Human Nature in Theistic Perspective

with Celia Deane-Drummond and Paul Wason, "Becoming Human in Theistic Perspective"; John H. Walton, "Human Origins and the Bible"; Mikael Stenmark, "Is There a Human Nature?"; Alan J. Torrance, "Is There a Distinctive Human Nature? Approaching the Question from a Christian Epistemic Base"; Alistair McFadyen, "Imaging God: A Theological Answer to the Anthropological Question?"; Celia Deane-Drummond, "God's Image and Likeness in Humans and Other Animals: Performative Soul-Making and Graced Nature"; and John Schneider, "The Fall of 'Augustinian Adam': Original Fragility and Supralapsarian Purpose"

THE FALL OF "AUGUSTINIAN ADAM": ORIGINAL FRAGILITY AND SUPRALAPSARIAN PURPOSE

by John Schneider

Abstract.   This essay is framed by conflict between Christianity and Darwinian science over the history of the world and the nature of original human personhood. Evolutionary science narrates a long prehuman geological and biological history filled with vast amounts, kinds, and distributions of apparently random brutal and pointless suffering. It has also unveiled an original human person with animal psychosomatic heredity. This narrative seems to discredit Christianity's (Augustinian) metanarrative of the Fall—Paradise Lost and Paradise Regained. The author contends that the Augustinian story and its character of Adam are implausible, anyway, for reasons of theology and apologetics. He proposes that Christians adopt instead a Supralapsarian metaphysics of original human personhood and existence that grows from the intuitions of Irenaeus. The outcome will be improved Christian theology, more persuasive theodicy, and, above all, peace with Darwinian science

Keywords: aesthetics; the Fall; Irenaeus; Supralapsarianism; theodicy

PEACE IN THE VALLEY OF DARWIN?

Influential philosophers and theologians have tried very hard to assure everyone concerned that supposed conflicts between Christianity and Darwinism are greatly exaggerated, especially by "new atheists," who

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promote the opinion that evolutionary science has discredited theistic religion in general, and Christianity, in particular, once and for all. Meanwhile, on the other side of the presumed conflicts, a considerable population of Christians (many of them in the United States) see Christianity's revelation (as they interpret it) as discrediting all or parts of evolutionary science (as they understand it). Amid the intensifying hostilities, an impressive cadre of mediators has grown into something like a diplomatic corps promoting terms of peace.

For instance, Michael Ruse (who is an agnostic), and several notable Christian writers, such as Karl Giberson, Denis Alexander, Alvin Plantinga, and John Polkinghorne, have become known for their arguments downplaying the supposed conflicts, and supporting amicable dialogue (Alexander 2008; Giberson 2008; Plantinga 2011; Polkinghorne 2011; Ruse 2001, 2010). They all promise that with relatively minor adjustments, the prospects of peace for Christians in the valley of Darwin are good.

However, as things currently stand, the promise seems premature—for two main sorts of reasons, one of which I will but briefly discuss, if only to have it in the background. The second reason (to be disclosed) will be the main subject of the essay.

All the above-named writers seem sanguine about the road that leads to harmony. For instance, Plantinga proposes that taking it requires two pretty straightforward things. First, we need only think of Christianity in a certain way, as "circumscribed by the rough intersection of the great Christian creeds," or as pruned down to the essentials of something like the "Mere Christianity" that C. S. Lewis made famous (Lewis 2001; Plantinga 2011, 8). Second, he proposes that we need only think about evolutionary science in a certain way—as consisting of several connected "theses." He suggests that evolutionary theory normally consists of six distinct theses. They are (1) the thesis of an ancient earth, (2) the progress thesis (life has progressed from the simple to the complex), (3) the thesis of descent with modification (offspring differing from parents), (4) the thesis of common ancestry from a single cell, (5) natural selection (which he calls "Darwinism," the selection of traits via random mutations and survival of the fittest for reproduction), and (6) the thesis of naturalistic origins—that is, that life itself originated from natural processes (Plantinga 2011, 8–9). Plantinga believes that we can affirm evolution without the last two theses, so he is left with a sort of Mere Darwinism consisting of the first four (Plantinga 2011, 10). He goes on to explain why, in his view, provided we think of Christianity and evolution in these ways, no real or "deep" conflict exists, but only conflicts that are relatively "superficial" (Plantinga 2011, Pt. 2).

Now, there will be agitated hand waving on at least the Christian side upon hearing these definitional constraints. (We will ignore possible hand

waving at the treatment of thesis (5) natural selection, on the other side). For one thing, that huge population of Christians just mentioned cannot in good faith simply prune their Christianity down in the way that Plantinga proposes they must do. That is because they adhere religiously and devoutly to doctrines that lie *outside* the intersecting lines of *Mere Christianity*, so that for them *Mere Christianity* does not qualify as a sufficient summary of *true* Christianity, as they formulate and profess it. They add other "essentials," such as the "inerrancy" of the Bible, the doctrine of a young earth, or the miraculous creation of human beings. These doctrines, and some others, are often sources of glaring conflict with evolutionary science, and unless the adherents give up those doctrines, it is hard to see how the conflicts could ever be resolved.

Plantinga does acknowledge the concerns of those Christians (Plantinga 2011, 10–11). However, he treats them almost in passing at the beginning of the book and gives the impression, at least, of not quite sensing the religious depth of those conflicts. Many of these believers feel that giving away those doctrines would amount to a betrayal of the faith itself, and that is a powerful prohibition against the requisite change, and it is a source of great inhibition about even entering the discussion of maybe doing so. In order to take the matter head on, one must dig into depths of the applied hermeneutics of Scripture, together with their intuitively skeptical epistemology of science. And one must go still more deeply into the cultural and psychological sources of ingrained dispositions toward the Bible, and into the particular concepts of inspiration that they apply to it. As anyone who has taken on this work knows, it is tough going, and it is a real job to get the Christians in question to go comfortably along with the inquiry, or to find their way through to the promised peace with Darwin.

