

Human *Cupiditas*: Formal Characteristics

Introduction

HUMAN LIFE AS *CUPIDITAS*, HUMAN SIN AS THE OCCASION FOR THE FIRST divine wound or divine grief, exhibits several formal characteristics. By no means do I pretend, with my identification of these formal characteristics, exhaustively to analyze this occasion for divine suffering. I only examine here the broad contours of the factors that structure the beloved human's infidelity, those structural characteristics of human sin that figure most prominently as features of the occasion for the first divine wound. Most generally, according to the Christian symbol of divine suffering, the creaturely occasion for the first divine wound exhibits six formal characteristics: a distinction between essential and sinful finitude; temptation to sin; sin as distortion of relationships; sin as involvement of the whole person; sin as universal to all humanity; and the indissoluble bond between sin and its consequences (guilt, bondage of the will, and original sin).

Essential and Sinful Finitude

As the first formal characteristic of sinful human life, the Christian symbol of divine suffering does not equate human sin with finitude as such.¹ Features and qualities of humans as finite participate in the reality of sin,

1. Numerous theologians of divine suffering express this conviction: as examples, see Brasnett, *Suffering of the Impassible God*, 121–23; Macquarrie, *Principles of Christian Theology*, 242–44. In this connection, also recall my development of the anthropological principle in the first volume of my study (Pool, *God's Wounds*, vol. 1, chapter 2).

but do not constitute evil in themselves merely because of their character as finite. Identifying essential finitude with sinful finitude produces dangerous residual effects throughout the entire network of Christian symbols. As one foundational consequence, for example, any such identity between essential and sinful finitude produces a questionable concept of God. If God creates finite reality, and one equates the finite with sin or evil, then only by subtle conceptual manipulations can one either describe this God and God's creation as good or, therefore, exonerate God of any arbitrariness or capriciousness.² Thus, the Christian symbol of divine suffering, while *acknowledging* the reality of sin as *fact* (as traditionally formulated in the symbol of original sin, *peccatum originale*), *emphasizes* the reality of sin as *act* (*peccatum actuale*), in order not to risk identifying sin or evil with essential finitude as such.³

2. In thinking through some issues in this dilemma, Augustine, for example, claimed that error, although not always a sin, is always an evil (Augustine, *Enchiridion on Faith, Hope, and Love*, 27–28 [21]). Unfortunately, Augustine only pushed the problem back one step with this view. Other typologies of evil try to avoid some of these problems, but many of them fail because they too often identify characteristics of *essential* finitude (not merely *sinful* finitude) as evil. O. C. Quick conceived evil as twofold: (1) sin and (2) suffering. Nonetheless, he almost identified these two realities, when he claimed that, “so long as we regard suffering as in the full sense evil, we are bound to find its cause in something which has the nature of sin” (Quick, *Essays in Orthodoxy*, 85). C. E. Rolt, who defined evil as “a want of harmony” in all of its forms, classified evil in the following way: (1) physical evil as bodily pain; (2) mental evil as grief; (3) aesthetic evil as ugliness; (4) intellectual evil as error; and (5) moral evil as sin. Although Rolt does fall into the trap mentioned previously, he refused to find the causality of physical death, for example, in sin (Rolt, *World's Redemption*, 161, 170). William Temple perceived three major types of evil: (1) intellectual evil as error; (2) emotional evil as pain; and (3) moral evil as sin. He sought to avoid the dilemma that I mentioned previously by beginning with the premise of moral victory as the highest value for human life. He continued and concluded as follows: in order to attain moral victory, one must overcome something; thus, the existence of evil in all of its forms is the “essential condition” for moral victory (Temple, *The Faith and Modern Thought*, 119, 121). Forbes Robinson more adequately addressed the dilemma: “The necessary condition of progress was not sin, but the exercise of the power of choice” (Robinson, *Self-Limitation of the Word of God*, 40).

3. As I will later show, the Christian symbol of divine suffering emphasizes sin as *act* in order to avoid weakening the sense of human responsibility for sin or evil. Although Rudolf Bultmann discerned inconsistency in the apostle Paul's statements concerning “the guilt-character of sin,” he acknowledged that Paul held “to the idea that sin came into the world by sinning” (Romans 5:12–19), rather than as a result of either human participation in “matter” or the influence of Satan (Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament*, 1:251).

