THE CHRIST AND THE TEMPTER
CHRIST’S TEMPTATION BY THE DEVIL IN THE THOUGHT
OF ST. MAXIMUS THE CONFESSOR AND ST. THOMAS AQUINAS

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ABSTRACT

THE CHRIST AND THE TEMPTER

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This dissertation considers two trajectories of Christian thought about human
temptation after the first sin of Adam and Eve and about Christ’s confrontation with the
devil in his own temptation, focusing on the embodiment of these trajectories in the
thought of Maximus the Confessor and Thomas Aquinas. The first of these trajectories
sees fallen human temptation in the framework of an ascetic confrontation with the devil
on the battlefield of the human mind, in thoughts and desires. The second of these
trajectories see this temptation in the framework of a purely internal division between the
flesh and the spirit, expressed as disordered concupiscence (“desire”) or the fomes peccati
(the “tinder of sin”).

Structurally, the work is divided into two sets of three chapters with an
introduction and a conclusion. The introduction reviews modern denials of the devil’s
role in Christian theology, defends the place of the devil in Christian theology, considers recent work that relates to the dissertation’s subject matter, and provides a detailed outline of the following chapters. Each set of three chapters (first on Maximus, then on Thomas) is organized according to: (1) sources for the central figure; (2) the anthropological framework for temptation in the thought of the figure; and (3) the Christological application of this framework. The author shows that both Maximus and Thomas conceive of Christ in his temptation as an empowering exemplar who takes on something of the punishment for Adam’s sin in his own temptation by the devil.

Though certain disjunctions appear between these thinkers in the course of the study, the conclusion offers constructive suggestions about ways in which the two trajectories might still be compatible. The conclusion also outlines areas for future historical and systematic research concerning Christian traditions of temptation and recommends a retrieval of the earlier trajectory of which Maximus forms a part.
For my wife, Christine

On the First Sunday of Lent
The Commemoration of Our Lord’s Temptation
February 22, 2015
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I first want to express my profound gratitude to Dr. Matthew Levering for directing this project. From the beginning of my time at the University of Dayton, Dr. Levering helped to guide me toward a topic that fruitfully builds up the Christian community. Although we have been in a “long-distance relationship” for the last two years, his incisive vision, deep and comprehensive knowledge of St. Thomas, and ecclesial heart have made this project possible. I also want to thank the members of my committee: Dr. Paul Blowers, Dr. Gloria Dodd, Dr. Dennis Doyle, and Dr. William Portier. I have benefited especially from occasional conversations with Dr. Dodd (when I could make it over to the Marian Library!) and from Dr. Portier’s ever-open door, whether for theological discussion or for mulling over practical minutiae of the process.

Additionally, two other professors at UD were indispensable to the linguistic work in this project. Dr. Fred Jenkins (for help with Latin) and Dr. Silviu Bunta (for help with Greek) were incredibly welcoming and went far beyond the call of duty in their willingness to informally talk about particular passages from St. Maximus, St. Thomas, or other ecclesial documents. Dr. Bunta also read and gave wonderful feedback on early drafts of my Maximus chapters. Dr. Charlotte Kingston provided some very helpful feedback regarding some of the material on Gregory the Great. My conversations with Dr. Brad Kallenberg have kept alive my interest in scientific and biological questions
about instincts and reflexes. Any errors in this project remain solely my own, but without these people, this dissertation would not be what it is.

At an earlier stage of my research, I received support from a University of Dayton Graduate Student Summer Fellowship. Although that research on the dogmatic proclamation of Mary’s freedom from original sin cannot be found in the following pages, the final direction for my project was in many ways forged by that research. There are also professors from earlier in my formation that I would like to thank. From Princeton Theological Seminary, both Dr. George Hunsinger and Dr. Bruce McCormack shaped me as a reader of Karl Barth. More distantly still, without my formative years of study at St. Olaf College under Dr. Charles Wilson, Dr. Elizabeth Galbraith, and Dr. Gregory Walters (who introduced me to St. Maximus), I would not be where I am.

Others at UD also deserve my thanks. Firstly, many thanks to all my classmates—the collegial atmosphere of our communal office is perhaps the greatest incubator of profound and diverse theological discussions that I have ever encountered. Josh Brown, Jason Heron, Alan Mostrom, and Robert Parks, in their friendship (as well as in their formation of various informal reading groups), have been an endless source of encouragement. Katherine Schmidt and Jason Hentschel have been constant companions through the program; Adam Sheridan’s work on the Fall and toil has enlivened many conversations; and Matt Archer, my fellow dissertation-student of Aquinas (and defense-date partner), has been alongside me through the last couple years of our research projects. My thanks also go to the staff at the Roesch Library, especially Chris Tangeman at ILL who bent rules to help feed my insatiable book addiction and found sources that I would have simply abandoned.
Finally, I must thank those who have shaped my life in even more fundamental ways. First, to my parents, Bob and Peggy, who have supported me despite not knowing “what I’m going to turn into” (Mom: “What, like a sandwich?”). My father formed me as a Catholic, showed me what hard work is, and somehow sent my brother and me to Catholic school on a rancher’s income. My mother formed me as a human being, showed me what patience and humility are, and insisted on giving us a good college education. Finally, to my wife and son. Christine has supported me more and more as this project drew to its completion and never complained (well, almost never) when I fell behind in my household duties. Isaac has been a constant joy, a much-needed distraction, and an increasingly mobile motivator for me to complete the project quickly. Okay, Christine, now I can finally get back to the dishes!
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Amb. Io.</td>
<td>Maximus the Confessor, <em>Ambigua to John</em></td>
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<td>Amb. Thom.</td>
<td>Maximus, <em>Ambigua to Thomas</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>CCSG</td>
<td><em>Corpus Christianorum, Series Graeca</em></td>
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<td>CCSL</td>
<td><em>Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina</em></td>
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<td>CL</td>
<td>Maximus, <em>Centuries on Love</em></td>
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<td>CT</td>
<td>Maximus, <em>Centuries on Theology</em></td>
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<td>DFO</td>
<td>John of Damascus, <em>De Fide Orthodoxa</em></td>
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<td>PG</td>
<td>Migne, <em>Patrologia Graeca</em></td>
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<td>PL</td>
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<td>QD</td>
<td>Maximus, <em>Questions and Doubts</em></td>
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<td>QT</td>
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<td>ST</td>
<td>Thomas Aquinas, <em>Summa Theologica</em></td>
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<td>TPO</td>
<td>Maximus, <em>Theological and Polemical Opuscula</em></td>
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Put on the whole armor of God,
that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

For we are not contending against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world rulers of this present darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.

-Ephesians 6:11-12
INTRODUCTION

How was Christ tempted? How could one who is sinless and incapable of sin also be tempted? Because the Christian tradition upholds Christ’s sinlessness, his temptation expresses a deep solidarity with the human condition, to the point that a recent spiritual manual can affirm that “the one reality we all share is the experience of being tempted to sin.”¹ But how closely does Christ’s temptation relate to our common experience of temptation? Take, for example, the definition of temptation proposed by Jacques Leclercq: “temptation is the desire to sin. Sin is the will to do evil; temptation, the desire. But there is only sin if one knows that the act is bad and if one wants it as such, even though bad or because it is bad. There is only temptation in the same conditions: one knows that it is evil and one wants to do it.”² As a description of our fallen temptation, Leclercq’s definition has much to recommend it; but how could that definition be ascribed to Christ? However one affirms the reality of Christ’s temptations, the Christian will surely argue that Christ’s temptation has consequences beyond the historical event itself—ramifications for his followers in the present. In that light, how does Christ’s

¹ Joseph Esper, Saintly Solutions to Life’s Common Problems (Manchester, NH: Sophia Institute Press, 2001), 297.
² Jacques Leclercq, “La Tentation,” in Pastorale du Pêché (Tournai, Belgium: Desclée, 1961), 17-18, my translation: “la tentation est le désir de pécher. Le péché est la volonté de faire le mal; la tentation, le désir. Or il n’y a péché que si on sait que l’acte est mauvais et si on le veut tel, bien que mauvais ou parce que mauvais. Il n’y a tentation que dans les mêmes conditions: on sait que c’est mal et on a envie de le faire.”
experience of being tempted heal our own moral struggles, both now and in preparation for eternal life?

In light of such questions—questions at the heart of the Christian faith—the particular focus of this study is a historical inquiry into the way in which St. Maximus the Confessor and St. Thomas Aquinas conceive of the nature of moral struggle and of God’s action in Christ to heal and undo this struggle. For these authors, the two questions of the nature of moral struggle and the solution to it are deeply intertwined; the anthropological and the Christological cannot be separated. The goal of this work is to explain how each of these figures understand humankind to be bound to moral struggle throughout this life and how God’s action in Christ brings about a resolution to this struggle. In this regard, I will devote a good deal of attention to the development of the basic theological conception of moral struggle—from the 7th century Greek conception of demonic temptation to the 13th century Latin conception of the fomes peccati, the tinder of sin. To say that the basic theological conception of moral struggle is different in the 13th century is not to say that the devil no longer appears as a tempter—even an inner tempter—in the Latin West. Rather it is to say that the basic framework in which the common experience of temptation is treated shifts from an externalized and personified battle against the devil in thoughts and desires to a purely internal and anthropological struggle against the flesh. The devil still makes an appearance in this latter framework—but in a way that is subordinate to the corruption of the flesh called the fomes peccati. The Christological consequences of this shift are significant, resulting in distinct accounts of Christ’s exemplarity in the experience of temptation.
In this introduction, I will address two preliminary matters that stand in the foreground of this study (the devil (I and II) and the ‘historical’ character of human nature (III)), discuss modern literature on my central question (IV), and provide a short overview of this project (V).

I. Demonic Temptation?

Before entering more directly into this study, I should ask whether Maximus’s view of demonic temptation, a view that is shared in large part by Aquinas, can or should still be taken seriously today. There is no shortage of skepticism about and, indeed, outright denial of angels and demons in the modern world. In July 2014, the Anglican Communion introduced new, “understandable” baptismal rites that exclude all mention of the devil. In a related move, many churches in England over the years have sealed off medieval “devil’s doors” that were used in the exorcism rites associated with baptisms. In the United States, after an interview in the New York Magazine in October 2013, a Supreme Court justice encountered ridicule for defending belief in the devil. Yet beyond these events that garnered media attention, some academic examples of this resistance are significant enough to merit a preliminary discussion. I will discuss two examples: Elaine Pagels’s work on the meaning of the devil in traditional Christian discourse and the

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3 A variety of other stances have been expressed recently in more academic settings. A moderate Protestant agnosticism regarding demons can be found in John Benson, “I Still Think of Bultmann,” in Dialog: A Journal of Theology 52, n. 3 (2013), 174-6, whereas a moderate Pentecostal affirmation of the theological place of demons can be found in E. Janet Warren, “Spiritual Warfare: A Dead Metaphor?,” in Journal of Pentecostal Theology 21 (2012), 278-297. A moderate and positive articulation which has much to commend it is articulated by Amy Plantinga Pauw, “Where Theologians Fear to Tread,” in Modern Theology 16, n. 1 (2000), 39-59. Pauw uses a musical analogy for the theological investigation of angels and demons that is warmly welcomed: they are the “ornamentation” on a melody.
Catholic theological resistance to demonology that we find in an early form in Piet Schoonenberg and then more fully developed in Henry Ansgar Kelly.

In her influential *The Origin of Satan*, Pagels argues that the primary function of demons and the demonic in Christian history has been to demonize their human opponents by “narrating” themselves into the right side of history. Pagels’s thesis is that this demonization led and leads to an inability among such Christians to sympathize with those with whom they disagree. When human disputes are reified into cosmic warfare, Pagels contends, one’s human “enemies are evil and beyond redemption.” Is this what we are dealing with in Maximus and Thomas? I do not think so. The extreme sort of demonization of which Pagels speaks, whereby one’s enemies are considered “beyond redemption,” is repudiated by Maximus and Aquinas; no human subject is incapable of reform and repentance. Today, we would rightly add that such demonization cannot be legitimately deployed as a means of excluding, persecuting, or abusing any minority (even in cases of heresy) from our broadest human communities. No merely human opponent can be unequivocally and dismissively called a servant of Satan.

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4 Elaine Pagels, *Origin of Satan: How Christians Demonized Jews, Pagans, and Heretics* (New York: Vintage Books, 1996), 184. Pagels argument tends to the implication that the devil is not needed for Christian theology, as Satan is intrinsically connected with the misidentification of human subjects as the opponents of God. Pagels recognizes, however, that Paul uses Satan for somewhat different “Jewish” purposes (ibid., 183), holding out hope that the opponents might eventually be converted or persuaded to the truth.