So that is one reason for thinking that the promises seem a little too sanguine. However, it is not the reason I wish to pursue in this essay. I will for now only commend the writings of others who have done so already. Some have written ably on the hermeneutics of creationists (Enns 2012; Harlow 2010; Walton 2009), others on their skeptical epistemology of science (Haarsma and Haarsma 2007; Lamoureux 2009; Young and Searley 2008). And William J. Abraham, building on the pioneering works of James Barr on the Bible's authority, proposed that evangelical hermeneutics (and the prohibitions against embracing science and historical criticism) have grown from confusion on the concept of inspiration, which they have unconsciously treated as a species of divine speaking (Abraham 1981; Barr 1980). To this day, that proposal still awaits the attention it deserves. Even the most admirable writings of evangelicals on the Bible, such as the recent book by Kenton Sparks, seem not yet to have realized the conceptual error and corrected it (Sparks 2008).

Meanwhile, the focus of the essay henceforth will be on a source of deep Christian conflict with Darwinism that is anything but narrow or parochial. It arises from Christian doctrine that is embedded in the confessional, theological, evangelistic, and apologetic presentations of *all* the historic versions of Christianity—a source of conflict with evolution that is embedded in *Mere Christianity*. The central source is the traditional Christian story of the Fall. It is true that there are two main traditions of telling that story in Christendom. One of our proposals is that the version that prevailed in Eastern Orthodoxy, reaching back to Irenaeus of Lyon (died circa 200 C.E.) is much more amenable to harmony with Darwinism than the version that has prevailed in the Catholic and Protestant West. That version descends mainly from Augustine of Hippo (354–430 C.E.), and it is our main subject of criticism. It is a story of Paradise Lost and Paradise Regained that has framed Christian theology and proclamation in the West for so long that we are barely aware anymore that it is a version of the Genesis story, and not the story itself. Unfortunately (so we believe), among other defects (to be visited), it is a source of not-so-superficial conflict with Darwinism.

THE DARWINIAN WORLD

I believe that in order to have a sufficient working conception of Darwinism, we need to add two theses to the essentials of Plantinga's "Mere Darwinism." First, we need a thesis that captures the way in which the theory of evolution depicts the empirical *character* of the world through planetary and biological time. The time span is not just extremely long—unfathomably so. Evolutionary science has also unveiled a narrative of events that seem to have no unifying *sense*, to begin with, which look more like a disunited series of "worlds," rather than the unfolding of just one world, or cosmos. The Darwinian World, as I will call it, seems to violate what Whitehead and others have considered *aesthetic* norms for a sufficiently good world (Whitehead 1996). But furthermore, the course of this history has included vast amounts of apparently random waste and seemingly pointless suffering for both human and nonhuman animals. Evolutionary thesis (7), the Darwinian World, depicts the planetary and biological past as one in which entire biomes have come and gone in apparently purposeless and brutal fashion, and reveals that ours is merely one of them. In his recent book *Nature Red in Tooth and Claw*, Murray ably describes the deep conflict that this depiction creates for Christian theism. Was this wrought by a loving and kind God (Murray 2008, 1–9)?

The thesis (7) of a Darwinian World is a source of conflict in its own right, and the problem of natural evils and the vast amounts, kinds, and distributions of suffering in the design of existence for animals and hominids is getting more attention than it once did (Murray 2008, 5). Richard Dawkins sees it as providing *prima facie* grounds for atheism

(Dawkins 1996, 132), and various defenders of theism are just now beginning to get arguments off the ground (Murphy et al. 2007). However, the thesis of a Darwinian World also contributes indirectly to another conflict—conflict between Darwinism and Christianity on the nature of human existence and personhood. It does so if we think of it as coupled with yet another thesis (8), the Darwinian Adam, or Darwinism's depiction of existence and personhood for the first modern human beings.

To borrow a theatrical analogy, the Darwinian World seems to discredit the existential sense and explanatory power of Christianity's entire stage play in three great acts—the creation, the Fall, and redemption through Christ. Whatever the explanation for this prehuman history of apparently random, pointless waste and suffering—the Devil meddling with laws of nature before humans appeared (Boyd 2001, 293–319; Lewis 1962, Ch. 9; Plantinga 1974a, 57–9), or as the inevitable byproduct of a lawful universe (Murphy et al. 2007)—the explanatory problem persists. The Darwinian World just is not a stage set for any plausible production of the traditional Christian script on human origins and the human condition in the world. Furthermore, evolutionary thesis (8) the Darwinian Adam makes the matter of staging and casting considerably worse.

THE DARWINIAN ADAM

What sort of human *person* was the very first modern human being, the Darwinian Adam? What sort of human *personhood* should we think had emerged from the selective genetic and environmental descent from nonhuman animals? What would the psychosomatic heredity of Darwinian Adam (and Eve) have been like? Recent genomic science enhances our ability to piece together a portrait of primary human personhood from older clues about the Darwinian Adam.

Perhaps the first thing to consider is that genomic science—after mapping of the human genome—strongly supports a polygenetic account of human origins. Geneticists calculate mutation rates leading them to believe that the current human population descends from somewhere between 1,000 and 20,000 original breeding human pairs with "Genesis" occurring in Africa between 100,000 and two 200,000 years ago (Cann et al. 1987).