Sin entails, then, the inauthentic or distorted actualization of human life as love, human life as *cupiditas* rather than as *caritas*.⁴ Thus, although the Christian symbol of divine suffering does not identify sin with essential human finitude, when humans actualize themselves as *cupiditas*, through betrayal of the divine lover, this symbol does acknowledge that sin *radically affects* essential human finitude. Consequently, one can distinguish between sin and sinner only in principle. This requires, in a qualified sense, a description of actual finitude or real human life as sinfully real; a person becomes what a person does.⁵ God,

4. The Hebrew version of the first Christian canon uses many terms to describe sin. One Hebrew word in particular, the verbal root of which means in secular experience “to bend,” describes sin as the perversion or distortion of authentic human life or life following Yahweh’s way: “I sinned, and perverted what was right” (Job 33:27 RSV [Revised Standard Version]); “A voice on the bare heights is heard, the weeping and pleading of Israel’s sons, because they have perverted their way, they have forgotten the Lord their God” (Jeremiah 3:21 RSV). This idea construes more broadly the meaning of sin that I have described in this chapter. In this respect, when the Christian symbol of divine suffering construes both human life as love and human sin as human infidelity to the divine lover, this symbol closely resembles H. Richard Niebuhr’s anthropology and hamartiology. “With the alternative symbol of man-the-maker or man-the-realizer of ideals, we understand our human wretchedness, self-contradictoriness, and alienation as *hamartia*, the missing of the mark, rather than as transgression of the law. Sin is not quite so much lawbreaking as vice; it is the perverse direction of the drives in man, or of his will in general, toward ends not proper to him. . . . The fundamental evil is conflict within, and corruption of, a life meant by its internal entelechy, its native drive, to be whole and ordered within itself, whether as personal, or as social or universal” (Niebuhr, *Responsible Self*, 131, 132).

5. Several Christian theologians of divine suffering perceptively realize this when they reject the theology of the oft-repeated, yet highly simplistic, cliché: “God hates the sin, but loves the sinner.” “There is no such thing as sin apart from a sinner, any more than pleasure could be real, in pure abstraction, irrespectively of a pleased consciousness. . . . To be angry with a thing—and sin abstracted from sinner is no more—ranks as a moral absurdity” (Mackintosh, *Christian Experience of Forgiveness*, 165). “If God hates the sin, what He hates is not an accretion attached to my real self; it is myself, as that self now exists” (Temple, *Christus Veritas*, 258). “It is commonly said—and there is no more misleading catchword—that God hates the sin and loves the sinner. But moral evil has no existence apart from a moral agent. Sin has no meaning independently of its author; the moral value of a deed lies not in the deed itself, but in the person of the doer” (White, *Forgiveness and Suffering*, 54). “What is primarily an affront to God in man’s sin is not man’s evil deed as such, but the man-initiated breach in the personal relationship between him and God. . . . The statement that God hates the sin but loves the sinner is too simple a resolution of the fundamental oneness of the sinner with his sin” (Wolf, *No Cross, No Crown*, 192). Of course, the rejection of this cliché implies at least one other serious problem: if one cannot separate sinners from their sins, then should one speak of God’s hatred of or wrath toward sinners at all? To be sure, numerous Christian

through suffering, responds to and interacts with this *actual* person, not to or with the essential person or the person whose possibilities (either negative or positive) that person has not yet realized.

Temptation to Sin

For the Christian symbol of divine suffering, temptation also plays a key role as a second formal characteristic of human *cupiditas*. Previously, I have described the situation from which temptation arises for humans in terms of this symbol's two presuppositions. God has created the human in the image of Godself, whose life is love. Thus, on the one hand, because humans resemble God, humans must actualize themselves as love—either authentically (as *caritas*) or inauthentically (as *cupiditas*): both possibilities reside in human reality. God has not supplied humans, however, with the possibility not to actualize themselves as love. On the other hand, human life as created also differs from God, always finite instead of infinite; consequently, even authentic actualization of human life, human life as *caritas*, occurs within limits that God has established for creatures or finitude. The possibility to actualize themselves as *cupiditas* tempts humans to move beyond their given finite or creaturely limits: this temptation suggests the possibility that humans can make both more and less of themselves than God has enabled them to be; this temptation also suggests the possibility that humans cannot trust God, that God has lied.⁶ This temptation precedes human breaking of trust with God, human infidelity toward the divine lover. Thus, human finitude in itself, along with its concomitant conditions and states (such as anxiety), does not tempt humans; rather, the possibility of conquering the perceived insecurities of finitude—so perceived along with doubt about God—tempts or beckons humans to grasp for infinity.⁷

attestations to divine suffering announce God's wrath toward sinners. Nonetheless, many theologies of divine suffering understand divine wrath as the symbol with which to describe the horror of the self-destructive consequences that sin has produced. I will elaborate this point more fully later in this work.

