

CHAPTER 4

FREE WILL AND THE FALL

Definition of free will

Cf. Calvin, *Institutes*, bk. 2, ch. 1-6; C. Hodge 2:ch. 9; Murray 2:ch. 6; Hoekema, 227-31; A. A. Hodge, *Confession*, ch. 9, and *Outlines*, ch. 15; Jonathan Edwards, *On the Freedom of the Will* (*Works*, Vol. 1, pp. 1-93)

Confessional statements

WCF 9:1, “God hath endued the will of man with that natural liberty, that it is neither forced, nor by any absolute necessity of nature determined to good or evil.”

WCF 9:2, “Man, in his state of innocency, had freedom and power to will and to do that which is good and well-pleasing to God; but yet mutably, so that he might fall from it.”

WLC 21 & WSC 13, “Our first parents, being left to the freedom of their own will . . . “

The nature and the will

The will is that part of the human mind which determines what the person will do. It makes these decisions from two bases:

- a. Its understanding of the situation—the person’s knowledge
- b. Its reading of the person’s natural inclinations and priorities—the person’s nature (or heart)

When we say the will is free, we mean that the will is free to express the person’s nature. We do not mean that the will is free to choose what is right. The will is not forced to act contrary to the person’s nature—that is what we mean by free will. Actually, the will is bound to the person’s nature. Only an insane person makes decisions unrelated to his nature and knowledge.

Necessary distinctions

1. Liberty — ability (cf. A. A. Hodge, *Outlines*, 289)

Liberty—freedom from outside constraint

Ability—freedom from internal compulsion

2. Alternate choice — contrary choice (cf. Murray 2:63-65)

Alternate choice—ability to choose different (sinful) actions

Contrary choice—ability to choose good or evil

Conflicting views about free will

1. Materialism

All choice ultimately the result of mechanical, chemical, economic, social environment

(But note Adam's environment)

2. Fatalism

A divine force determines all things, apart from human responsibility

3. Arminianism

The will can operate independently of one's nature; sometimes called the doctrine of contingency (Hodge 2:282-84)

Note quote by Arminian D. D. Whedon in A. A. Hodge, *Outlines*, 293, #28:

To this maxim, that it is no matter how we come by our evil volitions, dispositions, or nature in order to responsibility, provided that we really possess them, we [the Methodists] oppose the counter maxim that *in order to responsibility for a given act or state, power in the agent for a contrary act or*

state is requisite. In other words power underlies responsibility.” (quoting from *Bibliotheca Sacra* (April, 1862).

4. Calvinism

The will is free to follow one’s nature

“The will is not determined by any law of necessity; it is not independent, indifferent, or self-determined, but is always determined by the preceding state of mind; so that a man is free so long as his volitions are the conscious expression of his own mind; or so long as his activity is determined and controlled by his reason and feelings.” (Hodge 2:288)

This is the case in all four states:

- 1) Before the fall
- 2) After the fall
- 3) After conversion
- 4) In the eternal state

—Cf. the outline of WCF 9:2-5

The nature = “the habitus of the person, the whole complex of desires, of motives, propensions, principles” (Murray 2:61)

The Bible refers to the nature often as the “heart”:

Prov 4:23, “guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life”

Matt 12:34-35, “Out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks. The good man brings good things out of the good stored up in him, and the evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in him.”

Mark 7:21-23, “For from within, out of men’s hearts, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly. All these evils come from inside . . .”

Theological arguments for Calvinist position

[Hodge 2:299-302]

- 1) Divine foreknowledge

Foreknown events are certain to occur

2) Divine foreordination

“There is no difficulty attending the doctrine of foreordination which does not attach to that of foreknowledge. The latter supposes the certainty of free acts, and the former secures their certainty.” (Hodge 2:301)

3) Divine providence

“Foreknowledge supposes certainty; foreordination determines it; and providence effects it. . . . If God cannot effectually control the acts of free agents there can be no prophecy, no prayer, no thanksgiving, no promises, no security of salvation, no certainty whether in the end God or Satan is to be triumphant, whether heaven or hell is to be the consummation.” (*Ibid.*)

4) Divine regeneration

God effectually produces repentance and faith

Important relationships with free will

Liberty and certainty:

[Hodge 2:295-96; Murray 2:65-66]

God works through our hearts, not against them

To a large extent, a mystery

Liberty and responsibility:

[Murray 2:60-61]

Responsibility required of all moral creatures

Liberty required for a creature to be responsible, if he is to be judged for what he actually is

Note that God is not responsible to anyone else (Rom. 9:19)

Adam's fall into sin

WCF 6:1; WLC 21; WSC 13, 15

[Hodge 2:ch. 7; Murray 2:ch. 7; Hoekema, ch. 7]

Adam's liberty

WCF 6:1, “This their sin God was pleased, according to his wise and holy counsel, to permit, having purposed it to his own glory” (cf. Rom 5:20-21)

Liberty of contrary choice before the fall; no internal compulsion to sin

Environment ideal for obedience (cf. above, ch. 3)

Is consent required for representation? (Would we have done better?)

The source of temptation

(More concerning theodicy, and the origin of sin with Satan in course Doctrine of God; cf. the *WRS Journal* 3/1 [Winter, 1996]; also see the additional article by John Battle that accompanies the *Journal* article at the WRS website—www.wrs.edu)

Gen 3:1, the serpent

An animal, vv. 1, 14

Used by Satan

“The great dragon was hurled down—that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him.” (Rev 12:9)

Fall of Satan from being a holy angel

Cf. 2 Pet 2:4, “For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but sent them to hell, putting them into gloomy dungeons to be held for judgment; . . .”