5 The deployment of demonic language against Christian heretics is a complicated case and is not the subject of this study. I would say, briefly, that such language is in principle legitimate for the following reasons. The devil has no permanent hold over human beings, but there are certainly ideas that are amenable to the spread of what Christian communities call evil. Such ideas and their supporters (however passing) can be described as supporting the devil’s cause, even unwittingly. One need not fully “demonize” such opponents, but the Christian should be willing to recognize a fully intentional agency behind moral and doctrinal evil, even if the human agent has apparently good intentions. Without such evil intentions as those of the devil, there may be various and quite common doctrinal mistakes, but less frequently would a merely human agent choose (hairesis) portions of Christian truth to the exclusion of others. Heresy, then, finds its unity not in its human followers, but in supernatural sources. A human being can of course with full intent make such a choice, but the judgment of such cases is not commonly placed in the hands of human agency and when it is (in formal, ecclesiastical charges of heresy) the Catholic believer must rest in the end in the authority of the ecclesiastical
Pagels’s claims, however, surpass these sociological observations, at times encroaching on the anthropological territory that is more central to this project. In order to support her own idiosyncratic gnostic anthropology, Pagels mischaracterizes that of Anthony of Egypt, arguing that he “taught his spiritual heirs in monastic tradition to picture Satan as the most intimate enemy of all—the enemy we call our own self.” In other words, Pagels thinks that, for Anthony, since the devil works from inside the self, the human self, with its demonic “inner thoughts and impulses, … imagination and desire,” is somehow demonized. As far as a description of the spiritual method prescribed by Anthony (and the following monastic tradition of which Maximus is a part), her summary has gotten it perfectly backwards. Anthony’s purpose, as with Maximus’s, is precisely to show that since the devil works from inside the self, the human self is something other than those demonic thoughts and impulses. But according to Pagels, Anthony’s traditional Christian anthropology attempts to personify, as in a negative form of Feuerbachian projection, what is really the individual’s own evil inclinations.

In contrast to this caricatured version of Anthony, Pagels prefers the anthropology espoused by early gnostic (and especially Valentinian) texts. Pagels initially characterizes this anthropology as wholly optimistic and unequivocally good. She argues, for instance, that early gnostic texts teach that God can be sought and found within the individual—one need only turn inward to have an encounter with the divine. In this way, Pagels attempts to argue that gnostic anthropology affirms the human subject as good and even

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methods appointed to the judgment of such cases. Historical counter-examples can surely be provided wherein the charges are baseless or flawed (as, perhaps, with Jon Hus), but the principle of ecclesiastical jurisdiction in the judgment of such cases must be maintained, even if human agents themselves can perhaps occasionally get it wrong.

6 Pagels, Origin, 173.
7 Ibid., 167.
(in a sense) divine. But, as she presents the teaching of the *Gospel of Philip*, one finds that this anthropology is not as optimistic as she would have one believe. *Philip*, unlike Anthony, laudably (in Pagels’s estimation) does not need to “demonize” one’s inner evil, even though that evil is still somehow present. According to Philip, the “root of evil,” characterized by Pagels as a “human inclination to sin” and an “evil impulse,” is buried inside each individual and is eradicated when one comes to knowledge of its existence.

The brevity of Pagels’s summary of this anthropology leaves many questions unanswered: Where does the root of evil come from? Is it a conscious decision or deliberate action? If it is not deliberate (as she seems to imply), is it “natural” to humans? If it is not natural, the original question about its origin recurs. If it is natural, what does this say about the presence of the divine in the human subject? Further, how does mere knowledge of this “root of evil” remove it? These are serious questions that receive no answers in Pagels’s text. The gnostic adept must address with greater precision how or whether the divine (and only the divine) is in fact at the core of the human soul. The Christian who accepts the Genesis narrative would rightly want to know how this “root” relates to the created goodness of human nature.

For his part, Piet Schoonenberg’s reflections on demons are terse, yet they are the starting point of a trajectory of Catholic interpretation of the demonic that goes well

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8 As she points out, however, there are other Valentinian gnostic texts that explicitly identify inner negative affective states as originating from demonic sources. Quoting from one such text, Pagels states that the human heart is a “dwelling place for many demons” (ibid., 170). Thus, while Pagels places a good deal of emphasis and importance on the fact that Philip does not “demonize” the self the way Anthony does, it is not clear that the gnostic sources themselves reflect the distinction Pagels hopes to maintain.

Pagels uses *Philip* to advocate for a subjective morality according to which only the individual can judge whether one’s actions are righteous or sinful (ibid., 174). Other aspects of her argument make this intent clear: while ostensibly exegeting gnostic texts, she denies the importance (if not existence) of objectively moral or immoral actions (ibid., 172), espouses circumstantialist morality (ibid.), and praises *Philip’s* intentional ethics (ibid., 176).

9 Ibid., 173-4.

10 *Philip* speaks of an “uprooting” of this root, but gives no further indication of the means of this eradication.
beyond his relatively modest claims. Schoonenberg’s most skeptical remarks about
demons are found in a footnote to his *God’s World in the Making*. There, he proposes that
the existence of angels and demons is not a dogmatic necessity; rather, “Scripture
presupposes rather than affirms the existence of good and evil spirits.”\(^{11}\) Schoonenberg
briefly deals with other sources from the Christian tradition, most importantly the Fourth
Lateran Council—which, he argues, also merely presupposes the existence of the
demonic. On the basis of his analysis, he speculates that “theologians should ask
themselves whether they can claim without qualification that this existence [of angels] is
‘de fide.’”\(^{12}\) Schoonenberg’s main text does not follow these speculative remarks, but that
footnote marks the beginning of a significant trajectory.

On the basis of Schoonenberg’s skepticism, Henry Ansgar Kelly mounts a full
attack on the reality of demons. Kelly characterizes “a great deal” of (falsely ascribed)
‘Christian’ demonology as “untheological levity”\(^{13}\) and closes his first book on the matter
with the following reflection on Christian demonology:

> Although it is possible that evil spirits exist, at the present time it does not seem
probable; but whether or not they exist, it does not appear to be necessary to
believe in them in order to cope with the problems of human life. Given the evils
that belief in demonology has caused in the past, and given also the uncertainty of
its claim to a place in Christian revelation and theology, it would seem best to act
as though evil spirits did not exist, until such time as their existence is forced
upon us.\(^ {14}\)

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\(^{12}\) Ibid., 9.
\(^{13}\) Ibid., 131. In full: “We must conclude that a great deal of the demonology evolved under the name of
Christian teaching can only be characterized as ‘untheological levity.’ The representations of the spirit
world in scripture betray signs of simple folkloristic origin, and the modifications that these images and
myths underwent when they came into contact with later cultures and philosophies are no longer
convincing, however satisfying they may have been for past ages. A continued adherence to these
views, as if they constituted an essential part of divine revelation, runs the risk of exposing the whole
Christian mission to ridicule.”
\(^{14}\) Kelly, *The Devil*, 131. Such deep skepticism is preceded by the work of Piet Schoonenberg, quoted at
length by Kelly at ibid., 122-3. One can also add to these ranks the recent Christological work of
With respect to whether the devil tempts human beings *from within*, Kelly argues that there are important pastoral reasons for skepticism. The theory of internal diabolical temptation, he concludes, “would impede self-knowledge and the maturity that comes from accepting responsibility for one’s own potentialities and tendencies.” Kelly has continued to hold to a similar position in his more recent work. In *Satan: A Biography*, Kelly argues that Satan—or rather the idea of Satan—distracts people from paying attention to the real cause of evil: human beings. His reconstruction of a history of Satan wherein Satan was always God’s faithful servant (even in the New Testament) ends with the hope that his work “will also rectify our view of Human Nature and eliminate discussions of ‘Evil’ by drawing attention away from an invisible Prince of Evil or abstract Personification of Evil and focusing on the real causes of the evil actions that people actually commit.”

Some of Kelly’s concerns are certainly legitimate. Kelly is right to say, for instance, that human beings are the cause of great moral evils and he is even right to say that humans should not shift the blame to the devil or lose focus on their own moral defects. But he is wrong if he thinks a Christian worldview or even a Christian anthropology can get along better without the devil than it did with personified evil.

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15 Ibid., 117-8. Kelly precedes this negative conclusion with some positive caveats: “Pragmatically, it can be claimed that the theory of internal diabolical temptation has often helped to calm distressed persons. A certain kind of mentality is relieved when told that troublesome thoughts are not from itself but from the devil.” In contrast to these positive speculations, he calls his negative conclusion “very likely.”

Kelly is also right that certain temperaments are ill-served with an over-concentration on the demonic. But if the devil does have the power to tempt through thoughts and feelings, the (sometimes real!) pathological effects that this fact has on certain temperaments would not be a sufficient reason to tell that person that the devil does not attack in that way.\textsuperscript{17} Despite Kelly’s rejection of the demonic as impractical, significant figures of Christian theology have seen demons and their action among and within human beings to be absolutely necessary for “coping with the problems of human life.” Such a belief—dismissed by Kelly as if it were as open to disproof (or at least as in need of skeptical critique) as geocentrism or creationism\textsuperscript{18}—stems for Maximus from a deep human problem: how is it that human nature can be accounted good if one encounters from

\textsuperscript{17} Premised on the existence of the devil, one must still take a measured approach to the mentally unstable. Indeed, there are certainly pastoral situations in which it is advisable to encourage the distressed individual to consider natural remedies to their situation rather than to seek for explanations in supernatural affairs. Such advice would be in the purview of both medical and religious professionals; practically, priests, too, should explore natural explanations before pulling out their exorcism texts. Such is, in fact, the official rule in the revised \textit{De exorcismis et supplicationibus quibusdam} from 1999. Kelly also includes another dramatic list of other consequences of Christian demonology: “It is certain that in the past the attribution of misfortune to invisible creatures at enmity with mankind has often radically hindered the proper diagnosis and treatment of the ills that afflict the human race. This has been the case not only in the obvious examples of witch persecution and possession manias, but also in less sensational circumstances where a vague dread of intangible adversaries has distracted attention from applying remedies to tangible causes and effects” (ibid., 131). While I could give fairly ready assent to the claim about witches and, perhaps, the ‘possession manias,’ it is difficult to engage with other items on his list. How does one gauge the extent to which medical ills were misdiagnosed in the age of modern science as demonic possession? Or if the claim is that belief in the devil prevented research into mental disorders in the first place, did budding medical professionals decide, “it’s probably the devil, so I’ll become a priest instead”\textsuperscript{17}? More precision about the “distraction” he locates is necessary before this objection can be taken seriously.

\textsuperscript{18} Kelly, \textit{The Devil}, 126: “like the claim for a geocentric universe, many of the tenets of demonology would be capable of a scientific demonstration, if they were true. If, for instance, demonic apparitions, wonders, and cases of possession could be properly witnessed and recorded they would no longer need to rely solely on faith. Unlike the theory of geocentricity, however, the belief in the existence of demons cannot be positively disproved. But its probability can be weakened in the face of an opposing theory—as was the case when the theory of the immediate creation of each species was confronted with the evidence for evolution. The theory of demonic possession, for instance, which is stated no more strongly in the bible than that of immediate creation, has been largely discredited by more sophisticated theories of illness. While there is still a possibility that it is valid, it could easily be discarded in practice if only the alleged necessity to believe it as a part of revelation could be removed.”
“within” thoughts and desires that do not form a part of God’s plan? Kelly’s work does not significantly address the theological problems present in that question.

Most troubling of all, however, is Kelly’s brief treatment of Christ’s temptation by the devil in the synoptic Gospels. Kelly characterizes this pericope as a “figurative tableau” in which “the devil is not seen at work.”¹⁹ For both Thomas and Maximus, Christ’s temptation by the devil in the desert is not and cannot be described in this way. Maximus and Thomas would never reduce Christ’s temptation by the devil to some introspective confrontation with Christ’s own unnatural or disordered passions, as if human nature itself were the ancient Enemy in need of defeat. Rather, Maximus and Thomas believe that demons exist (1) because we find ourselves in a fallen world where not all moral evil can be explained by human evil and (2) because Christ, not only acknowledging these forces but even undergoing their attack in his own temptation, defeats these principalities and powers so as to gain for all humankind a victory—not over human nature or over the world (God’s beloved creations!)—but over the personal, demonic agents of evil that attempt to thwart God’s purposes and prowl about the world seeking the ruin of souls.

II. ‘Evil’ Beings in the Ancient World

The project to demythologize the ancient world cannot help but do significant violence to the categories in which ancient Jews and Christians thought. I wish to address very briefly the presence of non-divine spiritual beings in the Hebrew Bible, the purposes of these beings in the Second Temple period (especially at Qumran), the impact of such

¹⁹ Ibid., 127-8.
Jewish apocalypticism on Paul’s cosmology, and the continuation of these lines of thought in the early rabbinic period.

In the Hebrew Bible, heaven is anything but lonely: the Psalms, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Zechariah, and Malachi are particularly dense with references to God as the “Lord of hosts,” and Bibles containing the deuterocanonical texts give three angels by name: Gabriel, Michael, and Raphael.20 The hosts play a relatively uncontroversial role in these texts, but a fourth angelic figure in the Book of Job—ha-satan—plays an indispensable and more complicated role in that narrative. Ha-satan’s activity in Job is distinct from these other figures because he tests Job in a way that is, as the name ha-satan implies, adversarial both to God and human beings.21 This role—in the strict confines of Job, if not the Hebrew Bible as a whole—is not yet the antithetical job of the devil in later literature, but the presence and reality of all these figures in subordination to the divine would be indisputable to the biblical authors.

Much more relevant to this study is the place that angelic beings come to hold in late Second Temple literature, especially in Jewish apocalypticism in that period. Bennie H. Reynolds III has summarized recent scholarship on the demonologies of the Dead Sea Scrolls, especially in 1 Enoch and Jubilees.22 While partly in response to canonical

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20 The relevant Hebrew term is tsava’. Raphael only arises in the Book of Tobit, and is thus not fully or at least canonically recognized in Protestant churches. Of course, the Ethiopian Orthodox Church—which recognizes 1 Enoch as canonical—has a much longer “official” list of named angels. Ha-satan may be more appropriately described as a title than as a name, but one might also include him in this list.

