam's sin given that none of us existed at the time of Adam's lapse, nor are ourselves Adam or identical with him in any straightforward or commonsensical kind of way. For this case of imputation we encounter two options: what Rea, adapting terminology by G. C. Berkower, calls 'Personal Guilt' (PG) theories, that stipulate that in some sense we committed or participated in

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Adam's sin; and 'Alien Guilt' (AG) theories that advance the thought that despite our nonparticipation or concurrence with Adam in his disobedience, guilt is justly imposed on us by God on account of it (Rea 2007: 325).

*Positions on the Original Sin*

The different positions will be organized around a set of three questions; questions pertaining to categories of moral responsibility that are now fairly well known within the literature, and whose pertinence will become clearer in the pages that will follow. The questions are: (1) Was I in control of the originating sin?; (2) Is the originating sin attributable to me; and (3) Am I accountable for the originating sin? For a chart of the positions, see the Annex at the end of this work, where there are seven positions which affirm the doctrine, (1)-(7), and one that denies it (8). Because position (8) denies the doctrine, I will address only positions (1)-(7).

But before proceeding to outline these positions, it is important to say a few words about the relation between moral responsibility, as used in Rea's principle (MR), and the concepts of attributability and accountability, as used in the questions we have formulated to differentiate the various positions on the original sin. In a seminal essay, 'Two Faces of Responsibility', Gary Watson (1996) speaks of different (though overlapping) perspectives for matters of moral responsibility:

- The aretaic face of responsibility, where what is at issue are questions of practical identity: of the agent as an adopter of ends; of what the agent stands for. On this perspective behaviour is supposed to be governed or controlled by one's deepest principles or values (what Susan Wolf calls 'real-self views'), and our actions, as well as the thoughts and attitudes manifested in them, are imputable (attributable) to us as exercises of our moral capacity; they are, in other words, an expression of who we are, and what we stand for or believe in.

- The other perspective, that of accountability, places a prime on our character as social beings, and as such on the moral demands or requirements that we impose on one another; *i.e.*, since our responsibility as moral agents cannot end in our mere compliance to our own self-adopted ends or values (aretaic or attributability face of responsibility), but must take into account our capacity to conform to the (implicit) moral demands imposed by life in society, the accountability face of responsibility concerns itself with this normative domain or competence to which one most naturally gravitates when thinking of issues of moral responsibility.

Hence, while attributability evaluations or appraisals revolve around the agent as an adopter of ends, accountability ones have more to do, to borrow a phrase from T.M. Scanlon (1998), with what we owe to each other. This said, I turn now to the solutions to the philosophical problem of the original sin.

*Metaphysical Solutions (1-4)*

*Solution 1*

The first alternative in this series would give a positive response to all three questions, that is, I was not only in control of the original lapse, but also it is attributable to me and I am accountable for it. Consequently, on this solution (MR) is true but (A1) is false. It then follows that Adam's guilt is immediately imputed to us since we were, in a sense, Adam, and so this solution is a Personal Guilt solution. There are four ways this solution has been explained:

1.1    Humans have two modes of existence: as individuals and as a single nature (Augustine and Anselm).[25]

1.2    Humanity is an organic whole such that (a) it is a moral agent; (b) every individual human being is a part or instance of it; and (c) it committed the sin of Adam by virtue of having a part or instance —namely, Adam— that committed that sin (Aquinas).[26]

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[25] Augustine writes, 'By the evil will of that one man all sinned in him, since all were that one man, from whom, therefore, they individually derived original sin' (*On Marriage and Concupiscence*, Bk. 2, Ch.15; in Augustine, 1999: 288). In addition, he writes,

> All good qualities, no doubt, which [human nature] still possesses in its make, life, senses, intellect, it has of the Most High God, its Creator and Maker. But the flaw, which darkens and weakens all those natural goods, so that it has need of illumination and healing, it has not contracted from its blameless Creator —but from that original sin, which it committed by free will. (*On Nature and Grace*, Ch. 3; in Augustine 1999: 122; cited in Rea 2007)

In a similar way, Anselm maintains,

> Each and every descendant of Adam is at once a human being by creation and Adam by generation, and a person by the individuality which distinguishes him from others . . . But there is no doubt from what source each and every individual is bound by that debt which we are discussing. It certainly does not arise from his being human or from his being a person . . . [for] then Adam, before he sinned, would have to have been bound by this debt, because he was a human being and a person. But this is most absurd. The only reason left, then, for the individual being under obligation is that he is Adam, yet not simply that he is Adam, but that he is Adam the sinner. (*The Virgin Conception and Original Sin*, Ch. 10; in Anselm 1969: 183-184; cited in Rea 2007)

[26] Aquinas writes,

1.3    All human beings share Adam as a temporal part. When Adam sinned, there was a great fission which resulted in a plurality of human beings (Edwards).[27]

1.4.    All human beings timelessly sinned (Kant).[28]

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[A]ll men born of Adam may be considered as one man inasmuch as they have one common nature, which they receive from their first parents; even as in civil matters, all who are members of one community are reputed as one body, and the whole community as one man. Indeed, Porphyry says that by sharing the same species, many men are one man. Accordingly, the multitude of men, born of Adam, are as so many members of one body. (*Summa Theologica*, Part II, Sect. 1, Q. 81, Art. 1; in Aquinas 1945: 666; cited in Rea 2007)

[27] Edwards writes,

 I think it would go far towards directing us to the more clear conception and right statement of this affair, were we steadily to bear this in mind: That God, in every step of his proceeding with Adam, in relation to the covenant or constitution established with him, looked on his posterity as being one with him. And though he dealt more immediately with Adam, it yet was as the head of the whole body, and the root of the whole tree; and in his proceedings with him, he dealt with all the branches, as if they had been then existing in their root. From which it will follow, that both guilt, or exposedness to punishment, and also depravity of heart, came upon Adam's posterity just as they came upon him, as much as if he and they had all co-existed, like a tree with many branches; allowing only for the difference necessarily resulting from the place Adam stood in, as head or root of the whole. Otherwise, it is as if, in every step of proceeding, every alteration in the root had been attended, at the same instant, with the same alterations throughout the whole tree, in each individual branch. I think, this will naturally follow on the supposition of there being a constituted oneness or identity of Adam and his posterity in this affair . . ..My meaning, in the whole of what has been said, may be illustrated thus: Let us suppose that Adam and all his posterity had co-existed, and that his posterity had been, through a law of nature established by the Creator, united to him, something as the branches of a tree are united to the root, or the members of the body to the head, so as to constitute as it were one complex person, or one moral whole: so that by the law of union there should have been a communion and co-existence in acts and affections; all jointly participating, and all concurring, as one whole in the disposition and action of the head: as we see in the body natural, the whole body is affected as the head is affected; and the whole body concurs when the head acts. Now, in this case, all the branches of mankind, by the constitution of nature and law of union, would have been affected just as Adam, their common root, was affected. When the heart of a root, by a full disposition, committed the first sin, the hearts of all the branches would have concurred; and when the root, in consequence of this, became guilty, so would all the branches; and when the root, in consequence of this, became guilty, so would all the branches; and when the root, as a punishment of the sin committed, was forsaken of God, in like manner would it have fared with all the branches; and when the root, in consequence of this, was confirmed in permanent depravity, the case would have been the same with all the branches; and as new guilt on the soul of Adam would have been consequent on this, so also would it have been with his moral branches. And thus all things, with relation to evil disposition, guilt, pollution, and depravity, would exist, in the same order and dependence, in each branch, as in the root. (The Great Christian Doctrine of Original Sin Defended, in *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, vol. I 1992: 220-221; cited in Rea 2007)

[28] In distinguishing between maxims and dispositions, Kant writes, 'Moreover, to have the one or the other disposition by nature as an innate characteristic does not mean here that the disposition has not been

We can take solutions 1.1 and 1.2 together. While the view affirms (MR), and so accords with this aspect of our ordinary moral thinking, it also affirms that natures or organic wholes of humanity can be agents, which does not accord with our ordinary moral thinking since natures and organic wholes of humanity are not the kinds of things that can have beliefs, desires, intentions, and so on. One should take into account, though, that there is a manner of speaking in everyday life, particularly employed in literature, that does present groups of people—from small collectives to humanity itself—as moral agents in their own right; and as such, desiring, acting, and ultimately as praise or blameworthy for certain states of affairs. Anyhow, not only does the solution require a complex metaphysics, it also requires a complex ethics, which seems the worst possible option.

Position 1.3, though perhaps metaphysically more extravagant, allows for a truly simple ethics, affirming (MR) and requiring nothing more than typical human agency. To explain Edwards' position (or his position as Michael Rea (2007) has interpreted it), we need to consider the problem of change, a problem we can illustrate by considering how a candle, which was straight at 9am is now bent at 12noon. Here is how such a situation poses a problem:[29]

1. The candle persists through the change.

2. The candle which persists through the change is numerically identical with the candle which persists after the change.

3. The candle's change involves the incompatible properties of being straight and being bent.

4. The candle is the proper subject of being straight and of being bent.

5. The candle is straight and the candle is bent.

6. Nothing can be both straight and bent.

7. Contradiction

To solve this problem, David Lewis (1986: 202-203) denies the second claim. To do so, he develops a metaphysics of persistence he termed 'perdurance'. On this metaphysics, just as material objects are extended in space, so are they extended in time: just as material objects have spatial parts, so do they have temporal parts, which are momentary objects. Thus, no material objects are wholly present at different times. Consequently, material objects are spacetime worms, having temporal parts which are extended in

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earned by the human being who harbors it, i.e. that he is not its author, but means rather that it has not been earned in time' (2001, 6: 25).

[29] For further explanation of this problem, see Haslanger 2003 and Kurtz 2006. My statement of the problem is indebted to their work.

time. Change is thus explained by an object having a temporal part at one time, instantiating a certain property at that time, and a temporal part at a later time, instantiating another property incompatible with the former property at that later time. Using this metaphysics, we can understand Edwards' solution to the problem of original guilt thusly: Adam, and I (and you, and everyone else) share a temporal part. Therefore in a sense, I was Adam and so committed the original sin along with you and everyone else. But then a great fission happened, which is why I am not morally responsible or blameworthy for Adam's subsequent sins. But what is it that unifies me with Adam? In virtue of what do we make up the same spacetime worm? Normally, it is psychological connectedness and continuity that unifies human spacetime worms. But there is no such connectedness and continuity with Adam. I do not remember being in the Garden of Eden, for instance. There are two responses, neither of which are satisfying. The first is: divine decree. God says it is so. The second is: there's no answer; it is just a primitive fact that Adam and I share a temporal part.

Position 1.4 is Kant's (2001), according to which we somehow timelessly sinned. Firstly, it is somewhat puzzling that Kant had taken an interest in the topic, as he was deeply committed to a conception of moral responsibility as entirely dependent on the free actions emanating from a person's own will; *i.e.* he had an essentially voluntaristic take on questions of moral responsibility. His attempt to work out a version of the doctrine of original sin that was consistent with his voluntarism is what mainly pushed him in this metaphysical direction (Adams 1999: 230).

The basis of Kant's interest in the doctrine of original sin is his principle that nothing is good without qualification, but a good will (Kant 1949). To have a good will is not to be inferred from actions in particular nor is it to act in accordance with the law or our duty conceived simply as such; rather, it is to act out of principle, to act out of duty, and it should take into account all the deeds performed by any agent over a protracted period of time. It is, in a few words, a motivational state or a disposition more generally (Adams 1999: 230-231).

*Solution 2*

The next position is a slight variation from the previous one with the proviso of Adam being considered as essentially young or immature (and it should be remembered, I was Adam, that is, the young or immature Adam for this alternative). The result is that the first two questions receive a positive answer: I was both in control of the original sin, and it should also be considered as being attributable to me; but since we presuppose Adam young or immature, question number 3, having to do with accountability, is given a negative response—we are not to be held accountable for the original transgression, and this insofar as our natural notions of justice do not regard young children as truly responsible moral agents.

There are some considerations to bear in mind when thinking about the moral responsibility of immature agents, as with children for example, and that should warn us about the implications of this position or solution to the DOS. Indeed, one might consider that in the case of children their actions do sometimes reflect or are expressive of who they are, but the fact that they behave in a certain way does not signify that either (1) this is their fault, for it might well be the case that due to bad parenting they behave the way they do, or, as it usually happens, (2) that they have acquired a certain unfavourable character trait in a definitive manner, for there are many cases at hand when we can think of persons who, for example, as children were rather abusive towards others, but that left such adverse behaviour once they reached maturity. There is certainly a kind of cruelty that one can see in children that is more the outcome of unconsciousness associated to immaturity rather than plain and deliberate evil, as one can encounter it in adults. So, to consider that a young or immature Adam is rightfully considered as a paradigmatic case of who we are morally, and from there to consider that divinity does not wrong us in some way by extending the guilt ascribed to him to the rest of us, seems a rather unconvincing solution to say the least.

Furthermore, there are cases where even though one could claim that a culpable individual is indeed immature, as in the case of a juvenile delinquent, most of us would refrain from not holding such an individual to account based on a certain crime. Indeed, his criminal behaviour is expressive of who he is, but it would be strange to find people that would think that such a young criminal is not responsible or accountable due to his young age or to the fact that one could, and rightfully so, consider him as immature. It might ultimately hinge on the gravity of the crime whether one decides to hold someone, regarded as immature, to account for their offense. So that based on all of what has been said, the claim that due to the fact that an agent is immature we could regard him as attributable, though not accountable for a certain offense, becomes more dubious.

And just like the preceding alternative, this solution is attended with the same costs or metaphysical commitments (perdurantism, Kantian metaphysics, and the conception of humanity as a moral agent), but as well carries with it similar benefits in the sense of promoting a simple theory of the relations of the three key elements in our classification of alternatives: control, attributability, and accountability.

*Solution 3*

Position number three is indeed difficult to endorse since it argues that I was indeed in control of the originating sin, and consequently assumes that we are accountable for it, but at the same time pretends that the lapse is not to be attributed to us.

It is undoubtedly troublesome to conceive how we could be both in control of a certain act, and therefore rightly accountable for it, while abjuring attributability for it. Even for cases when someone acts out of character let's say, and therefore that the questionable action or attitude is not truly revealing of who

that person is (in normal circumstances), most of us would hesitate to not regard that particular action or attitude as attributable to her, for at least in that one instance, the act or behaviour does shed light on the kind of person she is if placed in particular circumstances. It might well turn out that someone is known for her patience, for example, but when confronted with a truly stubborn case of unruly behaviour, she loses her composure and behaves inappropriately, to the surprise of everyone that knows her. True, her behaviour in that instance is not truly revealing of who she is, but most of us would, and rightfully so I believe, consider that the questionable attitude or action in that occasion does say something of who she is, and therefore being rightly attributable to her.

As formerly stated, the want of noted theologians or philosophers to back this position serves as evidence of its implausibility, and as if this wasn't detrimental enough for this alternative, it carries with it the same metaphysical baggage of the first option analysed, though it also benefits from the same simple theoretical analysis of the elements of control, attributability, and accountability.


*Solution 4*

The fourth viewpoint on this doctrine is very similar to position number two, in the sense of considering ourselves (in the place that is) as the immature Adam, and bears with it the exact same costs and benefits declared there. The only difference lies in our consideration of ourselves as in control of the original offense, but notwithstanding the original transgression, we are to think of ourselves as neither attributable nor accountable for it. Again, its flimsiness lies in the difficulty of accepting someone as in control of a certain event or act, while at the same time denying both attributability and accountability for it. There could be no extenuating circumstances (as with the examples given above pertaining either to an immature agent, or in the case of someone that acts out of character), as regarding both attributability and accountability, for a case in which someone is indeed in control of a given situation. Moreover, to be in control of a situation implies the ability to do otherwise, and that for matters of moral responsibility—in both the sense of being an action or behaviour expressive of the agent's true self, but, what is more, of being open to certain reactive entitlements on account of it—is indisputable proof that such an act or behaviour is rightfully to be attributed to that agent and he is also lawfully accountable for it. As with the previous solution, the lack of significant theological support in history is testament to its weakness.


*Ethical Solutions (5-7)*

The idea behind the ethical solutions is that, in some way, (MR) is false. So far, all the alternatives described purport that we were in control of the originating sin, but from hereon (from positions 5 to 7), the assumption is that there was no such control.

*Solution 5*

On this solution, though I was not in control of the original sin, it is attributable to me and I am accountable for it. There are three ways this solution has been defended:

5.1.  Adam's sin brought about condemnation and corruption which all human beings subsequent to him inherit (Federalism).

5.2.  Adam's sin is attributable to us because it reveals our character, that is, our true self, and we are accountable for that sin because we think poorly of people who have this character, who do this kind of thing (extrapolated from Robert Adams' work on involuntary sins).

5.3.  Adam's sin is attributable to us and we are accountable for it because, even though we did not actually commit this original sin, we would have done so (Keith Wyma).

Beginning with Federalism (5.1), an Alien Guilt theory, we may say that it seems to have two problems: it is unclear how we inherit the guilt associated with Adam's condemnation, an ethical question, and how our nature then becomes corrupted, a metaphysical question. Concerning the ethical question, it just seems impossible for us to inherit Adam's guilt, owing to a modification of an objection Mark Murphy (2009) raises against the penal substitution theory of the atonement. On this theory of the atonement, our guilt is transferred to Christ, who then takes our punishment for our sins. Murphy argues that, though Christ can take our hard treatment, he cannot take our guilt, for that can be only ours since we still stand condemned and Christ stands uncondemned. For example, if I win a marathon, I can give my winnings to you, but I can't thereby make you the winner, for I'm still the winner. Similarly, Christ cannot take our condemnation for we are the ones who sinned, and if that is correct, that means that we cannot, in any way, take Adam's guilt for the original sin. We will review in a subsequent chapter when dealing with theories of Redemption, Murphy's objection to theories that involve the transfer of condemnation as it is in penal substitutionary theories of the atonement.

On position 5.2, we do not inherit Adam's guilt, but rather, we are guilty of Adam's sin because it reveals our character, our true selves. This position is an extrapolation of Robert Adams' (1985) view that we can sin involuntarily. He takes as an example having angry or lustful thoughts about another. According to Jesus in his Sermon on the Mount, we are just as guilty of murder or adultery if we think angry or lustful thoughts. This then poses a problem since it seems we are not in control of our thoughts; they are involuntary. And it seems we sin only when we commit an act voluntarily. What Adams does is modify this account of sin: we can sin involuntarily when what we do reveals our character, our true selves, that is, when the act is attributable to us, to use Watson's term. We are then blameworthy for this sin or, to use

Watson's term, we are accountable for it because it is appropriate to think poorly of people who have such characters. Adapting this view to a position on the original sin,

- we are not in control of Adam's sin, and in that sense it is involuntary for us, but

- it does reveal our characters, our true (fallen) selves, and so it is attributable to us, and

- we are accountable for it because it is appropriate to think poorly of people with such characters.

In essence, Adam's original sin is something we would have done, which leads then to Keith Wyma's molinist position.

Keith Wyma's (2004) position, position 5.3, asserts that it is just for God to hold us guilty of Adam's sin because, even though we did not commit this sin, we would have done so. God knows that we would have done this through His middle knowledge. God's middle knowledge consists in His knowledge of counterfactuals of creaturely freedom, which are contingent truths not under his control.[30] These counterfactuals have the form: If subject S were in circumstances C, she would freely perform action A. On this view, before creation God chooses which world to actualize based on His intentions for what He creates and His middle knowledge of what free creatures would do in each of the worlds He could create. Based on this knowledge, God creates only creatures who, in worlds in which they are the first human beings, commit the original sin in that world. So, even though I, not being Adam, did not commit the original sin, I would have done so. The obvious problem with this position is one of justice: how is it just to condemn me for something I did not do?

*Solution 7*

Before addressing position number six, I want to address position number seven. This position is altogether unconvincing for it tries to reconcile our alleged accountability for the originating sin, while simultaneously affirming that we were not in control of it nor are we supposed to regard it as attributable to us. It therefore would require a rather implausible theory of the relations between attributability, accountability, and control.

Just as Robert Adams does, one could bring up cases of ungratefulness or of self-righteousness as paradigmatic instances of objectionable attitudes that, though perhaps not within our direct voluntary control, could be regarded as something for which we are rightly held accountable. It is however extremely

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[30] For a simple explanation of the history of the concept, see Adams, R. (1977) 'Middle Knowledge and The Problem of Evil', and for an example of the type of objections the concept has raised, see Lane Craig, W. (2001) 'Middle Knowledge, Truth-Makers, and the 'Grounding Objection''.

difficult to conceive how self-righteousness or ungratefulness are not to be attributed to us, in the sense of being expressive of who we are. This solution is therefore far from being an acceptable one.

*Solution 6*

In my view, Chauncy's treatment of original sin situates him in this category; i.e., one where despite not being in control of the originating sin, the transgression is attributable to us, but we are, however, not accountable for it. In the remainder of this chapter, I want to develop this position, something that has not been done before, so that I can give a rigorous presentation of Chauncy's account of original sin. To do this, I will present some relevant philosophical work on moral responsibility due to Adams, Watson, but mainly from Angela Smith. Thus, before proceeding to Chauncy's own treatment of the DOS, I will present a Scanlonian account of moral responsibility offered in recent years by Angela Smith.

*Smith's Rational Relations View of Moral Responsibility*

Angela Smith terms her view of moral responsibility, drawn from Scanlon's work,[31] a 'rational relations view' (from here on RRV). Smith's original intention, as found in her 2005 essay 'Responsibility for Attitudes: Activity and Passivity in Mental Life', was to present an alternative narrative to what she calls the volitional take on moral responsibility; an account that would explain how we could be morally responsible not only for our deliberate or intentional acts, but as well for most of the unintentional features of our selfhood, such as our emotions, desires, convictions or beliefs, our unreflective patterns of awareness, and other unintentional mental states (Smith 2005: 237; Smith 2012: 578).

As for volitional accounts of moral responsibility, there is no single or unified conception of the term, but they all subscribe to the conviction that in order to count as morally responsible for something (whether an act or attitude) this something needs to be connected in some way to a choice or decision on our part or, at the very least, be susceptible to our voluntary control (Smith 2005: 238). On this traditional version of moral responsibility, an agent could be considered responsible for an attitude or other unintentional mental state and hence open to moral appraisal on account of it, just in case such a mental state is somehow connected to the agent's choices or decisions: whether (1) if it was owing to the previous decisions taken by the agent that the (objectionable) attitude or mental state took rise from (what Smith calls the 'prior choice view'); or if (2) the agent decided to identify with or endorse with the attitude or mental state in question (the 'endorsement view'); or if (3) the agent has the capacity to alter the

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[31] Although Smith acknowledges this influence, particularly from T.M. Scanlon's treatment of moral responsibility in *What We Owe to Each Other* (1998), she nonetheless distances herself from Scanlon's more recent views as encountered in *Moral Dimensions: Permissibility, Meaning, Blame* (2008).

objectionable mental state through the decisions he takes in the future (the 'voluntary control view') (*ibid.,* pp.238-9).

On the RRV by contrast, moral responsibility is essentially dependent on 'judgment sensitivity': one is morally responsible for those things that bear a relation (Smith talks of a rational relation) or that somehow reflect our evaluative judgments or commitments (Smith 2005: 237; Smith 2012: 577). More generally though, on Smith's view of the matter, the basic condition of an agent's responsibility is rational judgment, as opposed to choice or voluntary control as most volitional versions would have it. Therefore, it is not the activity of choice, but that of evaluative judgment, the one inherent to our moral practices (Smith 2005: 237). For Smith then, responsibility is an issue not so much about accountability, but of attributability, that is, of the requirements that must be met in order for something to be imputed (or attributed) to an individual so as to serve as a 'basis of moral appraisal of that agent' (*ibid.,* p.238).

Fundamentally though, moral responsibility on Smith's theory is to be identified with answerability—moral criticism of an agent would be contingent on whether an action or attitude is 'normatively connected' to an agent's evaluative judgments or commitments, so that such an agent could intelligibly and, at least in principle, be demanded to provide his (justificatory) reasons for his conduct; and even to reassess or modify them if his response was unconvincing or unsatisfactory (Smith 2008: 370). I say in principle for as Smith correctly points out, it might well be the case that there is no one in a position to legitimately make such demand for justifications on the questioned agent; and intelligibly since the failing in question just needs to be of a kind where this demand for reasons would make sense (Smith 2015: 103).

Furthermore, these evaluative judgments or commitments need not be 'consciously held propositional beliefs, but rather tendencies to regard certain things as having evaluative significance' (Smith 2005: 251), which is why it is proper to speak of 'evaluative discoveries' in ourselves, as in some instances when we are responding to certain circumstances we might be surprised at our own reactions. Here, as mentioned previously, it is up to oneself to determine if one has sufficient justification to support the mental state or action in question, and ultimately to 'modify it or give it up if such a justification cannot be provided' (*ibid* p.52). But being morally responsible also involves being eligible—in principle here as well for reasons I will later explain—to certain moral responses based or depending on the quality of the reasons (justifications) provided. Although mostly these responses are based on assumptions of how we think the agent might respond given our knowledge of the context or situation (Smith 2015: 103).

What exactly does get ruled in under the RRV then? Just as Robert Adams does, Smith believes that the mental states for which we would bear no responsibility whatsoever, and hence that would be excluded from the RRV would be physical pains (*v.gr.* headaches), physical traits (height, weight, intelligence), appetitive desires (hunger, thirst), and this insofar as it would be preposterous to expect such states 'to be

rationally sensitive to our evaluative judgments or our wider cognitive or evaluative commitments' (Smith 2005: 257). Nor would it make any sense to ask an agent to justify his thirst or his height; such demands, at most, could be for explanatory reasons, not justificatory ones (Smith 2012: 578). Her claim is that we are essentially passive regarding such states (Smith 2005: 257).

It would likewise rule out mental states arising in non-rational agents such as children or the mentally impaired, or in animals since we do not in general consider such beings (despite conceding to their obvious capacity for experiencing emotions) as responsible for their actions or mental states (Smith 2007: 474). But as well, not all of the thoughts that occur to us unreflectively could be regarded as revealing much of what we value or care for, as the appearance of certain advertising slogans or of random song lyrics within our heads, as Smith points out, have no direct rational connection to what we consider as significant (2005: 248). On this account of moral responsibility then, and this is a key idea, particularly for the next pages of this chapter, 'moral criticism addresses a person qua rational agent'; *i.e.*, it imposes a demand for both acknowledgment and justification on the implicit judgements in the agent's attitudes, emotions, unreflective patterns of thought, and other (unintentional) mental states for which we would consider him accountable (*ibid.*, p. 256). It is judgment then, which divides the things for which we are passive and active for on the RRV: I would be both active and responsible for anything that is responsive to, or is supposed to be controlled by, my evaluative judgments or commitments (judgment sensitivity) (*ibid.*, pp. 256, 263). On the RRV by consequence, one is active and responsible for many things that in the traditional view of moral responsibility would be considered as (volitionally) passive.

Underpinning what has been said so far is the presupposition that a rational agent is the depositary of a 'coherent psychology of a certain sort, such that there are systematic rational connections between the things that happen in her psychological life, and the underlying judgments and values she accepts' (*ibid.*, p. 256). A racist demeanour or attitude, for example, implies the fact that one judges certain segments of the population as inferior in some way due to a rather arbitrary concept such as skin colour or physical appearance more generally; or if I fail to notice that someone might need my chair in public transportation (an elderly woman for example), this again says something about what I value or judge to be important. Such failings are not voluntary, though we do not forbear from attributing them to their agents for purposes of moral appraisal.

*Attributability/Accountability Divide*

It could be affirmed that up until two decades ago most philosophers pretty much shared the same concept of moral responsibility, and their discussions revolved around the issue of the interpretation of 'the basic conditions that must be met in order for an agent to count as morally responsible' for something (Smith 2015: 99). Nowadays and following the path begun by Gary Watson, most philosophers believe that

there are at least two different senses of moral responsibility—responsibility as attributability and responsibility as accountability,[32] and therefore also at least two different ways of understanding the conditions to be met in order for someone to count as morally responsible for something (*ibid.,* p. 100).

Smith believes though that this distinction between attributability and accountability actually 'rests on an ambiguity in the notion of accountability' and that there is but a single concept of moral responsibility: responsibility as answerability (Smith 2008: 377). So far, what has been reflected in the literature is how different types of moral responses allegedly 'presuppose different agency conditions'; *i.e.*, these responses as being dependent on whether the conditions of moral responsibility are weak (attributability) or stringent (accountability) (Smith 2015: 104). What she brings to our attention is the difference, on the one hand, between someone being both responsible for something (and open to moral appraisal on account of it), and also maybe even culpable for it (in the sense of liable to moral criticism), and, on the other, in actively adopting blaming responses or stances (Smith 2007: 470; Smith 2008: 377).

In determining if a person is in a legitimate position to adopt blaming attitudes towards a culprit agent, considerations having to do with the type of failing in question—if whether the objectionable act or mental state belongs to aretaic or accountability blame—play but a secondary role. The main considerations on which this blaming activity is predicated go beyond or work '*in addition to* the agent's responsibility and culpability for the thing in question' (Smith 2007: 477). These considerations are: (1) the standing the person might have with regard to the agent, that is, on the relationship he might have with the agent, but additionally if the person has some significant stake or interest in the matter (*ibid.*, p. 478). Moreover, the relationship one might have with an agent is important not only in determining if we are in a position to express moral criticism, but also if the adoption of particular blaming attitudes is warranted as well (such as resentment, disappointment or anger for example) (*ibid.*, p. 479). We would likewise lack standing to express moral criticism to someone for a fault or character flaw that we shared with him, as charges of hypocrisy would then be rightly directed towards us (*id.*). (2) The agent's own responses to his or her moral failings also usually play a role in determining how to react to a moral fault, for if the agent is deemed as already reproaching himself (and perhaps also even 'making efforts to change') for the aforementioned lapse, then surely our expression or adoption of blaming attitudes towards him might seem out of place. And finally, (3) the significance itself of the failing, as everyone surely agrees with the fact that different types of moral faults warrant different sorts of moral responses (*ibid.*, p.480): the idea being that in some instances the fault might be so trivial that the expression of moral criticism, and even more so the adoption

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[32] David Shoemaker, for example, claims that there are three different understandings of moral responsibility: responsibility as accountability, responsibility as attributability, but also, responsibility as answerability. *Cfr.* (2011) 'Attibutability, Answerability, and Accountability: Toward a Wider Theory of Moral Responsibility'.

of blaming attitudes, could make us liable to charges of uncharitable behaviour (*id.*). In dismissing minor offenses or frailties though, one need not to consider that the agents in question are not responsible for them.

When going over the reasons Watson puts forward for his distinction of responsibility as attributability and as accountability though, Smith agrees with him in the need to distinguish ethical failures (as in Watson's examples of the person who betrays her ideals in choosing a dull but secure career in favour of a riskier but more meaningful one, and the one where the agent endangers significant things in her life by engaging in irresponsible behaviour [Watson 2004: 266]) from violations of moral obligations to others, as well as from the sorts of moral responses it would be appropriate to direct to each; or the fact that there are moral responses that are more appropriate for ethical failures, while others are more fitting for violations of moral norms. These considerations, however, do not in her opinion warrant this distinction in our basic notion of moral responsibility (Smith 2015: 111).

Besides, even for cases where what is at issue is an ethical failing of some sort—as with Watson's second example of the self-indulgent behaviour—the claim put forward by Watson that only aretaic forms of appraisal would be justified becomes rather equivocal, and this since a person close to the self-indulgent agent might be licensed to hold the agent to account for his behaviour, and this in turn since close friends or family, according to Smith, 'have a kind of license to 'hold their friends to account' even for ostensibly self-regarding behaviour' (*ibid.*, p.113). The truth is that it is probably only in cases of ethical failings of people one does not know personally (as with celebrities) that this 'detached, quasi-aesthetic perspective of aretaic evaluation' comes into play (*ibid.*, p.114). This however does not mean that we don't think such agents are not accountable for their behaviour, and that the people who are close to them would be justified in holding them to account for it (*id.*).

Smith has also some remarks for Watson's other example of the victim criminal, a criminal who was himself a victim of a terrible childhood. In the case of such a criminal, Watson avers that we would consider him responsible in an aretaic, but not in an accountability, way for we would consider that the control/avoidability condition was in his case violated (*ibid.*, p. 115). Smith believes that if we do as Watson does in the way of thinking that the victim criminal is not properly accountable for his moral violations, then we would be 'treating him as if he was less than fully rational' (*id.*). Exempting the criminal from accountability blame in this manner, according to Smith, comes at a 'high cost' (*id.*).

All of what has been said, however, is not to be taken in the sense of believing that there is nothing special or particular about moral transgressions as opposed from breaches in other normative domains. Like Scanlon, Watson considers that the special value that moral standards have in comparison with other non-moral standards has to do with what we owe to each other as moral creatures; *viz.*, in the 'interpersonal significance' that moral standards have (*id.*). Since moral failures posit a 'direct challenge to

the moral standing and value of those to whom they are directed', it is easy to understand why non-moral failings 'normally do not support reactive attitudes on the part of others such as hurt feelings, resentment, or indignation', and this since they do not concern our relations with others in a direct manner (*id*).

## 4. Applying Smith's RRV to Charles Chauncy's take on Original Sin

In these last pages I will provide the main features of Chauncy's theology on original sin—and of sinning in general—and the connection they have with an account of moral responsibility (moral agency) that in some ways mirrors the moral philosophy of Angela Smith as described in the previous pages of this chapter. By way of introduction and in order to prepare the stage for Chauncy's treatment of original sin, I will say a few words concerning his ideas of human beings as created in God's image, and on the type of nature we derive from Adam, and from there move on to the main topics of this section.

As previously described, Chauncy denies the claim that the first couple were endowed with the preternatural gift of original righteousness (*justitia originalis*). For him, being made in God's image is to be taken in the way of divinity endowing man with a 'constitution of nature such that his intellectual and moral faculties could be developed gradually'—under God's guidance and due use of them—towards perfection (Chauncy 1785: 17). It should accordingly not be understood as if the first couple were created already perfect (in both moral [holy or moral perfection] and intellectual faculties [intellectual perfection]) for despite their grownup exterior (their adult-type corporeal form that is), they were completely deprived of experiential or practical knowledge and could be regarded as infants in this respect.

It is precisely this misconception, this belief in an alleged original justice, that is connected for Chauncy with the assumption that the covenant under which innocent man was placed was a covenant of works. Such a covenant, says Chauncy, would have been too harsh on an otherwise intellectually and morally infant creature like Adam was in his prelapsarian condition. The law of trial they were placed under was a positive law given in a single instance through immediate divine revelation (Gen. 2II: 16, 17). This rejection of both the concept of original justice and of the covenant of works is directly connected with Chauncy's conviction, in a very similar manner to how Angela Smith does, that moral responsibility is unavoidably connected with rational moral agency, something that cannot come about till after a considerable period of experience and learning has taken place, something that the first couple were completely deprived of in their innocent condition (Chauncy 1785: 54).

As for our inherited nature, the flawed or corrupted nature of postlapsarian Adam is to be considered as a *super-induced quality*, not essential to his character as instrument or medium that based on the law of propagation, mediated the creation of the rest of mankind. What we derived from our first father was our quality as human beings, but in no way this entails that we inherited his moral condition or state, for as Chauncy mentions it elsewhere: 'neither virtuous or vicious character is transmitted by propagation'

(*ibid.,* p.170). He concedes that we come into the world with what he calls animal tendencies that, if unchecked, could become 'sinful principles of action' (*ibid.,* p.132). He therefore writes of our nature as being imperfect—of being in a disadvantageous state as a consequence of the original lapse—though not sinful or corrupted since it was the nature 'God was pleased to give us, previous to any agency of our own', and without the concurrence of our moral agency as Smith's RRV would have it, there could be no talk of moral criticism as to this nature we inherit and certainly no guilt could be ascribed to it (*id.*). But it is disadvantageous as well since we are incapable of being either justified or sanctified upon the foot of mere law[33](*ibid.,* p.208). And now, let us turn to the centrality that moral agency plays in Chauncy's theology of Original Sin.

We had mentioned that our powers and faculties when we arrive into the world are but mere 'implanted powers, absolutely incapable of moral exertion' (*ibid.,* p.162). Thus, the only manner in which we could be deemed blameworthy for our nature depends entirely on the use, 'good culture, and proper exercise' of these implanted powers (*ibid.,* p.163). To illustrate this point he makes use of his empiricist epistemology[34]by rhetorically asking who could blame infants for their want of understanding —'is it now

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[33] The orthodox Christian solution for the recovery of men's souls are the paired processes of justification and sanctification. Since it is beyond the scope of this paper to provide a comprehensive account of this complex theory, it will suffice for our purposes to merely say that:

> (1) on Augustine's account at least, our propensity to selfish or evil willing is not a function of the weakness of our will, but of our failure to seek help in God (this is our real fault), for it is open to anyone, even if internally fragmented, to form the first-order desire to ask God to strengthen his will (based on a higher-order desire): 'this is cooperative grace, because in giving it, God is cooperating with a person's higher-order desire' to have a will that wills the good (Stump 2010: 160). This process of cooperative grace is the process of sanctification; as one in which God does not undermine or ultimately infringes on the agent's free will (with efficient causality and therefore in a way substituting the agent's own will with His own), but rather only cooperates with the person's own will (with formal causality) to have the will he himself desires or aspires to (*id.*). It should only be noted that this process of sanctification is ordinarily a lengthy one, that is completed (if at all) only in the afterlife, and this is due to the fact that the human will is very liable to internal division, wavering, and is in general rather inconsistent (*ibid..*, p.161).

> (2) As Stump points out, sanctification 'not only involves this higher-order desire for a will that wills some particular good thing, but it also presupposes a more general higher-order desire as well' (*ibid.*, p.163); *viz.*, a general or global 'higher-order desire for a will that wills to will the good' (*id.*). And where is such a global higher-order will to be found? The answer lies in the solfidianism characteristic of much of protestant theology since Luther: that is, the sufficiency of faith for justification. Faith as an essentially free-willed 'global second-order desire to have, through God's help, a will that wills the good' (*id.*).

[34] There are various instances where Chauncy clearly exhibits a knowledge and endorsement of some of John Locke's empiricist ideas, as for example in his description of the cognitive faculties of Adam: like the rest of us, Adam was brought into the world completely deprived of the 'objects of knowledge' (*tabula rasa*). Other than immediate communication by God, the only manner he had for attaining such goods was by the mediate agency of our bodily organs (the senses more precisely), that receive the impressions from

any fault of ours, that we come into existence thus destitute of actual knowledge' (*id.*). Once again, it could be only due to misuse or neglect on our part, with respect to our understanding, and hence only after becoming moral agents, that an attribution of blame, sin or vice could be ascribed to us.

To talk of neglect or misuse of our faculties entails the judgment on the RRV, that either our faculties are not something to be cared for and hence developed, or the deliberate decision to become a vicious individual, and in both cases the questionable behaviour or attitude bears, as Smith would have it, a rational connection to our evaluative judgments or commitments. And what has been said of our power of understanding extends, on Chauncy's thought, to the rest of our faculties: 'They are all, at first, mere capacities only, neither fitted nor designed for present moral exertion' (*ibid.,* p.164); to speak of moral perversion in them necessarily presupposes wrongdoing as to their use or exertion.