6. In Genesis 3:1–7, the serpent disputes Yahweh's word to the woman. The woman then believes the serpent and distrusts Yahweh. Hoping for benefits that Yahweh did not give, preeminently that she as a human "will be like God, knowing good and evil" (Genesis 3:5b RSV), the woman acts upon her trust of the serpent and her doubt of God.

7. While I agree with Reinhold Niebuhr that anxiety constitutes a "permanent concomitant of freedom," or "the inevitable concomitant of the paradox of freedom and finiteness in which man is involved," I disagree with his conclusion that anxiety is "the

Furthermore, humans objectify temptation. Admittedly, when humans attempt to become that which does not belong to their own *authentic* possibilities, they reach for that which is external to themselves. Nevertheless, both the desire and the attempt originate within humans themselves. The sinful human's tendency to posit temptation as an objective force of evil that precedes human sin, and draws the human into sin, to project the source of temptation outside the human itself, expresses human infidelity's desire to shift the blame or to refuse its own responsibility for its life as *cupiditas*. In reality, however, with this tendency to objectify the sources of temptation, the human refuses to acknowledge that the horrible depth of sin's evil only originates from and resides within the human heart. This refusal itself results from sin.⁸

Sin as Relational Distortion

A third formal factor characterizes the very essence of sin. Sin radically distorts, twists, or disorders relationships between creation and God. More accurately, the word "sin" designates the distortion of those

internal description of the state of temptation," "the precondition of sin," or a "temptation to sin" (Niebuhr, *Nature and Destiny of Man*, 1:182, 183, 185). Again, this conclusion might suggest the possibility that God has created humans in such a way that sin becomes inevitable for them. Paul Tillich's analysis of anxiety, while similar in some respects to Niebuhr's analysis, assesses anxiety a bit more positively. For Tillich, finitude aware of itself as finitude is anxiety; furthermore, therefore, anxiety "belongs to the created character of being quite apart from estrangement and sin" (Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, 1:191, 194). Admittedly, Niebuhr argues similarly; nonetheless, when finitude itself, or any essential aspect of it, becomes the temptation to sin, a shadow of doubt casts itself upon either God's goodness or God's power (or both) in creation. Thus, finitude as anxiety does not tempt to sin; rather, the possibility of conquering finitude (and, therefore, anxiety as well) by the powers of finitude itself tempts the human to sin.

8. Witness the human tendency to objectify the sources of human temptation to sin in the symbolic narrative about the serpent's deception of the woman (Genesis 3:1–7). Since God created the serpent, many Christians often attributed the ultimate responsibility for this temptation finally to the divine mystery in one way or another. In places, the second Christian canon demythologizes—and, thereby, de-objectifies—this interpretation of temptation: "Let no one say when he is tempted, 'I am tempted by God'; for God cannot be tempted with evil and he himself tempts no one; but each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin; and sin when it is full-grown brings forth death" (James 1:13–15 RSV; cf. Romans 1:18–32). Nonetheless, later in this study, I examine original sin or *sinful social fatedness* (hamartiological fact) as the objective source of temptation to *sin* (hamartiological act).

authentic relationships.⁹ All false human love, therefore, whether for God, neighbor, or self, ultimately distorts the human's relation to God.¹⁰ Moreover, although the human can never completely remove itself from a relationship with God, the human can radically alter the nature of its relationship with God and with all created others.¹¹ Just as the disintegration of a building's foundation twists, cracks, and finally collapses the structure that rests upon it, so too the human's estrangement or alienation from God distorts, mutilates, and finally destroys authentic human relationships to all creaturely others, including the human's self-relatedness. Thus, the Christian symbol of divine suffering distinguishes *sin* from *sins*. Sin, or human life as *cupiditas*, designates both the human's *turning from* its divine source, the one alone in and through whom the human can realize its authentic possibilities, and the human's *turning to* itself as its own source and goal: *cor incurvatum in se ipsum*.¹² By refusal to trust God, the human becomes untrustworthy

9. Jacob, *Theology of the Old Testament*, 283–84. Many texts (e.g., the numerous texts that I have cited previously) from both canons of Christian scriptures attest to this central aspect of human sin. The divine-human relationship, as conceived in Israel's prophetic traditions, "as something laying claim to the very depths of the whole human personality here makes itself felt by causing sin to be portrayed as at bottom a wanton jeopardization, nay, dissolution of this relationship" (Eichrodt, *Theology of the Old Testament*, 1:375). For H. W. Robinson, that "sin is what it does" describes one central aspect of sin (Robinson, *Two Hebrew Prophets*, 28). For example, "your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you so that he does not hear" (Isaiah 59:2 RSV). Numerous other prophetic texts attest similarly (see Hosea 2:1–13; 4:1–10; 5:3–7). Also, in the second Christian canon, the apostle Paul described sin similarly: "For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law, indeed it cannot" (Romans 8:7 RSV).