21 In its own way, the serpent of Genesis 3 (whatever kind of agent it may be) also indicates the presence in the Hebrew worldview of non-human moral agents who contend with God’s plan for humankind. Beyond the account of Genesis 1-3, Anne-Françoise Loiseau “Gen 4,7, une ancienne formule démonologique modifiée par les scribes?” in Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft 125, no. 3 (2013), 479-482 argues that an ethical dualism with demonological overtones may stand behind the biblical text of Genesis 4:7. If correct, this theory indicates that evil spirits have a role in evil that is not limited to its first instance; rather, the “stalker” demon “lies at the door” of Cain (and perhaps other human beings) after Adam’s fault.

textual irritants (especially Genesis 6:1-4), demonology flourished in the context of Jewish concerns about the end of the world and the problem of evil. Concerning the first, the community at Qumran could invoke evil spirits to explain why some Jews did not join them: such non-adherents were under the influence of demons.²³ Concerning the second, demons were not only used against the community’s detractors; they were recognized as active in and among the community, attempting to instigate evil desires. As described by Archie T. Wright, evil spirits in the Book of the Watchers exist “to tempt humans and to draw them away from God,” and they “represent an external threat, which operates against the internal good inclinations of the individual.”²⁴ Piero Capelli can similarly argue that at Qumran “the Devil acts against an individual on his own initiative … the Devil’s actions are performed through the spirits of deceit.”²⁵ Such demons thus represented both a social and personal threat to the community: demons keep most away from the community and continue to attack the individual who does join.

Recent studies of Paul’s cosmology and demonology have emphasized continuities with such Jewish apocalyptic thought. Chris Forbes argues that some components of Paul’s cosmology should not be understood as “personal” agents (such as

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²³ Mohan Uddin, “Paul, the Devil, and ‘Unbelief’ in Israel (with Particular Reference to 2 Corinthians 3-4 and Romans 9-11),” in Tyndale Bulletin 50, no. 2 (1999), 273.

²⁴ Archie T. Wright, “Some Observations of Philo’s De Gigantibus and Evil Spirits in Second Temple Judaism,” in Journal for the Study of Judaism 36, no. 4 (2005), 482-3. Wright’s goal is to show that Philo’s account of “giants” is not the same as that of the Book of the Watchers, but Philo’s views are not directly relevant to the current work.

²⁵ Piero Capelli, “The Outer and the Inner Devil: On Representing the Evil One in Second Temple Judaism,” in “The Words of a Wise Man’s Mouth are Gracious” (QOH 10,12): Festschrift for Günter Stemberger on the Occasion of this 65th Birthday, ed. Pauro Perani (New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2005), 139-152. Capelli is interested in making a broader point that the causal link can go both directions (from personal sin to domination by the demonic and vice versa), but only one half of this claim is significant to my present consideration.
his terms “heights and depths”); such forces would not have intentions or “attack” human beings on their own. But Forbes identifies a broader “spectrum” of personification, wherein other beings—including Paul’s unique “powers and principalities” and his concepts of sin and death—are rightly understood as intentional agents in continuity with contemporary apocalyptic thought. Because of the place of these beings, Forbes rejects the ascription of “demythologization” to Paul’s cosmology. Rather, the fully personal beings in Paul’s demonology form an important part of Paul’s conceptual world, a part described by Van der Horst as “anti-salvation-history.” Such a category makes most sense when the intentional evil of such beings is recognized and for that, Paul himself would in all likelihood be thinking of these beings as personal, moral agents.

Beyond the simple matter of the existence of demons in Paul’s worldview, Mohan Uddin has provided an analysis of the place of these beings in Paul’s thought. Here, important parallels to the concerns of Qumran arise. Most importantly, Uddin’s analysis of 2 Corinthians 3-4 argues that Paul sees the influence of Satan as a major contributing factor to the failure of the majority of Israel to accept Jesus as the Christ. But this cosmological explanation, according to Uddin (who follows a typology from the work of M.C. de Boer), cannot be separated from a personal aspect that allows one to maintain Israel’s culpability in their disbelief. In the end, Uddin specifies three causes of Israel’s unbelief that Paul draws from surrounding elements present in the Second Temple period:

28 Ibid., 73.
29 Uddin, “Paul, the Devil and ‘Unbelief,’” 273-9.
“the stubbornness of the human heart, the malevolent intentions and actions of the ‘Satan’ figure and, above all, the ultimacy and mystery of the purposeful will and activity of Israel’s God.”31 Thus, while personal culpability cannot be denied, Satan’s role in keeping individual Jews from accepting the Gospel is an important part of Paul’s theological framework.

More can certainly be asked regarding the work of Uddin and Forbes: Why does God allow Satan to keep Israel in unbelief? How does Satan hold Israel in this way? In Romans 7 especially, how is the personification of sin to be understood? Is “sin” part of Paul’s anthropology, part of his demonology, or both? Can “sin” be simply my “lower psyche” or must it be a personal agent as Forbes indicates? How do the forces of “anti-salvation-history” persuade those who are trying to follow the Law? How does the activity of “anti-salvation-history” ultimately serve the purposes of God? In the end, these questions focused on Paul’s thought cannot be answered in this project, but similar questions can and will be addressed concerning both Maximus and Thomas. For now, it suffices to show that these questions have parallels in the earliest Christian reflection on human nature, the cosmos, and the cosmos-altering event of Jesus Christ.

Jewish thought in the rabbis of the late antique period—indeed, up to an overlapping with Maximus—continue to reflect on demonic forces in ways that parallel Christian treatment of the topic in this period. There is a long tradition in Jewish thought that addresses the presence of an ‘inner’ tendency or inclination toward evil (yetser hara) in human beings. Ishay Rosen-Zvi has argued that in Judaism there have been two distinct strains of thought concerning this human inclination toward evil.32 In the strain

31 Uddin, “Paul, the Devil and ‘Unbelief,’” 279.
32 Ishay Rosen-Zvi, “Two Rabbinic Inclinations? Rethinking a Scholarly Dogma,” in Journal for the Study
that has gained significant scholarly attention in recent decades, the *yetser hara* is created from the beginning by God for the preservation of the species and for other worldly necessities. One can find important affirmations in Talmudic literature in support of this reading. For instance, God’s affirmation of creation (including the *yetser hara*) as “very good” (Gen. 1:31) provokes the following explanation: “Is the evil impulse very good? … Were it not for that impulse, a man would not build a house, marry a wife, beget children, or conduct business affairs.” Such a reading downplays the descriptor of the impulse as “evil” so that the real function of the impulse is something like instinct or the drives found in the “lower” parts of the human soul. In this reading, the *yetser hara* need not be fought or destroyed, but rather tamed and cultivated.

However, another reading of the *yetser hara* that held academic sway for quite some time—and to which Rosen-Zvi has called for a return—argues that the *yetser hara* is essentially about theodicy or an explanation of human sinfulness. In this reading, there is a distinctly sinister and truly evil side to the *yetser hara*. The Talmud can express this strain very clearly; one finds most importantly the claim that the evil impulse is identical with evil angels: “Satan, the Jetzer Hara, and the Angel of Death are all one.” In this reading, then, the impulse is not about pursuing licit, this-worldly teloi, but ultimately about spiritual forces contrary to God’s will who seek human sin. The exposition of this strain of thought was greatly aided by the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls; the

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*Of Judaism* 39 (2008), 513-539 provides the basis for this distinction between Jewish schools of thought on this question.


34 Rosen-Zvi sees the ultimate outcome of this interpretation as the reduction of the *yetser hara* to “mainly a sexual bodily appetite” (Rosen-Zvi, “Two Rabbinic Inclinations?,” 515).

35 Quite literally, in fact, the good impulse is said to be on the right and the evil on the left at Cohen, *Everyman’s Talmud*, 90, quoting Berachoth 61a.

36 Ibid., 54, quoting Baba Bathra 16a.
community at Qumran had a wide array of demonological texts, some of which clearly reflect this reading of the evil impulse. In this reading, God’s purpose for the yetser hara makes room for the intervention of spirits who explicitly wish to contradict God’s purpose—and who consequently must be fought and defeated. Furthermore, since the yetser hara is actually evil in this reading, this strain of thought emphasizes that the yetser hara will be eliminated from human nature in the eschatological world.

Between these two strains of thought, one sees that the place of the evil impulse in Judaism is ambiguous, alternately internal and external, anthropological and cosmological, for our good and for our destruction. This ambiguity then translates to divergent assessments of the yetser hara as alternately “very good” and as intent on separating the human being from God and observance of Torah. If Rosen-Zvi is correct, however, the explicitly demonological reading of the impulse more accurately reflects the original theological intent of the doctrine.

The moral or anthropological problem of an ‘inner’ inclination toward evil for early Judaism—as indeed for Christianity—arises in the context of the basic desire to

37 Rosen-Zvi, “Two Rabbinic Inclinations?,” 529: “What is the source of the sinfulness of the sons of light [members of Qumran]? The Rule of the Community solves this flaw by assuming that Belial, the prince of darkness, works his powers on the sect’s members as well.” See also ibid., 532-538. One might also refer to Wright, “Some Observations of Philo’s De Gigantibus,” 471-488. Wright argues the Philo intentionally distanced himself from the “evil spirit” tradition in the Book of the Watchers. This latter tradition—as opposed to Philo—generally follows the strain under investigation here. As discussed above, Bennie H. Reynolds III, “Understanding the Demonologies of the Dead Sea Scrolls,” 103-114 also considers the relationship between the Enoch traditions and the texts found at Qumran; Reynolds sees the theological matters relating to the problem of evil as central to recent discoveries (ibid., 106-7).

38 The adversarial quality of Satan in Jewish literature encounters the same difficulties that arise in Christian literature. On the one hand, Satan expresses God’s wrath (and therefore fulfills God’s punishing will); on the other, Satan really does appear to wish evil for humankind—and not the good that God desires. See Cohen, Everyman’s Talmud., 56-8.

39 Ibid., 92-3, quoting Sukkah 52a.

40 Cohen’s preference at ibid., 54 seems to be toward an anthropological reduction of the yetser hara, but his statement about an affirmation of evil as coming from “within” as opposed to “without” is too vague to make any definitive judgment on the matter.
uphold the goodness of created nature in general and of human nature in particular.

*Because* human beings are good and incline toward their Creator, the existence or perhaps more accurately prevalence of thoughts and desires that separate one from God becomes an existential irritant in need of careful explanation. It is, indeed, nothing less than a particularly anthropological form of the problem of evil.

**III. ‘Stages’ of Human Nature?**

Perhaps equally controversial in the modern mind is the idea that human nature has a history. Evolutionary theory, of course, posits that modern human beings have arisen through the course of many millennia, but the kind of “history” of human nature that interests Maximus and Thomas is quite different. For Maximus, as for Thomas, Adam was created in one state of human nature; he subsequently fell into another state (along with his progeny); and the saved will finally be raised to a final, higher state at the end of time. From a modern evolutionary perspective, this affirmation can sound quite troubling. After all, it is a basic scientific fact that phenotype does not affect genotype: Adam’s concrete, historical action and traits could not affect the genetic make-up of his descendants. Rather, are we not simply a product of our evolutionary history? Do not aggression and desire—sometimes equated with the theological category of concupiscence—form a basic, constituent “rule” throughout human history, regardless of whether anyone has committed moral error? Are not mortality and death a necessary, constituent factor of the evolutionary emergence of humankind? Consequently, is there not only one “nature” that Christ *could have* assumed?
This perspective is not uncommon in modern attempts to think critically about scientific and theological accounts of human origins. Many assume at least some contradiction between evolutionary history and traditional Christian theology, but the two areas mentioned above are the most important for my current purposes: death and desire. Peter Enns, for one, argues that “death is not the enemy to be defeated. … death is not the unnatural state introduced by a disobedient couple in a primordial garden. Actually, it is the means that promotes the continued evolution of life on this planet and even ensures workable population numbers.”

The implication is that death is essential to human nature: if it does not die, it is not human. Similarly, many have argued that “concupiscence”—usually equated with instinctual (and disordered?) drives toward aggression, dominance, and procreation—is essential to human nature. Thus, Jerry Korsmeyer states that “concupiscence … is real, and is our natural inheritance, not the presence of the devil making the flesh lust against the spirit. Concupiscence, in this explanation, precedes sin.” Similarly, Anthony Zimmerman can claim that “concupiscence … must be natural to us, a part of our drives, useful, necessary, and usually also very pleasant to live with.”

41 See, for instance, Peter Enns, *The Evolution of Adam: What the Bible Does and Doesn’t Say about Human Origins* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2012), 147; see also 138-9. Other authors in this area could also be cited. Most baldly (and without nuance), Christian de Duve, *Genetics of Original Sin: The Impact of Natural Selection on the Future of Humanity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010), 149-50 provides a bare claim that original sin is the “fault” of natural selection—with no discussion of theological literature. Sharon Maclsaac, *Freud and Original Sin* (Toronto: Paulist Press, 1974), 103-23, though much more attentive to the theological matters involved, also treats original sin largely in the context of instincts and evolution. It seems that Maclsaac is ultimately unable to maintain the unique situation of Adam prior to the “sin of the world,” as this sin is understood as prior to any human decision (ibid., 117-23).


43 Anthony Zimmerman, *Original Sin: Where Doctrine Meets Science* (New York: Vantage Press, 1990), 153. One could also cite here Enns, *Evolution of Adam*, 147: “Some characteristics that Christians have thought of as sinful—for example, in an evolutionary scheme the aggression and dominance associated with “survival of the fittest” and sexual promiscuity to perpetuate one’s gene pool—are understood as
be out of the place here, some comments are in order. Both matters require a very precise
definition of terms that is lacking in the authors just listed.