One could rightfully claim then, that for Chauncy just as for Smith, the basic condition of an agent's responsibility is moral agency, understood as the rational faculty by which we appraise certain situations, and act accordingly; that is, very close to what we now call practical reason. We stumble at this point with a recurrent idea in Chauncy's theology: his rather optimistic (and Thomistic) view of human nature in the sense of an objective moral standard being accessible to any normally functioning human intellect (Stump 2010: 126, 139). For Chauncy believes that divinity created us in such a way that we are unable—unless due to some perversion or corruption in our understandings that would ultimately be chargeable to ourselves—, to not recognize, through our 'natural power of discernment', right from wrong (Chauncy 1785: 204). Those who become the servants of sin do so not because of an inability to discern moral good from evil— any rational and fully functioning moral agent, according to the RRV, would be able to morally appraise any given situation after all—or from an incapacity to dislike the latter, and love the former, but because they are 'drawn aside' by their lusts; because, in other words, 'their fleshly part gets the better of their mental' one (*ibid.,* p.206), which is why on his account those that choose evil over good do so at the expense of acting against their consciences.

Moreover, this emphasis and understanding of moral agency serves as a basis for his treatment of the differences between the disadvantages inherited through Adam's lapse, *viz.*, death and sin, and the advantages 'gained' or made available through Christ's perfect obedience on the cross: life and righteousness. It is doubtless for him that the real cause of the entrance of sin and death in the world was indeed Adam's original transgression; but as we've mentioned, since death and sin are different sorts of evil —the former a natural, while the latter a moral one—, it is impossible, says Chauncy, that Adam should be the source of both equally or in the same manner. Death came to be, or to pass upon all men, owing to the

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the material world, and transmit them to our minds. These sensorial impressions and the reflections that the mind makes of them are the real 'inlets to our knowledge, and the original source of all our attainments in it' (1785: 25).

(divine) judicial sentence as expressed in Genesis, though not sin, since no judicial sentence either from God or man could ascribe or impute sin on anyone without the intervention or exercise of moral agency on their part; no one can be made a sinner, to put the argument more forcibly, 'without their own wicked choice' (*ibid.,* p.274). And in the same way that death, being a natural evil, could come upon mankind by virtue of a divine constitution, and without the intervention of a misused moral agency, so too 'deliverance from death may, by a like constitution of God, be secured to the same mankind without any regard had to their own well-used agency' (*ibid.,* p.307). Righteousness, however, being of a moral nature (just as sin), is contingent on the (good) use we make of our faculties.

At this point though, the reader might rightfully ask how it is that Christ's obedience became the source for our own righteousness? Chauncy's words are to the point that 'as in consequence of this obedience […], and the constitution of God grounded thereon, they are rendered capable, in a moral way (such an one [*sic*] as is adjusted to [rational] moral agents) of becoming righteous persons' (*ibid.,* p.308-309). To think otherwise would be a moral impossibility for 'we can no more be made personally righteous by the righteousness of another transferred to us, than we can be made sinners by the sin of another transferred in like manner' (*ibid.,* p.309).

As for the description of the process by which rational human beings will be eventually ('sooner or later'[*id.*]) turned into righteous persons, this is more properly the subject matter for the last chapters of this work and will be dealt with in detail there (Chapters 6 and 7). We could add at this point though that this will be a process that will be agreeable to our natures, *viz.*, supposing the use of means suitable to be employed with rational moral agents (Chauncy 1784: 85). Since, as previously explained, an attribution of blameworthiness can only come about *after* personal wrongdoing, sin is to be regarded as essentially personal and, just like moral agency itself, as a non-transferable thing (Chauncy 1785: 151). True, one might be a sort of victim (a sufferer Chauncy says) 'in consequence of the sin of another, but one man cannot be guilty of another man's sin' (*ibid.,* p.131). We could only then be properly considered sinners after we have sinned ourselves (*ibid.,* p.307), that is, 'in our own persons', as it is necessary that we do if we are to be justly and even intelligibly 'chargeable with being sinners at all' (Chauncy, 1784: 45). Again, in a way that conforms to Smith's RRV, it is impossible to think of sinning without the intervention of our moral agency taken as equivalent to rational judgment, something which in its nature is fundamentally personal and untransferable.

At one point, Chauncy goes over to ponder, for the sake of his argument, a federalist theory of original guilt (for AG theories of immediate imputation), just to dismiss it along the same lines; that is, even if Adam acted as the 'constituted representative of his posterity, it would not follow here from, that they were guilty of his sin; but only that they might have been sufferers in consequence of it' (*id.*).

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Having thus far described how an attribution of blame, vice or sin is not to be imputed on us, it is time to explain how Chauncy conceives that sin in ourselves does take place. It has as its provenance the original lapse, but Adam's transgression became the spring for our own sinning in an indirect manner for it was owing to the divine judicial sentence, subjecting us to a mortal and frail bodily condition, that our proclivities towards sin take their rise from (*ibid.*, p.85). This implies a 'complex' understanding of death—as Chauncy suggests we should, and in a way similar to how Moses employs the term in Genesis—in Paul's epistles, as accompanied by its appendages of 'vanity, toil, sorrow, and suffering'; and not just death itself, simply taken as the termination of our physical life (Chauncy 1785: 274). It is this understanding of death connected with 'the whole disadvantage under which we hold life since the [F]all', that explains how we 'all become sinners *upon*, or *in consequence of*' our subjection to it (death) (*ibid.,* p.275); and this because our temptations to sin are essentially connected to our mortal bodies, to their situation and circumstances (*id.*). The fear of losing one's life, the desire to acquire the good things in life, and avoid the evil ones*,* all circumstances pertaining our mortal and frail condition provide the occasion for sinning in all its forms. A mortal condition that likewise explains our inability to reign in our sinful proclivities and hence go against our better judgement —'*in consequence* of our present *suffering mortal state*, we are often induced to do that, which upon sober reflection, we cannot but condemn ourselves for' (*ibid.,* p.276).

Chauncy relies as well on the absence of guilt as further proof of our unaccountability when it comes to the original sin. Again, since moral wrongdoing presupposes rational moral agency, how could it be possible, asks our writer, for Adam's posterity, thousands of years before coming into existence, to be regarded as moral agents, fit for being ascribed with guilt? (*ibid.,* p.151). We may, his posterity that is, be afflicted with grief, but it would be a downright 'moral contradiction' to suppose that any of us actually consider the original lapse as a fault of our own (*id.*). As mentioned previously, fault, and its concomitant feeling of guilt, could only be the outcome of personal sinning, and this precisely Chauncy considers to be indisputable proof that God does not look on Adam's posterity as having sinned when their first father did (*id.*). In this respect it seems important to bring to the reader's attention that conscience is one of the three elements or abilities of what Chauncy calls our moral powers or abilities (Chauncy 1784b).

The centrality of this notion of moral agency—understood broadly as equivalent to rational activity (RRV)—predisposes Chauncy to consider, again in a similar vein to Angela Smith, those beings that could not be regarded as proper moral agents, and thus ultimately not morally responsible for their actions or involuntary states of mind: children, animals, the mentally handicapped, *etc.* And this since, it should be remembered, on the RRV, actions or mental states arising in non-rational agents such as the ones just mentioned would be ruled out since it would be preposterous to expect such individuals or creatures to be eligible candidates for demands of justification.

When replying to those that claim that the supposed immoral behaviour encountered in children is sure evidence of an alleged innate depravity, Chauncy asserts that the peevishness or unrestrained behaviour displayed by infants cannot be regarded as properly sinful for, as mentioned repeatedly before, sin entails or presupposes rational moral agency, which is simply something children cannot have ascribed to them (Chauncy 1785: 171). Or, when confuting those who insist on the idea of the perennial torments of hell as contained in the death threatened to Adam (and by extension on his posterity) in Genesis, he expresses his disbelief in the fact that a good God would, for no other reason than that their first father ate of a fruit he was forbidden, for having disobeyed a positive command that is, condemn to eternal misery all of the beings that sadly die before arriving at a state or condition of moral agency. To think so would be both an 'injurious reflection' on God, but would as well be a contradiction to 'all the natural notions we have both of justice and benevolence' (*ibid.,* p.142).

During his treatment of the differences between men and the rest of created beings, and this within the (Thomist) framework of the interactions between intellect and will, he excludes animals from moral responsibility altogether for even though he doesn't seem to deny that animals are completely deprived of thought—for Aquinas believed that the beasts were capable of forming mental images anyway (Curtis, 1950)—but since they do so in so low a degree, it is impossible for them to properly distinguish moral good from evil (Chauncy 1785: 38). So that, in line with the RRV take on moral criticism—in the sense of addressing the culprit qua rational agent—, mentally inferior creatures such as animals would be precluded from moral blame in the strict sense. Before moving to a summary of Chauncy's position on this topic, I think it necessary to say a few more words regarding his take on moral agency and the connection it bears to questions of moral evil. And since it carries certain relevance for our later argumentation, I will also devote a few paragraphs on his position on God's middle knowledge and the possibility of counterfactuals of creaturely freedom.

When contravening those who claim that God, in confining Himself to bestowing existence on the posterity of Adam, not through a direct exertion of His power (as with Adam), but according to an established course of nature—such that owing to 'the fatality of settled connections in nature', they might suffer under the disadvantages they inherit from their first father (*ibid.,* p.225)—might speak unfavourably of the divine wisdom and benevolence, Chauncy makes the following remarks, particularly to those that think that the absence of provisions or, as Chauncy calls them, 'interpositions', in order to prevent the undesired suffering here talked about, likewise reflects unflatteringly on the deity. In this respect, Chauncy replies that it is impossible to know if the only effect of such interpositions would be the prevention of moral and natural evil. He states that perhaps the only possible interpositions would be those that imply the loss of moral agency itself, which he terms the foundation of the 'greatest and most valuable happiness' God has communicated to us (*ibid.,* p.227). As previously stated, from this assertion one could

conceive of Chauncy as aligning himself with a philosophical and theological tradition that finds a use and place for our proclivity to moral wrongdoing, in the sense of making serious moral decisions and hence genuine virtuous moral choices possible. Accordingly, without a tendency or 'propensity to what is not morally good, [we] would lack significant free choice and, with it, the ability to do good acts' (Stump 2012: 154).

So far then, we have a theologian that espouses a view of mediate imputation of guilt; *i.e.,* that we could be guilty only for our own corruption; a corruption that makes us invariably liable to future sinning, but not at all guilty for the original lapse that is the source for our own sinful proclivities.

And as described in the second chapter of this work, he ponders the possibility of a metaphysical unity with Adam—during his rather lengthy treatment of Edwards' ideas on the matter, particularly what could be classified as Edwards' *organic whole* theoretical account—as a way of explaining our purported concurrence with our first father in his lapse, that is, for PG theories of immediate imputation, but disposes of it by calling it a mere metaphysical invention, 'contrived for no other purpose than to serve a previously imbibed hypothesis' (Chauncy 1785: 149, 269). Moreover such a reading, he considers, is entirely absent from Scripture and points to Rom. 5:14 as further evidence that Paul never considered any such metaphysical unity or identity between Adam and his posterity —'death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression'. This could not be true if Adam, Chauncy argues, together with the rest of mankind, indeed constituted one moral whole (*ibid.,* p.226). To believe such a claim would tantamount to accepting that all of Adam's posterity, thousands of years before having an actual being, were sinners with him; an idea that we mentioned, our author dismisses completely. And in order to settle the matter once and for all, he denies that it is within the power of divinity to establish such a metaphysical unity between Adam and his posterity—'No establishment by God or man, can make the volitions and acts of any moral agent what they are not'; and then again: '[n]o pretended law of union could make them so' (*ibid.,* p.271). Volitions and acts that cannot be imputed on anyone from the outside, even by God, but must emanate or have as their source a connection to a person's evaluative commitments and judgments (RRV). In short, accountability presupposes judgment sensitivity or rational activity more generally, something which would be impossible to consider in the case of original sin.

Finally, though more evidently present in other of his works, Chauncy hints on several occasions at the possibility of God making use, through His middle knowledge, of counterfactuals of creaturely freedom. Since this will be the topic of another chapter of this work, I only mention it to help with my last claim in this part of my work; *viz.,* the position, among the list of alternatives available for original sin, with which Chauncy more clearly aligns himself.

Since we have seen that Chauncy's ideas on the importance of moral agency are very much in tune with Angela Smith's narrative on moral responsibility, we could conclude that in the case of Chauncy's account of original sin, we would be considered as not accountable for the original lapse, and this since the control condition was flouted—we were not, after all, as there was no exercise of our moral agency in the first place, in control of the situation. But if we add to this the idea of God making use of counterfactuals of creaturely freedom in order to know who among the beings He decides to create would act in a way similar to Adam (we would here be considered as some sort of subset of would-be Adams), then we could argue that original sin is rightfully attributed to us in the way of being expressive of who we are, of how we would have acted if placed in similar circumstances as Adam. So, this is what we have arrived at, a case where we were not in control of the original lapse and therefore unaccountable for it, but nonetheless it is lawfully attributed to us.

This is a rather uncommon stance in the DOS, and as the third section of this dissertation will make clear (Chapters 6 and 7), Chauncy has also an interesting proposal for the manner in which obstinate evildoers will voluntarily come to God. Now as mentioned in the introduction of this work, linking these two major dimensions of Chauncy's theology is the redemptive work of Christ, and this in turn explains our interest, and ultimately the inclusion in this work (Chapters 4 and 5), of Chauncy's ideas on redemption, to which we now turn.

## Chapter 4. Chauncy's Theology of Redemption

*1. An Overview of the History of Atonement Theories*

Despite its centrality in Christian theology, the atonement presents something of an odd case among the core doctrines of this religion. The reasons for this are historical for unlike other central Christian doctrines (*v.gr.* the Trinity or the Incarnation) that found their definitive or at least official formulation in creeds such as the Nicean or Chalcedonian, nothing of the sort took place for the doctrine of the atonement, with the result that ideas on the topic vary significantly (Quinn 1993: 349). Furthermore and as the present chapter will illustrate, the Bible makes use of various images in trying to convey the meaning of Christ's passion and death.

Briefly stated, the doctrine holds that Jesus Christ's suffering and death on the cross frees sinners from both their sinful condition and from eternal death, and brings them 'into a state of righteousness and eternal life' (Pearson 1659: 348; cited in McGrath 2011); so that more generally, it somehow solves, 'in some unexplained mystical way', the problem of human evil (Talbott 2014: 101; Stump 2003: 427). When it comes to clarity though, as to how such a redemptive process is carried out, one encounters an unhelpful popular understanding or account of the doctrine which only serves to generate further confusion.[35]

Since what the doctrine aims to provide is an account of the manner in which God deals with the problem of human sin, we will develop during the first half of this chapter a typology of the different versions of the doctrine according to a couple of considerations: (1) to the type of sin that the different doctrines tend to belong to—that is, whether their conception of sin is either deontic, ontological, or relational[36]—, and (2) what is it that the different models of the atonement are meant to resolve: a strife between God and humanity, between God and the Devil, or a conflict in our moral characters (Bayne & Restall 2009: 2). As for the second half of the present chapter and with the intention of better contextualizing Chauncy's ideas on the atonement process, we will provide a brief historical survey of positions that resemble in various ways those of our theologian—from those early and more philosophical Greek non-apostolic fathers such as Irenaeus of Lyon (130 – 202), Clement of Alexandria (150 – 215), and Origen (184 – 253) to a medieval luminary in Peter Abelard (1079 – 1142). And we will conclude the

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[35]A definition of such popular account as well as some of the main philosophical and theological problems it generates are explained in Eleonore Stump's *Aquinas* (2003).

[36] There are, one could argue, three different conceptualizations of sin: (1) *ontological*, also thought of as a pathological understanding of sin, and which conceives of it as an inherent feature of human nature; (2) d*eontic*, where the idea is that sin constitutes a failure to meet our moral obligations, and it is therefore seen as immoral behaviour by which we incur in a moral debt; and (3) *relational*, to mean that sin is to be thought of 'in terms of a broken or alienated relationships' (Bayne & Restall 2009: 2). On such an account, sin's ultimate and most devastating consequence is our alienation from both God and our fellow humans (*id.*).

present chapter by paying attention to some of Chauncy's thoughts more directly related to the topic of this chapter and to some intra-trinitarian concerns—concerns related to the 'relations' between the different 'persons' of the Trinity—that some of the traditional theories give rise to, and we will suggest a way for rethinking some aspects of the divine nature as they were advanced in the work of Karl Barth.

We thus commence with those models of the doctrine of atonement that could be grouped under a deontic conception of sin, that is, those doctrines that conceive of sin as essentially a breach in our moral obligations towards God; *i.e.*, where sin is thought of in terms of moral debt. Satisfaction, penal, sacrificial, and merit models of the doctrine all imply this deontic conception of sin and therefore advance different narratives as to how God handles such a debt (*ibid.*, pp.2-3).

*2. Atonement Models*

*2.1 Satisfaction Models*

The quintessential version of satisfaction models is that provided by Anselm of Canterbury. Satisfaction theories take their biblical inspiration from passages (*e.g.* Gal. 3:13) that suggest the idea that Christ vicariously underwent hardships on our behalf (Migliore, 2004: 183). Anselm's position concisely expressed is that: (1) original righteousness with which humanity was created, was aimed at leading us into a state of eternal blessedness; (2) with the Fall nonetheless such a state becomes an impossibility since it was contingent on our obedience to God's will; (3) since it is logically impossible for an omnipotent and omniscient being to have His purposes defeated, some sort of means (a satisfaction of some kind) had to be provided by which this state of affairs could be overcome; (4) if we recall from our previous discussion of Anselm's ideas concerning sin, that he conceived of it (of every sin in fact) as being infinite in character, then it is a logical conclusion that humanity by itself, that is, unaided, is precluded from providing the required satisfaction; and (5) therefore, only a 'God-man would possess both the ability (as God), and the obligation (as a human being), to pay the required satisfaction' (McGrath 2011: 327). Moreover, the supererogatory merit that was necessary to redeem mankind was funded on Christ's active and passive obedience, a distinction to which we will devote some attention lines below.[37]

Thus, for Anselm the moral debt we speak of is dealt with by God in the manner of payment: by sacrificing himself for us, Christ pays back the honour that we as humans owe to God (Bayne & Restall

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[37] By supererogatory good acts one is to understand those actions that go beyond what would anyone consider to be obligatory for someone; that is, while there are certainly good acts that most of us would consider as being of a compulsory or mandatory nature (*e.g.* keeping one's promises or the education of one's children), a supererogatory good act entails going *over and above* what is demanded as mandatory from us (Swinburne 2009: 354-355).

2007: 3). On this account, salvation is then made available through Christ's own restitution and reparation on our behalf (*id.*).

A noteworthy contemporary supporter of this model is Richard Swinburne, for whom Christ's atonement comprises reparation (payment) and penance (sorrow for sin) for the failure to comply with the (moral) debt we have been speaking of (Bayne & Restall 2009: 3 ; Davis 2014: 408). Whereas for Anselm our obligation was directed at honouring God, Swinburne thinks of it in terms of a duty to live good lives. By sinning we commit to living what he calls second-rate lives, and this, he claims, despite having been granted with sufficient opportunities to do otherwise (Swinburne 1989). We will provide a more detailed account of Swinburne's take on redemption in the following chapter.

A couple of objections to Swinburne' account ought to be mentioned at this point though. Firstly, to claim that we have an obligation to live good or first-rate lives would no doubt find many sympathetic listeners, but to claim that such an obligation is due to God, and not merely to ourselves or our loved ones, seems contentious to say the least. Swinburne bases such an obligation on a principle of gratitude; on the fact that we owe our very existences to God, but surely this, in and of itself, cannot be the sole basis for such an obligation. To claim that 'ontological dependence alone' is sufficient ground for establishing a 'deontological conception of sin' appears to be questionable (Bayne & Restall 2009: 4). Secondly, a brief survey of individuals committed to prison time will suffice to convince us that a significant number of them grew up in highly dysfunctional environments—subjected to abuse at many levels—, so that it turns out to be clear that for at least a considerable number of people living second-rate lives, God indeed fell short of the so-called obligation that Swinburne speaks of, in the sense of granting them with the sufficient opportunities for flourishing as morally sound individuals (*ibid.*, p.5).

But there are also some contentious points with satisfaction accounts in general, as with Anselm's claim that our main obligation is towards honouring God. There is an evident tension with such a claim and the biblically ubiquitous conception of God as essentially loving and merciful; for if we conceive of rendering honour to God as the quid or centre of our moral obligations, then this recasts our relationship to Him more in terms of those had with respect to a 'petty bureaucrat, whose relations with his inferiors are controlled by whether or not those inferiors show respect' (*ibid.*, p.4). Rather than love and benevolence, this would entail that divinity's hopes for His creatures should be couched in terms more of 'compliance and deference' (*id.*).

Furthermore and from a Trinitarian perspective, to talk of Christ paying back God the honour owed to Him by sinful humanity is not without its problems. For either Christ 'honours God the Father and not God as such' (that is, Father, Son and Holy Spirit) and in which case one might lawfully wonder why God the Father but not 'God as such ought to be honoured' (*ibid.*, p.12), or else Christ is rendering

God as such the honour owed to Him; but such a view is likewise puzzling, since Christ is an integral part of God, we would be committed to asserting that Christ is in fact honouring himself (*id.*).

Another objection arises from the suspicion that Christ's surrender of His life was not really supererogatory, for following Anselm's argument and owing to divine omniscience, God (the Father) knew that Christ rendering his life to pay the debt owed to God by humanity was necessary. So, if God desired this end and knew that the means to achieve this end was Christ's sacrifice, then one could claim that God, in some way, willed the crucifixion of Jesus; and this since if one desires a certain end, and knows that this end logically requires a certain means, then one wills that means as well. So that if Christ is really doing the will of the Father by surrendering His life, then to claim that Christ's atonement is a supererogatory good act becomes more dubious.

A further caveat against satisfaction models is that they fail to distinguish between a substitute and a representative. The idea is that while usually the language of substitution is that of mere replaceable things (as when a machine's part needs replacing in order to resume functioning), that of representation belongs in the world of interpersonal relationships (Migliore 2004: 184). On such an understanding, a representative, by standing in for us, by speaking and acting on our behalf, and therefore not merely displacing us, 'does not divest us of responsibility' (*ibid.*, p.185). Accordingly, we should envisage Christ's atoning work as that of sinful humanity's representative and less so on that of a mechanical substitute who would seem to exempt us from personal liability (Sölle 1967, cited in *ibid.*).

Another damaging critique to be raised against satisfaction models is that they tend to obscure divine mercy. Denny Weaver brings our attention to Jesus' famous Parable of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15: 11-32) and how in that story the father of a son who squanders his inheritance welcomes him back with open arms. Weaver asks us to compare this merciful father— an earthly father who Jesus relies on to advance an image of our heavenly father—with the God portrayed in Anselmian satisfaction (Weaver 2001; cited in Peterson 2016). The God 'envisioned in satisfaction atonement', says Weaver, 'is not actually a merciful God. This God forgives only after receiving his 'pound of flesh'', that is, only after compensation has been provided (Weaver 2001: 96; cited in Peterson 2016). Such contingent mercy could rightfully be considered as unworthy of a being who is thought to be perfect in love (Peterson 2016).

Others have cogently advanced this same point—if we as imperfect moral agents are nonetheless capable at times of forgiving without demanding the suffering of those who wronged us, why are we to think that God is incapable of doing so? Even if I am resentful, my negative reactive attitudes need not be vengeful or punitive (Davis 2014: 408). So again, why should we think that God cannot forgive without demanding satisfaction or some form of compensation? As will be shown in the following chapter when we will go over Swinburne's ideas on atonement, the usual response given to such questions is what Ryan Davis called 'the argument from moral seriousness' (*ibid.*, p.410): an argument that states that it is somehow

morally wrong to forgive without exacting some loss or suffering on the wrongdoer (*id.*). To forgive too easily would entail, so the argument goes, that we are not considering with due seriousness either the one who has been wronged or the wrongdoer himself; or a failure to appreciate the educational or expressive value that punishment could have (*ibid.*, p.411). There is evidently some truth in this line of reasoning, but it also overlooks the fact that there are alternatives to punishment or suffering that, while granting due seriousness to everyone involved, can bring about reconciliation (*ibid.*, pp.410-411). If it is possible to encounter instances of this in our ordinary human exchanges, then we can surely side with Davis in claiming that theories 'requiring that God insist on punishment or suffering of someone seem […] unduly sceptical about God's moral creativity' (*ibid.*, p.411).

*2.2 Sacrificial Models*

We continue with the image of Christ's Passion and death as representing a sacrifice on our behalf. The idea, roughly speaking, is that the only (or perhaps the best or more adequate) manner for humanity to be restored in its relationship to God was for our mediator or representative (Christ as a second Adam) to become Himself the sacrificial offering; a perfect sacrifice that unlike those oblations performed under the old law managed to overcome in a permanent way the guilt associated with our sinful condition (McGrath 2011: 320).

This is an outlook on Christ's death that proved to be specially compelling during the early history of the Church, but that like many other aspects of traditional theology, seemed to lose ground with the advent of the Enlightenment[38] (*id.*). It was an important understanding of Christ's redemptive work owing mainly to historical and contextual circumstances because for both Jewish and Gentile ancient culture, sacrifice was a rather common institution (Rashdall 1919: 69). The idea of religion in those days was very much connected to this institution of sacrifice. In such a context it was, one could claim, inevitable that the understanding of Jesus' death as somehow redemptive for our sins came to be expressed in sacrificial terms. Although it is important to mention that sacrifice in ancient Judaism was mostly connected with breaches of ritual laws; with ritual irregularities that had to be atoned for with other ritual endeavours or observances (*ibid.*, p.67); and that its purpose was not so much to be propitiatory, but to favour communion with the tribal god (*id.*). It was not until the idea of god became loftier and more ethical, and particularly so after Jahve came to be regarded as the one true God (that is, after Jewish transition into definite monotheism) that the concept of 'sacrifice became more ethical too…[and] the idea of satisfaction for moral transgressions became more prominent' (*ibid.*, p.68).

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[38] Both Athanasius in some of his Festal Letters (particularly the seventh) and Augustine, most notably in *The City of God*, spoke of Christ's suffering and death in sacrificial terms (McGrath 2011: 320).

Hugh of St. Victor (1096 - 1141) for instance provides an account of the efficacy of Christ's sacrifice in comparison to those effected under the old law—it is because, unlike animal sacrifices of old he avers, Christ was able to 'bring our fallen sinful nature before God' (McGrath 2011: 320-321); it rested, *i.e.*, on his humanity coupled with his divinity (*id.*).

*2.3 Substitution Models*

On the penal substitution model the central claim is that Christ saves us by taking in our punishment. On this deontic model the moral debt is dealt with by God with the punishment of Christ (Bayne & Restall 2009: 3). By accepting to go to the cross in our place and thereby 'taking in our guilt upon himself', Christ makes available to us His righteousness, a righteousness of which we could avail ourselves through faith (McGrath 2011: 329).

Absent from much of early Christian history, it began to gain ground mainly through the writings of Calvin during the sixteenth century and finds its main source of contemporary support in conservative protestant circles with theologians such as J. I. Packer, John Stott, and even Karl Barth endorsing such a view (*ibid.*, p.329; Bayne & Restall 2009: 9). Contemporary philosophical support for such a theory can be found in the writings of William Lane Craig and Steven Porter, as the following chapter will show.

As with other models, the penal substitution version posits some unsavory intra-Trinitarian connections or relations, for under such a model it is inevitable to think that God is being punished by God originating in a debt owed to God (Bayne & Restall 2009: 11). So how is one to make sense of such a statement? Are we to think that God the Father is punishing the Son? That is, that for retributive reasons, the second person of the Trinity is undergoing hard treatment at the hands of the first. This is an idea that seems to entail enmity between Father and Son, something which is unheard of in Christian dogma; or perhaps even more puzzling, that God is somehow punishing Himself? (*ibid.*, pp.11-12). This model therefore fails to take into account an integral element of Christian dogma, *viz.*, 'that Christ is one with God—one in character and purpose and disposition towards the children of men' (Smith 1918: 106; cited in Brümmer).

Moreover, the very idea of Christ undergoing punishment seems problematic for it seems to imply wrongdoing on His part, and this since punishment is generally understood as hard treatment for a failure which expresses condemnation of the wrongdoer. While Christ can take authoritative hard treatment for the moral failure of humanity, to claim that he is being condemned seems out of place. This is likewise an issue with which we will concern ourselves at length in the next chapter, where we will go about the implications of an expressivist theory of punishment for substitutionary accounts of the doctrine of atonement.

Given the importance that such models afford to the value of retributive punishment, there is likewise a problem with this model of the doctrine as concerns the issue of retribution (Davis 2014: 408). The concern arises from the fact that, unlike liberal theories of punishment (*e.g.* utilitarianism) that see some value in, and therefore 'justify', the infliction of punishment on the innocent, a retributivist theory of punishment disallows this (*id.*). And this because the very value of retribution is predicated on the fact of exacting some loss or inflicting some suffering on those who deserve it; and clearly those innocent, by definition, do not deserve this (*id.*). This is likewise a topic that we will concern ourselves at length in the following chapter.

Moreover, there are logical problems for this model of the doctrine (as it is for satisfaction accounts) in connection with the orthodox conception of divine impassibility. For under this model the punishment (and for satisfaction accounts the compensation) is intended to be propitiatory, not expiatory; that is, it is meant to bring about a change in God (propitiation) and not so much in ourselves (expiation) (O' Collins 2007: 15-18; cited in Peterson); a change from divine anger to divine mercy that would supposedly enable God to forgive sinners. As Karl Rahner puts it, this theory 'almost of necessity introduces the metaphysically impossible idea of a transformation of God', but it also obscures the fact that the real cause of the crucifixion 'is the mercy and love of God' (Rahner 1979: 119-224, 208 ; cited in Peterson 2016). But even talk of divine forgiveness runs into problems with the concept of divine impassibility as well, and this because if I condone someone there is an implicit denial that the wrong committed actually affected my interests, but if I forgive someone there is an assumption that the misdeed did upset or negatively influenced me somehow (Brümmer 1992: 440). As others have put it, forgiveness is 'not to be obtained for nothing, it must be bought at a price': the suffering of the one who was wronged (Quick 1916: 92-93; cited in Brümmer).

Lastly, the very fittingness of the idea of penal substitution seems to depend on the gravity of the offense itself. Truth be told, as David Lewis suggests, most of us are of two minds when it comes to penal substitution. Outside a theological context most of us seem to accept it as it in fact takes place—if for no other reason that it is impractical to oppose it, as for example in cases when the punishment consists in some monetary disbursement, that is then covered by a surrogate (a friend or benefactor of some sort). But most of us no doubt would balk at the idea of a substitute covering or doing the prison time of some wrongdoer, or suffering the physical hardship that was meant for the offender, or worse yet, in giving up his or her life for that of the culprit individual. And indeed, our criminal systems corroborate such moral intuitions (Lewis 1997).

So far all of the models covered, being of a deontic nature, presuppose that what needs fixing is the relationship between humanity and its maker, that is the product of our failure to comply with our moral obligations towards God. The subsequent models, however (Christus Victor and the Ransom

model), assume that what the atonement achieves is a resolution of a conflict between God and the forces of evil, personified in the Devil.

*2.4 Christus Victor Model*

The belief that the main achievement of Christ's life, ministry, death, and resurrection was the destruction of the Devil and his cohorts dominated Christian thought on the atonement for more than a millennium (Boyd 2006: 21-11). It was not until Anselm's doctrinal proposal in the eleventh century that this understanding of Chris's work and death began to lose ground (Beilby & Eddy 2006: 10). In order to explain this development and better describe this model for the doctrine of atonement, we will briefly allude to the historical context of first century Judaism.

For obvious reasons the worldview of first century (Palestinian) Judaism was very different from ours. As it was not altogether uncommon in the near-eastern mythological context of the time, they tended to embody or personify evil in either marine monsters, hostile waters, or rebel spiritual beings (demons) that waged war on God and His creation, including mankind naturally (Boyd 2006: 25). But by the time of what is called the apocalyptic period (beginning roughly two centuries before the advent of Jesus Christ), the locus of this evil had shifted to Satan, whom it was believed had enthralled mankind under his sinful spell (*ibid.*, pp.25-26). There is therefore what Gregory Boyd calls a pervasive warfare motif throughout Scripture, an example of which is to be found in the tendency observed in Israelites of the time to conceive of the world as a type of 'cosmic warzone' (*ibid.*, p.25). Satan and his hosts, they were convinced, had so enslaved the creation and its inhabitants that what was required was nothing less that the 'radical in-breaking of God' in history (*id.*). Such messianic longings were not however a distant hope, but something they expected for the near future (*id.*). This is an important aspect of the religious context to which Jesus arrived at, and it appears that His movement contributed to this apocalyptic mindset (e.g. John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11) (*id.*).

By the time of the New Testament writers, however, evil had also acquired a more corporate character, being associated with everything that they regarded as incompatible with God's kingdom (Boyd 2006: 27). This broad characterization of evil included elements such as the excessive religious legalism of ancient Judaism or its propensity to social and racial injustice; but as well the judicial cruelty of both Jewish and Roman cultures; and even death itself (*ibid.*, p.28; Beilby & Eddy 2006: 9). It had more to do with the 'destructive spiritual force of social structures and people groups' embodied not only in ancient Judaism as has been mentioned, but more generally in social classes, governments, and other power structures (Boyd 2006: 28): hence its various appellations in Scripture as the 'principalities', 'authorities', 'dominions', or more generally as 'the powers' (*ibid.*, p.28).

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The entrance of God into history, the advent of Jesus as God incarnate, and His conquering of these evil cosmic forces in order to set mankind free from their bondage are what constitute the centre of this model of the atonement (*ibid.*, p.29). On this Christus Victor account, the cosmic precedes the anthropological or soteriological (*ibid.*, p.34); it is only because the creation has been set free that we are liberated; *i.e.*, 'we are reconciled because the cosmos has been reconciled' (*id.*). The forgiveness of our sins is predicated on the cosmic victory of Christ over the Devil, and this since such victory assures our release from such demonic subjection (*ibid.*, pp.35-37). Salvation on this model is a 'cosmic reality before it is an anthropological reality, and it is the latter because it is the former' (*ibid.*, p.37). The manner in which this cosmic victory took place leads us into our next model for the doctrine: ransom theory.

Its main drawback is that it seems to encourage a dualism between good and evil that some consider might threaten God's sovereignty (Beilby & Eddy 2006: 11). It likewise seems to 'undermine awareness of human responsibility for its sinful condition', for to think of the atonement as a cosmic battle between good and evil forces would somehow seem to make sinful humanity a mere spectator in such a struggle (Migliore 2004: 183).

*2.5 Ransom Model*

The Christus Victor model previously described 'crystallized' in certain Christian provinces into what is known as the ransom model for the doctrine of atonement (Beilby & Eddy 2006:10). Drawing on some biblical references that speak of Christ's death as a ransom paid for fallen humanity (Mark 10:45; 1 Timothy 2:6), Irenaeus (130-202), and subsequently Origen (185-254), and Gregory the Great (540-604), advanced the rather startling idea that if Christ's death was indeed a ransom on behalf of sinners, then this had to be paid to the Devil, who had somehow managed to acquire rights over sinful mankind (McGrath 2011: 322-323).

As with the other models in this section, there is ample scriptural support for this theory (e.g., Matt. 20:28; Mark 10:45), support that provides us with clues as to how such ransom took place (Boyd 2006: 38). To begin with, it appears that during Jesus' ministry demons were aware of His presence and ministry but were unable to fathom the reasons for this (Mark 1:23; Luke 8:28) (*id.*); the reasons or logic that led to or precipitated Jesus' death—the wisdom of God that is—,were kept secret till after the crucifixion (Rom. 16:25; 1Cor. 2:7) (*id.*); Satan and his earthly cohorts played an active role in effecting this outcome (John 13:27) (*ibid.*, pp.38-39); and finally, that it was by the cross that Christ defeated the evil powers and brought about the reconciliation of the entire creation (including mankind naturally) with its maker (*ibid.*, pp.38-39).

Now let us see how these various scriptural clues play a part in what was one of the most common versions for this model of the doctrine. Ever since the original lapse, we have said, humanity had been enslaved by the Devil, who retained such control over humanity 'through the powers of the kingdom of

darkness (sin, fear, death, etc.)' (Beilby & Eddy 2006:10). In order to overcome this dreadful situation, Jesus would become a ransom meant to liberate mankind from this demonic hold. But since Jesus' life was entirely blameless, that is, perfectly innocent, in taking His life as ransom, the Devil had gone too far, and was therefore required to liberate not only Christ, but mankind itself (*id.*). In this manner the Devil had been outwitted by God, who knew that the evil powers would be incapable of imagining 'action that is motivated by this kind of self-sacrificial love' (Boyd 2006: 39). Jesus had become a divine 'bait'; a bait too tempting for the Devil and his human cohorts to overlook, and in acting this way, in following their nefarious proclivities, they would all 'play into God's secret plan all along (Acts 2:22-23; 4:28)' (*id.*).

Nevertheless, the idea of God availing Himself of means rather questionable, *i.e.*, of God being perhaps guilty of deception together with the problematic claim that the Devil had somehow acquired rights over fallen humanity, rights that God was in some way obligated to uphold, contributed to the loss of favour that this image of the atonement suffered at the onset of the Enlightenment (McGrath 2011: 324). In response, defenders of this model sometimes stipulate that God was in no way deceptive; God, they argue, merely acted out of love, knowing all along that the Devil and his hosts would be blinded by their very evil to action inspired by such outrageous love (Boyd 2006: 40-41). All participants, therefore, were merely acting according to their natures, and God cannot be held responsible for deception in any way.

*2.6 Exemplarist or Moral Influence Model*

A relational understanding of human sin is to be found in what is called the exemplarist or moral influence theory of the atonement; a model that some (mistakenly) believe has in Peter Abelard its most eminent classical representative[39] (Migliore 2004: 185; Kronen & Reitan 2011: 32).

Unlike the models previously described, and which would appear to entail that after Christ's (objective) redemptive action—whether a transaction of some sort or as the outcome of an epic battle—there is little, if any, participation for those on whose behalf the action was undertaken, this model is centred on the idea that Christ's redemptive undertaking is completed only till after His example of selfless love in both His ministry and death, it brings about repentance and conversion in sinners. It is therefore commonly referred to as a subjective theory or model (Migliore 2004: 185; Kronen & Reitan

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[39] Philip Quinn has made a strong case for the view that although the motif of divine love as an example for sinful mankind is at the center of Abelard's understanding of the atonement, it should not to be taken at the exclusion of other themes which he also considers as playing an important, though secondary role in Abelard's model, such as the idea of penal substitution. Based on such clarification, Abelard, just like Aquinas, is to be taken as a hierarchical pluralist, that is, although he assigns pride of place to a single motif, others no doubt are brought to bear in his account of Christ's redemptive work (Quinn 1993).