Origin of Satan's fall—pride

“He [a new deacon] must not be a recent convert, or he may become conceited and fall under the same judgment as the devil.” (1 Tim 3:6; note use of subjective genitive, “judgment of the devil”)

Not good to use Isa 14:3-23 (taunt against king of Babylon) and Ezek 28:11-19 (lament for king of Tyre) out of context and apply to Satan

Appearing to Eve in form of serpent:

Overpowering to appear as an angel (cf. 2 Cor 11:14)

Suspicious to appear as human

As an animal: non-threatening, yet intriguing (“crafty”)

Perhaps in some way upright (cf. Gen 3:14; Deilitzsch)

The temptation of Eve, Gen 3:1-6

More details given than with Adam's temptation—more instructive

- Satan questions God's word, v. 1

Appeals to desire for autonomy

- Eve's reply (only words of Eve recorded before the fall), vv. 2-3

Recognizes God's provision

Inaccurately quotes prohibition:

Does not distinguish the two named trees

Tightens the prohibition (“must not touch it”)

Lessens certainty of punishment (leaves out “surely”)

- Satan contradicts God, vv. 4-5

Direct contradiction of God's strong prohibition (see above, ch. 3, section "Threat of Death")

Sinful motives attributed to God (denies his sovereignty, goodness, and justice; accuses him of keeping his supremacy by suppressing his creatures)

- Eve's desire, v. 6

Natural desire ("good for food, pleasing to the eye")

Sinful desire ("desirable for gaining wisdom")

Cf. 1 John 2:16 KJV, NASB, "lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, pride of life"

- Eve's fall into sin, v. 6

Sin for herself: "She took some and she ate it"

Immediate sinful nature, became tempter for Adam: "She also gave some to her husband, who was with her"

- Nature of Eve's fall—deceived by Satan

2 Cor 11:3, "Just as Eve was deceived by the serpent's cunning, your minds may somehow be led astray from your sincere and pure devotion to Christ"

1 Tim 2:14, "Adam was not the one deceived; it was the woman who was deceived and became a sinner."

The temptation of Adam, Gen 3:6

Eve a stronger tempter than the serpent

Sinned deliberately, was not deceived (1 Tim 2:14)

His motives not stated (cf. Milton, love for Eve)

Consequence if he had obeyed—perhaps his seed continued some other way

Immediate consequences of Adam's fall, Gen 3:7-24

WCF 6:2, “By this sin they fell from their original righteousness and communion with God, and so became dead in sin, and wholly defiled in all the faculties and parts of soul and body.”

Cf. the general results of sin for mankind, WCF 6:6, WLC 27-29, WSC 19

Human guilt and alienation

- Marriage relation disrupted; self-conscious vanity, v. 7

Cf. Geneva Bible, “breeches”

- Alienation from God, vv. 8-10
- Note God’s seeking man, his initiative in the whole salvation process, vv. 8-9, 21
- Refusal to accept guilt, vv. 11-13

Adam

Eve

Judgment on the serpent, vv. 14-15

Physical judgment on serpents

Verse 15, the “Protevangelium”

Term Used	Literal	Historical	Christological
“You”	serpent	Satan	serpent, and Satan
“Woman”	Eve	Eve	Eve
“Your offspring”	snakes	unholy line	Satan

“Her offspring”	people	godly line	Christ
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For Christological or messianic interpretation defense, see E. W. Hengstenberg, *Christology of the Old Testament*, 4-16

Cf. Rom 16:20, and Gal 3:16 (seed of Abraham = Christ)

Romans 16:20, The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you.

Galatians 3:16, The promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. The Scripture does not say “and to seeds,” meaning many people, but “and to your seed,” meaning one person, who is Christ.

Judgment on the woman, v. 16

- Increased difficulty in conception and labor

NIV, “your pains in childbearing”

Possibly as in NASB marg., “your pain and your conception” (increased number of children)

Difficult labor

עֲשָׂה *‘eṣēḥ*, same as v. 17, “painful toil”

Cf. Ps 127:2; Prov 10:22; 14:23

- Desire to rule over husband, resistance to his rule

“Your desire,” תִּשְׁקָה *tēšûqāh*

Cf. Gen 4:7, desire to rule

Song 7:10 (Heb., v. 11), emotional dependence

- Domination by husband

מַשָּׁל־בָּ *māšal-bē*, have dominion over, different from term in Gen 1:28 (הִרְבֵּה)

More difficult with sinful husband (cf. 1 Pet 3:1, 5-6)

Judgment on the man, vv. 17-19

- Adam's sin, regarding wife more than God, v. 17
- The ground cursed
 - Not new kinds of plants, but new proportions of them
 - Sinful man exploits and corrupts the ground; fails to maintain and improve it
 - The natural world awaits redemption (Rom 8:19-23)
 - God created the universe “running down” (2nd law of thermodynamics) in anticipation of the fall, and of the new heavens and new earth
- Increased painful labor to survive and provide for his family
(Cf. labor for wife, above)
Less desirable food, v. 18b
- Physical death, v. 19

God's provision for man

- Garments of skin, v. 21
New relation to animals; now kills them for his use
“The first sacrifice”
- Expulsion from the garden, vv. 22-24

Reason: unsanctified immortality, v. 22

Cherubim, high-ranking angels, cf. Ezek 10, etc.

Actually, a favor to man, Acts 17:26-27

Additional teaching indicated, cf. Gen 4:3-4, 7

- Initial glimpses of faith from Adam and Eve

Adam (3:20); Eve (4:1)