First, regarding mortality and death, there is commonly a disjunction in the way
that the term “death” is used in scientific and theological circles. Thomas, for one, would
deny that Adam’s original existence before sin would have consisted in an interminable
bodily existence on earth; at some point, Adam would have been confirmed in his justice
and translated to an eternal heavenly existence. While Thomas would not call that
confirmation “death,” there is certainly room that the phenomenon would look much like
what scientists today describe as physical death. Arguably, a proper theological
ascription of “death” can be given to a set of existential and spiritual circumstances
wherein the subject is cut off from God’s grace and the individual’s own fate is shrouded
in unknowing—aspects that are beyond the purview of scientific investigation. While
these observations are merely an indication of a theological response, evolutionary
accounts of mortality need not contradict the theological recognition of historical
“stages” of human nature.

Second, regarding desire or concupiscence, the solution proposed by Maximus
and Thomas is somewhat different than that proposed with regard to death. Essentially,

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44 ST I.100.2. Thomas’s understanding of the immortality of the original condition is at ST I.97.4.
45 Perhaps the most difficult matter in this regard (at the “intersection” of theological and scientific
accounts) is whether Adam would have left a corpse behind; I cannot resolve the question here, but it
does not seem theologically impossible that such could have been the case.
46 I speak of “unknowing” here from a natural perspective, prescinding from revelation: humankind does
not naturally understand its post-mortem fate. I base the “openness” of these comments on the
ambiguity of official texts on this matter. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC)*, for instance,
defines death in such a way that it implies that, had he not sinned, Adam would have had an unending
earthly existence. *CCC* §1007 says that death is “the end of earthly life”; *CCC* §1008 says that death
“is a consequence of sin.” Taken together, these two claims indicate that *the end of earthly life is a
consequence of sin*: if Adam had not sinned, then his earthly life would not have ended. Certainly
Thomas does not believe such a situation to have been God’s original plan, and Maximus is no
different. But if there are ambiguities even in the Catechism’s discussion of death, I take for granted
that there is room for speculation and clarification.
whereas “death” properly understood is excluded by Maximus and Thomas from the original condition, “desire” is not. As will be shown in this course of this study, both Maximus and Thomas recognize that human existence is characterized—from Eden to heaven—by emotionality, desire, and recoil from evil. In this sense, both thinkers could affirm without difficulty the scientific categories of “instinct” and “reflex” as stable realities in human existence. What cannot be affirmed in theological accounts of the unfallen condition—and where the authors quoted above have terminological problems—is the category of “concupiscence,” usually understood in the Western Christian tradition as disordered desires that result from Adam’s sin. Thus, Maximus and Thomas would agree with the above authors to an extent, since desire is in fact constitutive of human existence. But basic, “natural” desires that separate human beings from their final end—a proper sense of the word concupiscence—would not be possible in the graced state of humankind.

Concerning both mortality and desire, Thomas and Maximus do not contradict scientific accounts of the human species—when proper disciplinary boundaries are recognized and maintained. Consequently, Maximus and Thomas’s account of the “historicity” of human nature is not called into question by evolutionary theory. For them, scientific theories could not disprove that human beings have an origin, an intermediate state, and a final goal for which they were created—categories defined largely in terms of God’s supernatural grace and calling of humankind. In this historical and theological framework, Christ’s incarnation is situated in the midst of those states precisely in order to bring about the eschatological state of human nature for the rest of humankind.
IV. Scholarship on Christ’s Temptation

Having completed these two preliminary investigations, I turn to recent writings on my subject matter. A survey of literature relevant to my central topic consists of two components: literature, both modern and pre-modern, on Maximus and Thomas’s thought about Christ’s temptation; and discussion of modern literature on Christ’s temptation that does not deal with Maximus and Thomas directly. This latter literature can be broken down into smaller units: liberation theology and non-violent atonement theories; texts that “demythologize” the devil; exegetical, historical, and systematic works that take seriously the devil and Christ’s temptation; and four modern Protestant voices who differ in important ways from the authors presented in this study. Since the ‘rediscovery’ of Maximus in the 20th Century, much of the scholarly attention to his Christology has been devoted to his dyotheletism (the doctrine that holds that Christ had both a human and divine will in perfect union). Hence, while there are a variety of studies (discussed in Chapter 3) that address Maximus’s view of Christ’s agony in the garden (certainly a “trial” in Maximus’s thought), to my knowledge no study has directly addressed Maximus’ demonology or its relationship to his Christology—and as I will argue, Gethsemane is certainly a part of this confrontation between Christ and the demonic. This study would appear to be the first modern consideration of this relationship.

Many of St. Thomas’s premodern commentators did not devote lengthy attention to the question on Christ’s temptation from the *Summa* (III.41). Cajetan’s commentary on it occupies eight narrow marginal columns and Bañez’s commentary is three pages in the
modern edition. In the modern era, Billuart’s commentary devotes only a single article to the temptation in the desert; Garrigou-Lagrange, in fact, skips the confrontation in the desert entirely, and his summary of Christ’s defeat of the devil focuses solely on the Passion. There are only two modern authors that have treated Thomas’s view of Christ’s temptation in some detail: Jean-Pierre Torrell and Paul Gondreau. Each of these works is significant enough that I will consider their findings in the second half of this dissertation.

Beyond this narrow focus on Maximus and Thomas, modern literature on temptation and Christ’s temptation by the devil is heavily punctuated by pastoral concerns; the two works cited in the opening paragraph of this introduction display this tendency quite well. Now, a pastoral concern is not a bad thing. Temptation is certainly a pastoral issue that needs a pastoral response. But this preponderance of pastoral approaches serves to emphasize that many modern Christological works neglect to treat the question of Christ’s demonic temptation in significant detail. To an extent, this neglect is surprising. One might expect, for instance, works in liberation Christology and

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49 Jean-Pierre Torrell, Le Christ en ses Mystères: La vie et l’Oeuvre de Jésus selon saint Thomas d’Aquin, t. 1 (Paris: Desclée, 1999), 224-242; Paul Gondreau, The Passions of Christ’s Soul in the Theology of St. Thomas Aquinas (Scranton: University of Scranton Press, 2009). Though one further text does not focus particularly on Christ’s temptation, it is worth mentioning as an attempt to habilitate a theory of “personal exemplarity” in the thought of St. Thomas: Louis B. Gillon, Christ and Moral Theology (Staten Island: Alba House, 1967). For a limited consideration of the temptation of Christ, see ibid., 72-5.
50 I would point here to the helpful, though limited, work of Wilfrid J. Harrington, Jesus Our Brother: The Humanity of the Lord (New York: Paulist Press, 2010). Harrington’s perspective is largely pastoral and his affirmation of Jesus’ compassion is surely right, but his remarks are too brief to explain important questions: What is the identity of Jesus’ tempter? How to affirm this compassion in light of the fact that Jesus is free from disordered concupiscence? Is the “devil” a real personal agent? Such questions require deeper, more sustained reflection than his work can provide.
non-violent atonement to take particular interest in a pericope where Jesus confronts and defeats the quintessential oppressor of humankind through non-violent means. But in fact, many modern texts in these areas are almost completely silent on the passage.\(^5\) One work in this category—J. Denny Weaver’s *The Nonviolent Atonement*—does not consider the temptation scene but rightly addresses the theme of Christ’s defeat of the devil at some length. However, Weaver explicitly claims that the devil “is not a personified being”; instead, demons are “the ‘spiritual’ dimension of material structures”—of “the state, corporations, economic structures, educational institutions, and so on.”\(^52\) Christ’s defeat of the devil thus becomes for Weaver the redemption of human culture—a “conversion” of the devil that does not make sense in the context of a personified (and post-Origenistic) devil.\(^53\)

Beyond liberation theology and non-violent atonement theories, many other recent Christological thinkers do not consider Christ’s temptation at length.\(^54\)

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\(^53\) Since Origen thought that even the devil would be saved, an Origenistic devil may be closer to the reality that Weaver describes. The later “post-Origenistic” tradition, which rejects Origen’s view of *apokatastasis*, could not hold to such an understanding of the devil’s ultimate conversion.

illuminating example that may help to explain this neglect is the work of Hans Urs von Balthasar. Balthasar is generally concerned with a deep affirmation of Christ’s solidarity with the human condition—such is his intention, for instance, in his unique articulation of the descent into hell. In the *Theo-Drama* and elsewhere, however, Balthasar only briefly discusses Christ’s temptation by the devil and its place in a Christology of solidarity. Balthasar certainly takes the reality of the devil and of his temptations seriously, but in point of fact Balthasar understands the temptation in the desert as a subsidiary moment in a trajectory that points toward Gethsemane and the cross. By emphasizing Christ’s obedience *unto death*, Balthasar somewhat underemphasizes the soteriological role of other ‘moments’ in Christ’s human existence. The devil’s temptations then become a subsidiary and preliminary test that is finally addressed by *God* to Christ in the garden—the ultimate struggle in Balthasar’s conception is not against personified evil, but with a full acceptance of God’s will.

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56 Balthasar’s affirmations regarding the role of demonic agencies in salvation history can be found in *Theo-Drama* III, 478-501 (especially 495-501) and Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Theo-Drama: Theological Dramatic Theory* IV, trans. Graham Harrison (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1994), 367-70. Mark A. McIntosh, *Christology from Within: Spirituality and the incarnation in Hans Urs von Balthasar* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1996), 69-70 notes the devil’s temptation (in Balthasar’s thought) as a point of “growth” in Jesus’ self-surrender, but also recognizes that Gethsemane is the real culmination of this struggle.
The point that can be generalized from Balthasar’s work, though, is the concentration on the cross to the neglect of the temptation. When presented in this way, Christ’s dramatic struggle against evil can appear to be accomplished in the single event of accepting the cross, when in fact throughout his public life Christ has constantly to do battle with the Evil One and the corrupted agencies that have aligned themselves with his cause. As presented in the Gospels, the temptation is a central, perhaps even definitive, moment of that battle—the tide of the war has finally turned. To emphasize the temptation of Christ, then, is to realize more fully the dramatic character of Christ’s struggle against evil throughout his public life—not just a momentary struggle in Gethsemane or on the cross. Such a constructive criticism is broadly consonant with Balthasar’s overall goals in the *Theo-Drama*.

There is a relatively short list of recent authors that commendably emphasize the reality of the devil and Christ’s defeat of the devil in his temptation. Some of these authors are exegetically or historically driven. Among exegetical works, Roch Kereszty does not shy from the Gospel accounts of the temptation or their intended meaning; similarly Susan Garrett can devote an entire monograph to an exposition of Mark’s Gospel as a series of tests undertaken by Christ.57 N.T. Wright remarks that Jesus’ claim during his ministry that “an initial victory has already been won” is most easily explained with reference to the temptation narratives.58 In that confrontation, Jesus had already struggled and won a battle against “the satan,” and Wright is well aware of the

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cosmological implications of Jesus’ self-understanding in this regard. Among historically focused work, none compares with the encyclopedic work of Jeffry Burton Russell’s series of works on the devil: The Devil, on pre-Christian and early Christian views; Satan, on the devil in early Christianity; Lucifer, on the devil in the middle ages; Mephistopheles, on the devil in the modern world; and The Prince of Darkness, a sort of summative volume. Overall, Russell’s work focuses on the problem of evil and the role of the devil as an essential component of Christian theodicy. As a historical work, Russell’s scholarship is unsurpassed.

Among the works with a more systematic than exegetical focus, the work of Gerald Vann and P. K. Meagher, published in 1957, is of considerable systematic value. They address in a sustained way what would constitute a “real” temptation of Christ and wrestle at length with the “reality” of a temptation that has no corresponding inner desire (arising from disordered concupiscence) in Christ. As another notable text, the Martin Luther Colloquium published three essays on “Luther and the Devil” in 1988. This volume is commendable both for the candor with which it speaks of Luther’s belief in the devil and for the authors’ self-reflections on the subject of the colloquium. Heiko Oberman apologizes (perhaps too much) for the subject matter in his introductory essay to the volume but Robert Jenson’s contribution is strongly self-critical: “By not taking the

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59 Ibid., 120-127.
61 Gerald Vann and P. K. Meagher, The Temptations of Christ (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1957), 7-43. Their introduction and first chapter are an excellent primer to this study’s subject matter.
devil seriously, I have done theology wrongly.” Jenson goes on to reflect on the devil’s temptation in hidden ways: through friends, society, and even one’s “own inner voice” or “conscience.” He explains our remedy: “we need to be able to identify him [the devil], to tell how the voice of society is sometimes the communal discourse by which we live and sometimes his [the devil’s], to tell how conscience is on the one hand inner discipline and on the other his sly permission to please ourselves, even if only by wallowing in despair at our iniquities.” Our ability to identify Satan, Jenson argues, is Christologically based: “To unmask Satan’s temptations, Jesus had to be tempted by them. He had to hear [his temptations] in all their plausibility and evasiveness, and reject them.” In light of the focus of the current study, Jenson’s remarks deserve high praise.