10. Such an attestation expresses, perhaps, the central confession about sin in the Christian scriptures (e.g., Psalm 51:4; Matthew 25:31–46). For this reason, Gustaf Aulén described sin as a "religious concept" and refused to posit two classes of sin with a distinction between "sins against God" and "sins against the neighbor" (Aulén, *Faith of the Christian Church*, 231, 232).

11. Brunner stated essentially the same point. "Man's relation with God, which determines his whole being, has not been destroyed by sin, but it has been perverted. Man does not cease to be the being who is responsible to God, but his responsibility has been altered from a state of being-in-love to a state of being-under-the-law, a life under the wrath of God" (Brunner, *Man in Revolt*, 105).

12. One may translate this phrase as "the heart turned back upon itself." Luther strongly emphasized this Augustinian insight with reference especially to original sin and inherited guilt (Luther, *Lectures on Romans*, 245, 290–91, 313, 345, 351, 512–13). Also see Brunner, *Man in Revolt*, 135–39.

before God. Thus, trusting only in itself, the human elevates itself to the status of deity.¹³ Paradoxically, then, the resemblance to God with which God has endowed the human as *imago Dei* allows humans to usurp, or at least to attempt to usurp, the divine role. This usurpation, however, carries humans along the *cupiditas*-trajectory with the result, therefore, that humans become less like God than ever and distanced from God by far more than creaturehood or finitude as such.¹⁴ Sins, therefore, take a variety of forms; but sins originate from sin. As a consequence, only awareness of the basic character of *sin* supplies the basis for recognition of various *sins*.

13. Once again, see Genesis 3:1–7 on this human desire and effort to be “like God.” Perhaps a tendency similar to this displacement of God, by the corresponding emplacement of the human as god, appears in the denial of God. “The fool says in his heart, ‘There is no God.’ They are corrupt, they do abominable deeds, there is none that does good” (Psalm 14:1 RSV; also see Psalm 53:1). In the second Christian canon, the apostle Paul attested similarly in this connection. “For although they knew God they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking and their senseless minds were darkened. Claiming to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man or birds or animals or reptiles” (Romans 1:21–23 RSV).

Herman Ridderbos echoed an insight of W. Gutbrod: “. . . the sin of man consists in that he does not want to be flesh (in the sense of “man-in-weakness and transitoriness”), does not want so to be flesh as it has been given him to be, as the foundation of a life after the will of God” (Ridderbos, *Paul: An Outline of His Theology*, 103). Abraham Heschel said that “the root of all evil is, according to Isaiah, man’s false sense of sovereignty and, stemming from it, man’s pride, arrogance, and presumption” (Heschel, *Prophets* 1:165). Christian theologians of divine suffering also have discerned this. “The proud conceit of any created mind, that it can, by its own inherent powers, be as a God, able to fill other minds from itself without first receiving of God, is a violation of the fundamental law of all created minds” (Beecher, *Concord of the Ages*, 79). Miguel de Unamuno also commented similarly: “every created being tends not only to preserve itself in itself, but to perpetuate itself, and, moreover, to encroach upon all else, to be all others without ceasing to be itself, to extend its limits to infinity, but yet without breaking them down” (Unamuno, *Tragic Sense of Life in Men and Nations*, 227).

14. “Thus man’s distinctive endowment, his by the fact of his creation, namely, the fact that he has been made in the image of God, is the presupposition of sin. Sin itself is a manifestation of the image of God in man; only he who has been created in the image of God can sin, and in his sin he shows the ‘supernatural,’ spirit-power, a power not of this world, which issues from the primal image of God” (Brunner, *Man in Revolt*, 132–33).

Sin as Involvement of the Whole Person

As a fourth formal characteristic of *cupiditas*, according to the Christian symbol of divine suffering, sin affects the whole human person. No aspect of human life remains either uninvolved or unaffected by human sin. The human, although still a *creature* in God's presence, becomes *totus peccator*, totally sinner. Physical, psychical, and spiritual dimensions organically unite in the human, all dimensions mutually-interdependent, in order to function properly within human life. Human life also functions emotionally or affectively, intellectually or cognitively, and volitionally. Even these functions, however, do not operate independently of one another: the human will operates with emotional or affective and cognitive elements; human cognition and rationality operate with volitional and emotional or affective characteristics; and human affectivity operates with its own rational and volitional qualities. When humans live along the *cupiditas*-trajectory, therefore, sin affects all dimensions, characteristics, functions, and operations of human life.

The traditional Christian doctrine of total human depravity intends to communicate this awareness, even when it does so excessively or in extreme ways.¹⁵ By introducing the symbol of total depravity into this discussion, however, I do not suggest that sin has totally effaced the *imago Dei*, that sin has completely perverted every aspect of human life. The Christian symbol of divine suffering acknowledges that life's ambiguity testifies against such a perspective, if nothing else does; too much good persists in the midst of the evil. Such an extreme conception of total depravity would eliminate the possibility for even a totally passive human reception of salvation. Nonetheless, a healthy concept of total depravity illuminates the extent and depths of sin in human life. Sin has exercised and affected every aspect of human life: the human has inauthentically actualized its whole self. This symbol in no way suggests that all aspects of human life in every human have been *fully* actualized inauthentically. Still, even though each human retains aspects not fully and explicitly actualized falsely, human sin also affects these aspects. Thus, even the abiding presence of goodness in humans lures humans into the dangerous confidence that they can overcome sin in their own lives and in society through the powers and intentions of their own resolve. Such illusory self-confidence drives humans more deeply into

15. See Appendix 1: Insights from the Reformed Doctrine of Total Depravity.

bondage to sin. For these reasons, the symbol of total depravity helps to describe the human's involvement in its own actualization as *cupiditas*.

Universality of Sin

As the fifth formal characteristic of *cupiditas*, with the claim that all humans sin, the Christian symbol of divine suffering affirms the universality of sin. For the Christian symbol of divine suffering, not only does the beloved human's infidelity implicate the total person. All persons falsely actualize themselves. In one form or another, *all humans* reject the divine lover, thus distorting their relationships with God, neighbor, and self.¹⁶ When the Christian symbol of divine suffering announces sin's universality, it emphasizes the origin of human sin through sinning, through the actions of all humans against God, decisive behavior for which God legitimately holds them responsible. Only in this way does the human acquire real and personal guilt for the vitiation of its relationships with God, the world, and itself. The announcement of sin's universality, therefore, refers to nothing biologically or spiritually innate within human nature, nothing sexually or genetically transmitted or transmittable (traditionally understood through the formula "*traduce peccati*") from generation to generation.¹⁷ Rather, the symbol of sin's

16. Numerous Christian scriptures attest to the universal human actualization of sin. From the first Christian canon, for example, see the following texts: Genesis 6:5; 8:21; 1 Kings 8:46; Psalms 14:1–3; 53:1–3; 130:3; 143:2; Proverbs 7:20; Isaiah 24:1–6; 53:6; Jeremiah 5:5; 8:6; 9:13; 16:12. Also, from the second Christian canon, see the following texts: John 1:29; 8:24, 34; Acts 17:29–31; Romans 3:9–12, 19, 23; 5:12–21; Galatians 3:22; James 3:2; 1 John 1:8–10; 2:2.

17. Indeed, certain texts from Jewish and Christian scriptures seem to suggest (and certainly have been so construed) that sin is *innate* to human nature or creatureliness (see Job 4:17–21; 14:1–4; 15:14; 25:4; Psalms 51:5; 58:3; Proverbs 20:9). Nevertheless, with this tendency, according to Eichrodt, Israel had extended the prophetic insight about sin's universality as the action of all responsible agents; this extension by later Israel, however, tended to weaken the prophetic emphasis upon *responsibility* for sin (Eichrodt, *Theology of the Old Testament*, 2:399). Both Bultmann and Werner Georg Kümmel agreed that, in the second Christian canon, the apostle Paul derived universal human sinfulness from the act of sinning itself, even though both authors remained aware of Paul's emphasis upon the seemingly inevitable human participation in sin (Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament*, 1:251–52; Kümmel, *Theology of the New Testament*, 178–81). Bultmann suggested that one understand the Adamic transmission of guilt to the entire human race by analogy to the way in which Christ transmits life to humanity. "Through Christ, that is, there was brought about no more than the *possibility* of life, which, however, in men of faith becomes certain reality. That suggests, then,

universality refers to the constant re-appearance of *cupiditas* in human life, in every human across the whole course of human history.¹⁸

Indissoluble Bond between Sin and the Consequences of Sin

The beloved human's infidelity to the divine lover exhibits a sixth formal characteristic: an indissoluble connection between the act of sin and its consequences. Three principal consequences of sin manifest this indissoluble bond.

that one should assume by analogy that through Adam there was brought about for Adamitic mankind the *possibility* of sin and death—a possibility that does not become reality until individuals become guilty by their own responsible action” (Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament*, 1:252). To the contrary, however, by an emphasis upon the corporate character of sin's universality, rather than upon the individual's responsibility for each human actualization of it, Ridderbos leaned more toward the idea of an inherited guilt—lamentably, a notion far more consistent with the Augustinian teaching on original sin (Ridderbos, *Paul: An Outline of His Theology*, 93–100; cf. Augustine, *De Gratia Christi, et De Peccato Originali*, 2.43, 44, 46; Augustine, *Enchiridion*, 32 [26]). These two interpretations of Paul's hamartiology operate upon the basis of two very different sets of hermeneutical presuppositions, at least the difference between Lutheran existentialism (Bultmann) and conservative Calvinism (Ridderbos). In some of his works, Ambrose argued that Adam's sin transmitted a corrupting power to all humans, but Adam's guilt only attached to himself and not to other humans (e.g., Ambrose, *Ennarrationes in Psalmos*, 48.9). J. N. D. Kelly said that Ambrose “envisages the inherited corruption as a congenital propensity to sin (the phrase he uses is *lubricum delinquendi*) rather than as positive guilt” (Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, 355).

18. In the first Christian canon, the Yahwist dramatically narrates (Genesis 3–11) the origin and spread of human sin across the whole of human history in that which Gerhard von Rad described as “the Jahwist's great hamartiology”; according to von Rad, the Yahwistic hamartiology represents an exception for Israel: “for never again did Israel speak in such universal terms of sin as exemplified in standardised models, and yet at the same time in such great detail” (von Rad, *Old Testament Theology*, 1:154). In addition, the Chronicler (Nehemiah 9:1–38) illustrated Israel's consciousness of sin's constant presence, at least across the course of her own history: upon return from exile, Ezra recounted the faithlessness of Israel toward Yahweh throughout the major and formative events of Israel's history, in a great confession that preceded the sealing of Israel's covenant with God. Israel's prophetic traditions boldly identify, and pronounce judgment upon, both the sins of Israel and those of other nations in the world; in this way, First Isaiah addresses all nations and the whole earth (13:26; 24:1–23); Judah (2:1–4:1), Northern Israel (9:8–21), Babylon (13:1–14:23), Assyria (14:24–25), Philistia (14:29–31), Moab (15:1–16:14), Damascus (17:1–3), Cush or Ethiopia (18:1–7), Egypt (19:1–25), and Phoenicia (23:1–18). Similarly, Amos announced Yahweh's judgment on the sins of the nations: Damascus (1:3–5), Gaza (1:6–8), Tyre (1:9–10), Edom (1:11–12), Ammon (1:13–15), Moab (2:1–3), Judah (2:4–5), and Northern Israel (2:6–16).

Culpa

As the first consequence of sin, guilt (*culpa*) illustrates this characteristic. I have described the essence of sin as the human distortion or rupture of the human's relationship with God: one cannot separate the act (sin) and the responsibility for the act (guilt) from one another; to announce one always implies the other.¹⁹ Sin-as-act constitutes its own consequence, as the rupture or distortion of the human's relationship to God, the only foundational relationship through which human authenticity properly actualizes itself. Humans, therefore, have interposed a distorting veil (even a wall) between themselves and God, making themselves guilty before God. No temporal distance intervenes between the act of sin and this first consequence. The beloved human becomes guilty in this creature's unfaithful behavior toward God.

Servum Arbitrium

Christian traditions identify a second consequence of sin—human bondage to sin—as the servile will, *servum arbitrium*. When the human lives along the *cupiditas*-trajectory, rather than along the *caritas*-trajectory, it chooses against its own authentic relationship with God. Because God created humans in the divine image (and, therefore, with the freedom of one who is genuinely other-than-God), God allows humans to

19. Semantically, according to Eichrodt, "... guilt as an objective effect of sin, consisting in *liability to punishment at the hands of God*, is not for the most part distinguished from sin by a special term, but the same word is used for both. . . . These indications make it clear that the Hebrew had no particular interest in making a sharp conceptual distinction between sin and guilt" (Eichrodt, *Theology of the Old Testament*, 2:413). Eichrodt acknowledged instances within the first Christian canon that reflect Israel's pre-prophetic period, "in which all the emphasis falls on the objective offence, while the sinful will of the person involved manifestly plays no part" (as examples, Genesis 20:3ff.; 26:10; Exodus 21:12ff.; Leviticus 4:1–35; 5:1–6, 14–19; Numbers 35:31ff.; Deuteronomy 21:1–9; 22:22ff.; Joshua 7:11; 1 Samuel 14:43ff.). Eichrodt stressed, however, that Israel gradually subjected this emphasis (upon the formal and objective character of guilt, as the result of transgression against an equally objective law) to an understanding of sin as a "*conscious and responsible act*" of human rebellion against the divine authority in favor of human autonomy. "This inevitably did much to counteract the tendency to objectivize sin by weakening the element of personal responsibility; for now the decisive feature was *the conflicting directions of two wills, the divine and the human*, and this conflict could only be resolved by dealings between two persons" (Eichrodt, *Theology of the Old Testament*, 2:381, 383).

have exactly that which they desire.²⁰ God releases the beloved human to its own choice, even if the human chooses against God, refusing to manipulate the beloved human either for its own sake or for God's sake. In the human's intention to exclude God from its life, the human actualizes the possibility that God had chosen not to will, that which Karl Barth called "the impossible possibility."²¹ In receiving exactly that

20. In this connection, the Yahwistic (J) source, with additional material borrowed from Elohist (E) and Nomadic (N) source strata, narrates an episode in Israel's wilderness wanderings, an episode in which the people complain that Yahweh gives them only manna for all of their meals. The people beg for meat instead of manna. Yahweh gives to the people exactly that which they desire, meat in the form of quail, and then allows the people to exercise their gluttony. A plague results and destroys many of those who had turned from Yahweh (Numbers 11:4–35; cf. Psalms 78:17–31; 81:11–12). "Man is so far responsible for his rebellions that his punishment appears as the sanction of a state in which he has deliberately placed himself: man has separated himself from God—he will obtain death. The sanction of sin is to involve man still more deeply in sin so that he weaves about himself a web from which it will be impossible for him to escape" (Jacob, *Theology of the Old Testament*, 287). In the second Christian canon, the apostle Paul similarly described God's response to humans who have loved and worshipped that which is other than God as God (Romans 1:18–32). God delivered ("paredwken αὐτοῦ ὁ ἄθεος") the unfaithful or rebellious human creation to that which it desires: separation from God for union with that which is other-than-God (Romans 1:24, 26, 28). Angelus Silesius announced this poetically: "Hear, Heaven is in you, as is the pain of hell: / You shall have everywhere that which you choose and will" (Angelus Silesius, *Cherubinic Wanderer*, 1.145). "The enterprise of setting up the 'No-God' is avenged by its success. . . . Our conduct becomes governed precisely by what we desire. . . . They have wished to experience the known god of this world: well! they have experienced him" (Barth, *Epistle to the Romans*, 51).

21. Barth formulated this paradox to describe his understanding of evil as "nothingness." "It is not a second God, nor self-created. It has no power save that which it is allowed by God. It, too, belongs to God. It 'is' problematically because it is only on the left hand of God, under His No, the object of His jealousy, wrath and judgment. It 'is,' not as God and His creation are, but only in its own improper way, as inherent contradiction, as impossible possibility" (Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, 3.3:351). J. Christiaan Beker used the paradoxical concept of "the impossible possibility" to describe the apostle Paul's understanding of sin's reality in the Christian's life, although nowhere in this discussion does Beker cite Barth as the source for his own use of this concept. Barth's source for elements of this concept, of course, one can trace to Augustine. Beker explicitly relies upon Augustine for this insight as well. "Paul's view of Christian life is (in Augustinian terms) a *posse non peccare* ('the possibility not to sin') set against the *non posse non peccare* of the old age ('the impossibility not to sin') and the *non posse peccare* of the future resurrection-life ('the impossibility to sin'). Sin has become an *impossible possibility*—impossible, because of the victory of Christ over sin, which is mediated to us through the Spirit, and possible because Christian life remains threatened and liable to *Anfechtung* (attack or temptation)" (Beker, *Paul the Apostle*, 217).

which it has chosen for itself against God's desire, the human brings upon itself the misery of sin; the human creates a world from which it cannot escape with its own human resources.

The human's choice prohibits the human's self-initiated return to the divine lover. The *initial* prerogative for such a reconciliation between alienated or estranged lovers, although the possibility of reconciliation ultimately always requires the operation of prerogatives by all estranged parties, belongs to the offended lover.²² Hence, the human enslaves itself to its own choice against God. Only God can open the doors for reconciliation and, thus, to renewed human freedom for God.²³ For Christian faith, this means that the human has produced an

Similarly, Martensen said, "but evil is just that possibility which ought to have remained a possibility for ever; its realization, therefore, can only be conceived as arising from the free will of the creature, whose self-obscuration must in so far remain inconceivable, as it is precisely a falling off from the divine necessity of reason" (Martensen, *Christian Dogmatics*, 159–60).

22. Quick, *Essays in Orthodoxy*, 92; Plank, "Scarred Countenance," 344.

23. The prophet Hosea declared the following about Israel. "Their deeds do not permit them to return to their God. For the spirit of harlotry is within them, and they know not the Lord" (Hosea 5:4 RSV). In his comments on this text, Karl A. Plank condensed Hosea's insights into both the first and the second consequences of human sin against God: "in her apostasy, Israel destroys not only the bonds of meaningful relationship but the freedom which makes possible a faithful return" (Plank, "Scarred Countenance," 346). A similar disclosure informs the prophet Jeremiah's pronouncement upon Judah. "Can the Ethiopian change his skin or the leopard his spots? Then also you can do good who are accustomed to do evil" (Jeremiah 13:23 RSV). Heschel described this prophetic insight in the following way. "Freedom is not a natural disposition, but God's precious gift to man. Those in whom viciousness becomes second nature, those in whom brutality is linked with haughtiness, forfeit their ability and therefore their right to receive that gift. Hardening of the heart is the suspension of freedom. Sin becomes compulsory and self-destructive. Guilt and punishment become one" (Heschel, *Prophets*, 1:191). In the second Christian canon, the Johannine Christ articulates a similar insight. "Jesus answered them, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, every one who commits sin is a slave to sin. The slave does not continue in the house for ever; the son continues for ever. So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed'" (John 8:34–36 RSV). Also see the apostle Paul's discussion of the former slavery to sin that the present freedom from sin, which Christ has given, implies (Romans 6:1–23). Christian theologians of divine suffering have continued to hold this perspective. Brasnett said that the Holy Spirit "permits that a will misused should by such misuse be strengthened to resist his own benign influence" (Brasnett, *Suffering of the Impassible God*, 56). Mackintosh stated this point similarly. "And just because this self-worship is constitutive of all sin, it follows that, in proportion as he comes under its power, the sinner loses the capacity to transcend self and share the life of others. All consequences of sin are minor in comparison with this" (Mackintosh, *Christian Experience of Forgiveness*, 170). H. W. Robinson said that

effect, the disruption or distortion of its relationship to God, that the human cannot reverse or overcome through its own creaturely powers. Christian scriptures often describe this consequence with the symbol of “captivity,” “the cipher of the human condition under the reign of evil.”²⁴ Human bondage or captivity to sin affects all aspects of human life. Thus, the human’s primary relationship with God (the only relationship that guarantees the *authentic* actualization of human life as love) suffers radical violence and, therefore, a transformation that constitutes an antithesis to God and the divine purposes. Nevertheless, because the human persists or continues to exist at all, something of the goodness in God’s creation remains in the human; furthermore, God continues to sustain the creature, even in the face of its *aversio a Deo* or its turning away from God. This claim implies that the human has not annihilated the *imago Dei*, only distorted, perverted, or falsely actualized it. Hence, although sin affects all humans and every aspect of each human, all human experience is not evil; but, insofar as human life actualizes itself by turning from God, no human actions, however worthy or beautiful or true, restore or count toward the restoration of authentic human relations with God; all human life actualizes itself as sin, the abysmal reality between the beloved human and the divine lover. Although humans originally possessed the freedom to sin or not to sin, to choose against or for God (*libertas ad peccandum et ad non peccandum*), the beloved human’s choice of sin enslaves it to sin, a captive condition that only the estranged divine lover can overcome to make possible the human’s release from bondage.²⁵

“there is a certain momentum in moral evil, which carries on the will through what we should call the law of habit to a definite hardening, which is part of the penalty” (Robinson, *Cross in the Old Testament*, 178). Robinson elsewhere said that “the sequel of disobedience is the growing inability to obey” (Robinson, *Two Hebrew Prophets*, 41). See also Brunner, *Man in Revolt*, 135. In this experience, originates the misery of sin, the focal point for discussion later when I analyze the occasion for the second divine wound. I will recall this present discussion in connection with my analysis of divine wrath later as well.

24. Ricoeur, *Conflict of Interpretations*, 282. This symbol appears prominently throughout the Christian scriptures: e.g., the bondage of Israel in both Egypt and Babylon.

25. Aurelius Augustine discerned and formulated many of the major issues for the theological debates about free-will and sin, as well as the classic positions in this debate for Western Christianity, in his controversies with both the Manichaeans and Pelagius. Although Augustine shifted his emphases in his position on the freedom of the will