2011: 32). Also, unlike the models mentioned lines above, what this theory purports to fix or amend is not a conflict between God and humanity, nor between God and the Devil, but a strife within our moral characters.

Surely the claim, on itself, that Jesus' sacrifice is a good example for humanity to follow, ought not to be regarded as an unfavourable trait of any atonement narrative, and in fact, it is difficult to find any theologian who would contradict such a statement; but critics of this model claim that to reduce the atonement to essentially this feature or image is to render an incomplete account of the doctrine (Quinn 1993: 349; Migliore 2004: 186).

Others censure what they consider to be an underestimation of both the gravity and hold of sin in humanity, and the centrality of grace in any appropriate account of the doctrine; as well as an undue 'sentimentalization of God's love' (Migliore 2004: 186). Connected to this series of concerns lies probably the biggest problem that a model such as this might entail: its inherent Pelagian tendencies, which we now discuss.

If Christ is nothing but a moral example that we are free to disdain or follow, then this would suggest that it is entirely within the natural faculties of man—that is, unaided by divine grace—to attain justification in God's sight (Quinn 1993: 358). The danger thus lies in the fact, as Bernard of Clairvaux suggested, that such a model fails to provide an adequate justification or reason for Christ's atoning work on the cross in the matter of our salvation; that is, it renders it almost unnecessary (*id.*). To state this concern in more theological terms, it would appear that exemplarist accounts of the atonement fail to make sense of Christ's passive obedience.

One place to look then, if one were to question the possible Pelagian proclivities of any writer subscribing to an exemplarist model, would be to analyse his take on the role played by divine grace in such a process. Later in the chapter we will concern ourselves with Chauncy's ideas on divine grace and the soteriological role he assigns to it.

It is now time for us to move to the second segment of the present chapter where, as mentioned before, we will provide a short historical review of theories that bear a kind of family resemblance with Chauncy's ideas on the matter and that could all be classified as being exemplary models of the doctrine of atonement. We will advance chronologically starting with those non-apostolic 'Greek' fathers of the early church, and in particular with the ideas of Clement of Alexandria. We will devote significant attention to these ancient exemplarist models, and we will provide as well a couple of more contemporary accounts at the end of the following chapter (by Hastings Rashdall and John Hick) in the conviction that all of them provide narratives that help us better understand the position advocated by Chauncy. So, without further ado, let us go over the ideas of those Greek fathers of the church.

*3. Ancient Exemplarist Models of the Doctrine of Atonement*

*3.1 Greek Fathers*

Although the extent to which Chauncy's overall theology could be described as Greek or patristic in character will be developed in the final section of this work, it seems not amiss at this point to say a few words concerning the presence in most of the early church's history of exemplarist understandings or readings of Christ's redemptive work on the cross. As Hastings Rashdall in his classical work on the history of the idea of atonement[40] (1919) expresses repeatedly, with the qualified exception of Paul, it was not until Irenaeus of Lyon in the late second century that a substitutionary or propitiatory dimension is reintroduced into Christian reflection on the topic (1919: 233). Though, as will become evident in the following lines, even in the ancient bishop of Lyon the old exemplarist and 'more philosophical [and ethical] modes of presentation' linger in his writings (*id.*).

The first of these patristic theologians with decidedly exemplarist leanings that we will survey (in a cursory manner) is Clement of Alexandria. And despite the fact that at times one might stumble in his writings with the familiar quotations from the passage of the suffering servant of God in Isaiah LIII, and which convey images of sacrifice, propitiation or even ransom, when 'the sufferings of Christ are dwelt upon, it is always either for the purpose of increasing our sense of Christ's goodness, or by way of example' (*ibid.*, p.222). Again, if Clement speaks of Christ surrendering His life on our behalf, this is to be interpreted in the sense of requiring from us a corresponding sacrifice on behalf of each other.[41]

Clement's logos theology and its identification of salvation with knowledge further contribute to the position we are advancing here. The word of God incarnate in Jesus is the greatest source of knowledge about God and the world He created; the culmination of a long process of divine self-revelation that has, for instance, in the most eminent of the classical philosophers of Greek antiquity, or in the Old Testament prophets of Israel, significant precedents (*ibid.*, p.224). Clement is thus fond of portraying Christ as both saviour and teacher, for they are to him overlapping functions, and this since 'it is mainly by His teaching and influence' that redemption is effected (*ibid.*, p.225). This idea of a progressive (historical) divine self-revelation, is endorsed by Chauncy, and we will return to it in the concluding chapter of this work.

Contemporary with Clement, Irenaeus of Lyon (*c.*120, /140, *c.*200, /203) (less of a philosopher and a moralist than him) is brought into our account owing to his ethical interpretation of *theosis*, or salvation as divinization (Trocmé 1993: 323). An idea shared by Clement and in general common to ancient Greek

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[40] *The Idea of Atonement in Christian Theology* (1919)
[41] Clement. Strom.VII, ii.6

theology,[42] it advances the conviction that deification is reached through the progressive moral progress or perfection of the believer, and with it the attainment of immortality (Rashdall 1919: 228, 241). At this point it is imperative to bring our attention to an aspect of Irenaeus theology with important implications for Chauncy's overall theodicy—Irenaeus distinction between the *image* and the *likeness* of God in man (Hick 2010: 211). For Irenaeus the *image* of God in man resides fundamentally in his character as a free and rational creature capable of achieving union with his maker, whilst the *likeness* consists in the progressive attainment of a moral character that resembles (finitely) that of Christ (*id.*). It is thus with this latter dimension that both Irenaeus' and Clement's conceptions of theosis are to be associated with. But let us now move from Clement to who some have termed the first dogmatic theologian in Christian thought: Origen (Trocmé 1993: 325).

Despite having followed some of Clement's courses, Origen considered himself more the disciple of Panteno and Amonio Saccas, a fact which sheds light on the strong Neoplatonic character of his writings (*ibid.*, pp.325-26). Origen does however clearly embrace Clement's ideas on the Incarnation concerning the progressive unfolding of divine knowledge in other persons prior to the historical Jesus, and, as Clement does, he proposes that the union of the divine word with Christ had been naturally more complete and perfect than ever before (Rashdall 1919: 257); an idea that, according to Norman B. Gibbs, is also shared by Chauncy.

As with his ideas on the Incarnation, Origen's concept of salvation is in essence ethical and rational—greater emphasis is given to Christ's teaching and example (*active obedience*) than to His death (*ibid.*, p.258); the *logos* saves us mainly through the teaching and revelation of the Father it conveys as well as through the example it lays down for our lives. And notwithstanding his use of conventional formulas to describe the death of Christ, the explanations he provides tend to be pre-Irenaean: the death of Christ is not isolated in his writings from His whole life and ministry,[43] but represent its completion, the culminating evidence of both perfect obedience to the will of the Father and of divine love towards His creatures (*id.*). Christ redeems us through the moral influence it exerts upon the believer, that is, by generating within the sinner a real change of heart; by making the sinner actually better.

One could claim that it was out of deference for the authority already enjoyed by Paul in his time, that Origen repeats some of the common formulas to speak of the death of Christ, and despite his admitted incapacity to describe how exactly the death of Christ 'redounds to the spiritual benefit of men', this death operates for Origen by making men better (*ibid.*, p.264). We are to understand such life and death

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[42] Although later Greek theology tended to conceive of this process as consisting in a sort of mystical or metaphysical acquisition of incorruptibility (Rashdall 1919: 228).

[43] Rashdall makes a convincing case to the point that all early Greek patristic theologians merge the concept of atonement in that of the Incarnation.

prospectively: it was not intended to satisfy a divine demand for retribution or a 'retrospective cancelling of the past' (*id.*); and rather than point to any objective effect or transaction of any sort, its effects are to be explained by their 'subjective or ethical influence upon the believer' (*ibid.*, p.266).

*3.2. The Irenaean Theodicy*

The orthodox Christian narrative concerning the first members of our race provides us with an idyllic setting (Eden) in which the first couple enjoyed, among other benefits or blessings, unmediated communication with divinity. A noteworthy benefit they enjoyed, so the traditional account goes, was their capacity to both perfectly discern good from wrong and hence to always know what was expected of them by every instance of God's law (intellectual perfection), and to actually comply with those demands (holly or moral perfection); a concept alluded to before as original righteousness or original justice (*Vid.* Ch.2). Despite this favourable situation, and rather inexplicably we might add,[44] the first couple disobeyed a single positive command issued by their maker and thereby gained for themselves expulsion from Eden and a host of other drawbacks that explain the current condition of mankind. This adamic myth as encountered in Gen. II and III, but most damagingly in its elaborated version first in Paul (Rom. 5:12-21; Cor. 15:21-22) and even more so in Augustine has been the conventional Christian explanation for the existence of evil and sin since the formation of the New Testament cannon in the second half of the second century (Hick 2010: 203-207, 210; Trocmé 1993: 313-317).

Within this mythological scheme, however, an alternative account that goes back to the earliest of the Eastern Greek fathers (e.g. Tatian and Theophilus), and which finds its ultimate expositor in Irenaeus of Lyon, provides us with a very different picture of the first humans. Instead of thinking of them as morally perfect (original justice), it portrays them as essentially immature and therefore unfit for the reception of God's highest bestowals (Hick 2010: 212). If we recall from above the Irenaean distinction between the image and the likeness of God in man, we can think of Adam and Eve at this early stage of their lives as sharing in the divine image in the sense of being rational creatures endowed with free will. These are the materials that ground the *Imago Dei* position of Irenaeus; an unfinished stage in our personal development which depends in its entirety on the divine creative decrees (*ibid.*, p.254). Whilst the *likeness* of God in man requires our uncompelled engagement with the world in which He has placed us, so as to progressively acquire the moral features that were eminently exemplified in the life (and death) of the

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[44] Referred to as the traditional theological problem of the Fall, the unintelligibility of the idea of morally perfect creatures (whether human or angelic in kind it does not matter) falling into sin amounts to, as John Hick, Schleiermacher and others have pointed to, the 'absurdity of the self-creation of evil *ex nihilo*'; and it inavoidably places ultimate responsibility for the existence of evil in God Himself (Hick 2010: 63, 249-50; Crisp 2005: 25).

historical Jesus (*id.*). A process that, so as to fend off possible charges of Pelagianism, is always guided according to Irenaeus by the Holy Spirit. Thus, while it is straightforward to regard the first stage of this creative process as the outcome of divine *fiat*, the second one lies beyond divine omnipotence in that it requires the willing cooperation of creatures who are by definition free to act as they please (*ibid.*, p.255).

The philosophical (and Christian) argument that underpins this last point has to do with the unavoidable presence of freedom, and with it moral freedom, in creatures whose life is to be described as personal, *i.e.*, as endowed with personality. Thus, the idea of creating persons who are unable to act freely is incoherent; and since the accepted view of divine omnipotence precludes logical absurdities such as this one, we could conclude that not even omnipotent power could have achieved the creation of unfree, moral personal beings (Talbott 2014: 156-157; Hick 2010: 265). Part of the traditional free-will explanation for the existence of evil, this argument lends support to the Christian conviction that in creating men, the divine purpose was not only that they would freely act righteously towards each other, but also to bring them into fellowship with Himself (Hick 2010: 266, 272). And since experience teaches us that this was in fact God's resolution on the matter (for we are no mere automata) and since the establishment of a loving or even an amicable relationship requires the willing participation of those involved, then man 'must be a morally responsible agent with a real power of moral choice' (*id.*).

There is something inherently ethical in this account, as Hick is prompt to remark, in the way of regarding a goodness arrived through the free engagement with the world and with it with the temptations that characterize it, over the sort of untried innocence that could be ascribed to beings created *ab initio* as (finitely) perfect in this regard (*ibid.*, p.255). Indeed, it could be lawfully questioned whether such innocent creatures could even be morally commended in the way in which our terms have been generally employed in ethical discussion. Ninian Smart for example (1961) provided a cogent validation of our moral intuitions in this respect by showing how the decoupling of moral praise from concepts such as temptation, lust, greed, envy, and other proclivities simply renders moral utterances unintelligible (Smart 1961: 190-191; cited in *ibid.*). As with John Hick, Richard Swinburne, Kant, Schleiermacher, Eleonore Stump, and a host of other theologians and philosophers, there lies in Smart's argument an instrumental conception of evil; a view which, furthermore, is supported by Chauncy as we will later describe. Again, this is a topic to which we shall return in our concluding section of our work as we will then try to provide a comprehensive outlook on our subject's theology.

### 3.3. *Peter Abelard and the Power of a Story of Love*

Abelard's theory of atonement grew out of his dissatisfaction with the then prevailing interpretations of the death of Christ—the ransom model which probably reached its most philosophically defensible exposition in the work of Gregory of Nyssa (335-395) and the Anselmian substitutionary model (Rashdall

1919: 304-5; Fiddes 1989: 142). Both accounts seemed to Abelard to 'impose a necessity upon God from outside himself, as if God had to find some way of solving a problem that faced him'[45] (Fiddes 1989: 142). Furthermore, as part of a generation of theologians in the second half of the twelfth century who were keenly interested in the human life of Jesus, Abelard was baffled by the particular mode chosen by Christ to carry out His redemptive work; that is, one characterized by 'insults, scourgings, and spittings, and finally that most bitter and disgraceful death' (Buytaert 1969: 116; cited in Quinn 1993). For Abelard the only catalyst to be found for the Son of God to voluntarily abase Himself in this form was the 'sheer love of God' (Fiddes 1989: 143). The atonement, and the incarnation more generally, took their inspiration not from the demands imposed by either the so-called rights of the Devil (ransom theory), nor from a conception of divine justice that somehow required a substitute culprit on whom to discharge retribution for the sins of men; rather they both obeyed what one Abelard scholar aptly called the logic of divine love (Weingart 1970; cited in Fiddes). If the divine nature is essentially loving, an argument we will develop on a subsequent chapter (Ch.7), then in both the incarnation and atonement God was merely pleasing His own loving nature (Fiddes 1989: 143).

Having established the motive for the path of redemption chosen by divinity, and knowing beforehand its ultimate intention according to Christian dogma—the reconciliation of fallen man to his maker—, it still lays open the difficult and all-important question of how exactly the love manifested and present in Christ redeems us from our sins. And in this respect, it is helpful to pay notice to the language employed by Abelard, especially in those passages taken as representative of his position on this topic.[46] Before diving in earnest into Abelard's choice of words though, we believe it is important to draw attention to a distinction within the subfield of subjective models of the atonement: *exemplarist*, and *infusionist*

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[45] To borrow a phrase from Rashdall, both these older models would seem to make the atonement a sort of divine afterthought by which God overcomes a situation that (*per impossible*) somehow took Him by surprise (Rashdall 1919: 224).

[46] Abelard writes,

> Now it seems to us that we have been justified by the blood of Christ and reconciled to God in this way: through this unique act of grace manifested to us[...] he has more fully bound us to himself by love; with the result that our hearts should be enkindled by such a gift of divine grace; and true charity should not now shrink from enduring anything for him. And we do not doubt that the ancient Fathers, waiting in faith for this same gift, were aroused to very great love of God in the same way as men of this dispensation of grace, since it is written: '[a]nd they that went before and they that followed cried, saying: 'Hosanna to the Son of David,' etc. Yet everyone becomes more righteous—by which we mean a greater lover of the Lord—after the Passion of Christ than before, since a realized gift inspires greater love than one which is only hoped for. Wherefore, our redemption through Christ's suffering is that deeper affection [*dilection*] in us which not only frees us from slavery to sin, but also wins for us the true liberty of sons of God, so that we do all things out of love rather than fear—love to him who has shown us such grace that no greater can be found, as he himself asserts, saying, 'Greater love than this no man hath, that a man lay down his life for his friends' (Abelard 1956: 283-284; cited in Quinn 1993).

models. Under such distinction, an exemplarist model would stipulate that 'Christ's soteriological significance lies merely in the example it provides to believers' and the ensuing life changes it could foster in them (Hill 2018: 195); whilst an infusionist model sees the 'change in believer's lives as deriving not (merely) from their own efforts but from God working directly on their hearts in some way' (*id*.). It is our contention that Abelard's doctrine escapes the former mere exemplarist label so defined and attempts to express, though not necessarily in a completely successful manner, that divine love is capable of creating or generating love within us; *i.e.*, that it somehow manages to infuse love within ourselves (although Abelard prefers to speak about the *pouring in* of divine love into ourselves) and that he is therefore attempting to express something more objective when he claims that divine love has the capacity to 'move human hearts and minds to a similar love' (Fiddes 1989: 141). To this effect, Abelard's identification of the Holy Spirit with divine love further contributes to our infusionist characterization of his doctrine. Far from being the product of our own efforts or good deeds alone, it is the Spirit 'who reactivates the love of human beings for their Creator' (*ibid*., pp.153-154). In one of his sermons for example, he refers to the Holy Spirit as pouring out 'his pure love into us by which we love him sincerely for his own sake' (Abelard, Sermons, 5. PL 423c; cited in *ibid*.).

But returning to our analysis of Abelard's language, it is important to notice that by his use of expressions as *enkindled*, *made righteous*, *incites*, or *acquire for us*, Abelard is trying to express the thought that divine love has a 'redemptive impact on its own account', that is, independently of the disposition it might encounter in its receptor (*ibid*., p.144). To speak of a love that enkindles love entails or presupposes a generation within and seems to go beyond a mere imitation of the aforementioned affective state in the one who beholds or receives it (*id*.). For Abelard it would seem that the demonstration of divine love, its revelation, is at the same time an infusion of it. A case in point— 'Dispelling our shadows with light, he showed us, both by his words and example, the fullness of all virtue, and repaired our nature'(*id*.). As with another quotation where Abelard moves from the idea of Christ *teaching us by word and example* to that of our hearts being *enkindled*, here also lays a noteworthy transition between *showing us,* and *repairing our natures* (Fiddes 1989: 145). And the device employed by Abelard to explain how this process is carried out is understandably close to his own life experience: the power of a story of love (*id*.).

As is well known, the name of Abelard is usually considered in relation to that of Heloise d'Argenteuil as representing one of the most famous, albeit tragic, love stories of the Middle Ages. One of the main features of their intermittent relationship was their prolonged epistolary exchange, and it seems fair to state that Abelard draws upon this experience in his dealings with the matter at hand; *viz*., that of the 'human experience of telling a story, and the human gift of memory, and applies it to the narrative of the cross' (*ibid*., p.146). In the course of their letters, he exhorts Heloise to enter into the story of Christ's death and Passion with the same imaginative force she does when reliving the story of their love (*id*.).

It appears that Abelard has, as Paul Fiddes remarks, an intuitive perception of an interior psychological transformation that is dependent upon an objective event (*id.*), and that therefore those atonement models that make use of psychological insights could be said to belong in spirit to Abelard's outlook on the topic (*ibid.*, p.147). If, as Robert Taylor remarks, Abelard conceives of love as a 'spiritual force exerted by the lover on the beloved, and, in a responsive heart, setting up a reflex which tends to become permanent', Abelard's model, ingenious and insightful as it is, is not altogether clear as to the manner in which Christ's love gets implanted or infused in us (Taylor 1935: 212; cited in Quinn 1993). But it is now well due for us to provide some of Chauncy's main ideas concerning the redemption process.

*4. Chauncy's Redemption Thoughts*

*4.1 Righteousness*

Sin, to be sure, was the main foe that God came to destroy, but the only way to do this is by bringing about a change in mankind that shall transform them from rebels against God into their 'willing and obedient people' (Chauncy 1784: 179). And despite Chauncy's talk of two senses of reconciliation between God and mankind—one effected immediately through Christ's passive obedience, while the other is that 'change of state connected with an actual meetness for, and present interest in eternal life' (*id.*)—it is clear from his work that his emphasis lies in this latter sense of the term. Accordingly, we are redeemed, that is, made righteous, in a manner that is agreeable to our natures as intelligent and indeterministically free moral agents. This for Chauncy, constitutes the reason for 'the erection of the gospel kingdom, with all its means, privileges, blessings, and motives', and yet of still 'other dispensations […], that so mankind universally may, at length, be wrought upon, and in a rational way, to become righteous persons' (*ibid.*, p.86). Like Origen centuries before him, our author clearly spurns the idea of imputed righteousness and believes that this making righteous could only come about in a manner or through a process that does not undermine our character as personal moral agents. A case in point: when going over the demerits of the traditional or classical doctrine of hell as being allegedly everlasting (something our author dismisses as it will be shown in the following chapters), Chauncy argues that God is not obliged, and it certainly would not comport with divine wisdom, to make the 'discouragements to vicious practice the greatest, it is possible his power should make them' (*ibid.*, p.344); such a method, he says, would not suit with God's consideration of them as personal moral agents, for then 'no room in this case would be left for the trial of their virtue'; these discouragements being so great as to 'overpower the mind and give no opportunity for choice' (*ibid.*, p.345).

This, moreover, we should remember, is connected to our author's take on the issue of being born again, of the so-called second birth. This second birth consists for our author, in a moral sense and figuratively speaking, in the acquirement of a condition or state where our moral traits resemble, through a

new *superinduced nature* as he likes to put it*,* those exhibited by the historical Jesus (Chauncy 1785: 186). Chauncy's ideas on this topic are similar to those Greek patristic theologians mentioned above (e.g. Irenaeus of Lyon) and their distinction between the *Image of God* in man, which essentially consists in our condition as rational and free moral agents, and the *likeness of God* in man, as that progressive development of our moral faculties by which we hopefully imitate or resemble those exhibited by Christ in his earthly sojourn.

What God seeks, says Chauncy repeatedly, is the free consent of the will (*ibid.*, pp.181, 190-191); that is, a repentant attitude in the contrite sinner. Elsewhere he touches upon the idea of forced or involuntary submission as morally worthless, and it is telling in this respect his reliance on Samuel Clark's distinction between God's kingdom of power and God's moral government, the latter as that rule over rational personal beings who can't, and moreover shouldn't, be morally compelled to act in any given way. For Christ will, Chauncy holds, 'influence them universally, sooner or later, in a rational moral way, and as is befitting free and intelligent agents, to bow down before him, practically confessing him to be Lord' (*ibid.*, p.190). Now a philosophically minded putative objector might reasonably question the plausibility of the idea of universal voluntary subjection in the case of indeterministically free personal beings, but suffice it to say for the moment that our author finds a way out of such a logical quagmire by the expedient of making use of Molinism for Universalism. Since we will concern ourselves at length with this important issue in a subsequent chapter, we leave it at rest for the moment.

To repent and change one's ways are thus the main conditions for admission into heaven according to our author. Examples of this are numerous in his work, but we consider the following to be especially illustrative of this belief. When discussing the new gospel-dispensation opened up through Christ and again in the context of his disquisitions on the Pauline texts of Scripture, he emphasizes that despite the offenses being many, the possibility of avoiding the second death is open to anyone who repents and comes to Christ; for 'God is not willing that anyone should perish' (2 Peter 3:8-10) (*ibid.*, pp.137-138). Wherefore if anyone misses out on salvation, the fault will lie entirely with them. The other instance we advance comes during Chauncy's discussion of the different covenants that have framed the divine-human relationship through the ages. When comparing this gospel-dispensation made available through Christ, to the one in which our first fathers found themselves in (which Chauncy believes it not to be a covenant of works let us remember), this rule of trial we are dependent upon, he says, is less severe than that which Adam was subjected to. For 'there was no room for repentance' and a sure doom was to follow in case he would transgress or disobey. We, however, can 'be admitted to mercy' if we sincerely repent, no matter how severe or numerous our offenses could be (*ibid.*, p.240).

This idea therefore of the voluntary subjection of sinners to God's moral government is a rather pervasive theme in Chauncy's theological works, and he moreover explicitly connects it to the idea of

redemption by claiming that rational and eternal happiness can only come about through such willing or voluntary submission (*ibid.*, p.191); and so as to leave no room for doubt, moral depravity, says our author, is to be regarded as 'inconsistent with rational happiness' (Chauncy 1784: 343). In another of his works and dealing with the issue of divine benevolence, Chauncy mentions that communications of goodness from the deity vary significantly; that some manifest goodness in one degree, while others in a different one, and that no such 'communications of goodness may reasonably be looked for from the deity, though infinitely benevolent, but such as fall in with what wisdom directs to as fit and proper' (1784b: 41-42); lest in 'the final result of its operations, [it could] do more hurt than good' (*id.*). Divine love thus could take on the shape or form of unfortunate consequences that are a direct result of leading selfish and unloving lives, certainly clear marks of a sinful existence.

## 4.2 *Against Divine Impassibility*

Since God willed the creation of personal moral agents that would actively participate in the process of their own redemption; and if an integral part of such redemption is the achievement of fellowship between such creatures and the deity, then we must suppose God as desiring, and as concerning Himself for the welfare of such creatures. We provide below our author's ideas around the concept of divine passibility.

In arguing against those who claim that benevolence, 'as a disposition, inclination, or propension', ought not to be ascribed to the deity—for unlike us imperfect and frail creatures, God is not in want of such help to spur His benign endeavours—, Chauncy lays down his position on the issue of divine impassibility (1784b: 22). Such writers, according to Chauncy, believe that because of His infinite understanding, God bestows 'existence and happiness to his creatures solely from the fitness and reasonableness, of the thing as an object of intelligence' (*id.*).

Chauncy answers that in order to determine if an inclination or disposition is proper to a certain being, we must look to its nature or constitution. In the case of man for example, he avers that it is by knowing his constitution that we understand 'that he is formed with a capacity to receive pleasure; with a state of mind inclining him to pursue it, both for his own privative good, and the good of others' (*ibid.*, p.23). Additionally, such a being was formed with the 'powers of intelligence and volition, qualifying him to discern what will conduce to these ends, and to will the exertion of his endeavours for the accomplishment of them' (*id.*). But take away such capacity or inclination for both private and social happiness, 'of what use would intelligence or volition have been to him?' our author asks (*ibid.*, p.24). Such a being would have no incentive to action, and 'would eternally exist indifferent to everything' (*ibid.*, p.27). Now such reasoning, says Chauncy, is to be extended to 'all created beings whatsoever; and... it equally takes place with respect to the supreme being himself' (*ibid.* p.25). We must suppose God, Chauncy continues, as

existing with some constitution or other: which constitution, as to him, being self-existent, must be looked upon as necessary, in the same sense that we call his existence necessary. And what constitution can be imagined more worthy of the Deity, or consentaneous to all the ideas we have of perfection, than that which supposes him to exist not only with the powers of intelligence and volition, heightened in degree of perfection beyond all bounds; but with the principles also of self-love, and benevolence, heightened in like manner; disposing him to seek his own, and the happiness of others? Upon the previous supposition of such a constitution of nature, the conduct of the Deity, in creating the world, and giving being and happiness to so many creatures is intelligible. Otherwise, not very easily accounted for (*id.*).

We must therefore suppose the deity as existing 'with sentiments of happiness, and a capacity for it, in addition to the powers of intelligence and volition, together with a natural state of mind inclining Him to pursue it; either with respect of himself or others, or both' (*ibid.*, p.27). This understanding of divinity, one in some respects in opposition to medieval conceptions, conceives of God as responsive and in some way as affected by His creation. In essence, it would appear to present God in more modern terms, one where he would appear to be, for lack of a better word, more human. We will retake this topic of divine passibility in the following chapter.

*4.3 Divine Grace*

Owing to the importance of the topic itself, but also perhaps as a response to the inherent Pelagian tendencies of any exemplarist understanding of the atonement, Chauncy devotes some considerable attention to the role of divine grace in the matter of human salvation. We provide below some examples of this, particularly in connection with the Fall and its consequences, for it is there that our author mainly brings this issue to the fore.

The universal mortality that we are subjected to after the Fall together with the anti-Pelagian claim of an impossibility of earning justification through our own efforts alone—without the aid of divine grace that is—are things that in his consideration should appear obvious to an unprejudiced reader of the Scriptures. Hence despite his rather unconventional interpretation of the DOS as we saw in the previous chapters, he advances a rather orthodox account of God's grace through Jesus Christ as indispensable for salvation. He in fact considers this as another unfortunate consequence of the original lapse, but at the same time portrays it as its remedy. It is this dispensation of grace, this new establishment as he calls it, the grand promise and remedy for 'the disadvantages Adam had brought upon himself and his posterity' (Chauncy 1785: 135). Had this not been the case, he (Adam) would have surely immediately died, and the history of mankind would have been stopped in its tracks there and then. Therefore this 'deliverance from the power of the grave' is, for the Bostonian, 'absolutely and unconditionally the grant of grace to

mankind' (*ibid.*, p.136). And just as the sin of Adam, it came to be without any fault or merit on our part, *i.e.*, without the concurrence of our own agency.

Another drawback of the Fall, and to which we alluded to in a previous chapter (Ch.2), was this Pauline emphasis in an internal warring condition in all men, and again here the remedy for such a situation is to be found in divine grace. Our author does this when discussing Romans, particularly its seventh chapter (verse 24th) and where Paul complains of his fleshly proclivities as inducing him to sin—'O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death'; Chauncy interprets such passage as signifying: 'O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from THIS MORTAL BODY', that is, from its accompanying cravings and proclivities that make it virtually impossible in this world to refrain from sinning (*ibid.*, p.279). Now as we mentioned, deliverance from this internal warring condition is to be found a few pages on, in ver. 25, where it is specified that redemption 'may be obtained upon the plan of grace, through Jesus Christ' (*ibid.*, pp.282-283).

Our subjection to the nature we derived from Adam would bespeak unfavourably of both God's moral government of creation and His divine attributes as well if we were judged solely on our observance of the law, but since divine grace is essential in determining our ultimate destiny, critics that hurl such recriminations lack a firm footing in their complaints according to our writer. And he ends up the treatment of this topic with a very Augustinian declaration—no matter how early contracted or pervasive sinfulness could be within a person, it will always be their fault if they don't achieve deliverance from it since it is always open to anyone 'upon the foot of grace through Jesus Christ' to extricate themselves from the power of the devil (*ibid.*, p.237). We say 'Augustinian' owing to the North-African father's belief that no matter how internally fragmented a person could be, it is always open to anyone to ask God for a will that wills the good and in this way to begin the path to moral regeneration (Stump 2006).

*4.4 A Developmental Approach to Redemption*

It should be clear to the reader by now that our theologian places a great deal of interpretative weight in our condition as personal moral beings, endowed with liberty to will and act (the precise sense of which it would be difficult to express in contemporary terms, but suffice it to say that it approximates to what is now termed a libertarian understanding of free will), and that his outlook on the redemption process is likewise influenced by it.

Just as during his lengthy work on original sin he brings our attention to the happiness or pleasure that is the outcome of a due use of our intellectual and moral faculties (and this in the context of rebutting those who would claim that it would have evinced greater benevolence in the deity if He had granted us with the gift of original righteousness), he in another of his works actually connects it to the matter of our attaining a state of moral righteousness in which redemption essentially consists for him. He begins by

stating that in fact 'there could be no such thing as any moral attainment, if nothing could be acquired by the due exercise of our natural faculties' (1784b: 119). He continues, 'The capacity of making acquisitions, by our own endeavours, suitably employed, is the true and only basis of all our moral perfection' (*id.*). And again the issue of moral agency reappears a few lines after when he states that 'it is in consequence of this... that we become capable of virtue, and worthy of praise...And had we not this power, we should be nothing more than mere perceptive beings, who do not act, but are acted upon' (*id.*).

*4.5 The Destruction of Sin*

Chauncy's interpretation of Genesis 3:15 is worthy of attention at this point. The passage in question has God declaring that He 'will put enmity between thee [Devil] and the woman [Eve], and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel'. Chauncy naturally denies a literal sense in the interpretation of these words and favours a spiritual sense, particularly an anagogical one we could say that we now explain.

These words, says Chauncy, were uttered by God to the Devil then present in the body of the serpent, and really have to do with the promise of his destruction 'as the tempter and destroyer of man, by one who should be of the seed of the woman' (1785: 97). These words therefore, apart from providing comfort to the first couple in their guilty condition—they were pronounced in their presence, and in words 'adapted to the appearance of things, and their conceptions of them' (*ibid.*, p.99)—were not really aimed at their understanding; and the comfort here spoken of has to do with the implicit promise that they were to have children, which, as Chauncy makes clear, 'could not have been the case if the death threatened had been […] immediately inflicted on them' (*id.*). The correct reading of this passage for Chauncy is that they were 'a declaration from God, summarily, though obscurely, promising or predicting, the destruction of the devil, that is, his power, interest, and kingdom', though not necessarily his being as our writer explains elsewhere (*ibid.*, p.98). The idea the passage is intending to convey, says Chauncy, is that of God's victory over sin; for when it is here said that Christ shall destroy evil, it is to be understood as the destruction of 'that kingdom of sin, which, by his means, as a tempter, he had introduced into the world' (*ibid.*, p.233).

Because of their circumstances both historical and experiential, they had (Adam and Eve) no way of understanding the full meaning of God's words within the bigger scheme of the gospel plan of salvation. They couldn't know that evil men are the seed of the devil and that Christ was the seed of the woman here spoken of; a God both human and divine, 'made of a woman, and born of her body' (*ibid.*, p.100).

It is this passage, for Chauncy, the first enunciation of the gospel scheme of providence, 'the plan of grace' (*ibid.*, p.101), that in later times became clearer through God's subsequent promises to the first prophets, and particularly through His Son Jesus Christ and the apostles. A scheme that is expected to

become even more evident in the future as mankind will gain a stronger grasp of the 'grand purpose of God' (*ibid.*, p.102).

We are aware of the limited capacity that a single model or approach to the doctrine of atonement has for making sense of the work of Christ on the cross. Current writings on this topic thus piece together a 'synthetic understanding of the doctrine from elements of the various extant models…', a procedure that Oliver Crisp and Fred Sanders labelled as an 'egalitarian approach' to the doctrine of atonement (Crisp & Sanders 2015: 13). The fact that our author, in some isolated instances notwithstanding, avails himself of language that could be described as sacrificial, and in others, as just seen, his language would fit neatly into what we previously described as a Christus Victor approach to the doctrine, is perhaps an implicit acknowledgement on his part that a single approach or model to this intractable issue is probably ill-advised. However, it is clear that, to the best of our knowledge, he could be regarded as an exemplarist.

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**Chapter 5. Philosophical Problems and Solutions to Chauncy's Account of Redemption**

*Introduction*

In the following chapter I will: (1) describe the most relevant philosophical literature in current debates about atonement theories; (2) advance Chauncy's position on the issue; (3) provide an analysis of the nature and purpose of punishment, particularly for the version of redemption favoured by our author; and (4) state the principal objections raised against exemplarist versions of the doctrine of atonement. (5) We will likewise provide a couple of more contemporary accounts of the atonement—by Hastings Rashdall and John Hick—that, like the ones described in the previous chapter, could aid us to better understand Chauncy's position; also, during our discussion of Rashdall ideas, we will make a brief parenthesis to discuss one of the main criticisms raised against exemplarist readings of the atonement, *viz.*, that since it lacks an 'objective transaction', it is ultimately an unsatisfactory model to understand the doctrine. Finally, (6) we will devote some attention to the topic of divine voluntariness, particularly in its trinitarian implications and we will end this chapter by resuming our discussion about divine impassibility.

An adequate theory of the atonement should meet the following desiderata: faithfulness to Scripture, consistency with tradition, and coherence with reason. Satisfaction theories of the atonement cannot be adequate because they founder on Mark Murphy's objection, thus being incoherent with reason. In place of such theories we should have a moral exemplar theory of the sort given by Chauncy. It doesn't founder on Murphy's objection and is faithful to Scripture—while it is contrary to some passages of Scripture, all atonement theories are so, and it is no more so than any other—, as well as is consistent with tradition (that is, consistent with the three Catholic creeds—Apostle's, Nicene, and Athanasian).

*1. The state of the Current Philosophical Debate on Atonement Theories*

It has been maintained that one of the most philosophically sophisticated and morally intuitive accounts of the atonement to appear in recent decades was advanced by Richard Swinburne's *Responsibility and Atonement* (1989), and in a more condensed form a year before in *The Christian Scheme of Salvation*. Most of the allusions to his ideas on the subject to be found in this dissertation were taken from this latter work. Now at this early stage it seems warranted to clarify that Swinburne's theory would be best classified as a satisfaction account of the atonement and as such, it takes compensation—not retribution, as it is in penal substitutionary accounts—, as its 'guiding ideal' in the removal or cleansing of the moral debt that sinners incur in by way of their misdeeds (Murphy 2009: 254). And what is it that could compensate or undo the consequences of our sinful actions? To answer such a question Swinburne first constructs a framework of reconciliation between persons and then applies it to the divine-human relationship. So, let us first go over

those elements that Swinburne takes to be essential in bringing about atonement between persons, and then lay out the role he assigns to Christ's life and death in the divine-human context.

Swinburne contends that in instances of wrongdoing the offender acquires a moral debt towards the offended. Through an analysis of cases of intentional and unintentional wrongdoing between persons, Swinburne lists a series of elements he considers necessary for reconciliation: repentance, apology, reparation, penance, and (hopefully) forgiveness; though, depending on the intentional or unintentional character of the wrong involved, not every one of such elements is indispensable for true reconciliation as we will henceforth describe. The first step towards atonement between individuals consists naturally in a change of heart, disposition, or purposive attitude on the part of the wrongdoer (Swinburne 2009:357). This could take two forms depending on whether the wrong was committed unknowingly or by accident (*i.e.* involuntarily), or if it was the outcome of either deliberate malice or through blameworthy negligence or reckless behaviour (*i.e.* intentionally) (*id.*). By repentance Swinburne describes a rejection of the wrongful act by the culprit that takes place privately (*in foro interno*); a rejection that consists in both an internal acknowledgement of the wrongness of the past act, and a resolution not to incur in the same kind of misdeed in the future (*id.*). In apology I make public this repentant disposition (*in foro externo*) and make clear to the wronged individual that my current 'purposive attitude' is not the same as the one entailed in my previous offense (*id.*). Now if my wrongful act was unintentional then only apology is needed to begin the reconciliation process, but if there was a blameworthy volitional state involved repentance is also required (*ibid.*, p.358). Moreover, the connection between these two elements in cases of intentional wrongdoing is clear to see in the fact that sincere or convincing apologies—as are required in instances of serious offenses—are very much predicated on a genuine inward repentance beforehand.

After repentance and/or apology, reparation is an unavoidable feature for both intentional and unintentional wrongdoing. By reparation we are to understand all those actions meant to undo, to the extent that this is even possible, the negative consequences or effects of our wrongful actions (*ibid.*, p.357). For cases of negligence that concern private property for instance, some form of reparation will usually be available; for example, if you lend me a book and I somehow damage or destroy it, then one straightforward way of making reparation will be for me to buy you a new copy (*id.*). But as we will afterwards describe, in some instances reparation or at least true reparation seems impossible to achieve—there is no reparation possible for example for the victims of murder, and no matter what Swinburne thinks, if I run you over with my car while inebriated and leave you paraplegic, then regardless of how much I spend in wheelchairs, medical care or whatever else to alleviate your suffering, true reparation will be elusive until you manage to walk again.