More recently, John E. McKinley has produced a close analysis of Christ’s temptation and impeccability, surveying his own complex typology of nine different models for Christ’s temptation and eventually providing his own constructive vision. To

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63 Ibid., 38.
64 Ibid., 39.
65 John E. McKinley, Tempted for Us: Theological Models and the Practical Relevance of Christ’s Impeccability and Temptation (Colorado Springs: Paternoster, 2009). See also John E. McKinley, “Four Patristic Models of Jesus Christ’s Impeccability and Temptation,” in Perichoresis 9, no. 1 (2011), 29-66. McKinley discusses both Maximus and Thomas at some length in his work (ibid., 125-8 and 150-68). McKinley is more interested in categorizing Maximus in McKinley’s own complex typology of “theories” about Christ’s temptation than he is to explain the breadth of Maximus’s thought in his own categories. McKinley notes, for instance, that Maximus does not fit smoothly into his typology (ibid., 126, n. 41)—which might make one wary of the adequacy of the typology. McKinley’s focus on the mechanism of Christ’s sinlessness tends to sideline the question of the source of Christ’s temptations, i.e. whether from the devil, other people, or his own wounded humanity (as some authors below hold). This fact is particularly prominent in his own synthetic account in the concluding chapters; he dismisses the idea that Christ experienced “fallen” desires but, crucially, his typology of the sources of temptation is incomplete (ibid., 266-9, 279-85). McKinley does not separately treat the devil as a source of Christ’s temptation, relying on an inadequate distinction between “internally sinful” temptations and “externally sinless” ones (ibid., 284; he own variation on this distinction does not substantively change its inadequacy in this regard). The devil’s internal role finds no place in this account.
safeguard the exemplarity of Christ’s temptations, McKinley argues that Christ’s successful resistance to temptation should be understood as the gift of the Holy Spirit to the human Jesus—a gift that is available now to Christ’s followers as well. Finally, Pope Benedict XVI devotes significant attention to Christ’s temptation in his *Jesus of Nazareth*. Benedict states that the temptation “is a descent into the perils besetting mankind, for there is no other way to lift up fallen humanity. Jesus has to enter into the drama of human existence, for that belongs to the core of his mission; he has to penetrate it completely, down to its uttermost depths, in order to find the ‘lost sheep,’ to bear it on his shoulders, and to bring it home.”66 In the course of his description, Benedict can even speak of the Gospel accounts of Jesus’ temptations as reflecting “the inner struggle over his own particular mission.”67 Unlike some of the authors above and to follow, Benedict stops short of the claims that Christ had any sort of disordered desire, but he maintains (in an apparent gesture to the ‘mission-consciousness’ of Balthasar’s Christology) that the path forged by Christ in this event is an ‘internal’ one involving a struggle against evil that followed him along every step of his journey.

Finally, given the proximity of their subject matter to this study’s matrix of anthropology, Christology, and demonology, four modern Protestant voices need mention at this stage: Gustaf Aulén, Karl Barth, Jacques Ellul, and Helmut Thielicke. First, Aulén’s *Christus Victor* paved the way toward the repristination of subordinated dualism (the idea that God and Satan are in a prolonged, though ultimately predetermined, battle over this world) as a valid framework for a theory of the atonement.68 For this

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67 Ibid., 28.
68 The term “dualism” is Aulén’s (Gustaf Aulén, *Christus Victor*, trans. A. G. Herbert (New York:
contribution to the modern theological landscape, this study owes a great deal. Were it not for his work, perhaps no modern theologian would dare to speak at length of Christ’s saving work as liberation from the devil. However, despite the valuable service his work has done for modern consideration of the atonement, a brief criticism of his approach is in order at the beginning of this study.

Namely, Aulén’s view of the powers overcome by Christ is problematic, even troubling. On the one hand, Aulén leaves open whether the devil is a personal, intentional agent—Aulén seems to think that the devil could just as easily be an impersonal “force.” To suppose, though, that the “powers” with which Christ does battle are simply “forces” and not agents is to suggest that God could be directly responsible for the creation of God’s own adversary as such. That is, if the devil is not an agent personally responsible for his own corruption, the alternative is that God directly created the adversarial—evil!—forces and powers in order for Christ to overcome them. In such a view, how would God not be directly responsible for evil?

On the other hand, and approaching the same question from the other direction, the victory of Christ in Aulén’s Lutheran version of the classic model is not just over sin, death, and the devil (who, in Aulén’s account, may or may not be a personal agent) but

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Macmillan Company, 1956), 20-1, n. 1); I insert “subordinated” to carry his meaning: “It is used in the sense in which the ideal constantly occurs in Scripture, of the opposition between God and that which in His own created world resists His will; between the Divine Love and the rebellion of created wills against Him. This Dualism is an altogether radical opposition, but it is not an absolute Dualism; for in the scriptural view evil has not an eternal existence” (ibid., 21, n. 1). One might also refer to Jeffrey Burton Russell’s use of “dualism” in Satan, 25, 32-33: “Christianity is a moderate dualist religion. The Devil has great power to oppose the work of Christ, but his power is always limited and held in check by God. … [A] spectrum stretches between strongly monist religions and strongly dualist religions, and Christianity is somewhere in the middle of the spectrum, its exact position varying with the individual Christian thinker.”

69 This fact is noted by Hans Urs von Balthasar, Theo-Drama: Theological Dramatic Theory II, trans. Graham Harrison (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1990), 163: “Ultimately Aulén leaves it open whether the ‘devil’ is to be imagined as a personal or an impersonal being. The only important thing is the ‘overwhelming power of the demonic’ and its ‘destructive power in man’s innermost self.’”
also over God’s Wrath. In this arrangement, good and evil do not map perfectly onto God and the devil (respectively); God becomes one of the tyrannical enemies of humanity that must be overcome by Christ. This means, crucially, that the subordinated dualism (God over the devil) that largely guides Aulén’s text resolves in its Lutheran form into an unsubordinated dualism within the divine nature. The divine attributes of love and wrath do not eternally coincide; rather they are in conflict with one another, and the internal conflict in the divine nature is somehow resolved in favor of love by Christ’s self-sacrifice. Aulén admits that there is an “opposition” in his “idea of God” that he calls a “tension” between love and wrath: “The solution [to this tension] is not found in any sort of rational settlement; it is rather that the Divine Love prevails over the Wrath” by Christ’s self-offering. Thus, the ultimate irony of Aulén’s text is that while the overarching opposition is supposed to be between the forces of evil (the devil) and the forces of good (the divine), God cannot be ranked simply on one side of this opposition.

Karl Barth, Jacques Ellul, and Helmut Thielicke also merit attention due to their significant contributions to the domain of my study, specifically with regard to the anthropology present in their reflections on the meaning and purpose of Christ’s temptation. First, all three thinkers take the biblical claims about human fallenness as

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70 Aulén, Christus Victor, 171.
71 Amy Plantinga Pauw, ““Where Theologians Fear to Tread,”” in Modern Theology 16, n. 1 (2000), 39-59 (especially 54) appears to argue that Barth should rather belong with the demonological “dissenters” who deny the existence of demons. They are, in her estimation, “a mythological personification of nothingness” (ibid., 54). Balthasar has also discussed at some length the ambiguous ontological place of angels in Barth’s schema; see Theo-Drama III, 478-488 for a more thorough argument against Barth’s position on the matter. In my estimation, a close reading of Barth’s treatment of demonology—as brief and elusive as it is—does not intend to deny the existence of demons (CD III.3, 519-531, especially 528-9: Scripture “certainly does not say that they [demons] do not exist or have no power or do not constitute this threat. It is quite evident that their existence and nature are very definitely taken into account…”). Nevertheless, Barth’s treatment is so terse that it is open to significant misunderstanding. One might even compare Barth’s treatment of demons in a parallel way to Schleiermacher’s treatment of the Trinity in The Christian Faith: nothing more than a superfluous appendix. The most important point where Barth’s refusal to speculate leads to real difficulty is his
constitutive of the fallen human condition; insofar as they are willing to speak of an abstract category of “human nature,” that nature is constituted by an internal conflict wherein one’s “lower” nature resists one’s higher desires, driving the individual into evil.

Second, they conceive of Christ’s atoning work as absolutely substitutionary or as transformative from within. In a particularly modern extension of the classic Nazianzen soteriological maxim (“that which he has not assumed, he has not healed”), they argue that Christ’s essential human experience must be absolutely identical with that of fallen humankind if Christ’s life is to have a redemptive effect for us. Based on these assumptions, Barth, Ellul, and Thielicke come to the conclusion that Christ’s moral life can be described as one of internal conflict.

For Barth, “Jesus did not run away from the state and situation of fallen man, but took it upon Himself, lived it and bore it Himself as the eternal Son of God.” As a part of this “bearing” of the human situation, Barth indicates that it was necessary for Christ to experience internal conflict. “How could He have done so [borne human experience], if in His human existence He had not been exposed to real inward temptation and trial, if like other men He had not trodden an inner path, if He had not cried to God and wrestled
with God in real inward need?” Certainly, Barth here affirms that Christ’s endurance of this inner struggle is different from that of other human beings insofar as this struggle in Christ uniquely represents and carries out God’s will. Nevertheless, the idea that Christ experienced “real inward temptation” presumes (1) that what fallen human beings are must be ranked as an essential source of resistance to God’s will and (2) that the redemptive task of Christ encompasses all aspects of the fallen human experience.

Jacques Ellul’s If You Are the Son of God takes the same stance toward the devil as Weaver’s text, “demythologizing” personified evil. Thus, “there is no ‘spirit’ independent of a person that would ‘inspire’ him to bring this accusation [against another]. It wells up from man’s heart all by itself. … The key to temptation is the covetousness that is in each of us.” But Ellul recognizes in a consciously “scandalizing” move that, lacking an external tempter, Christ is left with no opponent besides the universal covetousness present in fallen humanity—Christ himself had this “potential covetousness in him.” To Ellul, the Philippians hymn suggests that Christ “would have considered equality with God something to be grasped”; he wanted to rule the nations. Ellul states that Christ “has in him the roots of temptation” and that the impersonal ‘devil’ in the human heart attempts “to bring about a rift between the Father and the Son, that is, within God himself!” For Ellul, then, Christ’s own “potential covetousness” is a force that drives him from his own Father.

72 CD I.2, 158, emphasis added. Barth goes on to quote Heb. 2:18 and cites with admiration the decision of the 6th ecumenical Council.
73 Jacques Ellul, If You Are the Son of God: The Suffering and Temptations of Jesus, trans. Anne-Marie Andreasson-Hogg (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2014), 8-10. Ellul is perhaps not primarily a theologian, but this work is certainly worthy of consideration on this subject.
74 Ibid., 10-13.
75 Ibid., 13.
76 Ibid., 56
Finally and perhaps most boldly, Thielicke’s articulation of Jesus’s temptation is also expressed as an introspective and internal struggle. “The man” in Thielicke’s Jesus sees the temple as “a fantastic prospect opened to his ambition,” “hunger and thirsts to be a Lord and God of this world,” and “lust, amid the joyless environment” of the desert. The image of the Temple in Christ’s mind is produced by “lurking ambition, the thought of [Christ’s] own heart.”; Christ’s temptation “goes from within outwards”; “it is not some external Satan who stands between God and us; we ourselves stand between God and us, since the evil one ‘possessed’ us, just as the man in Christ stands here between him and God.” In Thielicke’s presentation, the grotesque glory of Christ’s inner temptation is absolutely explicit. The hypostatic union is stretched to an infinitely thin contact (as a circle tangentially touches a line) because even in Christ, the “man” in him must ultimately be ranked as the enemy of God. For Thielicke, there is an unavoidable human temptation that is purely anthropological in its source—it is no “external Satan” and thus requires that what we are be opposed to God. And so: the incarnation (and all that follows from it) is Christ’s defeat of humanity—of himself—so that humanity might be reconciled to God.

One cannot help but be impressed with the rigorous inner logic of this position. Whereas the medieval tradition stopped short of any affirmation of internal conflict in Christ because they disagreed with the second assumption above, these intrepid thinkers forge on toward a Christ who willingly and obediently sinks himself into the mires of fallen moral struggle. And yet, one cannot help but be troubled by the way in which Christ’s conflict is understood by these figures. Essentially and most troublingly, God

78 Ibid.
must enter into open conflict with God’s very creation in order to redeem humankind. How could this be possible? How was human nature so deeply corrupted—even in Christ—that God must fight it in order to reconcile it? Did God directly bring about the existence of something opposed to the divine? How would such a position avoid Aulén’s unsubordinated dualistic conception of the divine wrath? Fundamentally, such thinkers have misconceived the terms of the cosmic struggle into which Christ enters. For these thinkers, Christ in his temptation does not fight and defeat the devil so much as he defeats human nature.

With respect to this matter, the purpose of this project is not to prove Barth, Ellul or Thielicke wrong, as if fallen human nature were not an ambiguous entity that can be coopted by intentional evil. If this project suggests anything, it must be that resistance to God cannot be considered fully “natural” to humanity and that any such resistance must be traceable to an intentional agency, whether demonic or human. Human nature is not evil nor can it in itself stand in opposition to God—it is misused and misdirected both by the human subject and by powers beyond mere human strength. Only intentional agents can actively resist intentional agents, and human nature should not and cannot be so easily enlisted as a “power” that resists God. Only in these ways can human nature be said to resist God’s will.

V. An Overview of this Study

In light of the foregoing background, let me provide an overview of the coming chapters, explain something of their interconnections, and indicate the historical and theological trajectory traced between Maximus in the 7th century and Thomas in the 13th.
My study is arranged in two groups of three chapters, each group following the same pattern. The first chapter of each set explores significant sources concerning temptation, the devil, and Christ for the thinker involved; the second chapter explains the thinker’s anthropological claims concerning the origin, purpose, and goal of human temptation; and the third chapter indicates the way in which the thinker associates Christ with that temptation so as to effect a liberation from it.

Chapter 1 traces three sets of influences on Maximus’s understanding of Christ’s temptation: first, scriptural sources; then later anthropological and Christological sources. The scriptural sources serve as an introduction to both Maximus and Thomas who, although they read the texts in different languages, both take those accounts of Jesus’ temptation as the definitive criterion of its significance. In this material, I will take care to flag the way in which the Book of Hebrews uses the terms “weakness,” as this term has particular bearing on both Maximus and Thomas’s presentation of Christ’s humanity. In the anthropological material, I will consider authors who are likely to have influenced Maximus’s thought on temptation. I will treat (1) Gregory of Nyssa’s understanding of the origin of the passions, (2) Nemesius’s moral psychology, and then (3) Origen and Evagrius’s conception of demonic temptation. The third set of these will be highly significant for the overall trajectory I trace; Origen and Evagrius both conceive of the devil as capable of inserting thoughts and desires into the human mind in order to lead the monastic practitioner into sin. This ascetic and monastic teaching is pedagogical, leading the reader to a deeper understanding of the “battleground” on which the devil must be fought and thereby providing the monastic reader with tools to bring about the monastic’s victory. The final section will consider texts that influence Maximus’s conception of
Christ’s self-emptying into human nature and condescension into human passibility.

These authors consider in particular the way in which Christ’s human nature “baits the hook” upon which the devil will pierce himself when he approaches Christ to do violence to him. I will consider as closely as possible the conditions of Christ’s humanity that, according to these figures, allow it to function effectively as bait for the devil.

Chapter 2 turns to Maximus’s own anthropology. I trace his conception of the original state of humanity in the garden and in the Fall and its consequences. Maximus articulates three of these consequences: mortality, corruptibility, and passibility. The third of these is most significant for this study. In the process of explaining Maximus’s view of human passibility, I will provide an overview of his understanding of the human subject and the inner workings of the human mind. While these matters are foundational to Maximus’s conception of possibility, these purely anthropological considerations do not exhaust Maximus’s thought on the subject. In essence, the way in which Maximus appropriates the demonology of Origen and Evagrius results in an even more ambiguous form in human temptation: temptation precisely in and through the passibility that infected human nature after sin. If “internal” temptation is a particularly strong form of human weakness consequent to Adam’s sin, some attention should be paid to why, in Maximus’s mind, God would allow this temptation. For that reason, I turn to matters of providence in Maximus’s conception of temptation. Maximus, again following Origen, thinks of temptation as largely pedagogical, a sine qua non of human salvation that strengthens virtue and leads one to the goal of the spiritual life. At the end of the chapter, I briefly consider the final place of the passions in humanity’s eschatological life.
Chapter 3 considers the soteriological role of Christ’s temptation in Maximus’s thought, proceeding from a discussion of Christ’s constitution—his human defects and human perfections—to an exposition of his liberating work in his temptation. I consider Maximus’s account of Christ’s double-descent into human nature and human passibility, tracing in particular his use of the terms “weakness” and “confusion” when they are applied to Christ. Maximus uses these terms to denote the limits of Christ’s contact with the brokenness of humanity, by which (borrowing a phrase from the Nazianzen) Christ consumes our worst parts as fire consumes wax. These matters in turn relate to human passibility and, eventually, to his experience of demonic temptation. I then turn to a treatment of Christ’s human perfections. While I consider three such perfections (virtue, knowledge, and impeccability), the third of these will require the most space. How can one incapable of sin be tempted to sin? As a response, I will argue that a parallel can be drawn between Maximus’s view of choice in Christ and his view of Christ’s temptation. The final section treats the dramatic encounter between Christ and the devil in the two most significant moments of his temptation (according to Maximus): in the desert and at the time of the crucifixion. I will show here that Maximus treats Christ’s experience of the natural and blameless passions in much the same way as he treats the monk’s experience of them. Christ undergoes a confrontation with the devil in these thoughts and desires and, by casting out those thoughts and desires that have the devil as their cause, Christ utterly “puts off” these “powers and principalities” in a way that both exemplifies for the monk a perfect response and, indeed, empowers this response.

Chapter 4 is crucial to the historical trajectory I trace between Maximus and Thomas. There is a thin historical link between Maximus and Thomas insofar as John of
Damascus and Burgundio of Pisa (his Latin translator) transmit aspects of Maximus’s thought to the Christian West. John echoes the monastic position on demonic passions and thoughts seen in the previous three chapters, yet his application of this tradition to Christ is somewhat uneven. On the one hand, John affirms that certain passions “attacked” Christ; on the other, he denies that the devil could attack Christ through thoughts. Crucially, however, Burgundio of Pisa’s Latin translation of John makes important errors (intentional or not) that make John’s reception in the West even more difficult and complicated. The most important error is his translation of ἀδιάβλητος as “indetactibilis,” a word that features prominently in John’s interpretation by Thomas Aquinas. The rest of the chapter traces a number of Patristic and medieval sources for Thomas’s understanding of temptation and of Christ’s temptation. After a brief treatment of Hilary of Poitiers’ view of Christ’s passibility, I consider both Augustine and Gregory the Great’s conception of demonic temptation. Here, the presence of the Evagrian tradition of demonic temptation (via Cassian) in Gregory the Great is particularly worth noting. Gregory’s analysis of the stages of sin—suggestion, desire, and consent—usually indicates that the human subject is morally responsible for illicit movements of desire, when a suggestion “begins to be sin.” But when Gregory considers the role of the devil in temptation, the distinction between suggestion and desire is sometimes quite porous, so that the devil can be directly responsible for sudden movements of desire. When I turn to medieval figures (Peter the Lombard, Alexander of Hales, and Bonaventure), I will consider their appropriation of Gregory’s moral psychology—but another major matter in this material is the development of medieval typologies of temptation. Following Hugh of St. Victor, Peter distinguishes between three different kinds of temptation: exterior
demonic, interior demonic, and from the flesh. This basic typology shapes Alexander, Bonaventure, and Thomas’s treatment of the devil’s role in temptation, usually relegating him to the remote and indirect cause of human sin through his temptation of Adam. The ‘inner’ version of demonic temptation is generally acknowledged, but it does not play the significant role that it did for the earlier ascetic tradition. Finally, since desire is understood as the “beginning of sin,” these figures will clearly deny the presence of such desire in Christ—whether that desire comes from the flesh or from the devil. I will discuss some of the difficulties in this arrangement as I proceed through each figure.

Chapter 5 discusses the role of temptation in Thomas Aquinas’s anthropology. I proceed in this material in much the same way as Chapter 2: the origin of temptation, its forms, their relationships, their purpose, and their final removal from the human condition. Thomas, like Maximus, assigns Adam’s fault as the causal mechanism of certain forms of temptation. For Thomas, there are two such “fallen” forms: inner demonic temptation and the fomes peccati. After explaining the origins of these two forms, I consider Thomas’s typologies of temptation from various works. I suggest that Thomas recognizes a slightly more prominent role for the devil in his later works than he does in his earlier works. I then treat each of the two fallen forms of temptation in detail, with more space devoted to inner demonic temptation. Concerning the fomes, I argue that Thomas surpasses (in specific circumstances) the strict equivalence between movements of the fomes and personal culpability that had predominated in earlier scholasticism. Essentially, there are some (carefully defined) passionate movements for which the subject is not morally responsible, though they are still “sinful” in that they arise from a corrupted human constitution. Even though the two forms are distinct for St. Thomas, I
show that Thomas conceives of inner demonic temptation as dependent on the *fomes peccati* in such a way that the converse does not hold. This dependence has important consequences for the relationship between inner demonic temptation and absolutely perfected virtue—and this relationship has consequences for Thomas’s Christology. I finally consider the pedagogical and punitive functions of temptation for St. Thomas. Thomas assigns different primary functions to the different forms of temptation and his explanation of these differences has some consequences for his relationship with Maximus.

Chapter 6 exposits St. Thomas’s view of Christ’s temptation by the devil. I proceed in three sections: first considering in a general way the soteriological place of Christ’s temptation, second treating the ontological basis of Christ’s temptation in Thomas’s Christology, and third explaining Thomas’s view of the encounter between Christ and the devil in the desert. In the first section, the essential claim is that Thomas views Christ’s temptation both in a typological relationship with the temptation of Adam and as *satisfactory* for human sin. Concerning the second, I carefully define what “satisfaction” means according to St. Thomas and show that it includes the taking on of the punishment due to another. This factor concretely shapes how Thomas conceives of Christ’s temptation. In the second section, I treat three foundational issues for Christ’s temptation: Christ’s human perfections, his human defects, and the voluntary character of his defects. These considerations prepare the way for the final section, in which I proceed through Thomas’s Christological application of each of the three medieval forms of temptation. Thomas denies the *fomes peccati* in Christ on the basis of his absolutely sinless human constitution. Concerning external demonic temptation, however, Thomas
affirms that something of Adam’s punishment should be present; Thomas specifies that this aspect is the violence done to Christ’s body in transporting him to the Temple and mountain. Thirdly, Thomas in all likelihood denies that Christ could be said to have been tempted from within by the devil. In all of these positions, Thomas keeps a soteriological focus; his affirmations and negations are grounded in the revelation of Christ’s saving work.

My conclusion offers synthetic remarks regarding the development of Greek and Latin Christian traditions of temptation. On this basis, I suggest that my research has implications for the interpretation of the Council of Trent and its affirmations about concupiscence or fleshly temptation. Specifically, I propose that Trent’s affirmations can be drawn into more explicit connection with the early monastic tradition of demonic temptation.
CHAPTER 1

MAXIMUS’S SOURCES FOR CHRIST’S TEMPTATION

Before an investigation of St. Maximus’s own thought on Christ’s temptation by the devil, I will first review some of the major theological influences that stand behind that presentation. Briefly, these sources can be grouped as *scriptural* (I), *anthropological* (II), and *Christological* (III). Since the canonical biblical texts are the original starting point for all that Maximus and Thomas will have to say about Jesus’ (and our) temptation, the first section will function as an introduction to both Maximus’s thought (in Chapters 2 and 3) and Thomas’s thought (in Chapters 5 and 6) in this study.¹ There, I will briefly review three subjects: human temptation in both the Old and New Testaments (A); Jesus’ temptation in the Gospels (B); and Jesus’ temptation in the Letter to the Hebrews (C). The first of these (A) will help ascertain why and by whom, in general, people in the canonical Scriptures are tempted. These reasons will not correspond in every way to a Christological exploration of temptation (in B and C), but there are important points of contact that need to be mentioned. Second (in B), I will undertake a short exegetical exposition of the prominent passages used by Maximus and Thomas in their accounts of Christ’s demonic temptation. As will be clear in Chapter 3, Maximus does not limit Christ’s demonic temptation to the temptation in the desert (as presented in

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¹ For this reason, I will not repeat this material in Chapter 4 when I discuss Thomas’s other sources for Christ’s temptation by the devil.
the synoptic gospels), and I hope to show why this is so. Third, I will explore the purpose of Christ’s temptation as indicated in the Letter to the Hebrews. To adequately consider later Christian reflection on the subject, I will introduce an important question from that letter about the relationship of Christ to human weakness as found in the Letter to the Hebrews.

The second section (II) will discuss important anthropological sources for Maximus’s conception of the passions and the devil.² In this material I will discuss three subjects in order: sources that consider the origin of the passions in human nature (A), the Nemesian sources for Maximus’s general moral psychology (B), and finally sources that discuss the way in which the devil tempts human beings as a semi-internal agent through thoughts and passions (C). For the first (A), I will review the thought of Basil of Caesarea and Gregory of Nyssa, each of whom argue that some sort of important emotional change or unbalance occurred in human nature after the first sin of Adam. This same question will be an important part of Maximus’s articulation of what happened in the Fall and how human nature was changed in that event. On this basis, I will then consider the content of the moral psychology that results from these changed moral circumstances in the second part (B). Nemesius of Emesa is by far the most important source in this regard. Nemesius articulates important categories both in his understanding of human faculties and in the progression of the moral act; both of these will strongly influence Maximus’s anthropology. I will introduce those distinctions at the proper time below. Finally, I will give a basic portrayal of Origen of Alexandria and Evagrius of Ponticus’s understanding of demonic temptation (C), the latter of which was directly and heavily influential on

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² While Origen, Basil, and Gregory of Nyssa will appear in both this material and in the third section, a topical (as opposed to strictly historical) exposition allows me to consider common themes and trends within each of these themes.
Maximus’s ascetical writings. Evagrius, like Maximus, is concerned with helping monks to reach a state of perfection and in doing so, he articulates a problem that the monk encounters, a goal toward which the monk strives, and the means by which that goal is attained. The problem for Evagrius is the passions, which are intimately linked to the influence of demonic forces; the goal is ἀπάθεια, dispassion; the means for overcoming the problem are askesis in following the example of Christ.

In the final section (III), I will consider early influential Greek views on Jesus’ human nature and his defeat of demonic powers. The asceticism encouraged by Evagrius is Christological in a certain sense but as I will show, his presentation of the exemplarity of Christ is in fact somewhat lacking. For Maximus, however, Christ is not merely an exemplar; he is an empowering exemplar—his defeat of the devil enables the monk to do the same. When Maximus articulates this clarification, he does so on the basis of many Greek-speaking Christian thinkers before him, of whom I will investigate Origen (A), Basil of Caesarea (B), Gregory of Nyssa (C), Gregory of Nazianzus (D), and John Chrysostom (E). The brokenness of fallen humanity mentioned above becomes Christologically relevant when it is affirmed that Christ empowers the believer by taking on and putting back together precisely that nature that was broken by sin and by “baiting the hook” for the devil with an enfeebled and vulnerable humanity. Christ comes to restore human nature to its original state (and beyond) by chiastically healing each stage or state of its development and fall. The common Patristic affirmations about who Christ was and how that identity brings about the defeat of the devil constitute much of the background for the claims that Maximus will also make about Christ’s temptation in the next two chapters.
I. Thomas and Maximus’s Scriptural Sources

If one were to search for the fundamental commonality of St. Maximus and St. Thomas concerning Christ’s temptation, one could easily rest on the fact that both draw from the scriptural sources as the norm for their thought. Since the purpose of this work is in part to understand how Maximus and Thomas reached certain conclusions about this temptation, it is important to begin with an investigation of this unique common source. Indeed, for St. Maximus and St. Thomas, these sources were the primary and ultimate authority in considering who Christ was, what he did, what he suffered, and most specifically how he was tempted. Thus, in what follows, I will present the scriptural texts as Maximus and Thomas themselves understood them: as a whole. While I will give attention to distinct voices in the scriptural texts, Maximus and Thomas both took for granted that the Bible ‘hangs together,’ and so I will attempt to portray it in this way as well. As mentioned above, this investigation will consider (A) how temptation or testing is conceived in the Old and New Testaments; (B) what the Gospel accounts report about Christ’s temptation; and (C) how the Letter to the Hebrews interprets Christ’s temptation, with a particularly close consideration of its affirmations concerning Christ’s “suffering with” our weaknesses. This investigation will be largely suggestive, introducing certain common themes that will be important when considering how Maximus and Thomas interpret these passages.

A. Temptation in the Old and New Testament

1. Temptation in the Old Testament. First of all, it is instructive to review the use of tests and temptations in key passages of the Old Testament. In the Hebrew Bible,
nassah and its usual Greek equivalent in the Septuagint, πειρασμός, are used generically as “attempt” or “try” (e.g. 1 Sam 17:39) but, more importantly, they take a different sense when used to describe the relationship between Israel and God. They frequently refer to Israel’s complaints against God, with the negative connotation that Israel doubts that God will do what has been promised (as in the English “to try one’s patience,” at Exodus 17:2, 7). The most significant usage for my purposes, however, is when the terms are used to describe the “testing” of Israel or other human beings. In the Hebrew Bible, the source of Israel’s testing is ultimately God, though as will be discussed in a moment, other mediating agents can participate in the test as well.

Why does God test Israel? Perhaps the most telling example of its purpose occurs in the giving of the manna in the desert. God puts Israel to the test both in the withholding of food and in the rules for the manna itself—Israel is instructed not to take more than what is necessary (Exodus 16:4). In this test, there is a short-term failure, for some Israelites try to collect or keep more than is necessary (Exodus 16:20, 27). In the long term, however, the purpose of the test is *pedagogical*: God “fed you in the wilderness with manna which your fathers did not know, that he might humble you and test you, to do you good in the end” (Deuteronomy 8:16). Furthermore, the test is *parental*, showing the intimate bond between Israel and God: “Know then in your heart

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5 Quotations are from the Revised Standard Edition.
that, as a man disciplines his son, the LORD your God disciplines you” (Deuteronomy 8:5). Thus, even if there are failures in the test, the overall purpose of the test is positive and for Israel’s ultimate benefit. Consequently, in other passages, temptation is not portrayed as something to be avoided; when the Psalmist is confident of his righteousness, he even asks that God will test him (“Prove me, O LORD, and try me,” Psalm 26:2). Two other moments of Israel’s being tested become significant in light of their later interpretation by the Gospel of Matthew: the prohibition of provocation and of challenge against God leveled in Deuteronomy 6:16 (parallel: Exodus 17:1-7) and the command against idolatry recounted in Deuteronomy 6:13-15 (parallel: Exodus 32:8). Along with the story of the giving of the manna, these three moments in Israel’s history are rehearsed and recapitulated in key passages in the synoptic tradition.

In the first example from the Torah above, God directly tests Israel without any indication of the mediation of other beings. Other passages, however, show that God’s test can also be carried out by others in God’s service. Job 1-2 is a clear example. Here, ha-satan, the adversary, appears as God’s servant who tests what God says to ensure its truth. While ha-satan’s intent is perhaps not as clearly pedagogical or parental as is God’s intent in testing Israel, he should not be considered (within the bounds of the book

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6 Genesis 22 is, of course, another important test whose purpose is much contested. Regardless of the troubling overtones of the text, Abraham certainly passes the test. For my current purposes, then, the positive purpose of “testing” is upheld here. Other examples of constructive or positive senses of tests outside the Hebrew Bible (and thus with the Greek πειρασμος) can be found in Wisdom 3:5 (“Having been disciplined a little, they will receive great good, because God tested them and found them worthy of himself”) and Sirach 34:10. See also Ceslas Spicq, ed., Theological Lexicon of the New Testament, vol. 3, 80-90, and André Marie Dubarle, “La Tentation Diabolique dans le Livre de la Sagesse (2:24),” in Mélanges Eugène Tisserant, vol. 1, (Rome: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1964), 187-195.

of Job) to be opposed to God’s ultimate purposes. He is a member of God’s court, acting in a prosecutorial role, yet still subject to God’s ruling.\footnote{See Samuel E. Balentine, \textit{Job} (Macon, GA: Smith & Helwys, 2006), 49-52. Another example beyond the bounds of the Hebrew Bible (which, in the surviving manuscripts, uses the Greek \textit{πειρασμός}) makes this sort of trial by a servant-angel clear. That is, in Tobit 13:12-16, the angel Raphael reveals that he was sent by God to put Tobit to the test regarding his generosity with time and wealth. In this instance, there is no doubt that Raphael intends to serve God’s ultimate purposes and to put them into effect.}

A second example of mediated testing occurs in Deuteronomy 13:4, but this example differs from the above \textit{angelic} test in that it is carried out by a human figure. God’s overarching intent in this test is compatible with what I have said above; however, the one immediately responsible for this test is a human prophet or “dreamer” who urges Israel: “‘Let us go after other gods,’ which you have not known, ‘and let us serve them’” (Deuteronomy 13:2-3). This false prophet intends for Israel to follow his own god, which implicitly places him in conflict with God’s intent, even if the prophet does not know that he is doing so. Thus, while the prophet intends for Israel to fall into worship of another god (and thus fail the test as envisioned by God), God’s intent is for Israel to emerge victorious from the trial. The mediator of the trial, then, need not know the divine purposes of his action; God’s purpose may be carried out without any inkling on the part of the one immediately carrying out the test.

In short, the “test” of the Old Testament is carried out ultimately and actively by God, who uses the test in order to teach Israel and act parentally toward them. Thus, the \textit{intended} divine goal of the test is positive, as a proof of trust, rather than negative, like a lapse or sin—even if lapses occur along the way. Additionally, mediating testers often participate in these trials, either in cooperation with God’s purposes or in implicit conflict with them. There is little evidence in the Old Testament for an open conflict of intention.
between God and the mediating agent of a trial. This opposition between the mediating tester and God comes clearly into view only in the New Testament.

2. Temptation in the New Testament. It has been argued by André Marie Dubarle that the New Testament introduces a new valence of πειρασμός with a decidedly more negative tone than that present in the Old Testament.9 In determining whether this is true, the central question remains the source of the temptation; if a temptation does not come from God, then the pedagogical and parental goals surveyed above no longer necessarily apply.10 On the one hand, many authors in the New Testament continue to see the same divine and pedagogical role for trial as has been seen in the Old Testament.11 On the other hand, the New Testament introduces sources of temptation that were not considered in the Old Testament, sources (or perhaps mediating agents) whose intention is in open conflict with God’s intention.12 I will consider here the affirmations of New Testament authors about two sources—demonic temptations and internal temptations—before turning to the New Testament’s vision of God’s role in or cooperation with these temptations.

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10 On the basis of the Old Testament understanding surveyed above, I assume here that in the New Testament God does not test human subject so that they would fail; see the following note.
11 As in the Old Testament, God is not presented in the New as tempting human beings with the intent that they fail. One can turn to James 1:3-4 and 1:12 for an example of how temptations can train or result in moral strength. “For you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness” (James 1:3-4); “Blessed is the man who endures trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life which God has promised to those who love him” (James 1:12). One might also refer to another phrase that mentions the “crown”: 2 Timothy 2:3,5: “Share in suffering [or: suffer together] as a good soldier of Christ Jesus … An athlete is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules.”
12 Some NT passages seem to question implicitly whether God is always involved (even passively or providentially) in temptation; the negative intent of the devil sometimes appears to push divine pedagogy out of the picture. This occurs, for instance, in 1 Thessalonians 3:5, where St. Paul fears that “the tempter had put you to the test and [that] our toil might come to nothing.” In this instance, one might still speak of a positive, divine cooperation and permission in this temptation, but St. Paul appears to envision the real possibility of ultimate failure. The kind of divine pedagogy discussed above recedes from St. Paul’s presentation here.
One can see something of the role of the devil in temptation in the concluding two lines of the Lord’s Prayer, where a test or temptation is associated with a personified evil (Matthew 6:13). In marked contrast to the prayer of the Psalmist (26:2) who asks to be tried, Christ’s prayer asks that the one praying not be tempted, as though the trial could lead to one’s failure. The possibility of a complete failure of the test can be explained in light of the following line, with its reference to the substantive πονηρός for evil or, preferably, the Evil One. The two objects, the trial and the Evil One, are thus closely associated (as in Matthew 4:1-11, where Satan is the Tempter), and the two prayers build upon one another: first, not to be led toward the object, second, to be actively guided away from the object. In the Lord’s Prayer, then, there is a temptation that is preferably avoided and there is a new, demonic actor whose intention in tempting us is not in agreement with God’s intentions in sending trials to Israel.

As for internal temptation, the most important passage to consider is James 1:13-14. Here, James first rejects the idea that temptation comes from God and then

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13 “And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil [Evil One?].” This is the only “but” in the Lord’s prayer, indicating a unique logical relationship between the two clauses. For another instance of Christ’s prayer that others might avoid this test, see Matthew 26:41.

14 See Daniel J. Harrington, The Gospel of Matthew (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1991), 95, where the ambiguity of the term is emphasized, though a slight preference for the personified form is articulated. R.T. France, The Gospel of Matthew (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2007), 251 more strongly prefers a reference to Satan in light of the temptation narrative before, in which Satan is referred to as the Tempter. He states that the two lines together “are vivid ways of saying that the disciples are aware of the need for God’s help and protection in the face of the devil’s desire to lead astray” (ibid.).

15 France also discusses this parallelism (ibid.).

16 The secondary literature unanimously explains this as some internal drive toward evil. John Paul Heil, The Letter of James (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2012), 47: “each of them is ‘tempted’ by his own desire, being dragged away and enticed … by the lure of the beautiful appearance of wealth.” Pheme Perkins, First and Second Peter, James, and Jude (Louisville: John Knox Press, 1995), 101, explains that evil’s “origin lies in the power of desires to entice persons into sin.” Perkins even personifies these desires, imputing intentions to them: “Desires use their power to entice individuals to give birth to sin” (ibid.). Such a personification begins to blur the difference between a real personification of evil (i.e. the devil) and a merely ‘literary’ personification. Patrick J. Hartin, James (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2003), 104: “The popular concept of desire … in James’s world sees it as something within the human person that is intrinsically ordered toward evil: it is the seat of all evil.” Among the
introduces a source of temptation that is absent from consideration in the passages above:

“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” (James 1:13-15).17 These verses explicitly deny that God would actively test the believer and there is no textual evidence that the “desire [ἐπιθυμία]” considered here is somehow demonic in source. Instead, this temptation evidently comes from the internal desires in the believer.18 When a person can be said to tempt him- or herself, the sense of divine pedagogy and parenthood is by necessity somewhat remote.19 But there are difficulties

commentaries I have consulted, only David R. Nienhuis and Robert W. Wall, Reading the Epistles of James, Peter, John & Jude as Scripture: The Shaping & Shape of a Canonical Collection (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2013), 80 refers to the later mention of “demonic impulses” (their phrase) in James (3:15), but even here, the point is to contrast those impulses with the inward desires being discussed in 1:13-14.

17 The text of Exodus 20:17 includes “οὐκ ἐπιθυμήσεις” in the Septuagint, which perhaps explains James’s perfectly negative assessment of desire/covetousness in the NT.

18 There are a variety of ways to explain this desire, but such cannot be the focus in the main text. It may be possible, firstly, to distinguish between the trial by desire itself and the sinful desire that follows from it. If this distinction is not carefully guarded, temptation becomes identical to sin, which, from the perspective of moral psychology, would be untenable. To avoid this problem, it seems necessary to distinguish between the two appearances of the term “desire.” In the first instance, the desire should be understood as an object of deliberation, an object understood and perceived as something valuable to be pursued. In the second instance, the “desire” should be understood as consent to pursue the object in act. Secondly, it might be possible to put a more negative connotation on the term πειρασμός here, so that the desire envisioned is already something of a capitulation to sinful ways of thought. This second interpretation is pursued in some Latin theological reflection on the fomes of sin, wherein a real temptation is recognized, but one in which there is already some sinful movement.

From a broader canonical perspective, as noted above, it is important to note that the same word, ἐπιθυμία, appears in the Septuagint translation of the Hebrew Bible at Exodus 20:17. The Hebrew injunction against covetousness is “lo-tahmod” in Exodus 20:17 and it was translated into Greek as “οὐκ ἐπιθυμήσεις.” Hamad carries the basic meaning: “to desire” and “to take pleasure in,” often in an inordinate, selfish way. Hebrew more commonly expresses desires with ‘avah, meaning “to incline” or “to desire,” with both negative and positive senses. Regardless of the precise sense of the Hebrew term in the original, Greek speaking Christians from that time forward would undoubtedly associate ἐπιθυμία with the more negative sense of “covetousness.”

19 God can permit an evil for the sake of a greater good, of course, but it is odd to say that a person’s self-temptation can count as temptation at all. If I say, “I could really go for a piece of cake right now” (especially assuming I know I shouldn’t be eating cake), I’ve already conceded significant moral ground just by articulating or presenting the desire to myself. How is this temptation and not simply sin? Some commentaries explain divine pedagogy in this passage by reference to the earlier unit in 1:1-4. Heil, James, 44-48 sees here a divine intention that one might still receive the “crown.” Others are insistent that since “God is not involved in evil,” one “must look elsewhere [than God] for the source
with this conception of temptation as well: how should one affirm that one can be both the *subject* and *object* of the same temptation or trial—how can I try myself?

The problem of internal temptation will be an essential area of investigation throughout the chapters that follow. Maximus and Thomas will each give their own account of what this temptation is, where it comes from, and how it is to be combated. The moral significance of this internal temptation will largely be determined in Maximus and Thomas’s thought by their estimation of the ultimate *source* of this test. The different solutions given by Maximus and Thomas will constitute some of the most important and fundamental differences that exist between the two thinkers concerning temptation, and this thinking influences the way each approaches the topic of Christ’s temptation in New Testament texts.

How do these two uniquely New Testament forms of temptation relate to the pedagogical testing instigated by God in the Old Testament? Only in the New Testament do beings who are purposefully opposed to God try to lure people to sinful actions and only in the New Testament is it explicitly affirmed that humanity is tested not by God, but by its own desires. In the first instance, it seems that demonic temptation is in some sense under God’s providential care. Even if the temptation envisioned in the Lord’s Prayer is one carried out by evil powers, the fact that the prayer asks for this temptation not to come implies that it is within God’s power to stop it—so God presumably permits it to continue for some greater purpose or good.\(^{20}\) In the second instance, however, James leaves little room for ambiguity; our internal temptations are *not* from God. There is a real threat of moral evil that originates inside the human subject and that does not come

\(^{20}\) It would perhaps be helpful to introduce a distinction between God’s *active* and God’s *permissive* will here, but such would move beyond the clear affirmation of the text of the Hebrew Bible at this point.
as a test from God. What James does not say is whether these desires are in a broader sense providential (for the procurement of human salvation), so an investigation of Maximus and Thomas on this question will be important in the coming chapters.

**B. Jesus’ Temptations in the New Testament**

There are two essential questions that I wish to address here: when the Gospel authors consider Christ to be tempted; and what subject tempts him in those scenes. After investigating the pivotal event of Jesus’ temptation in the desert, I will consider other moments in the Gospel accounts that will be described by Maximus as moments of temptation in Christ’s life.21

The temptation of Jesus in the desert appears in each of the synoptic Gospels (Matthew 4:1-11; Mark 1:12-13; Luke 4:1-13) and the basic data here are easily ascertained. The source of the temptation in the scene is the devil, who is described by Matthew as the Tempter [πειράζων] (Matt 4:3) and by Mark as Satan [Σατάν]. The objects of the temptation are also fairly clear. Following Matthew’s order, Christ is tempted first to miraculously consume bread, then to test God’s care for him, and finally to rule the nations and serve the devil.22 In light of the chapters to come, two questions must be considered: first, God’s relationship to this testing; and second, whether Jesus had any internal desire for the objects the devil presents.

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22 Scholars tend to argue that Matthew preserves the ordering of the source material from Q, whereas Luke reversed the last two in order to emphasize Jesus’ movement toward Jerusalem. See the two sources just cited and others on Matthew cited below.
As for the first question, it is argued among biblical scholars that the three temptations in Matthew’s account are constructed so as to parallel the three moments of Israel’s trial discussed earlier in this section. In this way, Matthew’s affirmations about Christ become claims about the relationship between Jesus and Israel. Whereas Israel failed the three tests presented in the parallel passages, Christ is presented as the true Israel, fulfilling the commands of obedience that Israel did not. Thus, while Matthew describes Christ’s temptation as originating in the devil, the broader theological purposes of this temptation come from God. Here, Matthew claims, Israel’s trial comes to its culmination and fulfillment; if their trial in the Old Testament is parental and providential, Jesus’ temptation shows the final explanation of how failure is not the last word. God tries his people and finally the one tried is found worthy—in the stead and on behalf of the people who perennially failed. In light of this structural consideration in Matthew, Jesus’ temptation is essentially providential—and is the means by which God fulfills his promises to Israel.

The Matthean discussion of the relationship between Jesus and Israel in his temptation is extensive. See, again, Alfaro, Mystério Salutis 11, 438-443, for discussion of Matthew’s theological reasoning and some references to modern biblical commentary on the passage. This section also contains some exposition of early Christian exegesis of Christ’s temptation, but a more thorough study can be found in M. Steiner, O.F.M., La Tentation de Jesus dans l’Interpretation Patristique de Saint Justin a Origene (Paris: Librairie Lecoffre, 1962). Other commentaries also have significant commentary on the Jesus-Israel relationship: see also W.D. Davies and Dale C. Allison, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel according to Saint Matthew, vol. 1 (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1988), 352ff, where the citations of the Old Testament are the “key to the narrative”; Harrington, The Gospel of Matthew, 68-70, where “Jesus stands with Israel in accepting the challenges posed by Moses” and “Far from replacing Israel, Jesus takes his identity from Israel” (ibid., 69); France, The Gospel of Matthew, 124ff, where he subtitles the section “The Messiah as the True Israel”; and Ulrick Luz, Matthew 1-7, trans. James E. Crouch (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007), 151-3. A brief mentions of the theme can be found in Curtis Mitch and Edward Sri, The Gospel of Matthew (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2010), 77, though this is not as thorough as many of the previous sources. For a broader analysis of the “Jewishness” of Matthew’s Gospel, see Anne M O’Leary, Matthew’s Judaization of Mark (New York: T&T Clark, 2006); there is discussion of Jesus and Israel at 144, and a thorough index shows several discussions of the temptation narrative of 4:1-11. Given this universal modern recognition of Jesus’ temptation as a moment of his recapitulation of Israel, and also given Thomas Aquinas’s general attention to the relationship between Israel and Christ (as discussed in Matthew Levering, Christ’s Fulfillment of Torah and Temple), it is somewhat surprising that Thomas does not address this theme in great detail. See Chapter 6 for further discussion of Israel, Christ, and temptation in Thomas’s theology.
As for the second question, there is little textual evidence to make strong claims about the way Jesus experienced the objects presented to him. One can reasonably assume that after forty days without food Christ would have had a strong desire to eat. Nothing in Christ’s circumstances, however, indicates that there would have been an unusually strong desire for the second two objects—but neither there is any indication what a “usual” desire for those objects would be. The texts simply affirm that all three are in fact temptations. In many ways, the relationship of Christ’s desires to these objects will be left to later authors to consider and will attract considerable attention in later chapters.

So much for the temptation in the desert; I will now consider other passages in the Gospels that may represent Christ’s temptation by the devil. There are, in fact, a great number of other confrontations that take place between Christ and demonic powers in the Gospel accounts, but most of them should not be described as moments of temptation. Christ is in clear control in most of these cases, having full knowledge of the demons’ presence and having the power to drive them out at a word. One scene in particular, however, demonstrates a decided break from this pattern, where Christ seems genuinely

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24 To speculate, one would generally only say that someone is tempted when the individual is in some sense drawn to the object under consideration. At the least, it would be an odd use of “temptation” to say that someone was tempted by food after a filling meal or that another was tempted by power when they were satisfied with their lot in life. Other senses of temptation are of course possible as well, and the differences here between Maximus and Thomas will be very important in the chapters that follow.

25 Later in this chapter, for instance, Evagrius of Pontus will argue that the three temptations presented to Christ arise from the three fundamental drives toward pleasure that exist in the human soul. See below in this chapter.

26 A possible exception to this general pattern between Christ and the demonic powers is the exchange between Peter and Jesus in Matthew 16:22-23, where Christ indicates that Peter, in suggesting that Christ does not need to suffer, is being used by the devil: “Get behind me, Satan! You are a hindrance to me; for you are not on the side of God, but of men.” See also the parallel in Mark 8:32-33. The word πειρασμός does not appear here in Matthew but the sense seems to be that the devil is trying to coax Christ away from the mission that has been given to him by God and thus that the devil is tempting Christ. The scene is also important in that it is the first time in Jesus’ life that the devil uses someone else as a vessel for his own temptations; not only God, but the devil as well is capable of mediated testing. This theme will arise again below when Satan enters into Judas in Luke 22:3.
tempted to stray from God’s plan: the Garden of Gethsemane. With a fair degree of certainty, Luke understands this moment as a trial for Christ.27 Given this piece of data, however, what is the source of this test?28 There is no explicit agent described in the synoptic texts, but as I will discuss in Chapter 3, Maximus argues that this scene portrays Jesus’ demonic temptation. Is there evidence to support his claim?29

In fact, the Gospel of Luke affords a particularly strong exegetical opportunity to consider how the Garden of Gethsemane may represent a confrontation between Jesus and the devil.30 In this passage, there are some weak parallels with the story of Adam and Eve and some much stronger ones with Jesus’ temptation in the desert. Briefly, the synoptic view of Gethsemane bears broad similarities with the sin of Adam in the Garden of Eden: both stories involve a man who is put to the test in a garden. Since the first

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27 Structurally, Luke builds Christ’s prayers around two separate admonitions to his disciples to pray that they “not enter into the test,” once at the beginning of Jesus’ prayer and once at the end. Luke 22:40: “Προσέχεσθε μὴ εἰσάξηθεν εἰς πειρασμόν”; Luke 22:46: “Ἱνα μὴ εἰσέλθητε εἰς πειρασμόν.” Based on the phrasing of Christ’s prayer for the disciples, it is not likely that they are currently undergoing a test, since Christ prays that they not enter into it. On the other hand, Christ certainly demonstrates that he is under severe duress in the scene, kneeling and sweating blood.

28 It is difficult to separate one’s popular imagination from the text here. Some artistic portrayals of the scene involve an angel coming from heaven to offer Christ the “cup” he asks to pass. Others explicitly place the devil in and around the Garden as the source of the temptation.

29 As discussed above, there are two other live options for the source of this temptation: God and Christ himself. If the events occurring in the Garden take place under God’s providential care, it is appropriate to consider God as permitting Christ’s temptation, though placing God as the active agent here does not seem appropriate. To say on the other hand that they come from within Christ would risk the moral unity of Christ as a perfectly sinless agent. The question of the internal disposition of Christ toward the proffered object is another question entirely, but is substantively the same as I approached it in the preceding paragraphs on the temptation in the desert. The question will certainly be important in Maximus and Thomas, but it does not merit further discussion here.

30 See the discussion in Alfaro, Mysterium Salutis 11, 443-7. Susan R. Garrett, Demise of the Devil: Magic and the Demonic in Luke’s Writings (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990), 101 only makes passing reference to the temptation of Christ at the end of his life. Michael D. Goulder, Luke: A New Paradigm, vol. 2 (Worcester: Billing & Sons, 1989), 742 also takes the parallelism between the temptation in the desert and in Gethsemane seriously, noting in particular the Lukan delay of the angels coming to strengthen Christ. Goulder is even willing to offer a tentative interpretation of demonic involvement: “It would be entirely in keeping with this [supernatural setting] if Jesus himself were under the influence of angelic force.” William S. Kurz, Reading Luke-Acts (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1993), 62 also notes the intentional deferral of the angel to this passage, though he does not discuss demonic overtones that this may imply. Alfaro and Goulder’s analysis is sound here, and certainly in keeping with the interpretations that will be seen in the coming chapters.
involves a being who questions God’s will, it is possible that the presence of a similar being is implied by Luke in the second. More concrete and convincing, however, is the strong relationship of this passage with the temptation in the desert in Luke’s account. Luke states at 4:13 that, after the temptation in the desert, the devil “departed from him [Jesus] until an opportune time.” Luke never says how long that time was, but the next time the devil makes an appearance in Luke’s Gospel is at the beginning of chapter 22(:3) when “Satan entered into Judas” to bring about the events of Jesus’ last week on earth.31 Shortly thereafter, Judas reclines with Jesus for the Last Supper and makes his decisive move when he confronts Jesus in the Garden and betrays him with a kiss (Luke 22:14-23; 22:39-53). Thus, even without a “spiritual” confrontation between Jesus and Satan (as may also be implied), Satan certainly uses Judas to confront Jesus in the Garden.32

There is another structural similarity to the synoptic tradition’s temptation in the desert. In Matthew and Mark, the temptation in the desert ends with angelic powers coming to Christ and “ministering” to him (Matthew 4:11, Mark 1:12) after the attacks of the devil. