

WESTERN SEMINARY

AUGUSTINE AND
THE CONSISTENT TRAJECTORY OF COMPATIBILISM

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Introduction

The freedom of the will of man, and its correlation to the authority and sovereignty of God has troubled and baffled theologians for centuries. Deciding who, or what, is responsible for the action of man is fraught with implications for moral responsibility and the origin of evil. Theologians articulate two prominent positions: libertarianism and compatibilism. The debate between the two remains heated because both shout about how “clearly” the Bible addresses the issue. Although both profess that God is sovereign over all and that man is responsible for his choices, the fundamental disagreement lies in how these two truths relate to one another. To complicate the matter further, both libertarian and compatibilist theologians appeal to the theological assertions of the great Bishop of Hippo, Augustine, to support their particular view. It seems there is much to be won if church history sides with a specific argument.

That being said, this paper will attempt to establish that Augustine had a compatibilist view of the will of man and the sovereignty of God even from his earliest writings. His early writings will be compared to his more mature theological discourses in order to demonstrate their consistency with one another. Consistency, however, does not insinuate that there was no development in his doctrine, but does establish that the trajectory of his argument was never augmented in the same way as, say, his view of the Manichee dualist doctrine of evil. Finally, a response will be given to Eleonore Stump’s attempt to find a way in which Augustine may embrace a type of “modified libertarianism.”

Augustine’s Development

Early Theology: The Manichaean Catalyst and *On Free Choice of the Will*

While studying Rhetoric in Carthage Augustine, who was not a Christian at this point, experienced a conversion to philosophy after reading Cicero's, *Hortensius*. Cicero's book "enkindled in Augustine a burning desire for truth and made him feel that all his worldly ambitions were misplaced."¹ Rather than seeking the accolades that came with the applause of men and popularity, he now felt that true happiness was to be found in the pursuit of wisdom. He initially sought for wisdom in the Bible, sparked by vestiges of the residual effects of his Christian upbringing and mother. However, "the Bible seemed to have little to do with the highly spiritual Wisdom that Cicero had told him to love."² To Augustine, it was full of immoral stories, contradictory genealogies, and did not have the linguistic polish that an educated and carefully groomed communicator would expect from a book claiming to expound truth and the height of wisdom. Unsatisfied with Christianity he was introduced to the Manichees, a religious sect who associated themselves closely with Christianity, but rejected the Old Testament as "unspiritual and disgusting," had a strong disdain for "oppressive" spiritual authority, and taught that man could find freedom from error through the medium of reason.³ With their emphasis on reason and its liberating effects, Augustine was hooked.

The Manichees also boasted to have a seemingly reasonable answer to the complex problem of sin and evil. They affirmed that God was completely good, and that it was impossible to charge him with the creation of evil or to associate Him in any way with wickedness. Thus, they postulated that evil was an eternal and equally powerful opposing force that warred against God and his creation.⁴ Man did not sin because he had determined that a

¹ Mary T. Clark, *Augustine of Hippo* (New York: Continuum, 1994), 2.

² Peter Brown, *Augustine of Hippo: A Biography* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2000), 31.

³ *Ibid.*, 31-32.

⁴ Brown, 36.

sinful action should be realized, but rather, because a powerful evil force operated against him and compelled him from within.⁵ Augustine believed that the sin he himself practiced was the result of an evil power that exerted its influence upon his mind and members. When acting in sin, it was not the “good” part of him that constituted the real Augustine, but a part under attack from a contrary power. He reasoned that this type of dualistic approach removed from him the responsibility for his sinful actions. Augustine would write about this time in his *Confessions*, saying, “I still held the view that it was not I who was sinning, but some other nature within me...I very much preferred to excuse myself and accuse some other thing that was in me, but was not I.”⁶

At the age of thirty-three, after becoming disenfranchised with the Manichee notion of wisdom, Augustine surrendered his life completely to Christ in the garden of his house at Milan.⁷ He quickly began to write several treatises against the Manichees. It is in response to their dualist view of good and evil and its denial of the responsibility of the agent in the performing of evil acts, that Augustine wrote, *On Free Choice of the Will*. Several tenets of Augustine’s early thoughts about the will are found here.

First, Augustine teaches that man has a will, the capacity to choose and to act upon desires. In book one his friend, Evodius, wants to know if God is the cause of evil and poses this question to Augustine. Augustine refutes this question by affirming the goodness of God. If God is good then it is impossible for him to be the source of evil, for any evil cannot come from the good. He explains to Evodius that the cause of evil is located in the will of men who turn from

⁵ William S. Babcock, “Augustine on Sin and Moral Agency,” *Journal of Religious Ethics* (1988): 30

⁶ *Confessions*, V.x.18.

⁷ Augustine, *Confessions*, trans. Maria Boulding (New York: Vintage Books, 1997), VIII, xii, 29.

the good (i.e. the love of divine, unchangeable things which free from fear) to the wicked (i.e. the love of changeable, uncertain things which enslave to fear).⁸ The choice to follow and embrace either good or evil “lies with the will,” and that “we do evil by the free choice of the will.”⁹ Immediately, Manichee dualism is confronted and the source of evil is located within the choices of men, not in any external power.

Secondly, Augustine teaches that God has given this will to man. This prompts a second question from Evodius: If God is not the source of evil, should not God still be held responsible for evil because he gave man the freedom of will? Augustine replies that the will, indeed given by God, was a good that should not bring libel upon God because men used it inappropriately. One would not accuse God of wickedness for giving men eyes although men use them to incite lust. One would not hold God in disdain for giving men hands though some men use them to murder.¹⁰ The instrument is good and the giver is good; it is the agent who uses the good gift of God for wicked and evil ends that is blameworthy. Augustine says, “Just as you approve of ...good things in the body and praise the one who gave them, disregarding those who use them wrongly, you should admit that free will...is a good and divine gift. You should condemn those who misuse this good rather than saying that he who gave it should not have given it.”¹¹

Thirdly, Augustine teaches that the movement of the will towards evil is not natural but is in fact voluntary.¹² The movement of the will towards evil is not coerced, but done willingly. Man does not choose to sin apart from a desire to do so and the inclination of his own heart to embrace wrongdoing. He compares the movement of the soul to love lesser things to that of a

⁸ Augustine, *On Free Choice of the Will* (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1993) I, xvi.

⁹ *Ibid.*, I, xvi.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, II, xviii.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, II, xviii.

¹² *On Free Choice of the Will*, III, i.

falling rock. The movement of the falling rock is action that “belongs” to the rock. In a like manner, the choice of the will is the action that “belongs” to the will. He makes one important distinction, however.

“The movements are dissimilar in this respect: the stone has no power to check its downward movement, but the soul is not moved to abandon higher things and love inferior things unless it wills to do so. And so the movement of the stone is natural, but the movement of the soul is voluntary.”

Indeed, the voluntary action of the will for Augustine requires that it not be coerced, that it not be forced to act against its own volitional choice. Any action that is coerced or forced by an external power is not an action in which the individual may rightly be held responsible for because it was not done freely. This includes internal, as well as, external coercion. He says that a mind rightly ordered by virtue, a stronger inclination than vice, directs the life in virtue.

Internal lusts and sin cannot overpower the will ordered by virtue because they are of a weaker element than virtue. Nor can external force compel the mind to submit to sin because “its equality or superiority would be measured in virtue...and virtue would not act against virtue.”¹³

If this is true, and the mind cannot be coerced either internally or externally, then only the exercise of its own will can make one subservient to sin. This confronts the Manichee notion that the good soul of the individual would never choose evil unless compelled by a “contrary

¹³ Babcock, 35. He takes this from Augustine’s argument in *Free Choice of the Will* (I.10). He cites other places where this freedom of the will to choose is noted: “Nothing, Augustine claimed, ‘is so completely within the power of the will as the will itself’ (*FCW I*, x).” Augustine seems to say that we can attain this good will with ease (*FCW I*, xviii) and that it is within the grasp of man (*FCW I*, xviii). “To attain it we need ‘do nothing but to will it’ (*FCW I*, xviii), for to desire to live rightly is to have a good will.” However, Babcock concludes that this view of the will only holds if Augustine can prove that the will was at one time rightly formed and that its descent to sin was its own choice. He uses these arguments against the Manichees not so much because he whole heartedly believed the will could will the good on its own, but because a defense for pre-existence of the souls was not a viable defense. Thus, these statements functioned more as a defense against the Manichee’s and support for his premise that people are morally responsible for the willing and doing of sin, “than as a claim that humans can attain the good entirely on their own.” Pg. 36.

nature.”¹⁴ No one may rightly say, “the devil made me do it.” There is no such dualism within Augustine’s notion of the will.