The last action open to wrongdoers in their quest for reconciliation with their victims is penance, which Swinburne characterizes as a costly gift that goes beyond what is required in reparation and that has

for purpose the reiteration by the culprit of the good intentions exhibited in his previous steps (*ibid*., p.358). It is precisely this costliness that grants seriousness to the repentant's reparation efforts, for as Swinburne rightly holds, to give what we cannot easily afford evinces how sincere our efforts at reconciliation really are (*id*.). It goes without saying that penance is only required in instances of deliberate, negligent or reckless wrongdoing; that is, when there is a blameworthy volitional state involved.

After repenting, apologizing, and making significant reparation and probably even penance, the wrongdoer, Swinburne argues, has done everything in his power to undo or cancel out his previously bad act; towards being at one (at-one-ment) or reconciled to his victim; but the definite remission of the guilt and moral debt he carries will depend on the concession of forgiveness by his victim (*ibid*., p.359). Forgiveness being an attitudinal or dispositional change in the victim by which he essentially agrees to not think of and treat the culprit as the person who wronged him previously (*id*.). Now no one is obligated to forgive[47] and on Swinburne's account it lies entirely within the wronged party to decide how much reparation and penance to demand before granting his forgiveness (*ibid*., pp.360-361). This furthermore is a good thing according to Swinburne, for it allows the wrongdoer to take his offense seriously as well as the importance of both the person and the relationship affected by it[48] (*ibid*., p.360). What we previously referred to, following Ryan Davis, as the 'argument from moral seriousness'.

Swinburne then applies this framework for reconciliation between persons to the divine/human relationship. Just as we owe it to our benefactors of early life, and chiefly among those to our parents, to make something good out of our lives, then, *a fortiori*, we owe it to our heavenly father as our ultimate benefactor to lead good lives or what Swinburne calls *first-rate lives* (*ibid*., p.364). Alas, this is not the case and we all end up squandering the opportunities we were given, and thus stand as guilty sinners in His presence and as required to make atonement to Him. The problem here lies in the fact that owing to the gravity of our offenses, the reparation and penance needed lies well beyond our capacities. In Anselmian fashion, Swinburne holds that the outside help comes through the life and death of Christ as the means available to repentant sinners to make the reparation and penance required (*ibid*., pp.364,366). It is hence only after 'sinners combine their repentance and apology with pleading the work of Christ as a means of reparation and penance that God forgives them their sins and their guilt is removed' (Porter 2004: 231). And since Swinburne holds that the best reparation possible is the one that restores the damage caused by

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[47] Swinburne rightly holds that despite this non-obligatory character of forgiveness, Christians do have such an obligation to forgive based on various sources of Christian dogma such as the Lord's Prayer (2009: 361).

[48] Swinburne claims that it would be in fact wrong to forgive serious offenses without at least requiring a sincere apology from the wrongdoer. Failing to do so he holds, trivializes human relationships for it presupposes that good human relationships could exist when we don't take our actions towards each other seriously (2009: 359-360).

the wrongful act—instead of merely giving something else as compensation—, and if the damage at hand consists in our living second-rate lives, then the offering of a perfect life is indeed fitting reparation for such a case (Swinburne 2009: 366).

However, let us remember that on Swinburne's theory it is up to the victim of wrongdoing (in this case God) to determine how much reparation and penance to demand before accepting to forgive the sinner. So that, as Steven Porter cogently remarks, on Swinburne's theory God could have settled for any other expedient to provide the required satisfaction (Porter 2004: 232). Far from being necessary, Christ's life and death was only one morally felicitous method for doing so 'amongst other fitting ways given God's overall intentions for human salvation' (*id.*). Why not think that Christ's perfect human life, Porter asks, could be sufficient to constitute the necessary satisfaction? And if this is so, it would seem unlikely that 'a good God would require such an event for forgiveness' (*id.*). In short, Porter's critique of the Swinburnian atonement process is that while it seems to accommodate or make sense of Christ's active obedience, it fails to do so for His passive obedience; for 'unless there is some good purpose that can only or best be achieved' by such death, then such a death would be at best inconsequential and at 'worst foolish or suicidal' (*id.*).We will retake this issue in a latter segment of this chapter. What Porter claims to be needed then is a theory of the atonement that bears a closer relationship with Christ's suffering and death; one that makes sense, or more sense at least, of His voluntary death (*ibid.*, pp.231-232). And with such an objective in mind Porter sets out to provide a renewed defence of the theory of penal substitution to which we now turn.

Porter's more constructive writing on the atonement—his defence of penal substitution—starts with a defence of the infliction of penal consequences on deliberate wrongdoers; with what he labels as the utilitarian and intrinsic ends served by retributive punishment. Contrary to Swinburne, Porter believes that in intentional wrongdoing (particularly when such acts include *mens rea* conditions) the culprit has in fact acquired a penal debt towards his victim and that even after engaging in the Swinburnian atonement process in its entirety, 'he will likely deserve further loss' (*ibid.*, p.234). For Porter then, victims of deliberate wrongdoing 'have a retributive right to punish their wrongdoers' (*ibid.*, p.233). A retributive right that is based on the deliberate misuse of certain rights and/or privileges by the wrongdoer. Accordingly, retributive punishment for Porter is the 'forcible withdrawal of certain rights and/or privileges from a wrongdoer in response to the intentional misuse of those rights and/or privileges by the wrongdoer' (*ibid.*, p.234). Ultimately though, despite its permissibility, its justification or what Porter calls its fittingness will lie in the moral goods that can be gained through the imposition of retributive punishment (*ibid.*, pp.234, 236).

Beyond the known utilitarian ends served by retribution such as deterrence or rehabilitation, Porter lists what he terms as the intrinsic ends served by it: taking the harm caused with appropriate seriousness;

treating the wrongdoer as 'a responsible moral agent' (*id.*); and in its more relational aspect, it affords to both the victim and the relationship marred by the wrongful act an adequate value judgement by the wrongdoer (*id.*). A deliberate wrongdoer going through retributive punishment would thus be granted with the opportunity of correctly considering the reasons that put him in that situation: of taking seriously his wrongful act, the person(s) affected by it, and the relationships involved. He would then be, in short, treated as a responsible moral agent; and in Swinburnian fashion, not doing so according to Porter, runs the risk of trivializing human relationships (*id.*).

Transposed to the divine-human context, we stand as penal debtors with respect to God, for everything we have, including our very lives is the consequence of His gracious and unmerited gift. Moreover, if we take into consideration the fact that we were granted with the opportunity of attaining the highest possible happiness any creature could experience, *viz.*, the unmediated experience and company of God Himself in the afterlife, then to knowingly squander 'the goods and opportunities of earthly human life... is a clear misuse of the rights and privileges we have been given by God' (*ibid.*, p.235). God would thus be justified in taking away, forcibly, these same rights and privileges—physical and spiritual death in theological terms.

It should be clear by now that Porter has a rather reformative and utilitarian conception of retributive punishment, and that he bases his transposition from the merely human to the divine-human context for these very reasons. For instance, even though Porter does not contend that it was necessary for God to follow such a procedure (here talking about what passes for the orthodox account of the atonement) to attain reconciliation between mankind and Himself, he does argue that 'there is great moral worth in him doing so' (*id.*). Such a process, again, will permit the wrongdoer to take his action, his victim and the relationship affected with due moral seriousness, and he will therefore be treated as a responsible moral agent (*id.*). All of which will redound, according to Porter, to the moral betterment of the wrongdoer (*id.*).

As for its utilitarian tincture, we are to concern ourselves now with Porter's arguments for defending the moral coherence of the substitution aspect of his theory, that is, of the penalty transfer from the guilty party (us) to Christ. At this point we arrive at an important fork in the road in current philosophical analyses of penal substitution theories of the atonement—the alleged logical and/or conceptual impossibility of punishing an innocent person. It has been argued, following Joel Feinberg's ideas concerning punishment, that since it is part of the very definition of punishment that the hard and authoritative treatment inflicted is in response to a person's failure to meet a certain binding standard (Craig 2018: 510), that an indispensable aspect of punishment is that it 'expresses condemnation of the wrongdoer, of the wrongdoer as performer of the wrong' (Murphy 2009: 256). And if punishment is chiefly condemnatory expressive action of a guilty individual, then one cannot logically maintain to be able

to punish someone one does not consider to be guilty or at fault in the first place (Porter 2004: 236; Murphy 2009: 255-257). For the time being let us simply mention that such semantic or logical qualms turn out unpersuasive for Porter, and that he believes that the claim that punishment could only be executed on blameworthy individuals is not a logical assertion 'but a moral one' (Porter 2004: 236). We will retake this issue later on when going over Mark Murphy's and William Lane Craig's contributions to this debate.

But beyond these logical or conceptual disquisitions, Porter grounds the moral coherence of the substitutionary aspect of his theory in two elements: (1) on the intentional character of the decision involved, and this itself based on a sound mind to take the culprit's place in the reception of hard treatment; and (2) on the ultimate justification for the imposition of retributive punishment: the accomplishment of certain good ends as has been already described (*id.*). This would permit, Porter believes, a relative freedom in the execution of this retributive right by the victim, and it also helps to explain why on this view it is ultimately up to the victim to decide 'within limits...to what extent and in what manner to inflict punishment' (*id.*). A freedom, moreover, that Porter naturally believes to include the acceptance of a 'voluntary penal substitute' (*id.*), for, on his view, if the good ends that warrant the punishment of the wrongdoer are also served through punishment of the substitute then this lends justification to his version of penal substitution (*ibid.*, p.237). Against Porter here however, one can apply the same arguments employed against humanitarian theories of punishment in the sense that they tend to dissociate punishment from desert (Lewis 1954: 225), and perhaps more troubling as we will afterwards explain in a more detailed segment devoted to punishment, in opening up the possibility of tyrannical forms of judicial authority that are predicated on alleged loftier goals.

Porter's endorsement of penal substitution is not however without qualifications and he provides clear instances of wrongdoing in which his theory would be simply out of place: a rapist's mother for example, with a willing disposition and sound mind notwithstanding, should not be allowed (as in practice it is never allowed) to serve his son's prison sentence. And the reason we find such a transfer morally counterintuitive according to Porter, is that 'the likely good ends' that could be attained by the punishment of the culprit (such as deterrence and prevention[49]) would not be served by the punishment of the substitute (*id.*). Though in the substitution that concerns us, that of Christ taking our place to receive our punishment, these good ends according to Porter are not an issue of concern (*id.*).

To recap at this point: we began with Swinburne believing that in order to atone for our sins, to be reconciled to God, it was necessary to make satisfaction for our wrongs; but after Porter's misgivings concerning Swinburne's apparent incapacity to make sense of Christ's passive obedience in his scheme of

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[49] The main good ends that Porter ascribes to criminal punishment are deterrence and prevention (Porter 2004: 237).

atonement, it would appear that we are now in orthodox Reformation quarters, arguing that genuine atonement can be achieved only if Christ Himself somehow takes the punishment that was our due. Let us now look briefly at Mark Murphy's theory of the atonement to see what valuable insights can be gained through what he labels as a vicarious punishment account; a theory he puts forward as capturing the kernel of the penal substitutionary theory but that avoids, so he says, what he regards as an insuperable conceptual or logical incoherence in it. And it is to this latter aspect of Murphy's ideas that we move into.

It was Murphy's work that introduced the definition of punishment—itself informed by current discussions in the philosophy of law—with which we are working, and since the essence of his critique against the penal substitution theory hinges on it, and it will also be a matter of concern during our revision of William Lane Craig's defence of such a view, we consider it appropriate to list its main components or characteristics at this point. Punishment we said is hard treatment, and as such it is 'perceived as an evil by the person punished' (Murphy 2009: 255); it is also authoritative in the sense that it is administered by someone legitimized to do so, that is, someone legally authorized; and lastly, punishments are for failures to meet binding standards (*id.*). When an instance of imposition of hard treatment is portrayed as punishment but fails to meet all these conditions, then we have, says Murphy, a case of defective punishment (*id.*). As it would be if, for instance, the authority or legitimacy of the person or institution in charge of inflicting such treatment is rightfully questioned, or if, as well, the wrongdoer for whatever reasons sees his punishment as not a completely unwelcomed development (*id.*).

These three conditions moreover, though necessary for an adequate definition of punishment, are not jointly sufficient conditions for it, for Murphy considers that certain cases in which hard treatment is authoritatively imposed for a failure to a meet a standard might nonetheless not count as instances of punishment. Torts or penalties in sports he believes, are not punishments, and he takes it as validation of this point the fact that torts are usually the domain of civil, not criminal law (*id.*). Which brings us to his fourth and more defining feature of punishments—that punishment, as already mentioned, is expressive action; action that expresses condemnation 'of the wrongdoer as performer of the wrong'[50] (*ibid.*, p.256). Among the virtues of such a definition for Murphy are: (1) a better way of recognizing instances of wrongdoing from those that aren't; and (2) it 'makes intelligible the fact that crimes have *mens rea* (guilty mind) conditions as essential elements' (*id.*). The first of these would help to explain why in tort awards or in infringements of sports rules there is no expression of condemnation according to Murphy; and for the latter alleged virtue, such definition would assist us in understanding why in criminal law, despite the

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[50] Punishments on this account are neither directly and solely against the wrongdoer *qua* wrongdoer, nor is it intended to condemn only the wrongful act (Murphy 2009: 256).

existence of a wrongful act (*actus reus*), if there is no blameworthy volitional state involved (presupposing intentionality, reckless or negligent behaviour) then there is no real crime according to Murphy (*id.*).

Considering Murphy's adoption of Feinberg's definition of punishment, one can see that in the dichotomy previously addressed, he believes there to lie an unresolvable conceptual tension and/or logical inconsistency in the idea of punishing an innocent individual. For if one adopts an expressivist definition of punishment, then punishment is a non-transferable activity (*id.*). One would not be able to express condemnation, so the argument would go, 'via hard treatment of someone who one does not take to be worthy of condemnation' (*id.*). Murphy likens this non-transferable quality of punishment—thought of as an expressive activity and not as a basic action—with the non-transferable character of an official honouring ceremony (*ibid.*, pp.256-257). Just as it would make no sense to punish someone one doesn't consider to be at fault, to praise or honour someone for an achievement or feature they haven't attained or don't possess is equally absurd. Praising and punishing 'are expressive actions, and they presuppose that their targets are bearers of certain relevant evaluative properties' (*ibid.*, p.257). Praise substitution, just as penal substitution can only be directed towards those individuals bearing the 'relevant evaluative properties' and are thus non-transferable activities (*id.*).

Harkening back to Porter's theory and even after acquiescing in his rather contentious concept of a retributive right (enjoyed by those wronged to punish their wrongdoers), such a right under the definition of punishment we are working with would be unavailable for those wronged to transfer (*ibid.*, p.258). We mentioned already that such an issue turned out to be unpersuasive for Porter, and that from the obvious fact that innocent people *are* subjected to hard treatment for crimes they didn't commit, he concludes that the objection at hand mustn't be logical, but moral (*id.*). Murphy rejects such a view claiming that even if there is no logical inconsistency there could still be conceptual incoherence involved (*Cfr.* The Moorean Paradox as an example of a logically consistent assertion that is nonetheless ultimately incoherent)[51](*id.*).

Murphy likewise believes that this definition provides him with resources to counter David Lewis' qualified endorsement of penal substitution. Lewis' defence of penal substitution (*Do We Believe in Penal Substitution?* [1997]) revolved around the apparent tolerance exhibited (by society in general) when an offender, punished through a fine, has that fine paid by someone else. In such instances, says Murphy, the only way to characterize them would be either that: (a) there is punishment taking place though of a defective sort; or (b) that no one is really being punished (*id.*). Now if we describe the situation under the former rubric, this would be because the law only stipulates that the criminal ensures that the amount demanded by the fine be paid, and this regardless of who (such as a wealthy relative) makes the required disbursement and hence also regardless of whether such payment actually creates financial difficulties for

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[51] 'I believe that P, but P is false' (Murphy 2009: 258).

the wrongdoer (*ibid.*, p.259). Or we could also describe the situation as one in which no one is being punished owing to the simple fact that if someone else pays the fine, then surely the person fined (the wrongdoer) is not being punished, and there would also be no intelligible sense in which it could be affirmed that the substitute is in fact being punished for the misdeeds that generated the fine in the first place (*id.*). Faced with such alternatives, it is important as Murphy suggests, to remember that 'penal substitution is not supposed to eliminate punishment, but rather to re-direct it' (*ibid.*, p.258); and since neither a clear imposition of punishment nor a genuine substitution could be discerned in Lewis' examples, Murphy believes Lewis' defence, albeit qualified, turns out to be unsatisfactory (*ibid.*, p.259).

One could also bring against Lewis an argument only tangentially touched by Murphy but more thoroughly developed by Philip Quinn—instances that demonstrate that this alleged general tolerance towards offender's fines (thought of as punishments) being paid by others is not as widespread as Lewis seems to think. Quinn's text is mostly a recapitulation of court rulings and legal opinions that evince dissatisfaction with penal substitution in cases of fines (Quinn 2004). Although the legal evidence put forward by Quinn is admittedly indirect, for they do not concern examples in which someone else serves as a penal substitute in the disbursement of an offender's large fine, they do address 'the underlying ethical issue', which Quinn takes to be 'whether offenders should be allowed to avoid punishment in the form of fines' (*ibid.*, p.722). Legal reasoning here proves to be significant for our purposes in the distinction it draws between compensatory and punitive awards, and on the lawfulness of insurance coverage against this latter punitive or exemplary damages (*ibid.*, pp.722-728).

But returning to Murphy, it is due for us to describe in what exactly does his nearby alternative to penal substitution consists in. The penal substitution view holds, let us remember, that a person A deserves to be punished, but that person B undergoes the punishment that was A's due, thereby releasing A from the punishment he deserved (Murphy 2009: 260). This we said while maybe not logically inconsistent, did present, to Murphy at least, a conceptual or semantic incoherence. On the contrary, the vicarious punishment account holds that person A deserves to be punished, but that person 'B undergoes hard treatment, which hard treatment constitutes A's being punished; and so A no longer deserves to be punished' (*id.*).

As in the penal substitution account, in vicarious punishment the hard treatment inflicted on Christ is what constitutes the punishment and allows for the 'requital of ill-desert' (*id.*); but unlike penal substitution, in vicarious punishment the wrongdoer himself is punished through the hard treatment that is inflicted in the substitute (*id.*). This could only come about, it is obvious, through a close personal connection between wrongdoer and substitute, such that the harms that befall the latter have a direct negative effect on the former. To this effect Murphy lists the many ways in which one could be made worse off through the imposition of punishment—by being deprived of one's liberty, bodily integrity, property or

even the loss of one's life, and calls all these forms of hard treatment as punishments exerted or inflicted *in propia persona* in the sense that they are immediately applied in one's own person (*id.*). Though Murphy, surely taking inspiration from history, states that not all punishments have to be inflicted in this manner, and that one way in which we could be punished is through the suffering of an innocent person who bears a special relationship to us; a suffering that is the outcome, and this is important to remember, of one's inability to meet a certain binding standard; of 'one's wrongful action' (*ibid.*, p.261). A feature which would surely aggravate the (indirect) punishment of the culprit.

Murphy claims that this vicarious punishment account is genuine punishment and through the counterfactual strategy of imagining a legal system based on it—his example involves the case of a murderer whose own spouse is killed (therefore punishing him) owing to the fact that his victim was himself married—he claims to meet all of the conditions of punishment previously listed. It would be authoritative, for it would be part of the legal code to punish wrongdoers in such manner; it would also be hard treatment imposed for a failure to meet a standard; and it would also be clear that such hard treatment would be 'essentially condemning... and limited by the variety of negative and affirmative defences that block attributions of blameworthiness and so make condemnation inappropriate' (*id.*).

Since it is not our aim to analyse in greater depth Murphy's theoretic proposal, we will only mention that despite its avoidance of the conceptual incoherence he finds in penal substitution accounts, this comes at a great moral cost, for on such a view one would have to countenance the justice of subjecting innocent persons (what he calls the *suffering innocents*) to hard treatment for the wrongs committed by someone else (*id.*). To this Murphy responds that if everyone in society has informedly and freely consented to be potential suffering innocents (how such a consent could be achieved he never mentions), then such a device would 'remove a basis for claiming that requiring [such] compliance is itself unjust' (*ibid.*, p.262). Again, as we will afterwards more fully explain, Murphy's approach could be reproached, as some liberal theories of punishment have been, with opening the door to tyrannical forms of judicial authority in the sense of justifying cruel and unjust punishment owing to allegedly utilitarian goals pursued by such methods. A case in point and in Murphy's own words: 'if an action is purported to be cruel (though not unjust), we would have to ask whether the action is justified by the ends the action pursues and the circumstances in which it is performed' (*id.*).

So it seems that vicarious punishment for Murphy is morally warranted on the alleged free and informed consent of the would-be suffering innocents; indeed, it all seems to hang on it. But Murphy himself elsewhere seems to be aware of just how hard consent to such a scheme would be to achieve—consent to such a scheme, he mentions, 'could probably not be freely and informedly acquired' (*ibid.*, p.263). If we take its analogical base, that is, it's possible human context of application, and deem it as inherently unjust and cruel no matter its avowed lofty goals, then we are inclined to regard it as a rather

unpalatable theory for the doctrine of the atonement; specially when applied to a God whose essence is presumed to be that of love.

A different strategy by Murphy in defending his theoretical proposal is to argue that in following such an expedient the utilitarian ends of punishment (retribution and deterrence) are better served than through other schemes of retribution (*ibid.*, p.264). It is prima facie possible that the prospect of having a loved one punished for my faults be a stronger deterrent than any sort of punishment inflicted *in propia persona*, such as imprisonment; and from a retributivist standpoint, serious wrongdoing 'might be better answered by punishing me through harm to a loved one than through unmediated punishing of me' (*id.*). Now all this might be true, but the issue of the glaring injustice of subjecting an innocent person to hard treatment for something someone else did; of treating such person as a mere means to an end, remains, no matter how valuable such ends might appear to be.

Lastly, Murphy argues, there might be other ends apart from achieving the aims of punishment that might commend vicarious punishment to ourselves, such as unity. Adapting an example from Porter in which a team captain volunteers to undergo the punishment (the running of extra laps) that was due to some members of such squad for arriving late to practice, Murphy claims that in having the captain solely undergoing the hard treatment, as opposed, let's say, to the whole team running extra laps, a sentiment of unity amongst the team could be better elicited than with the alternative. This would be so because, claims Murphy, if everyone is made to run, then 'the focus is in one's own discomfort, one's own pain' (*ibid.*, p.265). When the captain runs 'there is a common focus, on the suffering of the one' (*id.*). But before passing to Craig's renewed defence of penal substitution, let us state Murphy's vicarious punishment account in theological terms, that is, as applied to the reconciliation between God and sinful mankind.

The theory would go something like this: by sinning, by disobeying the divine law, we merit punishment and until such ill-dessert is dealt with (requited that is), union with God is unattainable (*id.*). God then decides to deal with this ill-dessert through the vicarious device of subjecting Christ to hard treatment in our stead; a hard treatment that constitutes *our* punishment owing to the special relationship between ourselves and Christ—that of Him being our Lord (*id.*). And since Christ freely and informedly decided to undergo such treatment (as it couldn't have been otherwise), any reproaches of cruelty or injustice towards Christ and the scheme in general could be put to rest. Under this account then we expiate our sins through being 'subjected to the hard treatment of having [our] Lord made to suffer and die' (*id.*).

Craig's defence of penal substitution takes the form of a variegated reply to some of Murphy's criticisms to the theory of penal substitution as has been described lines above. First, he relies on the known device of providing a definition of penal substitution that avoids making Jesus the subject of God's retributive justice (Craig 2018: 511). One such definitional alternative would stipulate that 'God gave himself in the person of his Son to suffer instead of us the death, punishment, and curse due to fallen

humanity as the penalty for sin' (Jeffery et al. 2007: 21; cited in Craig, 2018). Under such wording of the theory says Craig, Christ is not punished, but suffers the treatment that, had it been inflicted on us, would have been our just desert and hence punishment (Craig 2018: 511). Now while it might appear that in this enunciation of the theory we avoid the risk of treating Father and Son as distinct juridical persons—one who imposes punishment, and one who endures it—we are still left with the issue of the provenance of the punishment to be paid for such sinfulness. For divine law within a Christian context is usually never thought of as having its origin in some impersonal or self-evident principles (we are aware that for some Christians this is in fact a source, but such understanding of the divine law has never been universally or even widely shared within Christendom), but rather in the will of an omnipotent and omnibenevolent deity (and here we should not be understood as necessarily endorsing theological voluntarism). And if this is so, on such an alternative we would have to commit to the claim that God gave Himself in His Son to pay a penalty whose origin was Himself (*sic*).

A different charge brought by Craig against Murphy's expressivist theory of punishment is that it involves what H. L. A. Hart called a 'definitional stop to short circuit debate' (Hart 1968: 5; cited in Craig 2018) in the sense of ruling out by definition the possibility of punishing someone other than the wrongdoer himself (Craig 2018: 512). To which, argues Craig, one could avail oneself of Feinberg's own distinction between penalties and punishments (a distinction which Murphy endorses) and simply rephrase penal substitution as that of God penalizing Christ for our sins (*id.*). Simply stated, Craig's argument here is that if the use of the word punishment is conceptually incoherent when applied to the hard treatment inflicted on an innocent person (the substitute), then one could circumvent such semantic hurdle by simply using a word other than punishment (*id.*).

But even if one wanted to retain the word punishment in a penal substitutionary account, there is a possible way of wording the theory, claims Craig, that avoids the conceptual issues raised by Murphy. And the way to do this is by simply abandoning an expressivist theory of punishment (*ibid.*, p.513). Since it is not in the scope of this paper to cover the many ways in which Craig believes to counter the merits of Murphy's adaptation of the theory of punishment we have been working with to the atonement, let us simply mention that he provides convincing argumentation to the points that: (1) this expressivist theory does not in fact carve the cases properly: that 'the line between punishments and mere penalties in the law does not coincide with the line between condemnatory and non-condemnatory harsh treatment' (*id.*); and (2) that *actus reus* is sufficient for conviction in our criminal systems, as cases of strict liability illustrate, and that therefore *mens rea* is not indispensable for issuing a conviction (condemnation) (*ibid.*, p.514).

Craig also holds that despite what we have mentioned so far, an expressivist theory of punishment is not inconsistent with penal substitution, for it is no part of such a theory that 'the censure or condemnation expressed by punishment be directed towards a particular person' (*ibid.*, p.517).

Expressivism, according to Craig, merely states that 'a certain stigma [is] attached to punishment [and] in the absence of which the harsh treatment is not punishment' (*id.*). But even if one wanted to retain the idea that expressivism entails censure of the person punished, one could avoid the conceptual incoherence raised by Murphy by availing oneself of the Reformer's doctrine of the imputation of our sins to Christ (*ibid.*, p.517). Under such a scheme, Christ, though personally blameless, is nonetheless treated by God *as if* he had in fact committed such sins and thus 'declared legally guilty before God' (*id.*). Craig defends such imputation by equating it to other legal fictions in our systems of justice and the good ends attained through such mechanisms (*ibid.*, pp.518-519); an argument that, though ingenious, turns out personally unconvincing.

*2. Chauncy's Redemption Thoughts*

It is well due for us to provide the main contours of Chauncy's ideas concerning redemption and to explicate our reasons for considering him as providing an account that could be described as exemplarist in nature. It is also important to mention that Chauncy's ideas are not so much against Craig in the sense of rebutting his defence of penal substitution. But he is decidedly against any theory that purports that a transaction of some sort—be this a ransom, a sacrifice, a satisfaction or compensation, or some form of retribution, including the one effected in a substitute as both Porter and Craig defend—was necessary in order to change God's attitude towards ourselves: from divine anger to divine mercy. Therefore, his position is clearly also at odds with the other positions covered so far, be those revolving around the concept of compensation or satisfaction (Swinburne and his historical counterpart Anselm), or those advanced by Murphy and his theory of vicarious punishment. For as Chauncy clearly hints, it is not God that needs to be propitiated, to be changed, but ourselves: for instance, in response to those that think that Christ was sent to earth in order to pacify divine wrath, and 'influence him to have mercy upon the sinful sons of men', he indubitably affirms that not only does such an assertion reflects injuriously on the infinitely benevolent deity, but argues that God was as inclined to infinite mercy before, as after the Passion and death of His only begotten Son (Chauncy 1785: 246).

We saw that we were not declared, but made righteous, according to our theologian. Made righteous through a process that respects our natures as indeterministically free, moral beings. A process that consists in the progressive acquirement of a moral character that resembles, as it is humanly possible of course, that moral perfection exhibited by our Lord more than two thousand years ago. This developmental take on moral growth—this growing in the *likeness of God*—itself as the outcome of our interactions with a physical and social environment whose main design is to educate us in love (divine pedagogy). Thus, what God seeks as we have said repeatedly, is our repentance and a genuine change of heart. Moreover, God is not indifferent towards His creation; He is not an impassible God as we noted in

the previous chapter. He willed the creation of intelligent moral beings and to ultimately bring them into fellowship with Himself; and since the nature of relationships requires the free engagement of its participants, God had to let us figure out for ourselves that the greatest good available was this possibility of fellowship with Himself. And so as to fend off possible charges of Pelagianism, he insists repeatedly on the absolute dependence on divine grace for such an internal change in the contrite sinner to be achieved.

To sum up and in answering how God will exert such influence on ourselves, Chauncy does so, to the best of our knowledge, by relying on two factors: (1) Christ life and death (both his active and passive obedience) as the quintessential example of a Christian existence devoted in love to God and neighbour; and (2) his conviction that the hardships and evils experienced in this life (as well as those of the afterlife as it will become evident in the last chapters of this work) are meant to educate us; that is, to the omnipresent topic in Chauncy's works of the divine pedagogy (*vid.* Ch. 4). It is then through both the example of Christ's life no less than his death, and through the creation of a moral environment that teaches us what Thomas Talbott once called the self-defeating nature of evil, that God influences us into becoming redeemed. Evils and sufferings, not only in this earthly realm but afterwards as well, have then a reformative and temporal character, rather than being vindictive (retributive) and eternal. So it seems that in a manner similar to both Richard Cross and Phillip Quinn, Chauncy believes that what is fundamentally required for redemption and hence atonement between God and us is a voluntary submission on our part; a free consent of our wills. A voluntary submission to God's moral government that is predicated on an internal moral change in the sinner (Quinn), and such internal change itself as the logical outcome of an apologetic disposition in the contrite sinner (Cross).

*3. The Purpose of Punishment in a Developmental Account of Redemption*
In everything discussed so far lies the assumption that the hardships we endure have a reformative character, that is, they are meant to be the springs from where moral rehabilitation or healing is achieved in the contrite sinner. And even though there is ample biblical support for such a view, the general thrust of Christian thought, particularly since Augustine, has tended to favour the equally biblically warranted outlook in which these pains and sufferings are but our rightful desert, and thus have a retributive character to them. In the present section we will therefore describe these two strands of Christian thinking highlighting those commendable aspects, as well as the demerits of what some have termed the Augustinian (Calvinistic), and the Irenaean positions on divine punishment and their overriding purpose. And since these different understandings of divine punishment are themselves connected to contrasting pictures or images of the divine nature, we will commence by briefly describing these images, an issue which we will retake later on, albeit with a different purpose, in the third section of our work (*vid.* Ch.7).

Historically, the positions to be described have fallen under the labels Augustinian, Arminian, and Universalist; and a helpful manner of making sense of these different positions is to frame them along the lines of three variables: divine love, divine sovereignty, and the doctrine of eternal damnation (Talbott 2014: 38). Accordingly, we provide below a set of three inconsistent claims for which there is, individually, apparent biblical support, but which as a matter of logical consistency cannot be all true (*id*.).

1. God sincerely loves all of His human creatures equally, and His redemptive activity is always at work with the intention of reconciling each and everyone to Himself.[52]

2. In His omnipotence God will achieve in the end the reconciliation of every individual whose salvation He desires.

While the former proposition establishes the universal character of divine love, the latter one has to do with the sovereignty of the divine will, an issue we alluded to in a previous segment of this work; lastly, alas!, there is, as Calvinists stress, apparent biblical support for the doctrine of eternal punishment in the afterlife, such that,

3. At least some sinners will never be reconciled to God and will henceforth remain separated from Him.

The Augustinian picture of God presents Him as entirely sovereign over His creation (2), though not universally loving towards it; *i.e.*, they deny proposition (1), which leads them to endorse the doctrine of eternal damnation (3). The Arminian position by contrast endorses both (1) and (3), but sees God as limited in sovereignty in that He is ultimately unable to bring about the redemption of all His human creatures. Finally, the Universalist position conceives of God as both omnibenevolent or universally loving (1), and also as in complete control of His creation (2), and therefore ends up rejecting proposition (3) (Talbott 2014: 41-42). Again, a more detailed account of these different positions will be reserved for a latter part of this work.

Having delimited the positions, it seems appropriate to say a few words about the nature of the hardships we will be discussing. At the outset we should make explicit a by now fairly common distinction between pain and suffering, though it is true that, commonly, the former tends to trigger the latter (Hick 2010: 292). We say commonly owing to the evident fact that pain as a physical sensation tends to produce very different reactions in those going through it, as evidenced by the cases of, for instance, injured athletes, soldiers in battle, explorers, martyrs, and so on, who are able to endure substantial pain without having thereby the quality of their experiences significantly altered (*ibid*., pp.295-296). It is thus plain that physical pain (*the pain sensation*) is variously affected—both mitigated and enhanced—by factors such as distraction, emotion, expectation, judgement, and others, in the person going through it, and which in turn

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[52] My presentation of these differing pictures and claims is taken from Talbott 2014.

leads to the distinction between this physical sensation understood as physical pain, and the *pain experience* which we associate to the emotionally negative (psychic) experience we call suffering (*ibid.*, pp.293,295-297). Suffering however can be, and in fact in most instances is, the result of events that have no direct connection to physical pain, or at least where this pain stimulus is not the primordial factor in its generation—remorse, guilt, bereavement, anxiety, boredom, frustration, injustice, 'unrequited affection', and an apparently endless list of others prove to us that emotional suffering is by far the most steadfast tormentor we encounter here on earth (*ibid.*, p.293).

Seen under this light, the bulk of human suffering is the result of the quality or character of our interactions with our fellow beings; of our actions or omissions towards them; of our intentions and even of those unintentional features of our selfhood that reveal the place we assign to others in our considerations (*vid.* Ch.3). Suffering, as John Hick remarks, is thus 'a function of sin': it is the outcome of engaging our lives, particularly with our living environment, in a self-centred manner (*ibid.*, p.319). But before addressing the Irenaean outlook on divine punishment, let us go over the Augustinian or retributivist understanding of the trials and tribulations we go through here on earth.

*3.1 A Retributive God?*

According to the three pictures or schools of theology in the West that we mentioned above, it is clear that the Augustinian version presents us with a divine nature where it would appear that justice and mercy are different and opposing divine attributes (Talbott 2014: 134). One where divine justice would require the punishment of sin, while divine mercy would permit its forgiveness (*ibid.*, p.136). This is likewise a view of the divine nature shared by some Arminians (e.g. Milton), and one in which these different attributes would seem to pull God in opposite directions;[53] and thus a view under which someone else, namely Jesus Christ His Son, has to resolve in order to overcome this internal strife, so that He 'might be merciful to sinners without doing violence to His own sense of justice' (*ibid.*, p.135). Now as for the unavoidable consequence (for Augustinians and Calvinists) of dying in a sinful condition, it would be the swift consignment into the Devil's custody where they would have to endure eternally what we before referred to as *poena damni* and *poena sensus* (*ibid.*, p.136).

This doctrine of eternal torment implies a philosophical theory of the nature of punishment which has been regularly referred to as retributive, and according to which the purpose of punishment has not, or should have nothing to do with *liberal* or humanitarian conceptions of punishment such as deterrence or

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[53] Early heretical sects like the Marcionites and the Gnostics were among the first Christians to call attention to the apparently opposing attributes of justice and mercy. An opposition some of them resolved by denying all identity between the God of the Hebrews (the God of the Old Testament), and the God revealed by Jesus of Nazareth (Rashdall 1919: 234; Trocmé 1993)

rehabilitation (*id.*). The only purpose of punishment from a retributive perspective would be to make satisfaction, or be a compensation for the wrong incurred in; to somehow 'balance the scales of justice' by either inflicting suffering upon the culprit, or by extracting a 'compensating loss' from him (*ibid.*, pp.136-137). Under these circumstances the most relevant factor to consider when thinking about punishment as punishment 'is whether the punishment in fact fits the crime' (*ibid.*, p.137). This proportionality between crime and punishment being one of the main tenets of a retributive theory of punishment, raises significant, if not insuperable objections to its use or its projection as the divine rationale for afterlife judgement, as will be described at length in other parts of this work (*vid.* Ch.6 and 7). For now, let us go over those positive or commendable features that a retributive theory of punishment might have to offer.

First, retributivists have called attention to the way in which such humanitarian or liberal doctrines of punishment as deterrence or rehabilitation 'tend to sever the concept of punishment from that of justice' (*ibid.*, p.137); or as C.S. Lewis words it, to remove 'from punishment the concept of desert', and which could lead in turn to the loss of basic human rights that characterize tyrannical forms of authority (1954: 225). For instance, if our guiding principle in the discharging of sentences is in fact deterrence, and on a specific instance a ruler finds that such an outcome is better served by the execution of an innocent person, though widely believed to be guilty by the society where he lives, then this apparent lofty purpose would appear to justify the punishment of an innocent individual (Talbott 2014: 137). Or if our intention is to reform or rehabilitate the criminal, then this could surely be carried out regardless of the criminal's voice in the matter; and this in turn might open the door to excessive punishment if it is then deemed to better promote such rehabilitation (*ibid.* pp.137-138).

Secondly, there is an unavoidable element of retribution in the very concept of law or regulations of any kind, as opposed to mere requests or suggestions. For as it is painfully evident in the political history of many countries (including my own), it is simply impossible to have laws, except in paper only, without a clear and corresponding penalty to be paid in case that they are violated. So if, as Talbott remarks, 'God wants to do more than simply make requests... He must also ensure that those who disobey his commands or his laws suffer a punishment of some kind' (*ibid.*, p.138).

However, if the retributive position defends as one of its main principles the idea of equal or proportionate retaliation according to the wrong committed (the *lex talionis* is one example of this line of thinking), and particularly to the degree of harm done to others; and moreover, if this retributive theory of punishment has been the basis for a defence of the doctrine of eternal damnation, the following and damaging question becomes inevitable: for what sort of crime or offense would eternal damnation be a commensurable punishment? (*ibid.*, p.139). As we will afterwards describe (Ch.6 and 7) Chauncy criticizes along these lines this philosophical theory of punishment and the doctrine of eternal torment it gives sanction to. But beyond its connection to eschatological locations, there is one more fundamental

drawback to be hurled against this retributive notion of punishment, and for which I believe the story of a close friend of a family member could be helpful.

The story to put it shortly, is about a woman whose son was murdered by a group of men whose original intention appears to have been not to kill him; they wanted certainly to cause great physical harm to him, even to maim him, though apparently not to put him out of existence altogether. My relative knew, after some years of the tragic incident, that the murderous group was about to be released from prison and she asked her friend (the mother of the murdered person) how she felt about it; if she was understandably outraged and to my relative's surprise, her response was that she felt indifferent towards it, that in fact, for all she cared, she wanted them released; that, and this is key, keeping them in prison would not bring her son back. We shall return briefly to this tragic story.