As for the Darwinian Adam and original human *personhood*, common ancestry taken together with recent behavioral studies of other species supports the thinking that many human moral intuitions—both toward virtues and vices—are *homologous* (come from a common source) (Domning 2006, 102–3). In other words Darwinian Adam was endowed with an animal psychosomatic genetic and social heredity that would have made "him" a morally equivocal sort of *person*. In his book *Original Selfishness*, the Catholic anthropologist Daryl Domning provides a fascinating account of this primary human personhood (Domning 2006). Other writers, such

as Ruse and Christian de Duve, have also explored Christian applications of Dawkins's thesis in *The Selfish Gene*, which is that the core of human morality is genetically designed interest in the preservation and prosperity of the individual self, as for all members of species (Dawkins 1996; de Duve 2009, 149–50; Ruse 2001, 205–6).

These explorations all suppose, however, that the first human beings could not plausibly have emerged in utopian natural conditions, nor could they have been at all morally mature, much less spiritually regal, as in traditional Christian teaching on Adam and Eve. Indeed, it seems that a greatly enlarged and more neurally complex brain enabled unprecedented degrees of *self-consciousness* and reflective *emotion* and *judgments* on the "goodness" or "badness" of actions and states of affairs (de Duve 2009, 124–5). With this "main frame," reflective morality could begin to evolve, as it has done, even into forms of *altruism*, but this had to have been a long process (Ruse 2001, 191–204). According to evolutionary theory, anyway, human beings developed complex languages only after tens of thousands of years (de Duve 2009, 114).

So the thesis (8) of a Darwinian Adam, together with the other theses of ancestry, selection, and the Darwinian World, support seeing original human personhood as a powerhouse of potential for unrivaled intellectual and moral achievement. Amid the dangerous yet rich Darwinian World, natural selection and common ancestry would have endowed Darwinian Adam with "virtuous" traits "such as solidarity, cooperativeness, tolerance, compassion, and altruism, up to personal sacrifice for the common good" (de Duve 2009, 147). On the other hand, they would have also inscribed reflexive traits that promised success at competition for territory, food, and mates at both the levels of individual personhood and that of the collective social dispositions of nuclear groups (de Duve 2009 148–50) .

Imagining the Darwinian World has taken us a long way from the Neolithic scene in Genesis, written in that setting no doubt because for practical purposes, for those human beings, that is the time when the "world" as they knew it began (Hurd 2003, 233; Wilcox 2003, 244). But more deeply, the Darwinian Adam bears little if any *spiritual* and *moral* resemblance to the counterpart in the Bible—as understood in prevailing Christian tradition in the West. That tradition reaches back mainly to the formative influence of Augustine, as already mentioned. Henceforth we refer to it generally as the Augustinian Adam, which has been the leading character on the Christian stage in the Catholic and Protestant West, and still has command of Christian center stage. So long as the Augustinian Adam has the stage, however, it will obviously be very hard for Christians who endorse evolutionary science to maintain the aesthetic and religious integrity of their main production. In my view, trying to do so only makes matters worse—it is too much like trying to pound a square peg into a round hole. Before looking at the major alternative—the Irenaean

Adam—we must look more closely at the Augustinian character and then see what a poor fit it is on the evolutionary stage.

THE AUGUSTINIAN ADAM

When Augustine wrote his great commentary on Genesis (*Genesis Taken Literally*) he obviously had many things on his mind besides just wanting to gloss a biblical book (Taylor 1982, 1–4). He was worried that Christian commentators caved in too quickly to criticism of the Old Testament by sophisticates, such as Platonists, Manicheans, and others who thought the Jewish depiction of God was crude and unworthy of belief (Taylor 1982, 1–2). Although he admitted that in the end the "literal sense" gave forth more questions than answers, Augustine worried that the common strategy of allegorizing one's way out was weakening Christianity's appeal to the whole Bible as being a revelation from God (Taylor 1982, 3–4).

Augustine riddled the commentary with attempts to resolve apparent conflicts between Genesis and science, especially on cosmology. He lambasted Christians who used Genesis 1: 5–7, which seems to describe a flat earth covered by a solid ceiling, as a means of ridiculing Greek science, which taught that the earth was a sphere. On the contrary, he warned, it was the Flat Earth Creationists who were ridiculous and whose ignorance was an embarrassment to the entire Gospel of Christ. He urged church leaders to do whatever was within their power to stop the embarrassment (Augustine 1982, Ch. 19, 39).

Perhaps the main purpose, though, was to improve upon previous attempts to interpret Genesis allegorically against the Manicheans, who poured scorn on the Old Testament God for being the agent of all sorts of imperfections and evils. This purpose apparently also coincided with desire to make his anti-Pelagian views more plausible morally than they seemed, even to Augustine himself, as we shall briefly observe in another section. In both contexts, it was all important to lay the blame for evils entirely on *creatures*, and none of it on God. We can safely rely on the great historian of doctrine, J. N. D. Kelly to relate the main ideas, which are well known to students of Augustine and uncontroversial so far as his views on the subject are concerned.

Kelly summarizes it as follows: "It is clear from Augustine's account that the fault was entirely his [Adam's] own. God could not be blamed, for he had given him every advantage . . . . Any blame must lie exclusively with his own will, which though inclined toward goodness, had the possibility, being free, of choosing wrongfully" (Kelly 2004, 362).

With this metaphysical purpose, it would not be enough to say merely that Adam was originally *good* (Eve comes later), and/or *innocent* of having yet done anything wrong, as Irenaeus said (see below). Those descriptions of original human personhood would not be enough to generate the quality

of *culpability* that Augustine's intended explanations required. The first human beings had to have been in possession of very great knowledge (including a grasp of how consequential disobeying was) and in a position of supreme moral advantage (full inclination and power to choose to obey instead). Otherwise, their disobedience could not justly merit the world-ruining and humanity-ruining consequences that followed. It had, therefore, to be an ultimate instance of "how the mighty are fallen." or else, on the scales of justice, God would not be good.

As Kelly observes, Augustine's Adam was a mighty man. Augustine "carries to its highest pitch the growing tendency to attribute original righteousness and perfection to the first man" (Kelly 2004, 362). The Augustinian Adam was "immune from physical ills and had surpassing intellectual gifts; he was in a state of justification, illumination and beatitude. Immortality lay within his grasp if only he continued to feed on the Tree of Life" (Kelly 2004, 362). And yet in this beatific physical and spiritual condition, the Augustinian Adam was morally *free*, not in the sense of inability to sin (*non posse peccare* which Augustine regards as the true liberty enjoyed by saints in heaven), but in the sense of the ability either to sin or *not* to sin (*posse non peccare*)" (Kelly 2004, 362). "Able to sin," and yet "his will was good, that is, devoted to carrying out God's commands, for God endowed it with a settled inclination to virtue. So his body was subject to his soul, his carnal desires to his will, and his will to God" (Kelly 2004, 362). Augustine imagined Adam as "wrapped around by divine grace (*indumentum gratiae*), and he was further granted the special gift of perseverance, that is, the possibility of persisting in the right exercise of his will" (Kelly 2004, 362).

The major theologians of both Catholicism and Protestantism followed Augustine in this way of depicting the first human beings and in thereby keeping us from "passing the buck" of blame for evils back to God. In his comprehensive account of "original righteousness" in Christian history, Charles Hodge showed that all Catholic and Protestant writers affirmed the doctrine with minor differences (Hodge 1965, 99–107). All of them followed the lead of Aquinas in specifying the original virtues as growing from a core of faith, hope, and love, and in seeing those virtues as infused in our first parents by supernatural grace (Hodge 1965, 101). There is no need to go on listing similar superlatives in the Protestant writings, which differ only (some of them) in extending the infusions to Adam's "lower nature."

COUNTING THE COST

In a scathing review of Enns's book, *The Evolution of Adam* (in which Enns expresses doubt that such a figure of Adam (or Eve) ever existed in fact), James K. A. Smith challenges us to count the cost. He roundly rejects Enns's contention that we need not have an explanation of *how* sin

originated in order to embrace the Gospel, which requires only that we admit that condition and turn to Christ. So Smith: "Unfortunately, that's just not the case. Because if we don't have an account of the origin of sin we will end up making God the author of evil—a thesis that has been persistently and strenuously rejected by the orthodox Christian tradition" (Smith 2012). By not "taking a stand on the origin of sin," Smith reasons, one fails "to recognize that what is at stake is the goodness of God. And if the goodness of God is not central to the Gospel, I don't know what is"(Smith 2012).

Smith obviously means taking an Augustinian-Calvinist sort of stand on the origin of sin, and we suppose that by "making God the author of evil" he means more precisely, "making God *culpable* of evil," or "making God a *doer* of evil." It happens that there are contexts in which moral agents "authorize" the occurrence of evils for reasons that render the agents morally inculpable, so the one hardly follows logically from the other without explanation. At any rate, Smith's main thought is that without the Augustinian-Calvinistic explanation of evils (in some version) we are bound to depict God as morally imperfect, which of course would be to demolish theism, and to engage in something like sacrilege. We will come back to this line of reasoning (and religious rebuke) before the end, and explain why we think it is seriously mistaken. For now, though, our point is that those Christians who stand firmly in the Augustinian tradition on origins are urgently motivated to keep the character of Augustinian Adam on stage at all costs, even if the stage we approve is Darwinian. Smith speaks for many others along these lines, as does John Collins. "Specifically, if we deny that all people have a common source that was originally good [by this he means the Augustinian "good"] . . . then the existence of sin becomes God's fault . . . " (Collins 2011, 134).

For Christians to make the existence of sin God's "fault" would of course be theologically wrongheaded and a religiously irreverent thing to do. Only a very misguided or perverse Christian would knowingly do it, we suppose. Unfortunately, trying to use the Augustinian script and character of Adam in order to thwart the impropriety in defense of God's goodness only makes things worse.

THE IMPLAUSIBLE PLOT

Collins, who is a scholar of the Old Testament and an Old Earth Creationist, has given a useful summary of the various attempts to keep an Augustinian Adam in an essentially Darwinian scientific script (Collins 2011, 121–31). He discusses the proposals of Fazale Rana, John Stott, Derek Kidner, Denis Alexander, and C. S. Lewis. He might have also included the scenario put forward by Peter van Inwagen, who is an influential Catholic philosopher of religion (below) (van Inwagen 2004).

Despite differences, they all seek to preserve the Augustinian depiction of the first human persons as endowed by God with preternatural spiritual and moral gifts (Collins 2011, 123–29).

Alexander's scenario perhaps holds out the best hope for success at salvaging the Augustinian script, because it is by far the most thorough and detailed in trying to make a mainly evolutionary story hold together in Augustinian Christian terms.

In his otherwise very useful book (in introducing evolutionary science lucidly to nonexperts), Alexander (director of the Farraday Institute at Cambridge) considers three "Models" for getting the traditional Fall into a Darwinian story (which he wholeheartedly accepts to the extent he can). Models A and B, which he treats with some sympathy, take the Genesis story as mythical, and as having no real relevance to the facts and sequence of events in Darwinism (Alexander 2008, 235–6). He tentatively, but pretty clearly, favors Model C, in which the Genesis episode refers to events of history (including the relevant Neolithic Mesopotamian scene), albeit written appropriately in ancient idiomatic form (Alexander 2008, 236–7). Alexander seems moved to prefer this model by Paul's references to Adam in Romans 5, which Alexander reads to describe (for Paul) a historical person (Alexander 2008, 241). I choose to bypass this (I believe) questionable reasoning on Paul and Adam in order to get directly to the main aspects of his "Model C."

The heart of his model is that "God in his grace chose a couple of Neolithic farmers in the Near East, or maybe a community of farmers, to whom he chose to reveal himself in a special way, calling them into fellowship with himself—so that they might know him as a personal God" (Alexander, 236). Alexander names these newly awakened physiologically human beings *homo divinus*, "the divine humans, those who knew the one true God, the Adam and Eve of the Genesis account." (Alexander 2008, 237) These people, he reasons, were "the first humans who were truly spiritually alive in fellowship with God, providing the roots of the Jewish faith" (Alexander 2008, 237).

Two points arise already in the model's disfavor. One is that it depicts God as having put nonhuman and human animals through the brutal formative history of evolution, and all God got for the "cruciform" price of their suffering was a semihuman anatomically modern hominid. In order to get a fully human *person* none of this sufficed—God had still to intervene, God still has to get out the "fairy dust" in order to get creatures capable of the spiritual things that God was aiming at all along. I think all the animals and humans who suffered excruciatingly along the way, most all of them to extinction, would be right to protest in the way Young Earth Creationists, like Henry Morris, have done. If God was going to create miraculously anyway, what could conceivably justify the unfathomable amounts, kinds,

and distributions of suffering, not to mention the unimaginable waste? (Morris 1970).

The second point is also theological. In the scenario that Alexander envisages God places the destiny of every human being in the hands of two "born again" farmers. God left it entirely up to them to determine whether the base metaphor of human history would become Disney World (God's aim, we suppose) or rather Dachau (as it happened). Alexander demurs from describing the preternatural gifts that would have qualified them for this awesome responsibility, and also from the precise nature of the evil they did, or why. It seems the script is already at risk of self-defeat by making God into the one morally responsible for the catastrophic outcome after all. That is of course intolerable, because the whole point of preserving the character was to protect God from that very thing.

To explain, Alexander appeals to the traditional reformed doctrine of Federal Headship. God made the two selected and renovated farmers together "the federal head of the whole of humanity alive at that time . . . chosen by God to be the representatives of his new spiritual family on earth" (Alexander 2008, 237). To illumine the appeal morally, he likens Federal Headship to an imaginary scheme by the United Nations, in which they sponsor an international competition. Under developed nations each select a man and woman to represent them in a quiz show, the winners will acquire a top university for their needy nation, and they will be academic heads of the enterprise (Alexander 2008, 238). He admits that the "analogy is not perfect," but thinks that it nonetheless illustrates how "in the lives of Adam and Eve, the way is opened for any person anywhere in the world to enter God's family by faith and obedience" (Alexander 2008, 239). What we need, however, is an analogy for failure. What if the authorities *penalized* all the people in the nations whose representatives *lost* the contest, perhaps by taking away the meager schools they already had? On this sort of analogy, all appeals to Federal Headship (not just this one) have the theological self-defeat that Smith and Collins fear securely within sight. The analogy makes God conspicuously morally inept. Since Collins himself appeals to Federal headship, one is inclined to invoke the proverb advising people who live in glass houses not to throw stones (Collins 2011, 130–31).

The theological-moral trouble worsens when we consider the real-world workings of the ruinously radiating consequences. Alexander imagines a population worldwide of between 1 and 10 million (unenlightened modern human beings going about their lives). Meanwhile, in Mesopotamia, unbeknownst to any of them (unlike the U.N. analogy of representation) *Homo divinus* stopped praying and singing praise songs and defied the command of God. How should we think their defiance could have spiritually destructive effects on all the others everywhere? Alexander proposes that we think of it on another analogy—the analogy of a hydrogen

bomb going off, "with ferocious force, scattering radiation around the world, so sin entered the world with the first deliberate disobedience to God's commands, spreading the spiritual contamination around the world" (Alexander 2008, 255). We can but wonder what exactly happened to those people, and what they could have thought was suddenly and unexpectedly happening to them. Again, I submit that we subject the story's plausibility to intuitions about the power, wisdom, and goodness of God.

By pressing it back to the very first humans, Lewis and van Inwagen tell more elegant stories of an Augustinian Fall in evolutionary terms, but perhaps mainly because they do not explore details as forthrightly as Alexander does. However, their common way of developing the character of the first human beings succumbs to a line of criticism that is arguably more devastating than the previous ones, because it seems that the personal development of that character is historically implausible in the extreme. (This is not the outcome of conflict with science, by the way; it is just that the modern *staging* helps to bring the implausibility into clearer relief than otherwise.)

Implausible Characters

In *The Problem of Pain*, Lewis invites us to imagine that God selected two (or perhaps more) biologically human beings and awakened them to awareness of themselves and to spiritual and moral realities (Lewis 1962, 77). God endowed this Paradisal Man with supernatural powers—"he was all consciousness," like a "yogi," had "full control of his bodily functions, he *chose* his appetites, the length of his life may have been up to his own discretion, he possessed powers of command over animals" (Lewis 1962, 77). Further, Lewis proposes that "God came first in his love, and in his thought," so that his constant experience was "perfectly enacting in joy and ease of all the faculties and the senses that filial surrender which our Lord enacted in the agonies of the crucifixion" (Lewis 1962, 79). In other words, the Paradisal Man was Christ-like in love for God, fellow human beings, and for all things.

Similarly, van Inwagen offers a hypothetical version of the Fall story that is compatible with the existence of evils and yet "presents us with no particular reasons to believe that this story is false" (van Inwagen 2004, 68). His story assumes that God "guided the course of evolution so as eventually to produce certain very clever primates," who formed a "geographically tightly knit group" (van Inwagen 2004, 68). In "the fullness of time" God "raised them to rationality," gave them "gifts of language, abstract thought, and disinterested love," and also "the gift of free will" which was essential to love (van Inwagen 2004, 69). God took these creatures into "a kind of mystical union with himself," into a spiritual state of what Christians call "the Beatific Vision." These first humans lived "in the harmony of perfect love," and they also possessed "what theologians used to call preternatural

powers," enabling them "to protect themselves from wild beasts (which they were able to tame with a word), from disease (which they were able to cure with a touch), and from random natural events (such as earthquakes)" (van Inwagen 2004, 69). But then—somehow—disaster struck. Despite the fact that "There was no evil in their world," it happened that "somehow, in some way that must remain mysterious to us, they were not content with this paradisal state. They abused the gift of free will and separated themselves from union with God" (van Inwagen 2004, 69–70).

Aside from criticisms already lodged about the aesthetic and explanatory defects of these Augustinian "plays" within the larger Darwinian "Play," I think we indeed do have at least three particular reasons to think that the Augustinian storyline itself is false, that its plot is implausible in its self-designated genre of *history*.

One reason is that no evidence exists anywhere in the geological or genomic record to support believing that there ever were super-human beings like this on the planet. One could claim that the Genesis story in the Bible counts as "evidence," but that is not just unacceptably parochial, limiting the last word on the science of origins to the Christian. Even as a Christian territorial claim, it is presumptuous, since at least one other interpretation of the Genesis story exists as an alternative. Good theological reasons exist to prefer it to the Augustinian reading (see below on Adam in Irenaeus).

Another reason is that character development in these scenarios is historically implausible in the extreme. We do have some ability to assess the psychology of people who have supposedly had "beatific" experiences of God, and even imperfect, fallen persons in that condition simply do not behave in the way that the Augustinian Adam supposedly did. The objection is as ancient as Augustine himself, and even he did not dismiss the question. He understood that. God *could* have created human beings in a *better* condition, so that could *not* sin, and would be like God and the saints in heaven (Augustine 1982, Ch. 7–11). He understood that ignorance of one's moral future was incompatible with *beatitude* in Eden (Augustine 1982, Ch. 18). And so he understood that there indeed was "a more serious problem to be considered" (Augustine 1982, Ch. 42, 58, 175). "If Adam was a spiritual man, in mind though not in body, how could he have believed what was said through the serpent?" (Augustine 1982, Ch. 42, 58, 175). His best answer was that the *woman* (not in God's image) was deceived, and the power of love for the woman induced the man to sin (Augustine 1982, Ch. 42, 58–60, 175–6). As is better known, Augustine wished to trace this all back to Pride, but he failed to explain what would have been the ultimate in self-deception—*pride* welling up in someone existing in perfect union with God—was even marginally possible. And since in his explanation the welling up of Pride was the source of the first sin (Augustine 1982, Ch. 15), the plausibility of the entire character breaks down.

Unfortunately the second reason to think the story false leads to a third one. It is that in order to fall in the fashion supposed, the first human beings had to have been spiritually *fragile* in some key respect. Augustine also understood this much, and he speculated, along the lines of his mature theology of predestination, that God created them in that fragile (albeit good) condition knowing they would fall, and that this would create a whole population of humans worthy of *damnation*. This in turn would set the stage for divine *election*, and the creation of another, *better* kind of human being—one that could not sin. In so doing, God would have occasion to display both aspects of God's *glory*—his *justice* in punishing the damned, and his *mercy* in blessing the selected saints (Augustine 1982, Ch. 7–11). Unless we think this explanation depicts the character of God as ontologically and morally *good*, it looks like the like the logic of the Augustinian story leads to making God the "author of evil," after all, which of course defeats the entire religious and apologetic point of the plot in the first place (so Smith, Collins, and others).

BEATIFIC PERSONHOOD AND ORIGINAL FRAGILITY

So it seems that supporters of the Augustinian story face a dilemma. *Either* one has the implausible character of someone blessed with "beatific personhood" developing in the most arrogant and irrationally wicked fashion possible (meriting the magnitude of the consequences). *Or* one concedes an original fragility of personhood to make the character development plausible, but in so doing make God seem to be the one most responsible for their breakdown. Before going forward to deal with implications of original fragility, and an alternative view, I wish to make the first horn of the alleged dilemma a little more secure.

In discussing the Fall Murray engages the Paradisal Motivation Problem (Murray 2008, 84–7). How could anyone in Paradise have the *motivation* to want anything more (Murray 2008, 84)? The Paradisal Problem, as we are formulating it, poses an even more formidable question. How could anyone enjoying Beatific Personhood possibly become arrogant to the extent of defying God, self-deceived to the extent of seeing this as good rather than completely evil, a better existential course and not the ruination of everything? In other writings, van Inwagen has defended a dispositional view of moral action, that is, that for any moral action the agent must already have a "pro disposition" to perform that action, good or bad. On this view, for any bad action, there is a "pro disposition" to perform that action (van Inwagen 1989, 1994). (Maybe it is not a mystery why in his story of the Fall, van Inwagen writes in passing that the reason why such beatific persons went wrong "must be mysterious to us," instead of applying his own dispositional theory.)

Lewis and Plantinga offer versions of Augustine's appeal to Pride, but I do not think they escape the dilemma of beatific evil. Lewis wrote:

Such a sin [pride] requires no complex social conditions, no extended experience, no great intellectual development. From the moment a creature becomes aware of God as God and of itself as self, the terrible alternative of choosing God or self for the centre is open to it. This sin is committed daily by young children and ignorant peasants as well as by sophisticated persons, by solitaries no less than by those who live in society: it is the fall in every individual life, and in each day in each individual life, the basic sin behind all the particular sins: at this very moment you and I are either committing it, or about to commit it, or repenting it. (Lewis 1962, 75)

Two connected objections to this eloquently seductive explanation are in order. First, Lewis fails to account for the welling up of Pride in persons who are currently enjoying the psychic realities of beatific bliss. In his own description, the first such reality was direct awareness of *God*, perfect communion, producing a Christ-like self. We imagine this condition would involve the constant self-presentation of both God's greatness and love. The person would be in a constant state of something like what Rudolf Otto named the *mysterium tremens* and overflowing love that the great mystics have reported (Otto 1923). William James reported extensively on the features of "saintly" experience, the fruits of which typically were a constant sense of Higher Power, peace of mind, charity, bravery, love of humanity, and so forth, and above all, the "permanent alteration of character" (James 1961, 211–60). James records statements by mystics such as John of the Cross and Teresa of Avila, both of whom wrote about the incorrigibility of these experiences. John thought that a "single one of them may be sufficient to abolish at a stroke imperfections of which the soul during its whole life had vainly tried to rid itself" (James 1961, 324–5). The experience would "leave it [the soul] adorned with virtues and loaded with supernatural gifts" (James 1961, 325). There is no need to go on. All the way to Saul of Tarsus, and to Jesus himself, the examples support thinking that anyone with the personhood of Augustinian Adam would have only grown in wisdom, stature, and favor with people.

This objection is linked with a second one, which is that Lewis's examples are ordinary people, none of whom is supposed to have been in the beatific state comparable to the purported original human condition. The welling up of pride in "fallen" persons is unsurprising in itself, but surprisingly irrelevant to the case.

Plantinga's appeal to Pride takes a somewhat different turn. He suggests that "perhaps a high probability of such a fall attaches to free creatures (creatures with an area of autonomy) who were created in the image of God" (Plantinga 2000, 211–13). Such creatures may naturally develop a desire for God's position. "Perhaps there is a high probability that beings

created in the image of God will also wind up resembling him in this: that they want to see and do see themselves as the center of the universe" (Plantinga 2000, 213). Perhaps this "substantial probability" is "built into the very nature of free creatures which have knowledge of God's glorious status and indeed do see it as glorious and desirable" (Plantinga 2000, 213). Maybe there are possible worlds in which such creatures do not fall, but perhaps these worlds are a small minority of the "totality of possible worlds containing free creatures" (Plantinga 2000, 213). If so, then, "the fall isn't necessary, but perhaps its objective probability is very high" (Plantinga 2000, 213).

Plantinga's explanation is provocative, but I think it fares little better than Lewis's. First, it fails to include the presumed original beatific condition and personhood, including the features that would have prevented the grandiose delusion he envisions. Second, however, if we propose that the designed ontology of human persons comes with a high degree of "objective probability" they will fall this way, then we are back to original fragility and the thought of evil due to divine design. His proposal resembles the notion of "trans-world depravity," which he originated years ago: it is possibly true that in all possible worlds with morally free creatures that those creatures eventually do something morally wrong (Plantinga 1976, 45–530).

Plantinga's proposals in fact support a line of thinking that leads away from the Augustinian tradition on human personhood. The name for it is Supralapsarianism, which originally was a theory about divine election defended by sect of Calvinism in the seventeenth century. They believed God's purpose in creation always was to save some people through Christ and to leave the others in sin. We have just seen that Augustine himself, when pressed, resorted to just this dialectical view of precosmic divine purpose. Karl Barth's treatment of the debate between supporters of Supralapsarianism and Infralapsarianism (God's decrees came only after the un-decreed Fall) is perhaps the best in modern print, both for its historical value and for the renovated version of Supralapsarianism that Barth himself endorsed. In Barth's version it always was God's purpose to elect *everyone* and *everything* in Jesus Christ, who reveals God as the "electing God" (Barth 1967, 127–45). It is noteworthy that Plantinga has recently adopted a version of Supralapsarianism in the debate over God and evil, and we will return to his approach in a moment (Plantinga 2004).

But first we should point out that an ancient and authoritative precedent for Supralapsarianism metaphysics exists in Christian history. Its main source was Irenaeus of Lyon, who had a very different understanding of original personhood in Adam. It seems that we would do well, especially now in the context of Darwinian science, to consider Irenaean Adam for the leading part in our play.

IRENAEAN ADAM

According to Irenaeus, Adam and Eve could not have been morally and spiritually mature, because it is in the very nature of such maturity that it cannot happen apart from the course of a lifetime of moral choices and experiences. According to J. N. D. Kelly, Irenaeus almost indisputably adopted the view of Theophilos of Antioch that (so Kelly) "Adam was infantile and undeveloped, and indeed this was why he was forbidden the acquisition of knowledge (Kelly 2004, 168).

Yet there is no suggestion that this endowment amounted to what later theology was to call original righteousness. On the contrary, being a creature, Adam was necessarily far removed from the divine perfection and incorruptibility; an infinite distance divided him from God. *In Paradise, therefore, he was morally, spiritually, and intellectually a child . . . . It is by a long process of response to grace and submission to God's will that Adam, equipped as he was with free choice, was intended to advance towards ever closer resemblance to his Maker* [italics mine]. (Kelly 2004, 171)

Irenaeus understood that such moral novices were no match for the persuasive powers of the Devil (Serpent) (Lawson 1948, 202–3). Since God is omniscient and wise, God must have known they would fail, and yet God let them be tested anyway.

We have not mentioned divine foreknowledge, but we have seen that it complicated things for Augustine on the metaphysics of the Fall. It obviously complicates things for any Augustinian version of the account.[1]

At any rate, Irenaeus thought that the Fall must have been part of a foreordained plan, and that the plan was for a better world than any other. It would be a world brought to maturity and flourishing in and through the Incarnation and the Atonement, the Person and Work of Christ. Matthew Steenberg's entire book, *Irenaeus on Creation*, makes this pervasive point, which Irenaeus never captured more succinctly than in the statement, "Since he [Christ] had pre-existence as a saving being, it was necessary that what might be saved should also be called into existence, in order that the being who saves should not exist in vain" (Steenberg 2008, 34). It was in the *nature* and *character* of God, then, to bring about a world that would emerge through divine victory over imperfections and evils. In these metaphysics God *authorizes* the existence of evils for that purpose, but is not the "author of evils" in the sense of being *culpable* for anything wrong. In its totality, beginning to end, the creation is "very good," and so is God.

"SUPRALAPSARIAN" GOODNESS

So there is in fact an alternative in orthodoxy to the Augustinian character of Adam and the story of Paradise Lost. Plantinga in fact proposes that Supralapsarianism may provide the best metaphysical framework in which

to think about the existence of evils on theism (Plantinga 2004, 1–2). He proposes that the acts of salvation in the Incarnation and the Atonement are possibly the most valuable goods that could exist in any possible world—for God, the First Being of the universe, to enter into human flesh, human suffering, and abject humiliation on behalf of greatly less valuable, sinful creatures, is as great in value as anything we can imagine (Plantinga 2004, 7). This leads Plantinga to affirm the "strong value assumption" (among weaker others one could use), which is "any world with incarnation and atonement is a better world than any world without it—or at any rate better than any world in which God does nothing comparable to incarnation and atonement" (Plantinga 2004, 10).

In this way of thinking the goodness of the original creation does not consist of an original perfection, and maybe not even complete freedom from disorder and natural evils, so called. The original goodness of creation consists in its teleological place as a *part* in a historical-eschatological cosmic whole. Moreover the goodness of *God* in authorizing such a world consists in the great good of the world in its eschatological *totality* as a finished work—one is inclined, as Lewis was, to turn to *aesthetic* agency and complex works of *art* as moral analogies (Lewis 1962, 84). These points all apply to original human personhood, too.

Along this line, I also submit that Plantinga's account of Supralapsarianism and the goodness of God and the world is incomplete in an important respect. The Incarnation and the Atonement do not generate cosmic value by *themselves* in the abstract. They refer not only to divine *actions* but to divine a*chievements* in and through those actions—achievements of great goods not just for God but for God's *creatures*. Marilyn Adams has made this point as eloquently as anyone in the analytical philosophy of religion. In the book, *Horrendous Evils and the Goodness of God*, the major thesis is that for God to be good in relation to some person, God must be good to that person, on the whole (Adams 1999). A complete treatment of Supralapsarian goodness and purpose would include an account of how the Incarnation and the Atonement achieved goodness for all creatures and things, not least for human persons. Adams (like Lewis) also points the way to an *aesthetic* understanding of God's goodness and to the goodness God achieves for creatures, especially human persons. I have also written elsewhere on how this aesthetic Supralapsarian way might be taken by Christian theologians (Schneider 2004, 2010).

Peace at Last?

In closing, it should be clear that good theological reasons exist for getting the Augustinian character of Adam and the drama of the Fall off the stage and rewriting the script for an Irenaean part. Irenaeus's approach to human beginnings and personhood has several notable advantages. It provides

a better framework for a Christian metanarrative that replaces Paradise Lost and Paradise Regained with a more plausible (theologically speaking) account of God deliberately forging a world via the triumph over conditions of alienation and mortality for all creatures and things—a story of Christus Victor. Furthermore, as John Hick proved years ago, the Irenaean approach to theodicy has vastly more promise than the Augustinian Fall story does (Hick 2007). And, finally, the Irenaean original person—Irenaean Adam— fits remarkably well into the larger narrative of a Darwinian World and Darwinian Adam. With a little imagination, the Irenaean figure can adapt to the part naturally in unforced fashion.

If we are prepared to make these improvements in our theology of human personhood, it may be that peace can break out between Christianity and Darwinism, after all.

Other reasons exist for adopting an Irenaean character of Adam and human personhood. It should also be clear enough that the Irenaean character fits naturally into the wild Darwinian World and can adapt on stage to the part of a Darwinian Adam. In the context of Christian theology, theodicy, and engagement of evolutionary science, it would be a wise and good thing to let "him" take the stage.

NOTE

1.   We have seen that it forced Augustine himself into a Supralapsarian explanation—God's two-aspect aesthetic glory revealed in full. We did not mention that Lewis also conceded a similar Supralapsarian point—that is, that "in fact, of course, God saw the crucifixion in the act of creating the first nebula" (Lewis 1962, 84). In that sense the Fall was part of a grand plan from pre-cosmic beginnings. We must bypass his contention, in defense of genuine original freedom, that *either* kind of world—one with or one without the Fall—would have been of equal value (Lewis 1962, 85). If that is so, the question is why, then, did God not simply bring forth the ones without it and spare creatures all the vast amounts, kinds, and distributions of suffering? Finally, we must also ignore the famous controversy over compatibility between foreknowledge and freedom, except to say that it is hard to see in this metaphysical scenario how original human freedom could rise to the determinative degree required by the Augustinian explanation of personhood and evils.

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