This leads to a final affirmation of Augustine concerning the will. If the movement of the will is voluntary and results in evil, then it is proper for God to hold man culpable for his actions. The responsibility for the choice made belongs to the agent doing the choosing. If the movement of the will were not voluntary and under the control of the individual, it would be improper for God to punish man for the sin he commits, or reward him for the good he does.¹⁵ However, since God is just in his punishment of all men, it must rightly be said that man is responsible for his choosing and action. The goodness of God is preserved and the justice of God is upheld.

Each of these four tenets about the freedom of the will appear to point to a libertarian view of freedom: 1) man has a will, 2) it has been given to him by God, 3) he exercises it voluntarily and free from any type of coercion, and 4) is held culpable for his actions. Some theologians declare bluntly, “Augustine was one of the great defenders of libertarianism; indeed, he was the first to articulate the view clearly.”¹⁶ At this point, however, we may ask whether or not Augustine hints at the inability of man’s will and the need for God’s grace to enable the will of man toward good that is found in his “mature” theology? Is this trajectory present, or at least hinted at, here in this early writing? Simply put, yes, and for two reasons.

First, in book three of *On Free Choice of the Will*, Augustine asserts that the fall of Adam and Eve in the garden consigned all men to a life of “ignorance and difficulty,” a life in which

¹⁴ Babcock, 31.

¹⁵ *On Free Choice of the Will*, II,i

¹⁶ *On Free Choice of the Will*, xi. This statement is made by Thomas Williams in the introduction to his translation of Augustine’s *On Free Choice of the Will*. He defends a classical libertarianism that defines metaphysical freedom as the freedom to choose in a way that is not determined by anything outside of one’s control. The debate continues about whether or not this particular view would fit with certain presentations of compatibilism.

they would find themselves unable to choose the good.¹⁷ He makes a distinction between the will exercised by man's original parents, and that of their progeny. The bondage to ignorance and difficulty and the inability to refrain from sinful action did "not belong to the nature that human beings were [initially] created with; they are the penalty of a condemned prisoner...when we speak of free will to act rightly, we mean the will with which human beings were [initially] created."¹⁸ Thus, Augustine makes a distinction and speaks of two human natures: the blameless human nature which humanity was first created with (Pre-Fall), and the mortal, ignorant, and enslaved human nature that all men are born into under the penalty of sin (Post-Fall).¹⁹ This appears to be an early conception of Augustine's thoughts on original sin that were further developed in later years.²⁰ Original sin was the doctrine that in Adam all men became sinners, stand guilty before the Lord, and have their emotions, intellect, desires, and will effected negatively. The nature of man was altered at the fall causing the will to be consigned to sin. The inability of the will to choose the good is the just penalty for sin that is meted out by God against

¹⁷ Ibid., III, xx. This is said several times toward the end of this book. Augustine seems very pessimistic about the condition of man. "But as it is, they are not good, and it is not in their power to be good, either because they do not see how they ought to be, or because they lack the power to be what they see they ought to be...And it is no wonder that because of our ignorance we lack the free choice of the will to choose to act rightly, or that even when we do see what is right and will to do it, we cannot do it because of the resistance of carnal habit, which develops almost naturally because of the unruliness of our mortal inheritance." (III, xviii)

¹⁸ Ibid., III, xviii

¹⁹ Ibid., III, xix

²⁰ Babcock explains the progression of thought extremely well here. No one would blame an individual if they were tied up and forced to engage in an act. However, if the individual consented to being tied up, and then was forced to engage in the same act, they would be guilty. "If there is complicity at the start, a subsequent set of forced actions can still be interpreted as the agent's own and therefore as sin." Augustine identified all men with Adam and taught that after Adam's voluntary sin, all of his descendents were plunged into the necessity of the habit of sin. He links this to Romans 5:12 as not just physical but spiritual death. (Babcock, 38-40; c.f. Wetzell, James. "Snares of Truth: Augustine on free will and predestination." In *Augustine and His Critics*, edited by Robert Dodaro and George Lawless, 124-141. New York: Routledge Press, 2002.)

his rebellious creation. No other person or power (even the power of evil as supposed in the Manichee doctrine) could usurp the authority of God and condemn man to an unjust penalty. Thus, Augustine concludes that, “the only remaining possibility is that this just penalty is a consequence of the damnation of human beings.”²¹

He is cognizant of the objection that will be raised, namely, if it is true that the will of man has been consigned to sin, then why is man held responsible for the slavery of his will to sin. He will imitate Paul in his response and addresses it accordingly,

“Here we come across the slanderous question that is so often asked by those who are ready to blame their sins on anything but themselves: ‘If it was Adam and Eve who sinned, what did we poor wretches do? How do we deserve to be born in the blindness of ignorance and the torture of difficulty? Why do we first err in ignorance of what we ought to do, and then, when the precepts of justice begin to be open to us and we will to do them, we are powerless, held back by some sort of necessity of carnal desire?’ My response is brief: let them be silent and stop murmuring against God.”²²

The consignment of the will to sin is just punishment, but in no way excuses the responsibility of man in making choices because even now those choices are considered voluntary and free.

Secondly, although the grace of God is not center-stage in this particular treatise, it is not absent. In his *Retractions*, Augustine reminds his readers that he does in fact claim in *On the Free Choice of the Will*, “that anything good in a human person, including any goodness in the will, is a gift of God.”²³ In book three, Augustine argues that all good things come from God, and this would include the will of man that is good and enabled to choose the good. He also says that God owes no man anything, including some type of reward based upon his merits. There would be no merits for God to reward if God had not first created man, and thus man owes his

²¹ *On Free Choice of the Will*, III, xviii.

²² *Ibid.*, III, xviv.

²³ Augustine, *Fathers of the Church: St. Augustine The Retractions*, trans. By Sister M Inez Bogan (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University Press, 1999), I, xi. Eleonore Stump also points this out in her article, page 131.

merits to God's creating his very existence. He goes on to say, "Therefore all creatures owe something to God. First, they owe him whatever they are insofar as they are natures; and then, if they have received a will by which they can will to be better, they owe it to him to exercise this will and be what they ought to be."²⁴ If a fallen, sinful man has a will to will the good, this is a specially restored gift of God that has been given to him particularly, and is not had by all of humanity. This good will was not his own, it is the grace gift of God.

These final two assertions by Augustine discussed are compatibilistic in nature, and demonstrate a definitive trajectory in a compatibilistic direction. They advocate the depravity of all men inherited from their first parents. This depravity runs to the very core of humanity, affecting his desires and will and rendering man incapable of choosing the good. He, therefore, affirms the necessity of grace to overcome that depravity. Some simply accuse Augustine of speaking out of both sides of his mouth. Compatibilists see Augustine's theology affirming both a biblical idea of the will of man in choosing the good and the necessity of grace in enabling that choice. Furthermore, although some may say that Augustine is more optimistic about the freedom of the will in this earlier writing than we see in his later works, Augustine never exclusively separates the will from grace.

Mature Theology: Catalyst for Progression and Final Stance on Will of Man

At the end of Augustine's life there is a more fully developed theology about the will. Almost all theologians and philosophers agree that Augustine is a compatibilist in his mature theology, citing both the freedom of man's will in desirous, culpable choices as well as the grace

²⁴ *On Free Choice of the Will*, III, xvi.

of God in enabling that will in a way that does not undermine responsibility. He writes in his

Retractions

“...it is by the will that we sin or live rightly. But unless the will is liberated by grace from its bondage to sin and is helped to overcome its vices, mortals cannot lead pious and righteous lives. And unless the divine grace by which the will is freed preceded the act of the will, it would not be grace at all. It would be given in accordance with the will’s merits, whereas grace is given freely.”²⁵

Three things spurred the development of Augustine’s mature doctrine of grace and the will. The first was his understanding of Scripture. The initial catalyst seems to have been a response to his friend Simplicianus, who had written to Augustine about the problem he perceived in Romans 9, namely, the “unfathomable nature of individual destinies.”²⁶ In studying this passage Augustine came to believe that “man was utterly dependent on God, even for his first initiative of believing in Him.” He would write Simplicianus and say,

“To solve the question, I had previously tried hard to uphold the freedom of choice of the human will; but the Grace of God had the upper hand. There was no way out but to conclude that the Apostle [Paul] must be understood to have said the most obvious truth, when he said: ‘Who has made you different? What had you got that you did not first receive? If you have received all this, why glory in it as if you had not been given it?’”

Augustine had followed the interpretation of his bishop in Milan, Ambrose, when reading Romans 9. Ambrose held that God chose men unto salvation, but that this choosing was not arbitrary, but rather, based upon the foreseen merit of man. God offers grace to all, men exercise their own act of faith, the Holy Spirit is then given and salvation attained. Augustine perceived no contradiction with faith and works here, for man’s faith was the result of his call. “One can take credit for coming when he is called, but he cannot take credit for being called, and it is the

²⁵ *Retractions*, I, xi.

²⁶ Brown, 147.

call which ‘effects’ the decision of faith.”²⁷ Later, however, when studying further what Paul writes about Jacob and Esau, Augustine become convinced that the election of God to grace precedes any decision on man’s part. The call of God is still associated with the grace of God, but the choice to receive that grace is no longer found in man. It is the free gift of God as well.²⁸ Grace and choice are both present, but primacy is now given to grace. From this point forward he will rely on Paul’s words in 1 Corinthians 4:7, “What do you have that you did not receive.” He believed that “man receives from God, then both the act of willing and the power to do what is willed, the former through the call, the latter through the infusion of love.”²⁹ Further meditation on passages like John 15:5 (“Without me you can do nothing”) as well as Jesus’ words in John 6:44 (“Without me you can do nothing.”) convinced him that man could not respond in faith to God without the grace of God enabling his will. None of this implied that the will of man was inactive in the whole process, but that the grace of God was a “helpful interior energy assisting people to will to believe in Christ as the giver of salvation.”³⁰ Both choice and grace are present. There has been development in his thoughts on the will and grace, but no Copernican change.

According to Augustine, the reason that man needed help in turning to God in faith was because of original sin. This is the second catalyst for his mature theology. Augustine identifies all men with the sin of Adam. He did not know in what way the punishment for Adam’s sin was transferred to the human race, but he was convinced that certain effects of Adam’s sin were

²⁷ Eugene TeSelle, *Augustine the Theologian* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2002), 177.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 178.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 179.

³⁰ Clark, 46.

experienced by his descendents.³¹ Even in his earliest work, *On Free Choice of the Will*, he notes that all of humanity has been assigned to “ignorance and difficulty” and that this is the just punishment of God, the “damnation of all humanity.” This line of thinking becomes more prevalent in his later works so that Augustine will insist on grace prior to any decision of man towards the good.

Finally, the Pelagian heresy will force Augustine to state clearly his thoughts on the will and grace of God. This become imperative for him, for even the Pelagians were using his early arguments to defend a doctrine that Augustine found heretical. Pelagians, led by the British layman Pelagius (350 – c. 425), taught that the nature of man was inherently good and that man could, through his own choosing and merit, achieve salvation. Pelagius was perturbed at Augustine’s view of the will in his writing of the *Confessions*, and thought that such an appeal to God’s grace would undermine the moral efforts of individuals who would wait for salvation and sanctification instead of being diligent to pursue the Lord and holiness.³² Pelagius denied original sin and taught that God had given all men Prevenient grace in the form of a free will and the knowledge of how human life should be lived.³³ He appealed to Augustine’s, *On Free Choice of the Will*, to support his stance.

In his *Retractions* Augustine denies Pelagians the use of his own argument, claiming that he never intended to separate the will from divine grace. He says that, “he had not mentioned divine grace [in *On Free Choice of the Will*] because, against the Manichee’s, the point was not an issue, and the Pelagian heresy still had not appeared.”³⁴ His intention was to defend the belief that man has a will that voluntarily makes choices for evil against the Manichaeist dualist

³¹ Ibid., 52.

³² Ibid., 48.

³³ Ibid., 49.

³⁴ Babcock, pg. 36. In reference to Augustine’s *Retractions*, I, ix.

doctrine of evil. It was never his intention to deny that grace was involved in the enabling of the will to choose the good. The will did not lose the ability to choose, in what he referred to as its natural capacity for free choice. Rather the will had lost the ability to choose that which was best, a delighting in the good rather than evil. This ability to choose the good had to be restored by the grace of God and was not based upon the effort or merit of men.³⁵ He affirmed the activity of the will in choosing, but against the Pelagians, taught that if the will was to be freed to choose that which was good, it must be freed by the grace of God. At the end of his life, he wrote in his *Retractions*:

“And what I said shortly afterwards: ‘For it is ours to believe and will, but His to give to those who believe and will, the power of doing good ‘through the Holy Spirit’ through whom ‘charity is poured forth in our hearts’ (Rom. 5:5) is indeed true; but by virtue of this rule [‘The same God...works all in all’] both are His, because He Himself prepares the will (Prov. 8:35), and ours also because we do only what we will.’”

The three catalysts mentioned above forced Augustine to more clearly define his thoughts on the will of man and the grace of God. In doing so, he made several statements that either shed more light on his understanding of this particular doctrine, or that clarified previous statements that were being taken out of context and misconstrued. In doing this he affirms that the trajectory of his argument has not been radically altered, but has merely developed.

Eleonore Stump and Modified Libertarianism

Both libertarians and compatibilist will agree that man has free will and that the grace of God is needed for salvation. What is not agreed upon is the manner in which men are free and the order in which grace is applied. If Augustine were a compatibilist, then he would argue that the grace of God is antecedent to a good response of the will. Some, however, assert that Augustine is most faithfully read through a libertarian lens, denying the antecedent work of grace

³⁵ Clark, 50.

in the choice of man. Some libertarians continue to argue for a type of libertarian slant, one in which grace is a response to the volitional act of the will. One such theologian is Eleonore Stump, who attempts to reconcile the will of man with the grace of God in a libertarian fashion. She argues that for a choice to be truly free the agent must be free to choose otherwise, and that their choice cannot be causally determined. Thus, in her article written for the *Cambridge Companion for Augustine*, she attempts to forge a way for Augustine to affirm that man's actions are in no way causally determined (including initial desires of the will), yet affirm that, at some level, they are not separated from the grace of God. She calls this view, "modified libertarianism."

She begins by making a distinction between first and second-order volitions. A first-order volition is the movement of the will to perform a particular action. A second-order volition is the "will to will something."³⁶ For Augustine, both acts of volition are ignited by God's grace. If this were not the case, then he would have to admit that it was within man's own power to accept grace, a notion he rejects repeatedly in his mature writings. For example, if a man has a second-order desire to turn to God, and in response to that desire God gives grace at the first-order level so that man acts upon what he desires, then it may rightfully be said that man did the initial willing to turn to God. God only honored that turn of the will in man by granting him the ability to act upon a desire whose origin was found in man. This result is some type of merit in man that God responds to.

As Stump sees it, the problem for Augustine is the notion that the will only has two volitional acts available to it: accepting or rejecting. The will chooses either to accept a particular

³⁶ Eleonore Stump, "Augustine on Free Will," in *The Cambridge Companion to Augustine*, ed. Eleonore Stump and Norman Kretzmann (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 126.

thing, or the will chooses to reject a particular thing. However, Thomas Aquinas taught in the Middle Ages that the will not only had the power to accept or reject a particular thing, but also to simply do nothing. “It can just be turned off.”³⁷ If the will was neutral it would neither accept nor reject grace, it would simply cease to refuse grace. Stump argues that this third volition of the will offers a possible solution to Augustine’s dilemma. The choice to cease refusing grace is a free will choice made by the will apart from any grace given to it by God. In response to this ceasing to reject grace, God then gives the gift of faith that excites a second-order desire for good. This in turn enables a first-order volition to act upon that desire. She says that, “on this theology story...then, a person can have libertarian freedom even if God determines her will at both the first and second-order level provided only that it is up to her whether or not God acts on her will, so that her own intellect and will are the first and ultimate determiner of the final state of her will.”³⁸ Both libertarian freedom (the choice to quit refusing grace) and the necessary grace of God to desire and act upon the good are both in tact.

Although Eleonore Stump’s argument is appealing, there are two problems with her underlying suppositions. First, she postulates a third volition of the will towards grace, neutrality. She illustrates this scenario in the following way: a man is suffering an allergic reaction and desperately needs an antidotal injection to counter the allergen. However, the individual is deathly afraid of needles and refuses the injection. They are not even able to bring themselves to answer affirmatively when asked by the doctor if they would accept the injection. The individual may nonetheless cease actively refusing the injection, knowing that if they quit refusing, the doctor will administer the proper medication. In this particular case, the agent is in

³⁷ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, q.9.a.I. Taken from Eleonore Stump’s article, pg. 140.

³⁸ Stump, 142.

control of whether or not he receives the injection, even if they are unable to answer affirmatively to the doctor's request to give the injection.³⁹

Fully cognizant of the fact that all analogies are flawed and can be stressed to a breaking point, it may be shown here that this illustration fails to communicate what Ms. Stump wants for two reasons. First, the patient in question has an affirmative desire at the second-order volitional level for the result the medicine will have. They may not want the needle, but they want the relief it brings. They are unable to will themselves to say "yes" when asked if the doctor is free to give the shot, but they are aware of the need for the shot and want the effects of the allergic reaction to be alleviated. This would be parallel to the man who does not want to submit to grace, but also does not want to go to hell and positively desires the solution, even though they may not be able to bring themselves to submit to it. This implies that second-order volition is still under the authority of the individual although not infused with grace, something Augustine would have rejected. Secondly, she points to four conditions that may be affirmed if the will is to be neutral: 1) God constantly offers grace to all, 2) Post-Fall human beings refuse grace continually, 3) Ceasing to refuse grace is accompanied by an understanding that grace will follow, and 4) It is solely up to the human agent to cease refusing grace.⁴⁰ However, there is no reasoning offered why the will that is continuously refusing grace suddenly ceases to. The closest she comes to a reason is premise three, which insinuates that one must be favorable to receiving grace if they know that the grace of faith is the imminent result of ceasing to resist. The man with the allergy would not cease to resist the doctor if they did not believe that the medicine would help. If this is not the case, then there is arbitrariness to the argument that is inherent in many libertarian formulations.

³⁹ Stump, 141.

⁴⁰ Stump, 141.

A second problem is that Stump's argument is self-refuting. She places a necessary condition on the free will: "[A]n agent acts with free will, or is morally responsible for an act, only if her own intellect and will are the sole ultimate source or first cause of her act."⁴¹ In her third volitional option of ceasing to refuse grace, the ultimate source of this action is the will and intellect of the individual. However, in her notes she claims to leave aside a complication to her argument. "Insofar as God is the creator of every created thing and insofar as any created cause is always dependent on the operation of divine causality, no created thing can ever be the sole cause of anything, or the ultimate first cause of anything."⁴² If it is true that: 1) no created thing can be the first or ultimate cause of anything, and 2) that the human person is a created thing. Then it follows that 3) the human person cannot be the first or ultimate cause of anything, and thus any type of libertarian free will is eliminated.⁴³ The origin of causation, coupled with the arbitrary nature in which the will suddenly changes from its antagonistic stance towards grace to neutrality, make this modified libertarian view incompatible with Augustine's own teaching, and thus is to be rejected.

Conclusion

Development in theology does not necessarily imply change, as seen in the early church's development of doctrines concerning the divinity of Christ. That Jesus was the divine Son of God was never denied by the Orthodox Church. There was development, however, in how that divinity was to be understood, and this development led to a distinction between what was to be

⁴¹ Lynne Rudder Baker, "Why Christians Should Not Be Libertarians: An Augustinian Challenge," *Faith and Philosophy* Vol. 20 No. 4 (2003): 469-470. The following argument is cited by Ms. Baker. Stump, 126.

⁴² Stump, 143, note 7.

⁴³ Baker, 470.

considered true or heretical. Likewise, in Augustine's mature theology he believed that the will of man was free to choose what it desired, but the desire of will to choose the good was enabled by the grace of God, prior to any choice or merit found within the individual. Although his early theology was not as developed and Augustine did not give grace as prominent a position in influencing the will in *On Free Choice of the Will*, Augustine himself says that the grace of God was not absent, just not the focal point of his argument. In light of the affirmations of the will found in his early writing, *On Free Choice of the Will*, it may be stated with surety that the trajectory of his argument was compatibilist in nature, and was not altered from early to later works, just more thoroughly developed. Since this is the case, any attempt at construing a libertarian view of the will in Augustine is misleading.

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