Now for less serious crimes or misdemeanours, it certainly could be possible for the wrongdoer to make atonement for his offense. Not only with the intention of expunging the stain of guilt in his own heart, but specially with the aim of undoing or removing, to the degree that this is possible, the consequences of the wrongful past action (Swinburne 2009: 356-357). These consequences are, according to Swinburne, twofold: (1) the damage inflicted in the victim, which might naturally include those closest to him; and (2) 'the purposive attitude of the guilty one toward the wronged one manifested in the causing of harm' (*ibid.*, p.357). So, if for these less serious types of crimes it is open to the criminal to somehow restore or compensate the victim of his crime, then we can speak of him as making *reparation* for his offense (*id.*). For both Swinburne and Talbott, the last stage of this process would be the forgiveness of the sinner by the victim. As an example, if you offer to me your beach house, and during my time there your bathtub is damaged, then a clear manner for me of making things right between ourselves would be to first, sincerely apologize for my lack of care, and afterwards to either correct the aforementioned harm to your bathtub or to buy you a new one of the same kind. Having done all this and having received the acceptance of forgiveness by you, we could say that the issue has been truly left behind us. Justice for this case has been served.

However, for more serious crimes such as the story described above, it is simply impossible for the offender to make true reparation for his crime; for aside from our belief in the supernatural powers of Jesus of Nazareth, we know of no one capable of bringing back to life the deceased. At this point and in connection with both the cases just described, it seems important to bring a question raised by Talbott: what would satisfy justice to the full? For the latter and minor offense of an affected piece of property, it is clear that the path there suggested for the one making reparation and hence atonement, clearly approximates to this idea of perfect justice; whereas for the former case this ideal of perfect justice seems more elusive if not downright impossible to achieve. We could certainly understand and even sympathize with the affected relatives of victims of murder in their desire to inflict suffering upon the criminal, and we

certainly have legal systems that allow us to quench this thirst for revenge (Talbott 2014: 146). But still our fundamental concern would remain unsolved for even though—in the words of Herbert Morris—if by punishing the murderer with life in prison or even with the loss of his own life, we somehow remove the unfair advantage he had gained by his murderous act, the victim's unfair disadvantage, *viz.*, the loss of his life and the enormous damage caused to his loved ones, remains unabated (Morris 1968: 478; cited in Talbott 2014.). And the reason for this is that 'punishment is simply not the kind of thing that could pay for any offense; it is no equipoise at all for sin' (Talbott 2014: 144). If the murderer were to be punished perpetually, first here on earth and afterwards in agonizing pain in hell, this would not make up for, compensate, or cancel out any given sin he had incurred in; let alone that of such heinous crime as the taking of someone's life. This is probably the most damaging critique to be raised against the retributive theory of punishment. It exhibits the very limited context in which its application seems warranted, *viz.*, where the concept of perfect justice seems impossible to achieve (Talbott 2014).

*3.2 Reformative Punishment*

If, as found in the gospels, one of the most adequate ways for thinking about the relationship of God to man is on the analogy of the best possible parental human care—a parental care which would not conceive of making its children happy apart from making them better or good—, then the thesis put forward first by Irenaeus and other Greek Christian writers[54] in which the first couple were thought of as immature and imperfect creatures meant to experience moral development through their interactions with the world in which they were placed in; a world which is moreover characterized by an apparent random distribution of good and evil; then we say, this Irenaean type of theodicy gains in favour as a better explanation for the sufferings that are an unavoidable feature of any human life.

In the case of those Hellenistic non-canonical *paters* we mentioned in the previous chapter, we easily encounter this instrumental conception of the hardships we endure. In Clement for example we find the Platonic endorsement of the idea of punishment, as distinct from vengeance, as being for the benefit of the wrongdoer himself; as being a sort of moral medicine intended to improve the (moral) state of the offender (Rashdall 1919: 230-231). It is clear that for Clement the removal of sin is but a gradual process and that forgiveness can only take place once the sinner has become a better person (*ibid.*, p.230). In Origen as well the efficacy of Christ's life and death resides in the moral change it can bring about in the believer (*ibid.*, p.264). A process that, just like it is for Chauncy, is most likely to continue in the hereafter

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[54] Other early Greek non canonical writers that thought of Adam as immature were Clement of Alexandria, Methodius, and Saint Gregory of Nazanzius (Hick 2010: 216). More contemporary writers that think along similar lines include Schleiermacher, John Hick, Thomas Talbott and our very own Charles Chauncy.

(*vid.* Ch.7) (*id.*). Clement's picture of redemption is accordingly much more interested in the role of the Logos in aiding the spiritual growth of His creatures through the tools of reward and punishment. Again, this is a conception of punishment that, far from being divorced or incompatible with divine love actually presupposes it, in the fact that God, as any good parent would, would not think of making any of His children happy at the expense of making them morally better (*ibid.*, p.232). God only punishes according to this picture, 'only when it is merciful to do so' (Talbott 2014: 147).

This moralistic or reformative idea of the sufferings we endure is one that might be more appealing to a modern reader, but it is not altogether without its problems, for as we could easily imagine a putative objector to state, there is significant suffering here on earth that seems to serve no purpose whatsoever, either for the person going through it or for those close to him. Gratuitous or dysteleological suffering that inevitably make us wonder about any conceivable use or higher purpose such ordeals are meant to serve. Hick's response for instance is to follow the counterfactual strategy of imagining the consequences, morally and practically, that the removal of excessive or unmerited suffering would entail; thereby demonstrating that the random and apparently unfair distribution and the 'often destructive and dysteleological effects of suffering have a positive significance in that they call forth human sympathy and self-sacrifice, and crate a human situation' in which good actions are to be carried out for their own sake and not in expectation of any assured reward (2010: 353).

We are aware that despite its ingenuity, such an argument is but poor consolation for people agonizing under the pressure of what seem to be unmerited and unbearable sufferings, and we must conclude at this point with the remark that such an intractable issue as the problem of evil has been to any theistic mind, lies outside the scope of the present chapter and work.


*4. Objections to Moral Influence Theories of the Atonement*

Most of the criticisms against exemplarist versions of the doctrine of atonement to be described below have their provenance in feminist theology and their worries concerning their implications in both the lives of believers (their pastoral efficacy), and in the wider cultural context where they seem to raise questions of epistemic injustice (Pogin, N.D.: 13). These theologians, it is important to notice, do not circumscribe their objections to exemplarist theories, nor do they only direct their concerns to specific models of the doctrine, but instead question the entire historical process of theoretical construction of existing models owing to what they plausibly regard as a 'backdrop of a sexist tradition that has victimized women (among others)' (*ibid.*, p.5). For the purposes at hand however, we will only cover those concerns more directly related to moral influence versions of the doctrine.

Unlike other models, the beneficiaries of Christ's sacrifice in an exemplarist account is not God (even less could it be Satan as it is in some ransom models), but us; it is this death understood as the

supreme revelation of divine love that is supposed to inspire us to change our ways and turn to God (*ibid.*, p.3). Now when confronted with such a theory, a putative objector might understandably wonder why the Christian God seems to require as a condition for redemption the sacrifice of someone, let alone that of a blameless and sinless individual (*Vid.* similar arguments by Denny Weaver and Ryan Davis in Chapter 4); or why is that 'submission to violence should constitute part of having lived perfectly?' (*ibid.*, p.7). But before going over its more gendered and epistemological considerations, let us first look at the very issue of martyrdom.

So, from a more practical perspective, and even supposing that we have 'no duties to respect and preserve our own lives', we surely could agree in that we could be of more use and help to our loved ones while we are in fact alive and well (*ibid.*, p.8). For although there could be a sense in which a deceased person could provide some sort of support or counsel, when in want of such things we generally turn to those around and closest to us. There are, as Pogin rightly remarks, not many instances in which we could be of more help to 'to our friends in death than in life' (*id.*). Instead of considering immolation as the exemplar of righteous or loving behaviour Pogin continues, it should be, as common wisdom would normally have it, a last resort; a decision to be made and acted upon only when all other options have been definitely ruled out (*id*).

As for the gendered and problematic implications of existing theories of atonement, and in particular for the exemplarist sort, Pogin calls our attention to how the ways in which different 'religions conceptualize their doctrines has a significant effect on our broader understanding of the world' (*ibid.*, p.9). And within our Christian context and its portrayal of the atonement as the most eminent revelation of divine love, the different ways in which the doctrine has been framed has had far-reaching repercussions for our notions of relationship, 'and thus ethical conduct and love generally' (*id.*). With the intention of better contextualizing her argument, Pogin cogently argues how women in the Christian tradition have usually been abused, victimized, and in general held to higher moral standards than most men (e.g. Jezebel); and where the most commendable features of such subjects of abuse have been usually resignation, humility, and submission to violence (e.g. Esther) (*id.*). Indeed, these features have typically been described and thought of as 'standing in positive relation to salvation, covenant, and redemption' (*ibid.*, p.6). And this might in turn help to explain why Christian women seem to brook for longer periods of time domestic violence, even though statistical evidence shows that the prevalence of such violence is not more prevalent in Christian families that it is in society as a whole (Nason-Clark 2004: 304; cited in *ibid.*). Moreover, this apparent vulnerability of Christian women to domestic violence cannot be fully accounted for by Christian theologies of divorce, for as statistical evidence shows, certain segments of Christianity, particularly conservative protestants, evince divorce rates that are above the average (*ibid.* pp.10-11); and in the case of

evangelicals in the U.S. for instance, their divorce rates are in fact higher than those of agnostics and atheist.[55]

The conspicuous presence and pervasive cove up of cases of child abuse in Christian institutions could also be seen in part as another unfortunate consequence of this promotion of godly patience in the face of tribulation that seems to be entailed by the Christian understanding of redemption. These lamentable results should come as no surprise, for when one conceives of redemption as the outcome of an innocent person obediently submitting to violence inflicted by others; and where the objective is to precisely redeem these tormentors, 'it is [only] natural to see suffering as something that we should take on cheerfully if we are to be godly' (*ibid.*, p.16).

Now it appears that in the tragic instances just mentioned (domestic violence and child abuse at the hands of religious authority figures) 'limits have been imposed [on the] moral imagination of the victims' (*ibid.*, p.12), and in this respect the concept of hermeneutical (or epistemic) injustice could prove to be of value. According to Miranda Fricker, by epistemic injustice we are to understand 'the injustice of having some significant area of one's social experience obscured from collective understanding owing to hermeneutical marginalization' (Fricker 2007: 155; cited in *ibid.*). Pogin's adaptation of Fricker's conceptual tool for our present purposes would operate along the following lines.

If our conceptual landscape is mainly (or even solely) the outcome of our social milieu, that is, if our concepts are nothing but social constructions, then the possibility arises that dominant social groups might 'exert undue influence on the shape of [this] conceptual landscape' (*ibid.*, p.12); *i.e.*, that such groups might end up thwarting the process of conceptual (social) construction when they consider it detrimental to their interests by either: (1) preventing the emergence and availability of conceptual tools that might better enable 'members of dominated groups to clearly understand the nature of their domination', or by (2) upholding existing conceptual frameworks that preclude the possibility for those dominated groups to even understand their oppression as unjust (*id.*). And it is with this latter expression of epistemic injustice that Pogin concerns herself when rebuking traditional theories of the atonement—on their corrupting influence on our shared 'hermeneutical resources...and through which we understand our experiences (especially those which involve suffering as a result of unjust treatment) and ethical conduct proper to right relationship' (*ibid.*, p.13). We are thus, in such an adulterated conceptual framework, more likely to downplay the importance of resistance to injustice; to favour the 'subversion of the self' by placing the well-being of others above our own, even when these very others are inflicting violence on ourselves (*id.*).

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[55] Council on Contemporary Families report, 'Civil Rights Symposium: Fifty Years of Religious Change: 1964-2014' https://contemporaryfamilies.org/50-years-of-religious-change / ; cited in Pogin.

Pogin's case against existing theories of the atonement for their failure to take into account 'the social experiences of the marginalized and oppressed' is hence not without justification (*ibid*., p.14).

## 5. Contemporary Models

*5.1 A Glimpse of the Divine in Human Conditions. Hastings Rashdall.*

Even before arriving to the last and more constructive stage of his lengthy historical survey on the concept of atonement, it becomes evident for the reader that Rashdall's sympathies lie with the Abelardian/Origenistic outlook on the topic; and that he thus accordingly recoils from 'objective' approaches such as those associated with substitutionary, expiatory, or ransom-type models. So before addressing what Rashdall's position on atonement is, let us begin by considering an 'objective' criticism commonly raised against subjective doctrines such as the one we are concerning ourselves in this chapter, and which Rashdall himself answers back.

The typical critique raised by objectivists against exemplarist versions of the doctrine of atonement would be that it 'contains no objective transaction' (Swinburne 1989: 162); that apart from any objective necessity for the death of Christ in taking away sin or its punitive consequences, and independently of the subjective fruits it might bring forth in the believer, that the doctrine is made unintelligible; *i.e.*, that without a 'rational connection between that death and the responsibilities that sin involves, and from which that death delivers', the doctrine is simply rendered unfathomable (Denney 1902: 126; cited in Rashdall).

For Rashdall such a death, as the culminating act of a life devoted in love to God and His fellow men, represents, like no other, the proof of the extent of the divine love towards mankind. To this effect and in answering the criticism just described, Rashdall advances that: (1) Christ did not prove His love by merely submitting 'as a kind of ritual act to the process of dying', nor did He, as it sometimes seems to be entailed by this version of the critique, precipitated His own death; (2) if a death was required, as it had to be since the Logos had assumed human flesh, then it had to be the outcome or have been brought about by others; an assertion corroborated we might add by the synoptics themselves, since it seems clear that Jesus entertained the idea to the very last moment of accomplishing His mission without having to undergo such a violent and painful death; (3) moreover, such scourging and death were directly connected to the fidelity evinced by Christ to His messianic calling. His acceptance of such sufferings, in the words of Ritschl, are to be regarded as the [necessary] accidents of 'His positive fidelity to His vocation' (Ritschl 1902: 565-566; cited in Rashdall). It was then by willingly becoming incarnate in a humble Palestinian Jew, and in undergoing (voluntarily as well) a death brought about by others, a death He understandably feared (Gethsemane) and that He could have avoided 'if He had wanted to do so', and that bore a direct connection to His whole life and ministry, that He manifested divine love towards mankind (Rashdall 1919: 441).

A contemporary version of this characteristically 'objectivist' objection against exemplarist readings of the atonement was advanced by Thomas Williams during his analysis of Abelard's conceptions of sin, grace and redemption. Williams contends that 'unless the Passion actually accomplishes something, unless there is an *objective transaction* made in and through the death of Christ, there is nothing about the Passion to inspire our love: pity, perhaps, or sympathy, but not love or gratitude' (Williams 2004: 260). We can mention how Williams here lumps together the ideas of 'accomplishing something' and that of the existence of an objective transaction effected in and through the Passion. And we bring attention to this since one could plausibly claim, as does P. Fiddes, that what was accomplished at Golgotha was the most eminent manifestation of divine love, owing to the utmost possible identification of God with His fallen creation; *i.e.*, that by 'enduring to the uttermost the estrangement of his own creation', the Son made clear the depth of divinity's identification with us, and thus the extent of His love for us (Fiddes 1989: 157).

Kathryn Pogin likewise challenges this objectivist criticism of moral influence theories of the atonement, a criticism that has other known advocates like Richard Swinburne. Again, Pogin questions the necessity of an objective transaction for the atonement to be rendered coherent, and does this by relying on Richard Cross' 'merit theory' of the doctrine—an alternative which Cross constructs from the materials provided by Swinburne's work on the topic—which stipulates that reconciliation with God can be attained by 'no more than repentance and apology' (Pogin N.D.: 16; Cross 2001: 397,407). On Cross' theory the atoning value of Christ's death is predicated on a divine obligation to forgive that is itself the result of an indirect promise (by God towards Christ, or by the first person to the second person of the Trinity)to do so;[56] *i.e.*, that it was Christ's death the 'supererogatorily good act' that earns from His heavenly Father such a promise to forgive those sinners who are truly penitent (Cross 2001: 408)

But returning to Rashdall, one could claim that the extent and depth of the divine love manifested pre-eminently in the death of Christ saves by providing an example for us to imitate; and where its efficacy lies in the moral effects it produces on the believer (Rashdall 1919: 443). But as Rashdall makes clear, it becomes evident that such a doctrine can attain its full significance only if we can plausibly advance the thought that in the historical Jesus a supreme revelation of God took place; and in this respect (as with others) we can see the influence of Greek patristic theology in the English philosopher (*ibid*. p.447). The best and clearest manner for stating in contemporary terms the technical language of patristic and scholastic theologians as to the divinity of Jesus, is to 'think of the revelation of God in Christ [...] after the analogy of the imperfect but progressive revelation of God in other men—in the expanding, developing mind of man, in the reason and conscience of the best men...' (*id*.). The idea being that, generally speaking,

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[56] The two conditions under which God, according to Cross, would, or at least could be thought of as indirectly obligated to forgive would be because: '(1) He promises that He will do as person X asks, and (2) X asks God to forgive the sins of the penitent' (Cross 2001: 408).

one can catch a glimpse of the divine in mankind itself; that 'in the conditions of human life we have access, as nowhere else, to the inmost nature of the divine' (*ibid.*, p.448); and particularly a higher degree of such divine revelation in the best of us: heroes, prophets, martyrs, etc; a revelation which reached its most complete or culminating form in the moral perfection encountered in the teaching and example of the historical Jesus.

As with other exemplarists, Rashdall's doctrine assigns pride of place to the divine love and to its alleged regenerating effects upon the sinner; and here once again the English philosopher attempts to shed light on the divine via the humane. All human love, says Rashdall, and particularly the most intense of human love, mirrors the divine love (*ibid.*, p.449). We are here to think of sacrificial love—the one exhibited by martyrs or heroes throughout history for example—as being a revelation of God and the strongest earthly incentive for 'attracting to that goodness of which love is the supreme element[...], and for producing repentance for that lack of love in which sin essentially consists' (*ibid.*, p.450). Upon contemplating the divine self-sacrifice, and in the unmerited and boundless love it manifests (*agape*), the sinner is moved to gratitude, which in turn is the first step in a process that includes repentance for past misdeeds, and hopefully a real change of heart.[57] Christ saves according to most exemplarists including Chauncy, by effecting a real moral change within the sinner; that is, by making the sinner actually better. Its efficacy lies predominantly in the subjective influence it exerts in the mind of the repentant sinner (*ibid.*, p.358).

This exemplarist account, moreover, tends to remove or overcome for Rashdall the undue one-sidedness accorded to His death by most Christians, and regards His salvific efficacy as residing in His whole life and ministry. On such an understanding Christ's death remains an indispensable part of the Incarnation as a whole, probably its most eminent part, but it is still notwithstanding only a part (*ibid.*, p.443). The other equally important aspect for Rashdall is understandably Christ's ministry here on earth, for it is especially through His teaching that God was made known to us. To this effect he brings our attention to the fact that it was mainly through His teaching that His divinity was evinced to the disciples and the early fathers of the church, and in this respect it is important to remember that miracle workers were not an altogether absent feature in the Palestine of the first century. For if it be the case, as Rashdall points out, that it was false that 'never a man spake like this man, [then] there is simply no foundation for any theory of Christ's person' that would portray Him as anything else than an eminent prophet whose destiny, like all other prophets, is to be superseded when new and more inspired ones appear in the

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[57] Rashdall makes an interesting point to the effect that gratitude is the last element of the divine image to disappear from the soul of the recalcitrant sinner (*ibid.*, p.361). And if the benefactor is perceived to be none other than the Son of God, the gratitude felt for Christ 'passes into and becomes indistinguishable from gratitude to the Father whom He reveals' (*ibid.*, p.361).

religious and moral landscape of mankind (*ibid.*, p.455). It is thus His teaching the true foundation for the Christology that purports to express that in Him the Logos was united to human flesh as never before (*ibid.*, p.457).

*5.2 A Developmental and Teleological Version of Redemption. John Hick*

The present section will have for its purpose the presentation of John Hick's *soul-making theodicy* as put forward in his now classical work *Evil and the God of Love* (1966), for it connects to both the Hellenistic fathers' outlook on redemption (Ch.4), and it likewise shares important features with Chauncy's soteriological ideas, as will become evident in the remainder of this work.

Hick's starting point is his endorsement of what he calls the Irenaean tradition—as distinct from the Augustinian theodicy—, and which, let us recall, instead of conceiving of the first couple as created as finitely perfect creatures (that is, as the recipients of original justice or righteousness, and then inexplicably falling away from such state by disobedience to a single positive command in Eden) this Irenaean tradition envisages man as in a continuous process of creation. Adam and Eve were created as sharing the divine image, though lacking in the divine likeness, which is to be thought of as a quality of personal existence arrived to via the free engagement with the physical and social environment in which God placed them in (2010:253-255).

A convenient procedure for bringing to the fore those aspects of Hick's theodicy that we consider to be more relevant to our present purposes, is to take up the very familiar criticism raised by atheists or agnostics against the God of traditional theism, and in particular that of Christianity: the presence and extent of evil in our world; what is also known as the antitheistic argument from evil.[58] The rationale is well known: if God is all loving and all powerful, how can the existence of evil be accounted for? Such seemingly pointless suffering of, let's say, children suffering from a chronic disease such as cancer, either renders the God of traditional theism as non-existent, so the putative objector would claim; and if He does exist, then he is either incapable of preventing such misfortunes, or, worst even, if omnipotent, then He is unwilling to ward off such heinous evil. Underlying this position, as Hick remarks, lies a conception of the divine purpose which is fundamentally at odds with what Christians have traditionally believed, or have ought to believe, with respect to this issue (*ibid.*, p.256). These anti-theistic critics assume that a loving God's purpose for His creatures ought to have been the creation of a hedonistic utopia or paradise deprived of all suffering and pain (*id.*). 'They think of God's relation to the earth on the model of a human

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[58] It will be the more extreme logical or deductive version of the antitheistic argument that will be taken up in our discussion. The more modest inductive or evidential version of the argument will not be considered. For a definition of the two versions of this argument see Talbott, T., *The Inescapable Love of God* (2014).

being building a cage for his pet animal to dwell in' (*ibid.*, p.257). A loving and able pet-owner would therefore try to make the domains of his pet as comfortable and pain-free as possible, and to the extent that this is not the case, it either proves Him unable or unwilling to do so (*id.*). But as just mentioned, this is not how Christians have thought about the relation of God to His human creatures and the environment in which He placed them in. And to this effect it seems warranted to bring our focus to a powerful image with strong scriptural backing (and shared by Chauncy) in the preaching of our Lord Himself: God as our loving heavenly father.

Jesus likened the attitude of God towards man with that of human parents (at their best) towards their own children as the most appropriate way for us to think about God's attitude to His human creatures. Granted this, it seems correct for us to ask about the way in which the best parental care manifests itself, and our intuitions here will further confirm the teleological character in both Hick's, and later on, in Chauncy's theodicy. A loving and responsible parent will no doubt go to great lengths in the intention of securing the least amount of pain and suffering possible for his offspring. He will in fact endeavour to acquire for his children pleasure and happiness in manifold ways, though not at the expense of the acquisition of the most valuable human traits, such as respect for the truth, compassion, a strong sense of justice, moral integrity, and possibly above all, a loving disposition towards his fellow men (*ibid.*, p.258). A parent whose only concern—as it is sadly very common in everyday experience—is to make his son's existence as pleasurable and pain-free as possible, could hardly be regarded as having his son's best interests in mind. A child caught swindling old ladies, to use one of Talbott's examples, and whose parents did nothing to remedy the situation, might rightfully be called indifferent or indolent, though certainly not very loving (Talbott 2014: 110). Such a child would most likely end up being unable to cope with the distressful and tragic eventualities that inevitably befall during the course of a person's life. He would most likely grow to be morally immature and in general, as the depositary of an unattractive personality that makes him incapable of relating properly to his fellow beings (Hick 2010). We are here then to think of God in this same manner; accordingly, if He were to condone 'our selfishness, our vicious attitudes, our tendency to promote our own interest (as we perceive it) at the expense of others', and most importantly, at the expense of our own future moral development, He would likewise have 'no real regard for our future happiness' (Talbott 2014: 110).

Linking this widespread Christian image of God as our loving Father with Hick's endorsement of the Irenaean picture of man as morally immature, it becomes clear what Christians have traditionally believed to be the divine purpose for themselves in the world they were placed in: we are meant to grow morally through our free interactions with the environment He placed us in. As creatures currently in the process of becoming perfected after the likeness of our saviour, our surroundings were never intended to be a hedonistic paradise. The most conducive environment for such a task of soul-making would be one

where the greater part of the goods and ills we experience are the direct (or indirect) consequences of our very actions, and one where we are meant to learn through bitter personal experience what some have called the self-defeating nature of evil. In short, our physical universe and everything in it are not to be thought of as wanting in additional joys or as unduly charged with unwarranted evils of all sorts, but as a fitting environment for the 'realization of the most valuable potentialities of human personality' (Hick 2010: 258). This general picture, as made manifest in the pages of this work, is shared by Chauncy.

*6. Other Concerns*

*6.1 Divine Voluntariness*

During our summary of Rashdall's position on atonement we paid attention to his rebuttal of a characteristic *objectivist* criticism raised against exemplarist (or more generally against *subjectivist*) versions of the doctrine. Although he plausibly defended in his work the conviction that Jesus' death had been the outcome of the free acts of others, that is, that He manifested divine love by submitting to a death brought about by others, 'the incarnation itself—Christ's entrance upon human life which made such a death necessary—was, according to the traditional representations, the voluntary act of the pre-existent Son of God' (Rashdall 1919: 444).

Rashdall is surely on target when he asserts that Arianism (and perhaps even possibly Ditheism) is the take on the doctrine that more closely corresponds to the popular understanding on the matter; *i.e.*, to the idea of the pre-existent Son of God—existing side by side with the Father from all eternity, and with a separate or distinct mind or consciousness from that of the Father—deciding to undertake the redemption of fallen man 'by an act of voluntary choice [and] distinct from the volition of His Father' (*id.*). An unfortunate though understandable development given Tertullian's legacy on Trinitarian doctrine,[59] particularly his use of the term 'person' to speak about the divisions within the Godhead, and the sheer intractable nature of trinitarian dogma itself (*ibid.*, p.446).

We mentioned previously some of the trinitarian concerns that a juridical or transactional reading of the atonement process entails, such as the questioning of the supererogatory character of Christ's death or the apparent enmity they seem to entail between the Son and the Father. Difficulties that seem to arise from the proclivity to regard the relations within the Godhead, especially those between the Father and Son as those of 'distinct juridical persons' (*id.*). Whether in the form of sacrifice, where the Son offers and the Father receives, or that of punishment, and where the Father imposes and the Son endures. Now such a conception of the relations within the persons of the Godhead is clearly at odds with orthodoxy as

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[59] In *Against Praxeas* Tertullian employs the Aristotelian concept of substance in the sense of there being only one God, but also in the sense of there existing three distinct persons sharing 'the same essential nature' (Moreland & Craig 2003: 579).

encountered in the Nicene and Constantinopolitan creeds. In those credal formulations, and in the expositions centuries later advanced by the likes of Augustine and Aquinas, God has but one mind, not two nor three.[60] If as Augustine, and before him Philo of Alexandria both held, the Son is the pre-existent wisdom of the Father—in His pre-incarnate condition that is—then as Rashdall rightly remarks, it is unwarranted for us to conceive of the Son as entertaining separate thoughts or as desiring differently or even separately, from that of His Father (*ibid.*, p.445; Moreland & Craig 2003: 579-582). We should therefore avoid the anachronistic reading of the term 'person' in Tertullian in the 'modern psychological sense of three different centres of self-consciousness' (Moreland & Craig 2003: 579).

*6.2 A Passible God?*

In everything discussed so far lies the belief that what an exemplarist/infusionist type of model is aiming for is our reconciliation with our maker; not evidently because of some obstacle or grudge to be attributed to God, but owing to our own rejection of His ever-available grace. A restored relationship with divinity, for, lest we forget, we were made in His image and with the intention of entering into fellowship with Him, is thus the grand outcome that the atonement is meant to achieve.

We already mentioned Fiddes' suggestion that by undergoing the gruesome reality of death on the cross, and therefore by identifying with the estrangement that characterizes our fallen condition, God manifested His love towards us. During his treatment of Abelard's doctrine on atonement Fiddes regretted the fact that for him, Abelard stops short of complete freedom when it comes to the expression of God's love for His creatures; for Abelard seems to operate under the assumption of the impassibility of God, a divine feature which he understandably extends to Jesus (1989: 157). Framed within the Christological belief of the two natures of Christ,[61] this means that when Christ suffered and died, it was only in His humanity that such events took place; His divinity remaining unscathed (*id.*). For Abelard believed, and indeed it might seem for the vast majority of Christian theologians down the ages, that for God 'love cannot be unto death' (*ibid.*, p.158).

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[60] In this respect Bernard of Clairvaux's distinction between the 'union of wills' a person could attain with God, and the 'unity of will' one is required to speak when considering the 'persons' within the Trinity, might prove to be instructive (Brümmer 1992: 447). For Bernard, since in the Father and Son we encounter but one will, and one essence, 'there can be no agreement or combining or incorporation […] for there must be at least two wills for there to be agreement, and two essences for there to be combining and uniting in agreement' (St. Bernard, 'On the Song of Songs', Sermon 71; cited in *ibid.*). Whereas in the case of a believer and God, being of different essences and wills, when there is unity between them we are to understand a 'communion of wills and an agreement in charity' (*id.*). If there is thus agreement between Father and Son it is in this stronger sense of a unity of will, which entails that their purposes and attitudes towards us should be identical (Brümmer 1992: 447).

[61] By the doctrine of the two natures of Christ we are to understand that Jesus Christ was both human and divine (McGrath 2011: 471). See also the concept of hypostatic union.

Against this *damnosa hereditas* of Greek philosophy into Christian theology, Karl Barth enunciated a conception of the divine nature truly unbounded by any non-logical constraint as the one just described (a different yet related alleged divine attribute would be that of immutability). For Barth the divine nature was made evident in His own self-revelation, and that revelation makes it abundantly clear that God decided to humble Himself and go through the ordeal that we now call the Passion with the intention of redeeming fallen man (*id.*). God, according to Barth, 'is his own decision', and should not be thought of as constrained by a nature whose features are derived from extra-scriptural sources (Barth 1936-1977: 472). He therefore decided to be conditioned by His creation, to (somehow) be affected by His relationship with us; just as it was open to Him in His omnipotence to remain unconditioned by it (Fiddes 1989: 158).

This rethinking of the divine nature in relationship with us adds an interesting dimension to the Abelardian (and Pauline) representation of divine love as essentially disinterested; as 'extravagantly self-giving' (*ibid.*, pp.158-159). For if God is indeed impassible (or immutable), the He cannot be said to benefit in any way from His creatures, nor will His happiness depend in any sense on their moral condition (*id.*). Likewise, this might have the undesired outcome of belittling the objects of such love, for it seems to preclude any significant contribution to the relationship on their part (*id.*). Fiddes seems to us to be on spot when he claims that a complete emphasis on the self-giving and disinterested nature of love 'belongs with impassibility and immutability' (*ibid.*, p.159).

Fiddes point is that Abelard's ideas on atonement would have greatly benefited from this addition of the *eros* dimension in the divine-human relationship that Barth puts forward. For, to use a phrase from Barth himself, if we conceive of God as 'the one who loves in freedom', this certainly contributes to Abelard's contention that in both the incarnation and the atonement God was merely satisfying His own loving nature (Barth 1936-1977: 306); and it also adds further weight to Abelard's claim that the death of Christ saves primarily by the exhibition/infusion of divine love it manifests/imbues on the believer.

**Chapter 6. Chauncy's Theology of the Afterlife**

*1. Introduction to Eschatological Locations*

The idea that unending post-mortem torments in hell, or the enjoyment of eternal and perfect bliss in heaven as the outcome of a spiritual union with divinity, has long played a significant role in both Christian dogma, as well as in the more general moral foundations of Western civilization as a deterrent in the manner of ultimate penalties or sanctions. And although one can easily encounter accounts of afterlife rewards and punishments that predate Christianity in various ancient cultures,[62] it is the distinctively Christian narrative of the afterlife that has exerted the most decisive influence in both religious reflection, as well as in the conduct of the lives of people in the Western world (Walls 2009: 491-492).

It will therefore be eschatological issues (from the Greek term *ta eschata*: the last things), and particularly the interpretation of such issues by Chauncy, the subject matter of the present section of this work. And following the pattern adopted in our theological chapters on original sin (Ch.2) and redemption (Ch.4), we will commence with a rather concise (1) theological introduction aimed at describing the central elements of a Christian understanding of the afterlife, to then move on to consider some of Chauncy's thoughts grouped under the headings of: (2) God's Nature, (3) Death, (4) Everlasting Fire, (5) Purgatory, (6) Universalism, (7) Proportionality Objection, (8) The Next State, (9) Millenialism, and that of (10) Social Order and the Classical Doctrine of Hell.

A central and distinctive feature of Christian belief that is important to state at this point is that 'time is lineal, not cyclical. History had a beginning; it will one day come to an end' (McGrath 2011: 444). With this in mind, eschatology in the Christian sense could refer to either the end of the present age—that is, to life and history—, or could also point to the narrower notion of the end of an individual's existence (*id.*). Hence, this 'discourse about the end' that will be engaged in the following pages is concerned with a host of connected topics or doctrines such as the resurrection of the body, salvation, eschatological locations, and others. (*id.*).

Scripturally speaking, the two main sources for Christian reflection on the afterlife have been the preaching of Jesus, and the Pauline sections of the New Testament (*ibid.*, p.445). In the ministry of Jesus one of the most recurrent themes, and one with important eschatological connotations, is that of the coming of God's kingdom, a rather uncommon topic among Jewish writings of the time. This topic,

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[62] To give but a couple of examples of this and that might be argue to have influenced early Christian thinking on the topic: in ancient Greece the myth of Hades where the deceased were carried through the river Styx to the underworld by Charon, and once there to partake in a family reunion with previously deceased relatives; or in ancient Rome (itself heavily influenced by Hellenistic culture) where writers such as Cicero in his dialogue *On Old Age* spoke likewise of an afterlife family reunion (McGrath 2011: 446-447).

moreover, has 'both present and future associations. The kingdom is something which is *drawing near* (Mark 1:15), yet which still belongs in its fullness to the future'.[63] This inaugurated eschatology[64]—in the sense of relating a past inauguration, and the future fulfilment of God's kingdom—with its implicit 'tension between the 'now' and the 'not yet" is also found in the Pauline letters, where Jesus' resurrection becomes both proof and omen: proof that indeed in Jesus a new age has dawned, and an omen that enables Christians to believe that earthly death is not the last word in our histories (*ibid.*, pp.445- 446).

As for eschatological locations themselves, we will go against the current on this and begin with heaven and the distinctively Christian understanding of salvation, since we believe it will become easier to describe the characteristics of hell once we are through with our description of the celestial sphere. We say go against the current since traditionally hell has attracted more the attention of both theologians, philosophers, and people of faith in general for fairly obvious reasons.

Salvation for Christians entails first and foremost a 'clear or direct ongoing experience of the divine essence', *i.e.*, what is commonly referred to as the beatific vision (Kronen & Reitan 2011: 12-13). This spiritual union with divinity deserves some elaboration. Perfect and eternal bliss is naturally thought to be the most immediate consequence of such a close relationship, but equally and perhaps even more important is that of moral sanctification or perfection, that is, 'the purging of all sinful dispositions' in the believer (*ibid.*, p.13). And as to the related goods produced by such vision according to Christian tradition we find: the 'most perfect enlightenment of the intellect', or perfect 'rectitude of will and appetite', to be understood as the complete subordination of our bodily or animal nature to our spiritual and moral imperatives; and of course what J. A. Quenstedt, a seventeenth century Lutheran theologian called 'the most delightful intercourse with God... and the angels... and all the blessed... consisting in mutual presence and most agreeable conversation, and rendering of mutual honor joined with mutual love' (Quenstedt 1685: 661-662; cited in *ibid.*).

Conversely, the fate of those obdurate creatures who reject God's grace to the very end, and who

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[63] When reading Paul on the chronology of salvation, one should bear in mind that although the apostle refers sometimes to justification as the starting point of the life of faith for the believer, and of sanctification as an ongoing process of spiritual growth with future consequences (*viz.*, salvation), one is to avoid what McGrath calls a simplistic understanding of such chronology in the sense of thinking of this three element framework in a linear past (justification), present (sanctification), and future (salvation) timetable. Rather, salvation for Christianity 'presupposes that something *has happened*, that something *is now happening*, and that something further *will still happen* to believers' (McGrath 2011: 319).

[64] This is one, albeit the most accepted one by twentieth century theologians, of three general positions relating to the eschatology of the New Testament. These positions are: (1) *Futurist*, that places the kingdom of God in the distant future; (2) *Inaugurated*, by which we are to understand that God's kingdom has already 'begun to exercise its influence within human history, although its full realization and fulfilment lie in the future'; and (3) *Realized* eschatology, in which the kingdom of God was realized in the (first) coming of Jesus (McGrath 2011: 452).

thus die in a sinful state, will be, according to Augustine, 'immediate, unending, physical and retributive' (Patasalidou 2012: 811). No good shall ever befall on them again since 'deserved and supreme misery shall be' their portion (Augustine, Bk. XX, Chap.1; cited in Talbott 2014). The word retributive deserves some attention as it is generally agreed within the literature that there are essentially two families of doctrines of hell—the classical (medieval) or juridical doctrines of hell that appeal to the concept of retributive justice, and, what are called liberal doctrines of hell that tend to place a prime in God's respect for creaturely autonomy (Patsalidou 2012: 810); *i.e.*, to our freedom taken in a rather indeterministic sense, and which to all appearances is actually Chauncy's position. In this last set of theories of hell our damnation is connected to our free choices which somehow God is unable to undo, at least not in a morally permissible manner (Kronen & Reitan 2011).

Suffice it to say at this stage of our work, that all of the different versions of hell share the conviction that the crux of damnation is that of the privation of the beatific vision, and all the related inconveniences it carries with it (Kronen & Reitan, 2011: 13); chief among them is eternal moral wickedness, since according to every version of hell our moral natures are only perfected, and sin is definitely conquered, only as the result of enjoying the beatific vision (*ibid*., p.14).

Juridical or classical doctrines of hell however, also argue for the infliction of further ills that can affect both body and soul such as: unending 'pangs of conscience', animosity or hostility towards God, literal torments to be inflicted by other residents of hell (devils essentially), as well as the perennial agony resultant from dwelling in the lake of fire of the underworld (*id*.). There are therefore as we have seen, two distinct sets of torments awaiting the damned in hell and these are: (1) eternal loss of the beatific vision, and hence irreparable separation from God; what is termed pain of loss (*poena damni*); and (2) literal and unending physical torments to be endured by the damned in hell; what is regularly termed pain of sense (*poena sensus*) (Walls 2009: 494; Talbott 2014: 136; Patsalidou 2012: 811).

So now, without further ado, let us move to consider some of Chauncy's thoughts on the issues just mentioned, beginning with what is usually taken to be one of the most employed arguments in defending the doctrine of Universalism in soteriological matters: love as the decisive moral trait of divinity.

*2. God's Nature*

Our writer starts from the orthodox assumption of the infinite benevolence of the deity, and from there assumes that it would be difficult to imagine Him deciding to create mankind unless He intended it for all to be ultimately happy. As he naturally ascribes infinite wisdom and intelligence to the deity, he concludes that if to make all of men happy was indeed His intention, then it would be difficult to conceive Him as unable to devise a plan or project to secure this goal (Chauncy 1784: 1). As it will be clear in the following

chapter, in common with contemporary universalists, our author considers that God's loving nature and omnipotence precludes the possibility of anyone enduring an existence of eternal torment.

In the case of those that suggest that the existence of free agents, capable of misusing their faculties and therefore making themselves liable to condemnation, would somehow hamper divinity's designs in this matter, Chauncy clearly states that this would be an impossibility. As God is infinitely wise, He would easily device suitable methods that, not contrary to the liberty of such agents, would conduce them to preparation for happiness. It would be hard to imagine, Chauncy argues, 'that infinite wisdom should finally be outdone by the obstinacy and folly of any free agent whatsoever' (*ibid.*, p.2). With the intention of making his case ever clearer, Chauncy asserts that the expression of such a sincere desire by divinity amounts to affirming that in fact, we shall all be saved; to think otherwise tantamount to absurdity, and contains its own confutation (*ibid.*, p.168). This notion of an alleged incoherence in the perennial rejection of God by a rational creature—a rational being naturally or intrinsically ordered towards union with its maker—will be developed further in our subsequent chapter, as it finds contemporary support in the work of Thomas Talbott. In the next chapter as well, we will describe in what exactly Chauncy considers this scheme or divine plan to consist in, and which is supposed to guarantee the universal salvation of mankind.

Now as stated before, another essential divine attribute for our author, and connected with what is termed Middle Knowledge, is the capacity to make use of what are called counterfactuals of creaturely freedom. This comes about when Chauncy considers that God, as being infinitely wise and benevolent, and in the case of knowing that certain of His creatures would, despite His outmost efforts, make themselves unhappy by misusing their moral powers, would most likely withhold the gift of existence from them (*ibid.*, p.3); *v.gr.* when discussing Rom. 8:29, 30, he declares that God, through His infinite prescience, and before all worlds, discerned who would among mankind be of such a disposition as to be, under the means used in this present state, wrought upon or subjected to God's moral government (*ibid.*, p.229)*; i.e.*, that through this prescience we speak of, God knew who would be 'so disposed as that they might, in consistency with their liberty as free agents, be brought upon to become his obedient subjects, in consequence of the means his wisdom thought proper to use with them in this present state' (*ibid.*, p.230*).*

In order to provide an adequate, though succinct account of what counterfactuals of creaturely freedom stand for, and due to the importance that this concept bears on our author and for the following chapter in particular, we find it inevitable to indulge in a brief digression at this point. Furthermore, although the origins of such concept lie in theological disputes between Jesuits and Dominicans of the late sixteenth century and that were concerned with the connection of divine grace with human free will, we will not dwell here with the historical provenance of the doctrine, and instead will concern ourselves in merely explicating the concept (Adams 1977: 109).

Since what the concept mainly attempts to reconcile is a robust understanding of free will with the traditional, and strong concept of providence that Christians subscribe to, it is ineludible to say a few words of the latter in order to proceed on a firmer footing. Even though the concept of providence might take into account other elements, it will include at the very least the following three: (1) foreknowledge (infinite knowledge) in the sense that all events were foreseen with certainty by God; (2) sovereignty—unlike the absent clockmaker of Deism who, acting as a mere *primum movens*, dissociates Himself from His creation (general providence), Christians believe that God's sovereignty reaches out or includes 'every event that takes place' (particular providence) (Flint 1988: 151); and (3) that both this divine foreknowledge and particular providence (sovereignty) are exercised according to an established, and morally commendable plan or purpose for the created order.[65]

A note before moving on: in our elucidation of this connection of divine sovereignty (particular providence) with human free will, we shall make use of the concept of possible worlds, which is to be taken as 'the maximal possible state of affairs, a state of affairs that specifies a complete history (from beginning to end) of how things might have been. Infinitely many such worlds *exist*, but only one *obtains* or is *actual...*' (*id.*).

This particular providence theory could be considered as flanked by two extreme positions that, as Thomas Flint observes, have generally been eschewed by orthodox Christianity—one that asserts that the present or actual world, albeit the outcome of divine will, could not have been otherwise because divine will was somehow constrained or determined in some manner (by for example omniscience and infinite beneficence), and associated with philosophers as Spinoza and Leibniz. And another that vindicates divine freedom in a complete or unlimited sense, and associated with Descartes (*ibid.*, pp.151-152; Hick 2010: 100).

In trying to encounter a middle ground between these positions or interpretations of particular

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[65] This theological dispute could be thought of as connected to an earlier one spurred by a form of determinism associated to Averroes (1126-1198), and that had the University of Paris in the thirteenth century for its milieu. Averroes claimed that divine reliability was due to external factors, a claim that naturally generated opposition within significant sectors that saw it as a denial of God's freedom (McGrath 2011: 210). The response provided by the likes of Duns Scotus (1266-1308) and William of Ockham (1285-1347) asserted that divine reliability rested ultimately on the divine nature itself, on 'God's own character', *i.e.*, in 'a deliberate and free decision to act like this' on His part (*id.*). When pondering the significance of the divine attribute of almightiness, Ockham drew a distinction between what he called the two powers of God: the absolute power of God (*potentia absoluta*) which refers to the alternatives open to divinity prior to His creative act of the universe; and, the ordained power of God (*potentia ordinata*) having to do with the order established by Him and that both reflects His character and intentions, as well as constrains His subsequent decisions (*id.*). The idea being that God was once completely free to do as He wanted, but by creating an established order, an order that 'reflects a loving and righteous divine will', He has committed Himself to withholding it, such that He is 'not now able to do anything which contradicts [it]' (*id.*).

providence, we arrive at the topic of God's knowledge in the process of creation, and according to which divine knowledge should be classified as follows: (I) *Natural Knowledge* (or knowledge of simple intelligence) as the one by which divinity knows which worlds are possible; and (II) *Free Knowledge* (or knowledge of vision) as the complete and perfect knowledge God has of the actual world He brought about through His creative act of will (Flint 1988: 153). The key issue here is the explication of the transition in God's knowledge from *natural* to *free* (*id.*). What allows divinity to exercise particular providence, to pass from natural to free knowledge with regard to the free beings He created, is the concept of counterfactuals of creaturely freedom, that is, counterfactuals that specify the 'complete set of circumstances in which a creature is placed and left free' (*ibid.*, p.154); *i.e.*, divine foreknowledge can only take place if 'God knows with certainty what every possible free creature would freely do in every situation in which that creature could possibly find himself in' (Adams 1977: 109).

As we have already seen, another recurrent image employed by Chauncy to describe the divine nature is that of God as our loving father; an image especially important in connection with Chauncy's soteriological universalism. Such a scheme of universal redemption, argues Chauncy, speaks more amiably of the deity, and avoids the perplexity that assaults most people when trying to reconcile the idea of a perfectly benevolent God, with a providential account that would have the most of our race as eternally condemned (Chauncy 1784: 13). Thus, it is a thought inconsistent with our infinitely benevolent God to think He would have allowed the world to be 'filled with weak miserable creatures, had he not intended them objects of his mercy' (*id.*). And so as to leave no room for doubt, he further adds in another work that '[a] more shocking idea can scarce be given of the Deity than that which represents him as arbitrarily dooming the greater part of the race of men to eternal misery' (Chauncy, 1784b: VIII).

Would this be the behaviour of a loving father? Is it not more reasonable to suppose that the miseries of the next state are 'a proper discipline in order to accomplish' their reformation, than that 'they should be final and vindictive only?' (Chauncy 1784: 322). This is once again calling into action the principle known as divine pedagogy, except that on this occasion it is projected into the afterlife where still divinity will be operating upon us in order to reform and, in the words of our writer, make us meet for the enjoyment of eternal life in heaven. Another instance of this: when speaking of those obdurate creatures, that impervious to the means employed by divinity in order to persuade them into a more virtuous temper of mind, and expressing that they will indeed be 'awfully miserable', he nonetheless specifies that such misery is not to be understood in an everlasting manner in the state next to come; and this in order to convince them of their folly, and in order to be 'recovered to a virtuous state of mind' (*ibid.*, p.12). We will say much more about the use of the word everlasting in Scripture a few pages down.

In addition, reason just as Scripture does (Matt. 7:11), makes it evident that God is to be regarded as the universal father of mankind; and if earthly fathers, despite their natural sinful proclivities, do good

to their children when they behave properly, but just as well chastise them for their own benefit, when they stand in need of discipline or correction, and all the while they do discipline them, do so with a heavy heart, why ought we to think differently of our father in heaven? when it is the punishment and miseries of the next state that we are speaking of. Surely, Chauncy argues, we would hold a very base concept of those fathers 'who should inflict misery on their own children without any intention to promote their welfare thereby' (*ibid.*, p.327). How could we then hold such an opinion of God? who is but infinite benevolence, and love, if the doctrine of everlasting torments is to be true, that is, if He was to 'torment them eternally, without any intention to do them the least imaginable good' (*id.*).

As stated previously, we see here Chauncy articulating a criticism to the idea of hell that was to be repeated during the nineteenth century, *viz.*, a criticism directed against the rather unchristian notion of vindictive justice, that is, the difficulty of reconciling 'the idea of a loving [and compassionate] God with the notion of the continuing vindictive or retributive punishment of sinners' (McGrath 2011: 458); as Daniel Migliore (articulating a thought no doubt most of us have entertained at some time or another) is quick to point out: the God who was made known to us in the cross 'does not exercise vindictive judgement' (2004: 345). The main problem on this account, as we will go about in the following chapter, is that the traditional account of hell is paradigmatic as an instance of pointless and rather wanton suffering, since no good could come out of hell in such a narrative (Kvanvig 1993:3-4; cited in Patsalidou 2012).

Chauncy has also things to say confuting those that claim that the perennial torments of hell are contained in the death threatened to Adam on account of his original lapse. It goes against reason for the Bostonian to suppose that all of Adam's posterity should be subjected to such a treatment owing to his original transgression. To conceive that a good God would condemn to eternal misery all of the beings that sadly die before arriving to a state of moral responsibility or agency (babies and infants) for no other reason than that their first father had disobeyed a positive command, would be both an 'injurious reflection' on God, as well as a contradiction to 'all the natural notions we have both of justice and benevolence' (Chauncy 1785: 142). But let us now pass from our author's thoughts concerning the divine character, to those of death, both physical and spiritual.

*3. Death*

The first death (physical death) according to our author was 'never intended to put an end to our existence, but only to its present mode, with all its connections and dependencies' (Chauncy 1784: 279). The first death then puts an end to the union or connection there is between these two parts that constitute us as living rational agents, but it does not directly put us out of existence altogether, either in its bodily or spiritual components, so that no more ideas are introduced into the mind by way of the senses, nor can the soul exert itself through the body in this present state (*ibid.*, p.280).

Now such a characterization of the first death will shed light on the characteristics of the second one, for as Chauncy describes it, after the general resurrection the souls of wicked men, just as those of the virtuous or righteous, will be reunited to 'particular systems of matter […]adapted, by the wisdom of God, to render them capable of communication with the world they shall then be placed in' (1784: 281); and even though the manner might be to us at present unknown, ideas will once again be introduced into their minds by way of the systems of matter they will then be endowed with.

During his rather lengthy refutation of other opinions on this issue, we find a couple of thoughts worth mentioning. First, although conceding certain assistance of reason in those who interpret the word *death* to mean a state of eternal misery, and by *life* a perpetual state of happiness, he points to the absence of Scriptural passages that might validate such interpretations. The same goes for those who claim to defend this position by stating that the eternal misery here mentioned must refer to the perpetual existence of the soul or spirit as such, that is, after the body had been separated from it after death (as disembodied spirits that is). If God had intended, says Chauncy, to make the first man suffer eternally for his offence, He must likely had then decided to make his body immortal instead; *i.e.*, he should 'have suffered, as a human creature, in that body in which he had sinned' (1785: 121).

A couple of other considerations regarding the death that humanity was universally subjected to since the original lapse: to those who claim that death not only consists in the return to dust of that corporeal exterior that the scriptures talk about (among them John Locke as Chauncy affirms), but also of the 'entire destruction of its animating principle' (*ibid.*, p.134), call it soul or spirit, Chauncy has the following things to say: first, there is no support or validation in the Bible for such a statement; secondly, if this was to be the case, then it would be impossible to properly speak of a universal resurrection, for then we would be more rightly talking of the creation or production of new beings that 'would constitute different individual agent[s]' with no connection whatsoever with the previous moral behaviour 'of that which existed before' (*ibid.*, p.140).

If not for the mediation of grace, this interpretation of death would entail an impossibility of 'perception or exertion in any shape for ever' (*ibid.*, pp.140-141). This new constitution of grace through Christ signifies a 'new foundation for perception and enjoyment [by the soul] after death' (*id.*). The idea being that by resurrection we are to understand the reconstruction, or as Chauncy calls it, 'the putting together again of the bodily machine, and animating it' with the same breath of life (*id.*).

Another point has to do with the immortality Adam and Eve enjoyed in Eden as a gift as well as the absurdity of placing any sort of obligation on God to prevent their postlapsarian (earthly or bodily) death. In a manner similar to Keith Wyma, their immortality and existence is to be regarded as essentially a gift, and as such, we have no right to make any demands upon the nature of such endowment (Wyma 2004); *i.e.*, we are in no position to be asserting any moral obligations upon God as to the status of our

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creation –'And what obligation can it be supposed God could be under to prevent that death?' asks Chauncy (1785: 157). The judicial sentence 'dooming Adam to death, was really nothing more than the withdrawment of that free favour, to which it was entirely owing, that he might have enjoyed immortality, without passing through death' (*ibid.*, pp.156-57).

And if all things will indeed be subjected to Christ, as Chauncy is fond of repeating, then death, both the first and the second one, will be subjected as well. Everyone admits, says Chauncy, that the first death will be conquered, even with regard of wicked men, 'as that they shall be again restored to life', and if Scripture is to be relied on then the second death will necessarily be 'swallowed up in victory' as well (Chauncy 1784: 184). Moreover, the last enemy that must be destroyed before Christ can hand over the kingdom is death, the second death, 'before they can be reduced under subjection to Jesus Christ' (*id.*). By second death he refers to the one that wicked men will suffer; those that die in a sinful condition (*ibid.*, p.210).

That this second death, just as the first one, is a sure enemy for men to be admitted to a glorious immortality, and in fact much more than the first one; for if not subdued it will be a 'visible standing demonstration, that they are not as yet reduced under subjection to Christ, as the faithful and obedient servants of his kingdom' (*id.*). This second death is the last enemy then, the only one according to our writer, that Paul concerns himself with, 'for it is an enemy that has no existence till after the first death is so far destroyed', that is, till everyone who was dead owing to Adam's sin are restored to life (*ibid.*, p.211*)*.

Having provided some of our author's ideas concerning the divine nature and death, the stage is set for us to develop his thoughts that are more directly related to his soteriological universalism: his reading pertaining the sense in which we are to understand the term *everlasting* in Scripture (4); his belief in the existence of afterlife stages that are essentially purgatorial in kind (5); his universalist scheme itself (6); and finally, his endorsement of what is commonly known as the proportionality objection (against the idea of an endless afterlife of torments and misery) (7). We begin then with Chauncy's thoughts on the correct interpretation of the term *everlasting* in Scripture.

*4. Everlasting Fire*

On this topic we find once again some recourse to common sense or reason by our author, for he mentions that though in Scripture there is talk of the hills and mountains as being everlasting, or of an eternal succession of prophets, common sense moves us to understand this eternity in a limited sense. So why should we not apply this reasoning to the issue of an alleged eternal fire? 'For it is, perhaps, as great an absurdity to suppose fire to be […] eternal, as to suppose the earth, or mountains, or prophets in succession, to be so' (*ibid.*, p.273). The laws of nature, says our writer, tell us that fire 'naturally tends to an end, and will in time, actually come to an end' (*id.*).

So for our author a 'restrained interpretation of the word, when connected with fire' is both the most natural as well as the most rational (*ibid.*, p.274). It is meant to last for a certain dispensation, age, or period, in order to carry out 'the end for which it was enkindled' (*id.*). Scripture, according to Chauncy, supports reason on this when it mentions, with reference to the cities of Sodoma and Gomorrah that they were 'set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire' (*id.*); for it is definitely not necessary to 'do justice to Scripture' here to believe 'that those cities are now in flames, and will be so to all eternity' (*id.*). Surely the fire lasted, says Chauncy, till 'it had accomplished the design of heaven' in this matter, and it is fit that we should think in like manner when the fire of hell is coupled with the adjectives eternal or everlasting (*id.*). Furthermore, fire, being a destructive element, and tending to provoke the dissolution of every body cast into it (according to the laws of nature as our author regularly insists), cannot be thought to be the punishment of the wicked in the literal sense that our translations make it to be, but in the everlasting sense with which Scripture speaks of the hills and succession of prophets as we have just mentioned (*ibid.*, p.*276).*

As for the rest of Scripture passages that speak of the future misery of wicked men, it is not mentioned in any of them according to Chauncy, that they will either 'live in torment without dying, or that their bodies, at the resurrection, shall be immortal, or incorruptible, or indissoluble' (*ibid.*, p.277).

The death here mentioned is that second death (Rev. 2:11; 20:14; 21:8); a death that shall be effected, remarkably points our author, by the fire of hell. Those who are the subjects of it are thus represented in Scripture as tares or withered branches (Matt. 3:12; 13:30, 40, 42; Luke 3:17; John 15:6), and not as things or creatures that could 'bear the action of fire, without being consumed' (*ibid.*, p.278). For similar reasons God is here called 'not a perpetual tormenting, but consuming fire', says Chauncy (Heb. 12:29) (*id.*).

It is perhaps impossible to ascertain beyond doubt according to our writer, whether the fire of hell is to be taken literally or figuratively; but in either case it is plain that 'the torments signified thereby, instead of rendering wicked men never-ceasingly miserable, will, sooner or later, bring on their dissolution, destruction, or death' (*ibid.*, pp.278-279). So that despite the 'sum total of this judiciary proceeding may be for ages of ages, it will not necessarily follow that the torture of any, much less of every individual, should continue for that length of time' (*ibid.*, p.305). The truth is that their various times of suffering will be 'in proportion to their deserts' (*ibid.*, p.307); that is, 'according to the indefinitely various degrees of that moral depravity they have contracted in this present state' (*id*).

Chauncy mentions, however, that it is not improper to speak of the blessed's happiness as being everlasting, for even though the state they will next be in (after the general resurrection) will come to an end, 'they will be swallowed up in the grand æconomy, of which God will be immediate head and sovereign', and will be so by a 'quick and pleasing transmutation' (*ibid.*, p.283); *i.e.*, not by dying again, and

(probably) analogous to the one that the righteous who are alive on earth will have to go through in their passing into the resurrection state upon Christ's second coming. So it is not improper then to describe their happiness and life as never-ending, despite the fact that 'their next mode of existence, with all its connections and dependencies, will come to a period', just as it will in the case of the unrighteous (*id.*).

Ultimately, our rule of interpretation of this word ought to depend on the nature of the subjects to which it is applied. As previously mentioned, the point Chauncy here makes is very similar to the one raised by contemporary universalists, and which hinges on their understanding of God's nature as that of loving kindness (Talbott). If God is indeed in his nature all powerful and all loving, then there is a clear inconsistency, if not a downright contradiction (*v.gr.* Talbott, Adams, etc.) between His nature, and the idea of unending and unbearable suffering in hell for some of His creatures (Patsalidou, 2012: 814-815). Chauncy expresses this conviction when he mentions that it perfectly 'falls in with the notions mankind universally entertain of the infinite benevolence of the deity, to interpret the word everlasting, in the endless sense, when joined with a reward' (Chauncy 1784: 285); *i.e.*, there is no repugnancy in such a construction with the ideas we have of God's nature. Whereas, who could hold the same to be true? that is, that 'there is the like reason to understand the word everlasting, in the same sense, when joined with punishment' (*ibid.*, p.286). Why ought we not, he rhetorically asks, to interpret the sense of one in an unlimited sense, and the other in a limited one?

*5. Purgatorius Ignis*

Concerning the issue of the resurrection bodies, our author claims that something similar to what happens here on earth with our first death will be effected, for just as owing to the different constitution of our bodies, some are able to endure more pain, both in quality and duration than others, God might saw fit that the resurrection bodies of the wicked 'be variously fitted, both for the sensations of torment, and a continuance under the pressure of them' (*ibid.*, pp.307-308). It is true our author argues, there is ample reason to think that the resurrection bodies of the wicked 'will be formed for a much longer duration, than they are capable of enduring at present, and that they must pass through much more intense and it may be, various pains, before their dissolution will be effected' (*ibid.*, p.308). In fact, he states that it is reasonable to suppose that if they are to undergo a second death as Scripture declares it to be, that 'their dissolution will be thus variously effected, by the pains which they will suffer' (*id*).

In an also familiar manner of criticizing the orthodox concept of hell, he considers the small quantity of those that will be saved as further argument against it. For if the next state is indeed the final one, only but a minority of mankind will be united with divinity in heaven. How could then the scriptures describe God's mercy, and the mediatorial agency of Christ as good will to all people? asks Chauncy. What reflection could we make of Christ's office, in His design to defeat the Devil, if 'notwithstanding his

mediatory interposition, and all that he could do in opposition to him, should [the Devil] finally get the better of him, by effecting the everlasting damnation of the greater part of those whom he came from heaven to save' (*ibid.*, p.324). Only the consideration of hell as a purging fire 'can make the matter fit easy upon one's mind' (*id.*). Our author makes clear that in the scheme he will later develop, even these otherworldly torments may, 'in perfect consistency with both reason and Scripture […] be considered as means, under the government of Christ, in order to awaken the attention […], and bring them to consideration, and finally gain the consent of their wills' (*ibid.*, pp.191-192).

And by way of response to one of the most known arguments in support of juridical doctrines of hell, and of endless misery therein—the one associated to Anselm of Canterbury, and which states that infinite punishment is a just retribution due to the enormity of the crime; *i.e.*, that all human sin is infinite in seriousness because it is committed against an infinite being—our author declares that such 'metaphysical nicety' goes against what Scripture states regarding the differences in the punishment that wicked men will suffer, owing to the different degrees of their moral corruption here on earth (*ibid.*, p.320). He mentions that if this was to be true, then all sinners, regardless of the differences in the offenses between them, 'must suffer to the outmost in degree, as well as duration', an idea which would obviously goes against one of the tenets of a retributivist theory of punishment—the philosophical theory about the nature of punishment that underpins the traditional doctrine of hell—, namely, that it would be 'impossible to assert gradations of punishments in proportion to the gravity of evil acts' (Talbott 2014: 142).

Through the words of the eighteenth-century British philosopher David Hartley, our author considers that the doctrine of purgatory espoused by Catholicism is but a corruption of a doctrine originally held by apostolic Christianity concerning a purifying fire. This doctrine of an intermediate stage 'in which those who have died in a state of grace are given an opportunity to purge themselves of the guilt of their sins before finally entering heaven', remains one of the fundamental divergences between Catholic and Protestant eschatological interpretations[66] (McGrath 2011: 459). He seconds the aforementioned writer as well in the association he draws between the influence of Neo-Platonism in early Christianity and the introduction of the doctrine of endless or never ceasing afterlife punishment. Hartley's words to this effect are: '[it] was not received till after the introduction of metaphysical subtleties relating to time, eternity, and

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[66] This idea dates from the early church when patristic writers such as Clement of Alexandria and Origen believed that those who had died prior to performing acts of penance would be given this opportunity in the next state, where a purifying fire would cleanse their souls in order to be admitted into heaven (McGrath 2011: 458-459). Likewise, the practice of praying for the dead during the fourth century played a part in this development, but it was not until the sixth century that through the writings of Gregory the Great, and in particular his interpretation of Matt.12:32, that a formal account of purgatory was established (*id.*).

c.[…], that is, not till after the pagan philosophy, and vain deceit, had mixed itself, and corrupted Christianity' (Hartley 1749: 429; cited in Chauncy 1784).

Reason, as well as experience, assures us that the purpose of the sufferings and punishments we sometimes endure in this life are to our own benefit, in order to discipline us, to humble or to do us good in general. All of which is also confirmed by Scripture according to our writer (*v.gr.* Psalm 89:31, 32, 33). So why should we suppose that the miseries and punishments of the next state have a different purpose? asks our author. Should we assume that God's infinite benevolence is not the same in the next state for us? that He does not have the same 'kind and good intentions in the punishments of the next state, that he has in this?' (Chauncy 1784: 325). For surely a 'change in the mode and place, of wicked men's existence, will not infer a change in' God's benevolent dispositions (*ibid.*, p.326).

*6. Universalism*

The idea that everyone, notwithstanding the obedience, or even the knowledge of Christ's redemptive work on the cross, will be saved and therefore united to divinity in the end, has exerted a powerful, yet intermittent influence on Christian soteriology down the ages. From Origen, whose rejection of dualism[67] and his restorationist conviction of the 'final and ultimate triumph of God over evil',[68] to Karl Barth's rejection of the doctrine of predestination to damnation, this stance, though unorthodox, has regained momentum in later decades as both theologians and philosophers have begun to re-examine its implications, particularly in connection with the orthodox image of God as omnipotent love (McGrath 2011: 345, 370, 458; Kronen and Reitan 2011: 193).

Our author states that he will not concern himself with objections that are purely rational, since he considers that reason, far from speaking against his ideas, rather support it. Or, at the very minimum, natural reason certainly does not speak against the possibility of it, for, as he rhetorically asks his readers, what principle of reason is contradicted by the claim that an 'infinitely benevolent God may, if he so pleases, make the human race finally happy?; and if this is his desire, what would prevent him from opening his mind about it?' (Chauncy 1784: 256). In any case, whatever misgivings may remain when we consider the final state of mankind 'upon the principles of mere reason', all disappear when we concern ourselves with what is said of the matter in Scripture. For it is clearly stated there (for Chauncy that is) that

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[67] By dualism we are to understand here the conviction, usually associated with the Gnosticism characteristic of the Mediterranean world in the late second century, of the existence of two supreme powers, good and evil, who reigned over their respective realms (heaven and hell respectively) for all eternity (McGrath 2011: 345; Trocmé 1993)

[68] Leibniz articulated a similar view on this when he stated his disbelief that 'even in the great future of eternity, evil should have the advantage over good, under the supreme authority of him who is the sovereign good' (Leibniz 1734: 132).

the salvation of all men is the grand objective the bible scheme 'has opened to our view, as now in prosecution, by the benevolent Deity, under the management […]of Jesus Christ, who […] will go on prosecuting this design, till all the individuals[…]that ever had, now have, or ever will have existence' shall attain a state of perennial happiness (*ibid.*, p.3).

He nonetheless acknowledges that this position is contrary to the common sentiments of mankind in this matter, a predisposition that he believes to be linked with the undue sway some writers might have over us, and the imbibing of certain doctrines that seem to favour an account where the majority of men are to be essentially unhappy in the end. He advances as an infamous example of such doctrines the theory of double predestination espoused by Calvinists, and whose origins lay in the writings of Godescalc (a.k.a. Gottschalk) of Orbais[69] (c.808-867), according to which only the elect are the ones divinity concerned to secure their salvation, while the vast majority of mankind—a majority that, 'He might have saved as well, had he so pleased'—are to be unavoidably condemned for all eternity, in order to 'the praise of the glory of his justice' (*ibid.*, p.4; McGrath 2011: 366).

Chauncy then marshals all the more important passages that he considers give countenance to his claim of universal salvation for mankind, and in doing so also censures those who, like the Calvinist most eminently, would have Christ death effected only for an elected few. The sacred text, argues Chauncy, is explicit in that Christ died for us [1 Thes.5:10], for sinners [Rom. 5:8], but even more clear in that He died for the sins 'of the whole world' [1 John 2:2]; indeed, 'that he *tasted death for every man*' [Heb. 2:9]. And so as to prevent any possible misconstruction of his words, says Chauncy, He commissioned His apostles 'to preach repentance, and remission of sins' to all the corners of the earth (Chauncy 1784: 21).

It is not only more reasonable that Christ died for us all, and not just for a selected few, but it also reflects greater honour on the deity; greater virtue is to be ascribed to the blood He shed on the cross, and a much more noble purpose is achieved than the rather fruitless perspective of dying for an elected lot, 'as to any real good that will finally be the event, with respect to the greatest part of mankind' argues our theologian (*ibid.*, p.22).

As it is not altogether uncommon among contemporary universalists (e.g. John Hick), Chauncy

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[69] Although one could trace the development of this doctrine to Augustine's insistence in the gift-character of divine grace—one should bear in mind that, as mentioned previously in this work, Augustine articulated this understanding of grace as essentially gracious in response to what he regarded as faulty doctrines of salvation, *viz.*, those associated with Pelagius—, it was not until the ninth century that the Benedictine monk Godescalc constructed a theory of double predestination, as would come later to be associated with Calvinism (limited atonement) (McGrath 2011: 365-366). From his assertion that God had predestined some to eternal damnation (the most of our race in fact according to this doctrine), Godescalc concluded that it would then be unwarranted to speak of Christ as having died for these individuals; '[for] if he had, he would have died in vain, for their fate would be unaffected' (*ibid.*, p.366). Thus, Christ's atonement was aimed or intended only for those he had previously elected.

devotes considerable attention to the Pauline texts in Scripture, particularly to the fifth chapter of Romans, from the 12th verse till the 21st. If in verse 15 Paul had only mentioned, in general, that the gift of grace through Christ 'reached beyond' the transgression of Adam, in the 16th it exhibits in particular the aspects or respects in which this is so—if by one transgression of one man all were condemned not only to death, but to a frail bodily condition that made it inevitable for them to sin, then by the perfect obedience of Christ, that had the many offenses of men, in fact all the transgressions of all men as its origin, will finally terminate, 'in opposition to the power and demerit of them all, in their conformity to the rule of righteousness, and their being accordingly restored, not simply to life, but to reign in it forever' (*ibid.*, p.56).

At this point Chauncy clearly shows his Reformed credentials in this respect as he clearly seems to favour a representational or federal understanding of both Christ and Adam's role with respect to ourselves. For it is one of Reformed theology's main convictions, particularly in connection to its intricate covenant doctrine, that 'Adam was humanity's representative under the old covenant of works; [whereas] Christ has become our representative under the covenant of grace' (McGrath 2011: 328). It should therefore come as no surprise that such covenant theologies 'are seen in their most fully developed form in New England Puritanism during the eighteenth century' (*id.*).

So upon the same comparison, if in the previous verses the apostle had only generally mentioned the gift through Christ as going beyond the damage by Adam, in this 16th verse he proceeds to be more particular as to how this is so. If the judgment to universal death and a liableness to sin took rise from one offense, and the gift of grace took rise from many offenses unto justification, this justification must be aimed at mankind universally as well, otherwise, Chauncy argues, the antithesis the apostle is upon will be lost—'for mankind universally are the object of condemnation; the same mankind therefore must be the object of the opposite justification' (1784: 60). And in the 21st verse the apostle not only opposes 'an eternal reign in life' with the 'reign of sin by death' and declares this reign in life to be as broad as the reign of sin by death. The latter being peremptorily accepted as universal the former must be so as well (*ibid.*, p.80). What we are to understand at this point, says Chauncy, are the 'two grand counterparts of the scheme of providence' in the correspondence they are represented to have (*ibid.*, p.81).

On Adam's side as already mentioned, the damage consists in the subjection to death of all men, and a proclivity thereupon (based on their frail and mortal condition) to sin. On Christ's side what Chauncy calls the super-abounding advantage consists in two things as well, *viz.*, 'a reign in life, and a being formed to a meetness for this mercy by being made righteous persons', and this despite all the sins that they might be guilty for, as having been committed in their own persons, and as such as are consequent on the original lapse of Adam (*ibid.*, p.82). A super-abounding gift that extends to the same subjects who had suffered the corresponding disadvantages through Adam, that is, to mankind universally, without exception or limitation. This notion of a super-abounding gift is connected to what is customarily called the

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supererogatory nature of Christ's display at the cross, and which is meant to signify that such an act was both non-obligatory in character as well as capable of generating 'a merit sufficient to atone for human sin' (Crisp 2009: 433).

This is particularly evident in both the 18th and 19th verses, where the advantages and disadvantages are treated separately. In the 18th where the damage is judgement to condemnation, its opposite advantage is justification to life, which is to 'come upon the same all men that were under the judgement to condemnation' (Chauncy 1784: 82). Whereas in the 19th verse, the disadvantage through Adam was sin, and the opposite advantage is righteousness through Christ, the advantage of righteousness is to be ascribed to the same ones who were made sinners by consequence of Adam's transgression, which is the same as to assert that it will take effect for the whole of mankind (*id.*). And so as to leave no room for doubt, Chauncy asserts that the advantages here spoken of are 'absolutely [the] free gift of God through Jesus Christ, and will be carried into effect, sooner or later, with respect to the whole race of men' (*ibid.*, p.83). An interpretation that he regards as the most plain and natural.

Besides, if in the final judgment the majority of mankind, notwithstanding the gift through Christ and its abounding quality, are 'left to perish eternally', there will be more reason in speaking of the damage through Adam as going beyond, surmounting, the gift through Christ. 'It will demonstrably follow, that Adam has done more hurt than Christ has done good', a thought not only contrary to what the apostle had in view to express, but also dishonourable to God, Chauncy argues (*ibid.*, p.88). An argument very similar to the one worded some years ago by John Kronen and Eric Reitan.

Chauncy is naturally not oblivious to the fact that his doctrine of universal salvation seems to be at odds with what he calls the general run of Scripture, 'which threatens a misimprovement of the gospel, and its means, advantages and blessings, with certain death after the resurrection at the great day' (*ibid.*, p.88). This being the principal reason, he says, that has made interpreters distort the words, and perplex the reasoning of the apostle, 'in order to reconcile what he has here said, with the Scripture account of that death, or misery, which wicked men shall suffer after the general resurrection' (*id.*).

He likewise considers the words that begin the following chapter of Romans (6th) as further proof of universalism in matters of salvation— 'what shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid!'. For if the gift of grace through Christ was only a conditional offer of life, that is, in case men are obedient and actually 'improve their Gospel advantages, which if they do not, they must certainly perish notwithstanding this offer', the apostle's words in the sense of warning against an ill use of the doctrine of universal grace would seem out of place (*ibid.*, p.90). Whereas, in Chauncy's scheme of universal salvation, this warning seems entirely proper and pertinent, as some might take too much comfort from it, and think that their continuance in sin is of no consequence in their ultimate destiny (*ibid.*, p.90).

And in Corinthians there is a specification as to how such deliverance will be carried out according to our theologian: observing a 'just decorum, [keeping] to rule, and order with respect to all men' (*ibid.*, p.202); but also that God, as 'the first-fruits of the dead' (1 Cor. 20), that is, being raised firstly from the dead, His resurrection was a sort of 'pledge, or assurance to all men, that they should be raised to a like immortality, when it could be done in consistency with due order' (*ibid.*, p.203).

The thought the apostle intended to convey here according to Chauncy, was that, though everyone, mankind universally will be raised from the dead, this will not be carried out all at once, but in a successive manner, according to 'different ranks or companies' (*id.*). He clarifies in a footnote what he means by these companies or ranks: as depending on how they become qualified for such a happy life 'by being Christ's, by being formed by him to a meetness for a blessed immortality' (*ibid.*, p.204). According to which the first rank would be composed by those who were prepared by Christ, 'under the present administration of his kingdom, for a reign in life when he shall appear the second time' (*id.*). He likens this passage of Paul with what the apostle John expresses in Rev. 20:5 by the *first resurrection*, and thereby describing them as blessed, an epithet that explains the fact that the so-called second death will 'have no power over them, as it would have over the wicked', but also because 'they should be kings and priests, and reign with Christ a thousand years'–a clear allusion no doubt to the theory of Millenialism, which will be dealt with at the end of this chapter (*ibid.*, p.205).

Furthermore, by calling it the first resurrection, the apostle, despite not explicitly talking of any further resurrections after this one, does lead our thoughts to believe or 'hope for still others' (*id.*); obviously insinuating, argues Chauncy, 'that it would, in God's way and time, be succeeded with others of the same kind' (*id.*).

*7. Proportionality Objection*

At one point Chauncy puts forward one of the main arguments hurled against proponents of the traditional doctrine of hell, and particularly to the retributivist theory of punishment that undergirds it, *viz.*, that there must be a proportion between the punishments inflicted, and the offenses committed—the modernly called proportionality objection—, for it is one of the most important intuitions behind the retributivist theory, as Thomas Talbott points out, 'that some offenses merit less severe punishment than others' (1993: 12). Chauncy's words are that this proportioning of the torments of wicked men to 'all the various degrees of their contracted stupidity, stubbornness, and moral degeneracy', would be impossible to achieve on the assumption of an eternity of miseries, for such a concept clearly 'swallows up all proportion […] [for even if there was] some difference in the degree of pain, [it would be such] as will be scarce thought worthy of being brought into the account, when the circumstance of endless duration is annexed to it' (Chauncy 1784: 309).

Elsewhere Chauncy likewise criticizes the traditional doctrine of hell in ways that would become fairly common later on, particularly during the nineteenth century. And he does this by making evident the disparity in the orthodox account of divine retribution between the offenses committed and the punishment inflicted in a way that reminds us of Jeremy Bentham's principle that the punishment 'should correspond exactly in kind to the crime committed' (Patsalidou 2012: 812). In whatever point of light we consider sin, our author declares, it is in its nature, a finite evil—it is committed by a finite being, and it is 'the effect of finite principles, passions, and appetites' (Chauncy 1784: 320). To say therefore, that the due and just punishment in such cases would be infinite in character, reflects unfavourably on both God's nature—on His infinite benevolence and mercy, no doubt—, but also on His justice (*id.*). Not to mention that the difference between those whom we would describe as moderately wicked or normally sinful (Chauncy uses the words *wicked in the lowest sense*), and those 'to whom the character of good is applicable in the like sense', is so small, even to the point of being sometimes imperceptible to ourselves, that it is indeed 'incredible, that such amazingly great difference should be made between them in the future world' (*id.*).

Furthermore, the majority or at least a considerable part of those that will be miserable in the next state were far from being regarded as 'incurably sinful', and it might therefore not be inaccurate to claim that 'if they had continued in life, they might have been formed to a virtuous temper of mind by a suitable mixture of correction, instruction, and the like' (*ibid.*, p.321). So, could it be supposed that such an infinitely benevolent deity would, Chauncy asks, 'without any other trial, in order to effect their reformation', cast them into perennial (and rather pointless) misery? (*id.*) Once again, this will be an issue to elaborate further in the following chapter of this work as 'the notion of eternal hell as a matter of just punishment' has largely been rejected by contemporary philosophers such as Jonathan Kvanvig, Marylin M. Adams, and Charles Seymour among others (Walls 2009: 495).

## 8. The 'Next' State

Firstly, it is important to highlight the fact that it is not the intention of Chauncy to advance the idea 'that all men will be admitted to the enjoyment of happiness in the state that succeeds the present' (*ibid.*, p.7). Our author in fact cites various biblical passages that state that the greater part of mankind will in fact miss out on happiness in the state that immediately follows the present one—'strait is the gate, and narrow the way' (Matt. 7:14); or in the conclusions of some of Jesus parables, 'For many are called, and few are chosen' (Matt. 22:14). If indeed the state that immediately follows the present one was to be the final state of men, then the common notions held by most Christians would be warranted by quotations such as these. But as Chauncy mentions it, this is not the case, but has been believed to be so to both the great distress of mankind, and to the causing of unflattering reflections upon the deity (*ibid.*, p.8).

Elsewhere Chauncy contends that since Christ's design to come into our world was to destroy sin, it will certainly be defeated, 'and since it is not destroyed in this present state, we may reasonably look for another, when this design of his mediatory manifestation shall be fully accomplished' (*id.*). To think of this issue in such a manner is the best way of 'reconciling present fact with the most obvious sense of these texts' says the Bostonian (*ibid.*, p.173).

After conceding that perhaps vast amounts of men might not actually be, in this present life or state, prevailed or subjected upon so as to 'willingly bow down before him as their Lord', he mentions that this will certainly be carried into effect in the one to come (the next state) (*ibid.*, p.191). Those who think this notion absurd or unreasonable, do so owing to the undue influence of 'previously imbibed notions', according to which this present state, and this alone, was 'intended for the recovery of men to virtue', while those who fail to be recovered in this state will surely be miserable in the next one, 'which is a state of endless torment' (*id.*). But just as with Leibniz's morally dynamic view of hell in which the damned continue to sin in the afterlife, and therefore make themselves liable to further and accumulated penalties, this argument by Chauncy is vulnerable to the criticism of diminishing the importance that this present earthly state has for us morally as a unique period of evaluation or trial (Patsalidou 2012: 812).

For our author the punishment threatened under the present dispensation of Christ, in order to dissuade men from disobeying His commands, 'is the misery of the same intermediate state, and not the misery that will have no end' (*ibid.*, p.191).


## *9. Millennialism*

We end our present survey of soteriological themes in Chauncy's theological works by addressing a couple of topics that although not directly related to our main concern in this part of our work, might prove to be of interest for those concerned in having a more complete understanding of the Bostonian's overall beliefs—his endorsement of Millennialism, and his rebuttal of a common and rather practical argument in favour of the traditional or classical doctrine of hell.

Absent from church history for at least fifteen centuries, the doctrine of the millennium, of a renewed worldly kingdom lasting roughly a thousand years between Christ's second coming and 'the establishment of a totally new cosmic order', reappeared in popular protestant theology, particularly that of the United States during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (McGrath 2011: 460; Ferguson 1997). An idea, it should be noted, rather loosely based on Scripture, particularly that of the book of Revelation (20: 2-5). It did however enjoy considerable appeal during the early history of the church (up until the fifth century), with writers like Irenaeus of Lyon—for whom Christ's promise in the Last Super to drink wine with His disciples once again warranted such a belief; and this since, Irenaeus thought, such a promise would be implausible if thought in relation to 'disembodied spirits'—or Tertullian, who conceived of such a

concept as a sort of reward or compensation aimed at those who had suffered here on earth for their faith[70] (*id.*).

Our author claims that even after the second coming of Christ, there will be substantial work to be done, and for which reason a long period of time is absolutely necessary. So one should guard oneself against the common mistake that some writers have run into, in the sense of believing that the mediatorial kingdom of Christ will be finished upon Christ's second coming 'by his then finally, and unalterably fixing the states of men, whether good or bad' (Chauncy, 1784: 208); for even though the apostle here speaks of the end of this mediatory scheme—'when Christ shall have delivered up the kingdom to the father' (*id.*)—there will be still substantial work to be carried out as we will henceforth describe.

The other period or dispensation affirms our author, will have Christ no longer for its head, as it is expressed in those words that state that then 'God shall be all in all', *i.e.*, 'shall govern all, influence all, make communications to all, immediately, and not through the hands of a mediator', for even Christ will then be subjected to God, the Father (*ibid.*, p.217). Chauncy adds that the administration of all will be in His hands, so that all duty, just as all favours and rewards will be 'immediately communicated from him' (*ibid.*, pp.217, 222). He will be then directly and 'immediately concerning himself' for the welfare of everyone, 'so as that they shall be happy beyond conception and without end' (*ibid.*, p.222).

Accordingly, final and everlasting happiness is not the reward promised under Christ's mediatorial kingdom, in order to persuade mankind into subjection to God's moral government—this will indeed, in the end, be the effect of it, but it certainly is not the promise made in this present state. The reward is 'the happiness of that state which intervenes between the resurrection, and God's being 'all in all'' (*id.*).

A couple of pages onward he states that the main difference between those who exit this present state as the obedient subjects of God from those who die in sin, lies in the fact that the former will be admitted, 'at Christ's second coming, to dwell with him in his kingdom of glory for a certain period of duration' (*ibid.*, p.224). Once again a clear allusion no doubt, to a millennial period or dispensation, where the fortunate ones will be living and reigning in life with Christ by their side, while the rest will be banished from 'his presence, to dwell in unspeakable torment till they are wrought upon to see their folly, [and] repent of it' (*id.*).

Chauncy naturally affirms that the Scripture account of such reward perfectly coincides with the

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[70] Tertullian writes that 'a kingdom has been promised to us on earth, but before heaven: but in another state than this, as being after the resurrection. This will last for a thousand years, in a city of God's own making[...]' (McGrath 2008: 648). He further writes that this city was,

> established by God for the reception of the saints at the resurrection, and for their refreshment with an abundance of all blessings, spiritual blessings to be sure, in compensation for the blessings we have despised or lost in this age. For indeed it is right and worthy of God that his servants should also rejoice in the place where they suffered hardship for his name (*id.*).

vision he has here advanced, for it is there described as enjoyment of various sorts in the kingdom of Christ, that is, when He will still be carrying out His duties as mediator and governor of this dispensation period. One example of this is Rev. 5:10 where the promise of this reward is expressed by their reigning on earth, which says Chauncy, clearly points our thoughts to the idea that this reward 'will be bestowed on them in the new heavens, and the new earth, which will succeed the dissolution of the present form of this world by fire' (*ibid.*, p.223). And where the saints, 'in their resurrection-state, shall live under the reign of Christ', till the time comes when the 'administration shall change hands', and God himself is 'king and sovereign' (*id.*).

*10. Social order and the traditional doctrine of Hell*

In one of his theological works Chauncy puts forth the very familiar argument customarily used against detractors of the notion of everlasting hell, namely, that it is a constraint against the naturally evil proclivities of men to believe in such endless misery; that it is the most powerful deterrent against such unlawful tendencies.

Firstly, he argues, it would have to be shown that these doctrines do in fact 'naturally and directly tend to encourage men in vicious practice' (*ibid.*, p.341). Besides, wicked men may, and in fact do, as it is evident with the grace of the gospel as it is presently 'perverted and abused by thousands' (*ibid.*, p.342), distort the 'tendency of anything, and take occasion, even from that which is naturally and strongly adapted to soften their hearts, and effect their reformation, to harden themselves in sin' (*ibid.*, p.341).

The truth is, for our author, that the doctrine of finite sufferings in the afterlife, one that will last till the necessary change in their characters or hearts is effected, 'is naturally and powerfully adapted to discourage them from going on in their sinful courses' (*ibid.*, p.342). Therefore, if the abuse some men might make of such a doctrine could be taken or construed into an argument against it, and conclude thereupon that the doctrine is false, then, Chauncy argues, no doctrine could ever be true, 'for there is not one but what may be perverted and turned into ill use' (*id.*).

If it had been the case, our author claims, that the scheme here advanced pretended men to be admitted immediately after their earthly death into everlasting happiness, regardless of what their moral deportment had been, then the objection here treated might carry with it some weight. But since it has been proved 'that moral depravity is inconsistent with rational happiness', and that the sufferings of wicked men in the next state shall be 'awfully great in degree as well as long in duration', it cannot but be concluded that the doctrine of universal salvation is not, 'from its natural tendency [propitious to] give encouragement to vice' (*ibid.*, p.343); and that if this was to be the case with respect to some, it is only 'because they will not harken to the dictates of reason, and act up to their character as intelligent agents' (*id.*).

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But as Chauncy clearly mentions it, the objections here discussed might not be so much directed against the truth of the scheme of universal salvation, but to the wisdom of making it open to everyone (*ibid.*, p.346). As previously stated, if men behave according to their nature, that is, as rational moral agents, the scheme here advanced of post-mortem, though finite torments will be enough to dissuade them from continuing to pursue their evil ways. But if they do not, the prospect of such distant sufferings, however endless they might be portrayed to be, will unlikely have a different effect on them. Chauncy's words are:

> But if they will not suffer so dreadful a punishment as this to have any influence upon them, by their thoughtlessness and inconsideration, there is certainly no good reason to suppose, was the punishment made greater by the increase of its duration, but that the same thoughtlessness and stupidity would render it ineffectual (*ibid.*, p.351).

And it might be, our author argues, that despite the vulgar notions that wicked men might entertain of the deity, their conception of Him as a being of infinite benevolence, run against the idea of never-ending torments in the afterlife. For they seem to believe that a being of such infinite goodness 'will not be so severe with his poor, though sinful creatures' (*ibid.*, p.353).

**Chapter 7. Philosophical Problems and Solutions to Chauncy's Account of the Afterlife**

*I. Introduction.*

The problem of hell concerns the seeming incompatibility between an orthodox conception of God, on which He is both omnipotent and perfectly good, and an orthodox conception of hell, according to which there are some human beings who, in the life to come, are eternally separated from Him. The incompatibility seems to arise because, if God is omnipotent, it seems that He can save everyone, where salvation consists in eternal union with God in the life to come; and, if God is perfectly good, He would want to do so. Now, if God can do something and He wants to do something, it seems to follow that He will do it, in this case, that He will save everyone. But that seems not to be the case, given the orthodox conception of hell.

By the traditional doctrine of hell we refer to the position that states that once a person dies in a sinful condition, then that individual will be consigned for all eternity to a place characterized by both physical suffering (*poena sensus*), and separation from God (*poena damni*) (Cross 2009: 346, 350; Patsalidou 2012: 811). Furthermore and as previously stated, the philosophical theory of punishment underlying the orthodox account of hell, *viz.*, retributive or vindictive in kind, seems difficult to square with the idea of God as essentially loving (1 John 4:8, 16) (McGrath 2011: 458); and this since the concept of the unending (and pointless) punishment of sinners seems barbaric and utterly unlike the image of God as a loving father that we find in the gospels.

There have been various attempts throughout history to try to preserve consistency with regard to this theological conundrum, as is eminently the case of those classical theologians[71] who rejected, or were at the least deceptive about their commitment to the idea of God's universal love for mankind; a group that Talbott labelled as *hard-hearted theists* (1990b: 21-22). Fortunately, very few theologians or philosophers nowadays have any sympathy for such grim views; and since it also lies outside the scope of the present work, we will not concern ourselves with explicating this position.

The issue at stake in this debate could be framed then as a problem of hell, and it revolves around a set of three inconsistent claims that, although finding *prima facie* support in Scripture for all three, cannot, as a matter of logic, be all true. As most theologians have historically done, if you accept two of them, then you must deny the third; a decision that reveals, as will become evident afterwards, significantly different conceptions of the divine nature (Talbott 2014: 39).

The propositions are:

    I.   God desires to save everyone

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[71] E.g. Augustine, Aquinas, Calvin, et al.

II.  God can save everyone

III. Not everyone is saved


Thus, the positions to be addressed in this chapter are first, William Lane Craig's Arminian defence of the traditional account of hell. In general lines, Craig's argument is that because salvation must be freely chosen by human beings, it may not be within God's power to save everyone, that is, there may be some people who, no matter how much God does to aid them in freely choosing salvation, will always freely reject it. The main advantage of this position is that of uncompromised freedom for those who choose to reject God. Whereas its principal drawback is that of the happiness of the redeemed in heaven being diminished by the knowledge of the presence of their loved ones in hell. Craig's rejoinder to this is divine obliteration of memories; that is, that divinity will erase from the minds of the redeemed any memories of their loved ones.

Our second position is the universalism of Thomas Talbott, anchored in his conviction that because God loves all human beings with a perfect form of love, it's not possible for Him to allow any human being to be damned. The strength of such a position is that there is no need for the erasing of memories one encounters in Craig's proposal, but carries with it the inconvenience of compromised freedom for those who freely reject God.

Finally, we have Chauncy's solution to this problem. What's forcing the choice between the two bad options above is that humans are given a finite number of opportunities to accept or reject God. Let's deny such assumption and say that God puts those who reject Him in Limbo and gives them infinite opportunities to accept Him. Furthermore, lest some creatures by endlessly rejecting God might hamper His plan for mankind, God, through His middle knowledge is aware of this, and simply decides not to create them.[72]

In this chapter I suggest a new way to reject (III). To do this, I will explain William Lane Craig's way of rejecting (II), and Thomas Talbott's manner of rejecting (III). I will suggest that each has a significant problem, but if we borrow elements from both we can avoid these problems and arrive at a dialectically superior solution to the problem of hell. This solution, I think, is found in Chauncy's eschatology, as I described in the previous chapter; and so, I think, is a Chauncian solution. So, let us begin with the unorthodox position and analyse Talbott's rejection of (III) which leads him to endorse both (II) and (I), that is, to the idea that everyone will be saved.

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[72] We are not concerned here with the so-called intermediate state after death, and before the resurrection; but only with the state or condition that comes after this intermediate state.

*II. Everyone is saved: Thomas Talbott*

We think it will be helpful to take on at this point some important definitions and distinctions regarding the different positions just mentioned.

A theist, generally speaking, could be said to endorse the following:

(1) God exists

(2) God is both omniscient and omnipotent

(3) God loves every created person

(4) Evil exists[73]

But given that most Christians also advocate the following tenet, we must add to the previous set the following,

(5) God will irrevocably reject some persons and subject those persons to everlasting punishment.

Following Talbott's typology, any theist who in addition to propositions (1) to (4) also endorses (5) will be referred to as a conservative theist (1990b: 21).

Talbott argues however, that from the above set of propositions, 'together with certain necessary truths one can deduce, [...] an explicit contradiction' (*ibid.*). Consequently, any reasonable theist will be forced to reject either (3) or (5) (*ibid.*), as was the case of the classical theologians mentioned previously.

Unlike hard-hearted theists, the Arminian or free will theist need not commit himself to the truth of (5) in order to defend the traditional doctrine of hell. Instead, he could claim that despite God's sincere desire that everyone be saved and come to know the truth (1 Timothy 2:4; 2 Peter 3:9), since He created us with free will, and some of us can use such freedom to reject Him forever, then He is unable to secure the salvation of at least some of His creatures (Talbott 1990: 227).

A free will theist will hence modify (5) for (5') or what is also known as the Rejection Hypothesis (RH), to wit,

(5') Some persons will, despite God's best efforts to save them, finally reject God and separate themselves from God forever.[74]

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[73] My presentation of these propositions is drawn from Talbott 1990b.

[74] Talbott 1990: 227.

But let us go back to Talbott's reasons for rejecting proposition (III), that is, with his attack on what he calls conservative theism.

Most Christians believe that up until the time of physical death, divine grace is always available to a creature. Tradition states then that divine grace has a 'built in time limit' (Talbott 1990b: 23). If one has died in a sinful state, then one will discover that all hope is lost; that the possibility of redemption has passed and never to return (*id.*). This conservative Christian is thus committed to much more than (RH) and believes that God not only rejects the sins incurred in by certain individuals but likewise rejects the sinners themselves (*ibid.* p.24). They thus advocate (5).

With the intention of clarifying what it might mean to say that God rejects some sinner, let us stipulate that, (a) a sinner freely and forever refuses to be reconciled to God, (b) that nothing God could do would bring it about (in Plantinga's broad or weak sense[75]) that the sinner in question freely repents of his sins, and (c) that the following conditional statements are true:

(6) If God could do something to bring it about that the sinner in question freely repents of his sin, then God would do it, and

(7) If the aforementioned sinner were to repent of his sins freely, then God would accept him back as a prodigal son.[76]

These conditions considered, it would be difficult to speak of God rejecting some sinner, and we would be closer to the truth if we were to say instead that the sinner freely rejects God (Talbott 1990b: 24). A helpful manner therefore of distinguishing between (5) and (5')/(RH) would be by adopting the following definitions:

(D₁) For any sinner S and time $t$, S finally rejects God forever at $t$ if, and only if, (a) S freely resolves at $t$ never to be reconciled to God and, (b) there is nothing both within God's power to do and consistent with the interest of all other created persons that would (weakly) bring it about, either at $t$ or at some moment subsequent to $t$, that S freely repents of S's sin and is thereby reconciled to God.

(D₂) For any sinner S and time $t$, God irrevocably rejects S at $t$ if, and only if, either (a) at $t$ and every moment subsequent to $t$ God would refuse to be reconciled to S even on the condition

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[75] For Plantinga's broad and weak sense of bringing things about, see *The Nature of Necessity*, pp. 171-173.
[76] Talbott 1990b: 24

that S freely repents of S's sin or (b) at neither *t* nor any moment subsequent to *t* does S freely repents of S's sin and the following conditions are met: (i) at *t* God knows of something both within His power to do and consistent with the interest of all other created persons that would (weakly) bring it about, either at *t* or at some moment subsequent to *t*, that S freely repents of S's sin, and (ii) God's immutable intention at *t* is not to exercise His power in this way.[77]

According to (D₁), which speaks of a sinner's rejection of God, and of God's incapacity to do anything about it, a sinner's rejection must withstand or be sustained 'in the face of all that omnipotent love might do' (Talbott 1990b: 25), an issue we will later take on. Whereas (D₂) who establishes the conditions under which we might speak of divine rejection of a sinner, might prove problematic for those prepared to endorse (5), since it appears to imply that God is capable of acting contrary to the interests of those He supposedly loves (*id.*).

Now the obvious issue to go over at this point is to define what it might mean to say that God loves a given individual. A necessary, though not sufficient condition according to Talbott would have God desiring the good of such an individual, that is,

> (P₁) Necessarily, God loves a person S (with a perfect form of love) at a time *t* only if God's intention at *t* and every moment subsequent to *t* is to do everything within His power to promote the best interest of S.[78]

Now considered within the context of human personal relationships, an obvious objection would be that, in order to be genuine, love for someone need not be everlasting, for we surely can think of examples of genuine love that simply ceases to endure for natural causes (*e.g.* dementia late in life). But an objection such as this one has no bearing when it comes to the divine being. In the case of an omniscient being it simply makes no sense to claim that such a being loved a person for a while, but afterwards ceases to do so (Talbott 1990b: 26). It is a necessary truth then 'that God loves a person at one time only if he loves that person at all subsequent times' (*id.*).

The only possible caveat here would have the best interest of someone in collision or in opposition to the best interest of someone else. In which case God would be precluded from promoting the best interests of both, and would be forced either to take sides in such an issue or to resolve the conflict 'in

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[77] Talbott 1900b: 24-25
[78] Talbott 1990b: 25

accordance with some principle of justice' (*id*.). Although Talbott believes that no such conflicts are even possible for God, he nonetheless introduces the following proviso for those that do,

> (P₂) Necessarily, God loves a person S at a time *t* only if God's intention at *t* and every moment
>      subsequent to *t* is to do everything within His power to promote the best interest of S,
>      provided that the interest of S is consistent with that of all others whom God also loves.[79]

The main idea behind both (P₁) and (P₂) is that if God sincerely loves a given person, then there must be some connection with this fact and His readiness to exercise His power in the interest of such a person (Talbott 1990b: 26).

Naturally not just any interest would qualify as the one that God would seek to promote in His creatures. So what would constitute the best interest of someone? Our intuitions here would likely point to the fact that a person's best interest must 'have some connection [...] with the conditions of a happy life' (Talbott 1990b: 27; Talbott 2014: 124). Needless to say, it would be nigh impossible to arrive to a consensus regarding what those conditions are, for though it may probably not contain instances of unpleasant sensations, Swinburne surely is correct in describing what he calls 'supremely worthwhile happiness' as not being 'essentially a matter of having pleasant sensations' (Swinburne 1983: 39; cited in *ibid*.).

Borrowing from Swinburne, Talbott defines these conditions as being, (i) that such happiness cannot be the outcome or take its rise from a false belief or from an immoral action; and (ii) that such happiness be able to endure forever, that is, that it must not lead to boredom or fade away with the passing of time (Talbott 2014: 125). A couple of conditions that will prove crucial for Talbott's rebuttal of the free will theist position later on.

Taking inspiration from the New Testament, Talbott asserts that such supreme happiness can only come about when 'one is loved by others and is likewise filled with love for others' (*id*.). It is then only by becoming part of a community of love that one can attain such supremely worthwhile happiness. And this leads Talbott to claim that:

> (P₃) Necessarily, God loves a person S at a time *t* only if God's intention at *t* and every moment
>      subsequent to *t* is to do everything within His power to promote supremely worthwhile

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[79] Talbott 1990b: 26

happiness in S, provided that the actions taken are consistent with His promoting the same kind of happiness in all others whom He also loves.[80]

So, the logical inconsistency in conservative theism should be evident according to Talbott, for if conservative theism includes commitment to both (3) and (5), but given (P$_2$), (3) entails,

   (8) For any created person S and time subsequent to the creation of S, God's intention at $t$ is to do all that He properly can to promote the best interest of S;[81]

and taking (P$_3$) into account, (3) entails

   (9) For any created person S and time $t$ subsequent to the creation of S, God's intention at $t$ is to do all that He properly can to promote supremely worthwhile happiness in S.

And also (5) would seem to imply both,

   (10) There is a person S and a time $t$ subsequent to the creation of S such that it is not God's intention at $t$ to do all that He properly can to promote the best interest of S.
   (11) There is a person S and a time $t$ subsequent to the creation of S such that it is not God's intention at $t$ to do all that He properly can to promote supremely worthwhile happiness in S.[82]

Since both (8) and (10) are openly contradictory, as is the case with (9) and (11), conservative theism, according to Talbott, at least appears to be self-contradictory (1990b: 29).

*III. An Arminian take on Soteriology: William Lane Craig*

We mentioned previously that the Arminian perspective claims that despite God's desire that everyone be saved, assumes that God is not almighty with regards to this issue, that is, that He is unable to 'satisfy his own will or desire in this matter' (Talbott 2014: 103). He simply does 'the best He can to cut his losses, minimize the defeat, and to produce the most favourable balance of good over evil that he can' (*ibid*., p. 42). Their defence of the orthodox doctrine of hell is thus based on (5')/(RH).

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[80] Talbott 1990b: 28
[81] Talbott 1990b: 28. The same applies to (9) and (10).
[82] Talbott 1990b: 29

For Craig the main issue concerning the conflict between divine rejection of some sinners, and divine benevolence, could be reduced to certain counterfactuals of freedom concerning those persons who, though not responding to the light of general revelation received, could have responded differently if they had been the subjects of special revelation (Craig 1989: 176). It has to do with answers to questions such as: why did God decide to create a world in which so many of His creatures would be lost?, and even more significantly, why did God not create a world in which everyone freely decides for communion with Him? (*id.*).

Craig claims that those who object to the exclusivity of salvation through Christ are posing what he calls a soteriological problem of evil, that is, that the combination of propositions (2) and (3) above, which we shall group together in,

(12) God is omniscient, omnipotent and perfectly good (perfectly loving)

is inconsistent with

(13) Some persons do not receive Christ and are damned.[83]

And since (12) is essential to theism, then the putative objector must show (13) to be false.

Now one might express concern here for the manner in which Craig frames his so-called soteriological problem of evil, since it appears to arise only for those who are familiar with the gospel (Knight, 2010: 10). For those who have heard of the gospel but who remain unconvinced by it—either because they are committed to their own religious beliefs, or because it (the gospel) was handed to them by people who were far from exemplifying Christian virtues for instance—'eternal damnation is the only thing to be expected' (*id.*). A God that behaved in such manner could certainly be called sovereign, but it would seriously call into question His loving nature.

Talbott's reasons for denying the possibility of (5') and the Molinist position more generally are: (I) first, that the choice specified in (RH) is incoherent, and (II) that even if possible, God would necessarily not allow such a decision to be made by any of His creatures (Talbott 1990: 227, 238). But before addressing in greater detail the exchange of ideas between Craig and Talbott concerning the possibility of (RH), let us consider first the possibility of God making actual a world in which all of its creatures, out of their own free will, decide to be reconciled to Him; a possibility that is apparently subscribed by Chauncy.

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[83] Craig 1989: 180.

Although it is logically possible for God to actualize any possible world, it is not open to Him to actualize just any world; and this since the scope of feasible worlds available to God in the moment logically prior to creation will be checked by those true counterfactuals of creaturely freedom which He, through His Middle Knowledge, knows before His divine creative decree (Craig 1989: 180). So at this point one needs to know if within the range of feasible worlds for God to make actual, there is at least one in which everyone is freely reconciled to God and thus saved (*ibid.*, p.181).

Those wishing to provide an affirmative answer to such a question would stipulate that,

(14) God knows for any individual S under what circumstances S would freely receive Christ.[84]

But given a libertarian understanding of free will,[85] and the possibility of some creatures being so obdurate and unrepentant as to reject God in whatever worlds He decides to put them in, the following could be put forward by an exclusivist,

(15) For some individual S, there are no circumstances under which S would freely receive Christ.

The Universalist could, however, accept (15) and still maintain that there are congruent graces for everyone, and that God can in fact make actual a world containing only such individuals (Craig 1989: 182).

Craig's position though, is to assert that in order to prove this option possible, it's not enough to merely point to the fact that it is always open for God to find and make use of circumstances under which various individuals would freely repent; it would be also necessary to show that such circumstances are compossible (*id.*). But even compossibility is not enough for Craig, for he believes that in order to avoid the 'counterfactual fallacy of strengthening the antecedent, [one] must show that in the combined circumstances the consequent still follows' (*id.*).

The position advocated by Craig is that God has disposed the world in such a way that those persons who would refuse reconciliation in any circumstances whatsoever (in every feasible world for God to make actual), are precisely the ones who are damned in the actual world. Taking once more inspiration from Plantinga, Craig speaks of *transworld damnation* as the quality possessed by those persons who would

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[84] Craig 1989: 181. The same applies to proposition (15).

[85] A libertarian understanding of free will is taken to include the following two claims: (L₁) an agent acts with free will only if his act is not ultimately causally determined by anything outside of himself; and (L₂) an agent acts with free will only if he could have done otherwise, or at the very least, the psychological possibility of doing otherwise was a live option for him (Stump 2006: 125, 128). For our purposes here however, we will consider that libertarianism *just is* this power to do otherwise, which is usually termed the Principle of Alternate Possibilities (PAP).

freely refuse reconciliation with God 'in every world feasible for God in which that person exists' (*ibid.*, p.184).

Based on all this, Craig believes to be in possession of a premise which is consistent with (12), and would entail (13), that is,

(16) God has actualized a world containing an optimal balance between saved and unsaved, and those who are unsaved suffer from transworld damnation.[86]

Now returning to the issue of the alleged incoherence of (RH) according to Talbott, (I) the first thing to be said is that if God is the preeminent source of happiness as Christians have always believed, and if separation from God can only bring about increasing misery, then it is difficult to know what could possibly qualify as an intelligible reason for rejecting God (Talbott 1990: 228; Talbott 2014: 173). Talbott in fact expands the concept of free will to include a minimum degree of rationality, and complains of the fact that Arminians and other free will theists operate as though the only requirement for a decision to be truly free is for it to be undetermined in the sense of not being the outcome of external sufficient causes.[87]

At this point Talbott draws a distinction between someone making a decision to reject God that is at least partly taken in ignorance, based on deception, as a consequence of previous bad decisions, or as the outcome of being in subjection to unhealthy desires; and that of someone making a decision to reject God who is fully informed, not deceived, and who happens not to be in bondage to such baneful proclivities. In the latter case we would be talking of someone making a fully informed decision to reject God, whereas the former would be better described as a less than fully informed decision to reject Him (Talbott 2014: 172).

For Talbott, if the decision to reject God is less than fully informed, it will always be open for God to release such sinners from their ignorance, deception, or their bondage to unwholesome desires, without in any way interfering with their freedom. For we are here speaking of those who owing to such bondage have forfeited their freedom of will in the first place, and in releasing them from such bondage, God would in fact be restoring the possibility of free choice in them (Talbott 1990b: 37). Whereas for Craig, this divine decision to 'jump start' sinners 'by repeatedly removing them from their bondage and setting them on their course again until they go right', is to be regarded as rather manipulative, and hence, as disrespectful of their freedom (Craig 1991: 300).

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[86] Craig 1989: 184

[87] 'If without any motive for doing so', says Talbott, 'S consistently acts contrary to S's own interest as well as contrary to the interest of all others, then S is not a rational agent and is not capable, therefore, of performing free actions' (1992: 501-502).

Craig's also replies that perhaps mere wickedness in some sinners might push them to reject God. Or it could also be that the will to self-rule in some persons is so strong, that no matter how irrational it may appear to us, they will choose to spurn divine love 'if that love requires worship and submission of one's will' (*ibid.*, p.302). Craig as well charges Talbott's claim of the alleged incoherence of (RH) as being question-begging. For it would seem that in Talbott's view 'any decision to reject God is by definition 'not fully informed'', and this owing to the fact that any person who thus acts is 'by the nature of the case deceived, and no 'fully informed' decision rests upon deception of any kind' (Craig 1993: 501).

Craig likewise deems Talbott's idea of limiting free choice to rational agents as question-begging. And this since Craig considers that a decision arising from either wickedness or plain stubbornness is totally unlike a random occurrence (owing to Talbott's characterization of a choice such as (RH) as being similar to a quantum leap). The reason he offers for this is that ultimately such a choice takes its rise in agent causation. In the end, says Craig, it is hard to see how such a decision cannot be free 'unless we simply define 'free' to exclude such irrational acts' (*ibid.*, p.502).

Let us concern ourselves now with Talbott's other argument against the possibility of (RH), that is, to the idea that even if possible, God would necessarily not allow any of His creatures to make such a choice (II). His love would preclude such possibility, though it is not love for those who would freely damn themselves that would spur God to action, but instead, it would be love for those who are saved. The idea being that the supreme happiness of the saved in heaven would be diminished by the painful knowledge of the fate of their loved ones who happen to be in eternal torment and separation from God (Craig 1991: 305). His argument here revolves around what he calls the inclusive nature of love, and how it binds people's interests together so as to be inseparable (Talbott 1990b: 32). So, let us say a few words concerning Talbott's concept of such love.

First of all, we need to bring here attention to a special feature about love with important implications for our purposes: though love makes possible such capacity within us for the relevant sort of happiness just mentioned, it can likewise render the attainment of such happiness as utterly impossible (Talbott 1990b: 32; Talbott 2014: 126). And the reason for this lies in the fact that as social, gregarious agents that we are, our happiness is intimately connected with the life conditions of those most close and dear to us. An example, inspired by Talbott will be enough to prove this point. If, as most fathers, I love my son as much as I love myself, then every possible evil that befalls my son will likewise bring misery and pain on myself. It would be preposterous, if the love in question is of such kind, to think that I could remain unaffected or utterly indifferent, or worse yet even happy, in the knowledge that a person who is so important to my own happiness is miserable. And, if the issue at hand is the supreme misery associated with everlasting damnation, all the more so. For if, as Talbott remarks, 'two persons are bound together in

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love, their purposes and interests, even the conditions of their happiness, are so logically intertwined as to be inseparable' (Talbott 1990b: 32; Talbott 2014: 127).

So, if God were not to do his very best (which in God' case would be omnipotence) for, or worse yet, if He acted contrary to the best interest ($P_2$) or the happiness ($P_3$) of a person we love dearly, He would then also be doing less than His very best, and acting contrary to my own interest and happiness (Talbott 1990b: 32; Talbott 2014: 127). Such a thought has also implications for both our love and obedience towards God, for if I disapprove of what God does, then my will is certainly not in conformity with His; and, if I disapprove of His actions, then it would also be very difficult for me to speak of either having a sincere love for God, or to worship Him in a wholehearted manner (Talbott 2014: 129).

With the intention of illustrating the force of these last two points, let us imagine what it would be like for God to love us, without at the same time loving those who are dear to us. So, if God were to mislead me concerning the fate of a loved one, who in reality happens to be spending his time in agony in hell, then 'my blissful ignorance, being based upon a false belief', is not the sort of relevant happiness we were discussing lines above (Talbott 1990b: 32; Talbott 2014: 127). And if God were to bring it about that I no longer care nor love this person, then He would again be destroying the possibility of attaining supremely worthwhile happiness in me. Either way, He would be acting in an unloving manner to both my loved one and myself (Talbott 1990b: 32; Talbott 2014: 127-128).

A possible objection at this point would stipulate that although it is impossible for God to love and make us happy without at the same time loving and making happy those we love, there remains the possibility of God loving us without necessarily loving those whom we don' t love. In answer to this rejoinder Talbott mentions that if a person S is not the object of our love, then that could be for one of three reasons: (i) either I am unaware of S's existence, (ii) or I am aware of S's existence but just don't know S very well, or (iii) it may be that 'my capacity for love is not yet perfected' (Talbott 1990b: 33; Talbott 2014: 128). If (i) is the case, then my resulting happiness is better described as the blissful ignorance that is the outcome of my false belief about the post-mortem condition of S; if (ii) is the case, then I will nevertheless continue to wish the good for S despite not knowing him very well, 'or my capacity for love is not yet perfected' (Talbott 1990b: 33; Talbott 2014: 128); and if (iii) is the case, then God 'should continue to teach me the lessons of love until it is perfected', that is, if He wants me to experience supremely worthwhile happiness (Talbott 2014: 128).

So it is simply not possible on Talbott's account for God to love me and make me supremely happy, unless He also makes everyone else happy; even those who are our enemies, as Jesus Himself commanded us to do.

Based on the preceding arguments Talbott offers us the following principles,

(P$_4$) It is necessary that, for any two persons S and S', if S wills the good for S', then God wills the good for S also if God also wills the good for S'.[88]

And with the intention of fending off a possible objection raised by the alleged incompatibility of (P$_4$) with a class of persons who are neither loved by God nor by any of God's creatures, let us include the following,

(P$_5$) It is necessary that, for any two persons S and S', God wills the good for S only if God wills that S be the kind of person such that, were S to know of the existence of S', S would will the good for S' as well.

(P$_6$) It is necessary that, for any two persons, S and S', if (a) God wills that S be the kind of person such that, were S to know of the existence of S', S would will the good for S' and (b) God Himself wills the good for S, then God wills the good for S' as well.

Craig believes that one can escape such conclusions by stating that, once in heaven, the saved would have any memory of their loved ones erased by God. So that their happiness would remain untinged by the painful knowledge of the fate of their loved ones. But he also adds that perhaps no such removal of knowledge would be needed, for it may be that the mere presence of God (the Beatific Vision) will drive out from the minds of the saved any conscious awareness of the fate of their loved ones who happen to be damned (Craig 1991: 306-307). Talbott in fact touches upon Craig's first rejoinder only to dismiss it as an immoral deception on God's part (Talbott 1990: 237-238).

Craig asserts that we can all think of situations where we conceal or shield others from painful information; information that we consider unnecessary for them to have (Craig 1991: 306). But we believe some distinctions are appropriate at this point.

Since, as Talbott points out, the nature of the created order is for Craig ultimately tragic, this would presumably justify God's decision to deceive the redeemed concerning the fate of their loved ones, lest this knowledge interferes with their capacity for supreme happiness that we take to be constitutive of salvation (Talbott 1992: 508); and this just as a loving parent would withhold painful and unnecessary information from a child (*id.*). In such a case, this withholding of information would be warranted on the grounds that such young individuals are simply psychologically or emotionally immature to grasp and deal with such hurtful facts. However, Talbott concedes as well to the possibility of concealing information in cases where

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[88] Talbott 1990b: 33-34. The same applies to propositions P$_5$ and P$_6$.

though mentally and emotionally mature, a person might nonetheless be in such a delicate physical condition that those in charge of their physical recuperation (doctors), decide to withhold painful information until a later time (*id*.).

So, even if we were to understand Craig's argument in this latter fashion, the blissful ignorance that results from such deception is a far cry from the supreme worthwhile happiness alluded to in the first part of this chapter (*ibid*. pp.508-509). As the excruciating reality afflicting a mother whose son or daughter has simply vanished reveals, no one who truly loves someone 'would want to remain blissfully ignorant' of their fate, and this notwithstanding how horrendous that knowledge might prove to be (*ibid*., p.509).

We feel inclined however, to regard Craig's argument as something more than a mere pious concealment of information, and to see it more in terms of a kind of divine lobotomy that expunges or obliterates from the mind of the redeemed any knowledge of their loved ones who happen to be damned. It is difficult not to recoil at the thought of what such an action might imply, particularly in terms of personal identity; for if we imagine a redeemed individual whose entire (or even a significant part of his) family happens to be condemned, the argument put forth by Craig would signify that any memory of his interactions with them would have to be erased; all the meaningful exchanges of trust, love or forgiveness for instance, that shape to a significant degree who we are, would simply vanish (Talbott 2014). So it is warranted to wonder what damaging effects such an action by God would entail, and what kind of person would the redeemed afterwards be.

Craig's other proposal stated that this recourse to divine obliteration of certain segments of the memories of the redeemed, might not be necessary since the beatific vision would simply drive off from their minds 'any awareness of the lost in hell... [such that they] would still have such knowledge, but they would never be conscious of it and so never pained by it' (Craig 1991: 307). We find these suggestions problematic for various reasons. How can someone be in possession of certain information and yet remain unaware (or unconscious) of it in a protracted manner?, as the Christian idea of salvation, coupled with Craig's suggestion would entail; and more importantly, what would the difference then be between having knowledge of a certain order lodged within one's head and yet never conscious of it, and the case of simply not having such knowledge whatsoever?

Ultimately, Talbott dismisses this last proposal by Craig on the same grounds that he dismissed what he calls hard-hearted theism—the likelihood of the beatific vision driving away any knowledge of the damned from the minds of the redeemed is only possible if the beatific vision makes 'the redeemed less loving and thus more calloused' (Talbott 1992: 510). An impossibility on Talbott's narrative if we remember that one of the central elements of his notion of salvation was the idea that the redeemed are filled with love for others.

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There is another and probably more damaging critique to be made against Craig's eschatology before we move to Chauncy's ideas on the matter. While Talbott raised some concerns regarding the idea that under Craig's scheme some individuals would serve as the means by which God secures a higher number of the redeemed in heaven, Talbott viewed it from the standpoint of the redeemed, and pointed to the likely rejection such a procedure would provoke in them. It is therefore natural for us to wonder as well what would the opinion of those persons *used* by God in order to secure a higher quantity of people in heaven could be. For it would appear that Craig's molinist defence of hell is not significantly different from that of a theological determinist; and theological determinism *is* very difficult to square with the conception of God as omnibenevolent (Knight 2010: 12). A Calvinist for example, holds that God creates people of all sorts and determines as well that some will be saved, while others will be damned. After His resolution to create a given world, God knows exactly how things will turn out, and is nevertheless unperturbed by the fact that His creative decree guarantees that some persons will spend eternity in misery (*ibid.*, p.14). Whereas on Craig's molinist scheme, God also knows that prior to creation 'there will be a certain ratio between saved and lost' (*ibid.*, p.15). So that, in the very act of creating them, God will be guaranteeing a life of eternal misery as well for them.

Although in this latter account God does not causally determine the choices that lead sinners into damnation, it is difficult not to share Gordon Knight's opinion to the point that God would then be utterly manipulative in His attitude towards creation (*id.*). For even if we concede that certain counterfactuals of freedom ensure that some sinners will freely reject Christ in whatever circumstances they are placed in, such freedom does not exempt God from responsibility in the eternal suffering of these creatures (*id.*). One does not, says Knight, in general, 'lose all responsibility for an action just because it involves a person's free choice' (*id.*). An example given by Knight will suffice it to prove this point: If I knowingly give the car keys to a friend who happens to be drunk, and if afterwards such friend is involved in an accident, I too share responsibility for the outcome, even though my friend acted freely in asking for his keys to drive home (*id.*).

*IV. Chauncy's Scheme of Universal Salvation*

We mentioned at the outset of the present chapter that what was forcing the decision between unsavoury options—that is, between Talbott's universalism and its apparent infringement on free will, and Craig's exclusivism with its attendant erasability of memories—was the orthodox premise that the opportunity for reconciliation (and hence union) with God was limited to our earthly sojourns. In what follows we will set aside such assumption and hold, with Chauncy, that God extends *post-mortem* and *ad infinitum* such a possibility for union with Him, and in this manner guarantees that everyone will be saved.

There are, roughly speaking, three elements grounding Chauncy's universalist scheme: (1) his conception of the divine nature as essentially loving, which coupled with His omnipotence, and His omniscience, guarantees universalism; (2) Molinism, and its attendant conception of a strong libertarian understanding of free will; and (3) his endorsement of what is now called the Argument from Infinite Opportunity (hereafter AIO). With the intention of not repeating ourselves, we will not delve long on (1), and will instead direct the reader to the companion theological chapter where this issue is developed at large (*Vid.* Ch.6). It will be therefore the main subject of the remainder of the present chapter to explicate points (2) and (3).

So, with regard to (1), Chauncy believes the divine nature is essentially benevolent and loving and would not have thus created mankind unless He knew He could achieve the voluntary reconciliation with Him of every single person. To put it simply and in his own words, no one is irreversibly under any doom of God (Chauncy 1785: 104). Moreover, in sending His son, the chief intention was to destroy or put an end to sin; a task that if not realized in this stage (earth), will be carried into effect *post-mortem*. So how does God manage to achieve this? How does He obtain the free consent of even the most recalcitrant of sinners? The answer to this leads us into (3), to which we now turn.

*IV.I Argument from Infinite Opportunity*

The reprobate after death will be sent to successive (if necessary) stages of limbo-like locations where, in accordance with AIO, God will guarantee three things: (i) He will work to remove all ignorance, deception, or bondage to non-rational affective states (hereafter salvation inhibitors); (ii) He will sustain the unregenerate in a temporal existence, until the time comes when they voluntarily choose communion with Him; and, naturally, (iii) He will leave open the possibility of choosing for reconciliation with Him at any time (Kronen & Reitan 2011: 60).

AIO thus advances that,

1. It is in God's power to bring about (i) to (iii).
2. In doing so God would not be doing anything morally unlawful.
3. If God brings about (i) to (iii), then everyone will voluntarily choose union with Him.
4. Thus, God can bring about that everyone freely chooses union with Him in a way that is morally permissible.[89]

We could think of Chauncy's ideas here as somehow akin to Kevin Timpe's Limbo, where individuals are given the opportunity, *post-mortem*, to heal and grow in the manner required for union with God (Timpe 2015: 277). For as Chauncy elsewhere describes it, we need to be made morally fit for salvation, and the

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[89] Kronen & Reitan 2011: 160

only avenue for achieving such end is to improve in virtue, which he calls the only rational preparative for happiness (1784: 12). Moreover, this process by which we are made righteous in God's eyes, let us remember, supposes the use of means suitable to be employed with rational moral agents, which in Chauncy's thought translates into the idea of God not tampering with our capacity to freely choose anything. Our subjection to God must therefore be voluntary for it to have any worth.

Points (ii) and (iii) of AIO specify the manner in which God could secure universalism even granted a libertarian understanding of free will. If, as previously mentioned, (i) is met, then a free agent will most likely choose for union with God; but, let us assume, for our purposes here at least, that even if free from all salvation inhibitors, the agent has an even chance (50/50) of choosing union with God over alienation. Furthermore, if (ii) and (iii) are met, then this decision will not be taken only once, but will be 'confronted *every moment* of an existence of potentially infinite duration' (Kronen & Reitan 2011: 161). That is, at every moment of such open-ended existence there is an even chance of the agent choosing for reconciliation rather than continued estrangement from God. Under circumstances such as these, the agent's decision to be reconciled to God becomes a mathematical certainty, as we will now explicate.

With the aim of elaborating on the mathematical certitude of salvation under AIO, we will make use of the language of possible words in the following manner,

> Let us call a complete possible state of affairs at any particular moment a 'possible moment'. A 'possible world' is a totality of temporally successive possible moments. A 'possible world segment' is a totality of temporally successive possible moments up to a particular time. A 'possible world tree' is a collection of possible worlds sharing the same possible world segment up to time T (the 'trunk' of the tree), after which they diverge. An 'indeterminacy' in a possible world segment is some random factor operative at T such that after T there is more than one possible world sharing the same world segment up to T. At any moment, there are a finite number of possible world segments in a possible world tree. However, as the timeline moves towards infinity, so long as there are indeterminacies remaining within any possible world segment, the number of possible world segments within a tree expands without bounds (Kronen & Reitan 2011: 161).

Let us imagine then a possible world segment P1, where an agent is faced at T1 (a moment of decision) with the choice (and hence an indeterminacy) of choosing for communion or for alienation from God. We mentioned previously that for the sake of argument we would be assuming that the odds of the agent choosing for reconciliation with God were even (for simplicity's sake we are also assuming that the only source of indeterminacy up to this point is the agent's decision for union or estrangement from God) (*id.*). Afterwards, at T2, we encounter two possible world segments belonging to 'the possible world tree that has P as its 'trunk'. In one of these possible worlds segments (P2saved)', the agent chooses for union with

God, while in the other (P2unsaved) the agent continues to refuse reconciliation with Him (*id.*). So, at T2, 'P2saved lacks any indeterminacy' and this since according to Christian dogma, once saved it is impossible for an agent to fall back into sin (*id.*). This in turn leads to the possible world extending from P2saved into the future, as one in which the agent is thus confirmed in salvation at every subsequent moment. At P2unsaved though, the agent is faced at T2 with the same choice he encountered at T1, so that, afterwards at T3, 'we have three possible world segments: P2saved-ext (the extension of P2saved up to T3), P3saved and P3unsaved. This process continues indefinitely' (*ibid.* p.162). As time advances however, the quantity of possible worlds in which the agent remains unsaved becomes increasingly smaller; that is, 'the percentage of the possible world segments in the possible world tree branching from P1becomes progressively smaller' (*id.*).

Additionally, on this account, while God would certainly be precluded from simply implanting in the unregenerate the appropriate desire for union with Him in a way that would simply bypass the agent's intellect and will, we could assume that God could work on the unregenerate by simply letting them experience what they have in fact chosen, *viz.*, alienation from Him (*ibid.*, p.170). And, it should be remembered, within a Christian context, the ultimate source of everything valuable and good is God.

Two images are encountered in Scripture to describe this estrangement from divinity: the lake of fire, and the outer darkness. By the hardships associated with the lake of fire image, we include those grouped under both the physical torments category (*poena sensu*), and those resulting from separation from God (*poena damni*). But also, for those obdurate sinners who wilfully continue to reject Him post-mortem, God might well allow them to experience the full consequences of alienation from Him in a way associated with the outer darkness image; that is, that of 'separation from every implicit experience of God, including even an experience of the material universe' (Talbott 2014: 188). But also, as Chauncy elsewhere mentions, for those most vicious sinners, the physical torments of a finite hell.

Such a leap into 'sheer nothingness' might prove to be the clincher for the recalcitrant sinner, for as Talbott argues, those who would initially attempt to cling to their illusions –such as Milton's Satan who expresses his desire to reign in Hell rather than serve in heaven, would encounter no one to reign over, nor even a physical environment in which to do so (*ibid.*, p.174). All of which further contributes to the idea that under AIO, and given a long enough stretch of time, even the most recalcitrant of sinners will be brought to voluntary union with God.

The whole argument comes down to affirming that the possibility of eternally rejecting God seems so unlikely, so low in its probability, that we need not worry about it being a real possibility. It would be the same as imagining that, although logically possible, the odds of a coin landing heaps up every single time in

a million tosses is so unlikely, so far-fetched, that it practically entails an impossibility (Kronen & Reitan 2011: 162).

*IV.II. Molinism and Free Will*

The understanding of free will most consistently favoured by Chauncy, and in accord with other aspects of his thought, is a libertarian one. As for Molinism, our writer makes use of it in various occasions, but particularly in his case against those who, like William Craig or Eleonore Stump, support what are now called Liberal Doctrines of Hell (LDH); doctrines grounded on God's alleged inability or unwillingness (for moral reasons) to tamper with a creature's free decision to not be united with Him.

The rationale for LDH is based on the following argument, called the Argument from Freedom (AF), which runs as follows:

1. God can guarantee the salvation of all only by bringing about the salvation of the unregenerate through some means that overrides their freedom.
2. Either such a means is not available to God (it is not possible for God to save the unregenerate by overriding their freedom), or, if it is available, it is morally impermissible for God to make use of it.
3. God will not do what is morally impermissible.
4. Therefore, God either cannot or will not guarantee the salvation of all (1, 2, 3).[90]

It will be therefore one of the main issues to go about when rediscussing AIO later on, to see if it can be construed in a way that avoids conflict with AF(1), and if it can't be done, and it is indeed a clear instance of overriding creaturely freedom, if it is a case of justified autonomy violation.

With the intention of elaborating on AIO, let us now move to AIO's premise (i), that is, the premise that in the afterlife God will work to remove or overcome all salvation inhibitors, and do so in a manner consistent with our character as free moral agents.

Let us recall from previous pages the issue of whether a fully informed decision to reject union with God is indeed coherent or not. While Talbott considers that if the agent is free from all salvation inhibitors, the decision to reject God is utterly inexplicable or incoherent, Craig appealed to stubbornness or the wilful rejection of the agent to submit to God; for if, paraphrasing Craig here, divine love requires submission, it might be spurned by those unwilling to bend their knee to God (Craig 1991: 302; Craig 1993: 516).

John Kronen and Eric Reitan argue that those who appeal to reasons such as the one just advanced

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[90] Kronen & Reitan 2011: 127

(wilful or prideful rejection) are mistaken, since one of the implications of the judgement that union with God is preferable to estrangement from Him 'is the judgement that satisfying one's pride is infinitely inferior in value to achieving communion with God' (2011: 155). And since we are assuming the person in question is free from all salvation inhibitors, we can claim such individual is not determined to act in a prideful manner. So, if no deception, ignorance or bondage to other non-rational affective states explains the decision to reject God out of pride, then the reason for such a decision remains inexplicable, since no reason could account for it (*id*.). And the same would be true, according to these authors, for any other alleged explanation to choose rejection over communion with God, and contrary to one's best and informed judgements on the matter (*id*.).

The result is that we are led to conclude that humans can make choices for no reason whatsoever, and in fact contrary to clear reasons for not doing so. So described, this libertarian concept of freedom commits us to the belief that human choices are at least sometimes arbitrary or random in character (*id*.). A fact which renders human choices as subject to the same mathematical laws governing random occurrences, and which in turn helps to clarify how AIO functions. This moreover is problematic for those endorsing libertarianism, since it would appear to entail that those who are damned, are so (at least in some cases) because of bad luck, and defenders of libertarian free will want to make agents ultimately responsible for their choices and their outcomes (*ibid*., p.168).

If, when presented with equally appealing alternatives, or owing to ignorance of which option to decide upon, I let chance decide, this can be defended as a rational alternative to paralysis (that is, if I am to choose). But to let chance 'decide between the very best conceivable thing [union with God], and the very worst [estrangement from God], is to leave to chance the very last thing any remotely rational being would leave to chance if they could help it' (*ibid*., p.156). Thus, if chance does play a part in such a momentous decision, then it must be because it cannot be avoided; 'there simply is a random element operating in human choice—one that, in a crucial sense, falls outside the person's control' (*id*.).

Chauncy at times seems to second this view, and sides with Talbott (and further back with Aquinas) in believing that a fully informed (free from all salvation inhibitors) decision to reject God is deeply incoherent. So now we must ask, under what conception of free will, will God's decision to work on our salvation inhibitors does not undermine our liberty as free moral agents? We will develop a brief sketch of just such an account of free will favoured by Thomas Talbott, and which in some ways resembles Chauncy's ideas on the matter: Thomistic or Rational Freedom.

As mentioned already, Talbott, like Aquinas, believes that a decision in favour of something against which one has every conceivable reason not to do, is deeply incoherent. If all motives converge on one

choice, then such a choice becomes inevitable; though free, but only if, let us remember, all ignorance, deception, or bondage to non-rational affective states are done away with (*ibid*. pp.134-135). Ultimately, it might be the case, as John Kronen and Eric Reitan point out, that for a Thomistic or rational kind of freedom, what we 'call libertarian freedom is a coherent understanding of freedom only when the creature confronts conflicting motives for action' (*ibid*. p.132). In situations of uniformity of motives this libertarian understanding does not apply. For Talbott (like Aquinas) believes that despite the will being determined, the action remains wholly voluntary[91] (*Cfr*. Aquinas's *necessity of the end* as an instance where the will is determined, but nonetheless the decision or action remains wholly voluntary [Stump, 2003: 299]). Clearly then, both Talbott and Aquinas deny that what is called the Principle of Alternate Possibilities (PAP) is an indispensable element of any free choice.

This rational or Thomistic freedom would then conform more closely, if we are to assign some contemporary label to Aquinas' views here, to what is now called compatibilist freedom (Kronen & Reitan 2011: 132). Although Eleonore Stump came up with a new species of libertarianism, which she labelled modified libertarianism, that comes very close to the position here described (Stump 2006: 125)

We are in position now to see how under a Thomistic conception of free will, God could work on our salvation inhibitors so as to produce uniformity of motives for choosing union with Him, and do so in a manner that would apparently not undermine our liberty as rational agents. But since for the likes of Craig or Walls and other free will theists, this might still not prove convincing, and this since they advocate a notion of free will more robust, *viz*. libertarian, it is necessary that we return to AIO as the means by which Chauncy believes that God could guarantee universal salvation even assuming a libertarian understanding of free will.

*V. Objections to AIO*

A first objection to AIO, to AIO(3) to be precise, would stipulate that our decision to reject God at some moment (call it T1) will influence the way we decide on the matter at a later time (T2). This so called 'hardening of heart' or 'habit-forming' critique to AIO is based on the empirical argument that, at least for some individuals, their present choices have the power or the outcome of limiting the range of possible choices that could be adopted in the future (Kronen & Reitan 2011: 163). The argument, endorsed in an albeit modified form by Swinburne, would have us imagine an individual S who chooses at T1 to reject communion with God; on such a narrative, the likelihood of S continuing to reject God at T2 is

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[91] 'Just as the intellect is ordered towards the truth, that is, it cannot but believe a self-evident truth if presented with it, the will is ordered towards the good, and if presented with the perfect good (*viz*. God) then the will simply cannot fail to love it in return' (ST pt. 1, q.82, a.2).

strengthened by his previous negative decision (at T1) (Swinburne 1983: 48-49). Likewise at a later time (T3), the odds of S continuing in his rejection of God are even greater than at T2, and predicated by his previous negative decisions on the matter (at both T1 and T2); and this progressively as the timeline moves into the future.

So that, contrary to AIO's contention that as the timeline progresses into the future, the probability of the agent freely choosing estrangement from God is increasingly lower, this objection advances the idea that owing to certain facts rooted in our psychology, our choices tend to 'produce habits which dispose us to make similar future choices' (Kronen & Reitan 2011: 163).

Theistic defenders of this position argue that such psychological feature might well be the outcome of God's decision, so as to enable 'us to choose to become a certain kind of person'; that is, that we are thus enabled to choose our own character (*id.*). Accordingly, were God to tamper with this character-forming dimension of ours, He would wrong us by meddling with our autonomy 'to choose the kind of person we become' (*id.*).

Before addressing the manner in which Chauncy would likely respond to such an objection, let us first remember that, since we are once again operating under the assumption of libertarian freedom, then, once again we are lead to conclude that for at least some of such obdurate rejectors, the reason for their decision actually lies in some random element outside their will or control; and hence, that for at least some of them, their damnation is the consequence of mere bad luck (*ibid.*, p.164). Given such a view, we side with John Kronen and Eric Reitan in their disbelief that God would feel obligated to respect such freedom, 'even to the point of letting persons be damned' because of it (*id.*).

However, if for the sake of our discussion, we take seriously the possibility of Craig's contention of some creatures suffering from what he calls *transworld damnation*, or the latter hardening of heart critique to AIO, Chauncy's molinism would simply cast out such possibilities; for it is one clear conviction of the Bostonian that all of the persons ever brought into existence belong to the subset of those possible beings that God knew—through His *Middle Knowledge*—will eventually be reconciled to Him owing to the means His wisdom saw fit to use either here on earth or in these post-mortem eschatological settings.

Other objectors however, instead of challenging the guarantee of universal salvation advanced by AIO(3), would question the moral permissibility of 'forcing' on an agent an endless sequence of opportunities to be for or against communion with God; that is, they would challenge the lawfulness of premise AIO(2) (*ibid.*, pp.170-171). Those who, like Michael Murray, would criticize AIO in this manner, argue in particular against the moral permissibility of points (ii) and (iii) of AIO; namely, to the ideas of both sustaining the unregenerate in a temporal existence until they choose for union with God, and to God leaving this option for union with Him as an open possibility at any time (*ibid.*, p.171). For Murray, even if

successful, such a method for carrying universalism into effect would constitute a violation of creaturely autonomy, and a God who is by definition morally perfect would not, the argument goes, proceed in such a manner, despite the desirability of its outcome (*id.*).

At this point it seems important to say a few words regarding Murray's conception of autonomy—it would involve, says Murray, free decisions 'expressed in actions that influence the course of events in the world' (Murray 1999: 58), Accordingly, autonomous free creatures are entitled not only to incur in evil choices if that may be the case, but to the ensuing acts and consequences from these (*id.*). The central claim in Murray's critique would be that, despite being *free* to choose alienation from God at any given time, this decision is not being respected in the sense of allowing those who make it, to have what they in fact have chosen, *viz.*, the consequences of alienation from God; and are instead forced anew—and eternally it appears for those who continue endlessly to spurn such an offer—to decide upon the issue at a later time (Kronen and Reitan 2011: 172).

In making his case, Murray makes use of an analogy where individuals in a drive-through restaurant have to decide upon either rotten burgers (alienation from God), and normal healthy ones (communion with God). Though we could imagine that experience would teach those opting for the rotten burgers that this decision was in fact contrary to their own interests, 'Murray asks us to imagine someone who has cultivated a taste for rotten burgers through repeatedly choosing them, [that is] out of a fixed state of character' (*ibid*, p.172).

The response offered by John Kronen and Eric Reitan is based on the following distinction, a distinction they believe Murray failed to grasp—this dichotomy between healthy and rotten burgers could be understood to represent the choice 'at any time T, between communion with God and alienation from God [or], it might represent the choice between eternal communion with God and eternal alienation from Him' (*id.*). If, as we suspect, Murray understands his analogy as one representing the latter option, then AIO might indeed involve autonomy violation of the creature's choices. And this since if, at T1, the sinner chooses for eternal alienation from God, God would seem to reject this decision, and would thence send the sinner 'back in line' only to be forced to decide upon the matter at a later time. And again, if at T2 the sinner continues to choose for eternal estrangement over eternal communion with God, the exact same result would ensue (*id.*). A process that would continue until the agent would choose at some time (Tn) for communion with God. So that, despite that in this last moment (Tn) the decision for communion with God is to all appearances voluntary, this is only because the alternative 'has been consistently denied [to] them each time they tried to choose it in the past' (*id.*).

In fact, this way of framing the decision constitutes an 'autonomy minimizing strategy' for the following reason (*ibid.*, p.173). If I am to choose at T1 for union with God at all times or estrangement

from Him at all times, and if my decision is accepted at this moment, then 'I am deprived of all future choice on the matter' (*id.*); that is, I would be precluded from ever changing my mind on this issue. It would be only by having my choice rejected at this moment (T1), that I would have a choice at T2. So that, even if *per impossible*, we could think of an agent making a fully informed decision to reject God at any given time, in giving them what they have chosen, God would be effectively cancelling their capacity for future choice in this issue, and with it, their freedom and autonomy (*id.*).

However, if we understand AIO as a choice between communion or alienation from God at any time T, then one could claim that at any time T 'people always get what they choose with respect to their relationship with God' (*id.*). The main issue here for us to grasp is that, instead of conceiving AIO as one in which we are f*orced to decide* until the time comes when we choose for union with God, God simply offers communion with Himself as what Kronen and Reitan call a standing offer. So, what *forces* the decision is the fact that God never withdraws His offer, but we would be nonetheless free to reject it at any given time. However, given the nature of AIO and the mathematics of random events, to claim that we can reject it indefinitely is a whole different matter.

**Conclusions**

It will not be our intention to tire our reader with a comprehensive review of the contents of this work. Instead we will cover a series of central elements in our author's theology and show them in the interconnectedness they share with other key elements of his thought. We will also present these central ideas in the relation that they have with historical positions on these issues. After such an endeavour we will single out what we believe are the main contributions of our theologian to current theological and philosophical discussion, and finally we will end this work by pointing out some possible areas for future research.

As this work has demonstrated, one conspicuous element in Chauncy's theology is the importance of rational agency, or, to use a more contemporary expression, of practical reason. Practical reason is in his overall scheme the only foundation of moral obligation, and in this respect, as in others, one can discern an Augustinian influence in our author's conception of moral evil. Just as for Augustine we sin when we misuse our freedom, that is, when we turn away from the (natural) role we were assigned in the divine arrangement or design, for Chauncy we sin when we neglect our faculties, and do not act up to our character of rational moral creatures. This privative understanding of evil (again baptized by Augustine from Neo-Platonism) is clear to see as well in Chauncy's reliance on what some later Augustinians called the problem of metaphysical evil, or the dreaded prospect of finitude for (finite) creatures (Hick, 2010: 38). Chauncy's DOS is largely based on it, for, let us remember, Adam's primaeval lapse became the source for our own sinning in an indirect manner—by inheriting a mortal body that was the outcome of a divine judicial sentence, we are pressed to seek and avoid those things that are either beneficial or detrimental to our lives respectively. Chauncy naturally does not draw the mistaken conclusion though, from such metaphysical analysis, that evils are empirically mere absences or a malfunctioning of something good. For although he usually portrays them as means to our moral betterment (and in some instances as well as a sort of divine reprimand), he never seems to attempt to diminish any of their ghastly reality as an experience in the lives of those going through them. As archbishop William King (and also as Catholic theology in general) expressed, finitude is an unavoidable element if there is to be a creaturely realm at all; otherwise the lines between creator and creature become blurred. This is a view shared by Chauncy as can be also seen in his insistence that perfection, as an attribute, is incommunicable to creatures.

This privative understanding of evil as *privatio boni*—in the sense of existing only as the malfunctioning or absence of something good—, helps to shed light on Chauncy's soteriology, particularly for his belief in the self-defeating nature of evil, and in the instructive or formative role it can have for wrongdoers (*Vid.* 'the divine pedagogy' in the pages of this work). Accordingly, evil is both absurd and

detrimental to the person it belongs to or harbours it, 'for to the extent that it succeeds, it can only destroy that upon which it lives' (*ibid.*, p.48). We saw that for Chauncy (as it was for Irenaeus of Lyon, Talbott, Hick, and many more), God brought about a world—and also *post-mortem* locations or stages—that are suited to make us learn, and through hard experience no doubt, this all-important lesson. Our redemption then requires our free engagement with a social (and hence moral) environment in which we are called to learn, above everything else, the basis of those two last dictums our Lord bequeathed to his disciples—that love of God and neighbour is the indispensable component of our salvation.

It is clear that Chauncy is here as well providing a theodicy in the sense of relating the hardships we endure and what we referred to as a developmental approach to redemption. In fact, most of the topics covered in this work could be seen as falling under the rubric of theodicy—the Fall, our redemption, and eschatological locations. But one concern here, as with like-minded theologies concerning the purpose of evil, is that it runs the risk of losing sight of just how inimical evil really is for God's creation. As a true Christian, our author never ventures into any sort of dualistic explanation for this intractable topic, but in his attempt to bring the hardships and sorrows we endure under the all-encompassing divine sovereignty, he could also be seen, as John Hick once put it, as domesticating evil within the divine household, and therefore of losing sight of its true nefarious nature. This however might just be an unavoidable consequence of a truly monotheistic (monistic) theology in which God is seen as inherently good, and where creation is described as coming into existence *ex-nihilo*.

There are yet a couple of other features of Chauncy's theology that could be regarded as belonging to the Augustinian tradition in theodicy—the principle of plenitude, and the aesthetic theme. The principle of plenitude is Augustine's response to the presence in nature of lower forms of life. To the question of why God decided to create a living realm so variegated; and since infinite or immense variation of species entails differences in strength, power, intelligence, and so on, another question arises as to why God decided for a world that contains such lower forms of existence. Why didn't He limit Himself to the creation of angelic beings? for instance (*ibid.*, pp.70-71). As stated in the pages of this work, Chauncy, sharing Augustine's general outlook on this topic, believes that a creation containing all possible kinds of existence is a better testimony to the inexhaustible goodness and riches of the creator.

And by aesthetic optimism, the idea that notwithstanding what might appear to us as evil, 'from the ultimate standpoint of the creator, the universe is wholly good' (Billicsich 1952; cited in Hick 2010). Chauncy devotes some attention to this subject when he censures us for ill-judging of divine benevolence from individual appearances of evil, that is, from evil as it pertains or affects the existences of individual creatures. We should instead, he argues, judge of divine benevolence as it concerns not individual members of species, but from the overall benevolent tendency that he sees displayed by the deity to species as a

whole, and even more comprehensively, to the entire structure of species we refer to as the creaturely realm. Under this picture God makes 'what is best in the whole, but not what is best in every single part, except in relation to the whole...' (Connellan 1947; cited in Hick 2010).

But Augustinianism (albeit in its eighteenth century form) is not the only current at work in our author's revision of New England Puritan theology; there is another important aspect of his thought that connects to an ancient and 'Greek' tradition that has in writers like Irenaeus of Lyon, Clement of Alexandria, and Origen, its most eminent representatives. And of special relevance here were Chauncy's similarities with Irenaeus' views about the condition of the first couple, in the way of considering them as morally infants, and its repercussions in Chauncy's take on the covenant the first couple were bound by with their maker. With the noteworthy element that Chauncy avails himself of Lockean epistemology to explicate this intellectual and moral state of infancy in which the first couple found themselves in. According to this picture, let us remember, the first couple were images of God in the sense of being free, rational creatures, but they were still required to grow in the likeness of God in the sense of progressively acquiring those character traits that had in the Jesus of history their most perfect expression.

Equally important in this respect and similar to the ideas of Clement and Origen, Chauncy's take on the Incarnation makes room for the belief that the 'Logos had created prophetic mediators in the past' (Gibbs & Gibbs 1992: 227), and that therefore we are concerned here with a historical and progressive unfolding of divine knowledge; a knowledge that, again, as Clement and Origen did, Chauncy believes to have reached its completion in the historical Jesus (*Vid.* Ch.4). Chauncy however 'never fully equated the divine Logos with the Jesus of history' (*ibid.*, p.223). On his opinion according to Norman Gibbs, even during the Incarnation the Logos never relinquished His 'cosmological and universal functions' (*id.*). This Logos moreover is the source of both general and special revelation; and of a universal revelation in history that is revealed in 'science, philosophy, and the great religions of mankind', and in the advancement of knowledge more generally (*id.*).

This last issue in turn leads into a topic not covered in this dissertation, but that became a source of misunderstandings regarding Chauncy's ideas on the Incarnation: the mistaken conceptions, particularly among the generation that succeeded him (e.g., Ezra Stiles, Nathaniel Langdon Frothingham, etc.) that portrayed him as an Arian (*ibid.*, p.266). A revision of some of his writings (particularly his major work on Universalism: *The Mystery Hid from...*) makes it clear that both creation and redemption are the 'exclusive work of God' (*ibid.*, p.224). The Son, in Chauncy's work, is usually set 'alongside the Father', where His role is that of both mediator and executor of the Father's will in both its creative and redemptive aspects or dimensions (*id.*). And so as to dispel any possible charges of Arianism, he criticizes in this same work the commentary on Col. 1:19 advanced by the Arian James Pierce by reminding his readers that although

the Father 'is above all, in all… and worketh all in all; yet he does nothing by himself immediately, but all through the intervening agency of his Son Jesus Christ' (Chauncy 1784: 125).

We have also seen that the epithet of Arminian could rightfully be ascribed to our theologian, and in fact, most historians of the period acquainted with Chauncy tend to share this appraisal; but since Pelagianism occupies 'the same theological space as Arminianism', it is only natural for us to wonder if our theologian was not in fact a Pelagian. As with other aspects of his thought, our author appears to be equivocal on this matter. At a minimum, and as the preceding work has indicated, we can certainly assert that he assigned an important role for divine grace in the process of redemption.

It could be as well, as Ava Chamberlain remarked, that since 'the relationship between nature and grace that constitutes Puritan orthodoxy is dialectical […] God operate[s] through secondary causes in order to preserve a role for the creature in its own salvation…' (p.344). And as we have seen in the course of this dissertation, those secondary causes could be accurately described as an earthly moral environment, and afterwards limbo-like locations—and therein through the infliction of finite physical torments, torments that moreover bear a proportion or correspond to the different degrees of our moral corruption exhibited here on earth— where we are supposed to develop morally into the beings that divinity intended us to be. Therefore, the sorrows experienced here on earth, as well as in the next state(s), have a reformative and never a vindictive character to them.

Another equivocal aspect of his thought concerns the nature of the limbo or purgatorial stage(s) he advocates, for at times he seems to portray it as a sort of finite hell, characterized by physical torments (usually in connection with the worst type of sinners), and in other passages of his work he abstains from such description, and he would appear to convey the thought of them being essentially a series of successive existences (the exact nature of which he never specifies) deprived of this tormenting nature or character.

We had as well pointed during this work to a theological kinship between our author and some of the positions associated with the nineteenth-century German theologian F. D. E. Schleiermacher; it is time to be more specific on how this is so. A clear instance of this is to be found in Chauncy's ideas concerning original sin (and sin in general) (*Vid.* chapter 2), and his rejection that it could somehow be assigned or imputed to us through divine fiat —no one can be made a sinner, let us remember, 'without their own wicked choice' (Chauncy 1785: 274); without the intervention or concurrence of our own moral agency that is. Schleiermacher for his part had come to reject the traditional narrative of the Fall, describing it as a magical view of sin (and salvation), and according to which sin and redemption could be considered as 'actual metaphysical entities' (Gordon 2017: 284). Entities that could be 'magically moved around from person to person as if they existed in abstraction from their actual forms in a lived life' (*id.*). Sin and

redemption are thus, for both Chauncy and Schleiermacher, to be considered as unavoidably linked to the actual moral deportment of the beings to which they are related to. Some years prior to Schleiermacher then, Chauncy was already advancing or reconnecting to a more liberal or rational manner of theological reflection as we hope the pages of this work have showed.

However, the old and the new, the orthodox and the 'liberal' are a recurrent feature of our author's theology. This is evident in both his take on original sin, where despite renouncing the notion of inherited guilt, he stops short of denying the doctrine by regarding it as something that is rightfully attributed to us, as something that speaks about who we are and how we would have acted in like circumstances; but at the same time something we could never be accountable for. In his theodicy as well one can see that his country lies in the tradition that conceives of this world as an adequate environment—with its apparent arbitrary mix of happiness and misery—for our moral development into the creatures that divinity intended us to be. This however does not keep our theologian from sometimes making use of a different historical strand of theodicy; one that relies on a detached, aesthetic and impersonal outlook on creation as a whole. But as mentioned before, it is clear that the general thrust of his writings, specially taking into consideration the centrality for his whole theology of the concept of divine benevolence (and his ideas on divine impassibility as well), place him in the former, developmental approach we documented in our work. A theodicy where the divine nature, in creating beings bearing His image (as indeterministically free rational agents) seeks not only goodwill between men but seeks as well to bring them into fellowship with Himself.

At the end of this work we are afraid we have to agree to a certain extent with a phrase about our theologian uttered more than a century ago by the church historian Williston Walker—that Reverend Chauncy is indeed, a 'hard man to classify' (Walker 1901: 297-298; cited in Gibbs & Gibbs 1992). We have tried in this work to flesh out what we believe to be the main currents of our author's theological thought, and it is our belief that although there are many traces of Calvinistic-sounding utterances throughout his publications, these scattered references stand in contradiction to the rational, and ethical thrust of his entire theology. Norman Gibbs called Chauncy a true agape theologian, and we have much sympathy for such an appraisal for we believe it to capture one of the salient features of his thought as we have attempted to make clear in the present work.

He was furthermore the intellectual leader of a religious group (*Old Lights*) that 'tended to move in the direction of rationalism in theology', and that expressed the views of educated clergy at Harvard College in the second half of the eighteenth century (Hudson 1960: 379, 382). In many respects he is the perfect representative not only of his camp, but of a period in theological reflection that began to move

away from the dour Calvinism of the colonies, and that in a relatively short period of time would see his beloved First Church of Boston make the transition from Congregationalism into Unitarianism.

Despite his historical relevance and his considerable theological production (there is sufficient evidence that he had finished most of his new 'body of divinity' many years before their publication in the middle 1780s, but that he stalled their publication for various reasons), there are few and scattered secondary sources of our subject's theology; so that, as Norman Gibbs rightfully observed, if one desires to approach the theological ideas of our preacher, one has to read and reread him in order to try to understand him (1992: 218). A task further complicated by the fact that his theological works are only available in a few libraries, and usually in rare formats (*id*.).

Now as for areas of future research on our author, his major work on theodicy (*The Benevolence of the Deity…*) presents an obvious opportunity in this respect. Although we have made frequent references to this work in the pages of this dissertation, owing to the soteriological nature of this thesis the ideas found in his major work on theodicy have served a rather complementary or supportive function. There are sufficient indications that, as both Norman Gibbs and Edward Griffin have suggested, once Chauncy had committed himself to benevolence as the chief defining feature of the divine essence, he was forced to revise the rest of the central features of his theology. We thus believe that a detailed exposition of this work, and of the philosophical implications and concerns it might give rise to, is a worthy future undertaking.

Another area of possible future research is suggested by Chauncy's developmental take on morality, and particularly of some passages in his work that seem to anticipate, as E. Griffin remarked, later orthogenistic theories of evolution, or what some call a philosophy of creative evolution. For instance, when describing man as 'one of the lowest intellectual moral beings', he adds that man is nevertheless 'designed for exalted perfection and happiness… [That he] is now in an infant state, compared with what this may be introductory to' (Chauncy 1784b: 203). This however is something not circumscribed or limited to human beings; he believes that animals (the 'higher' ones anyway) as the 'percipients of happiness, in the lowest and most imperfect degrees, may be designed for a much higher state of existence' (*id*.). And although these animals may 'be supposed to be gradually rising in perfection and happiness, in proportion to their greater original capacities', the distance between us and them 'will still be preserved among the various orders of creatures, and go on to be so, forever' (*id*.).

And as hinted in this last segment of our work, there is still plenty of fertile soil for future research as regards our author's Christology (and its relation to the anti-trinitarian developments in his own congregation shortly after his death), and the Incarnation more generally. Moreover, the sheer amount of his publications (Griffin lists, in what is the most comprehensive account so far, over 61 recognized works

by Chauncy), and his many interests (in nature, science, politics, and so on), as well as the scarcity of reliable secondary sources on his thought, leave open a wide field of future work on our subject. It has been the intention of this work to attempt to fill this analytical void as concerns the theological ideas of a historical character that was of some relevance for his time.

**Annex.**

## Positions on the Original Sin[92]

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Was I in control of the original sin?** | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | No | No | No |
| **Is the original sin attributable to me?** | Yes | Yes | No | No | Yes | Yes | No | No |
| **Am I accountable for the original sin?** | Yes | No | Yes | No | Yes | No | Yes | No |
| **Position(s)** | I was Adam and in virtue of which I sinned (Edwards/Rea); human nature, in which I participated, sinned (Anselm/Aquinas); I timelessly sinned (Kant) | Variation on position 1 on which Adam was immature | | Variation on position 1 on which Adam was immature | Federalist alien-guilt position  Attributionist position (Adams)  Counterfactual concurrence with Adam (Keith Wyma) | **Scanlon/Smith-style position: Charles Chauncy** | | Denial of the doctrine |

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[92] Adapted from a handout by David Efird for his module, 'Philosophy of Christianity'.

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Costs** | Requires heavy-duty metaphysics: perdurantism for Edwards/Rea, a theory on which natures are agents for Anselm/Aquinas, and Kantian metaphysics for Kant | Requires heavy-duty metaphysics: perdurantism for Edwards/Rea, a theory on which natures are agents for Anselm/Aquinas, and Kantian metaphysics for Kant | Requires implausible theory of the relation between attributability and accountability and requires heavy-duty metaphysics: perdurantism for Edwards/Rea, a theory on which natures are agents for Anselm/Aquinas, and Kantian metaphysics for Kant | Requires heavy-duty metaphysics: perdurantism for Edwards/Rea, a theory on which natures are agents for Anselm/Aquinas, and Kantian metaphysics for Kant | Complex theory of the relations between control, attributability, and accountability | Complex theory of the relations between control, attributability, and accountability | Requires implausible theory of the relation between attributability and accountability | Rejection of Scripture and Tradition |
| **Benefits** | Simple theory of the relations between control, attributability, and accountability | Simple theory of the relations between control, attributability, and accountability | Simple theory of the relations between control, attributability, and accountability | Simple theory of the relations between control, attributability, and accountability | Simple metaphysics | Simple metaphysics | Simple metaphysics | Simple metaphysics and simple theory of the relations between control, attributability, and accountability |

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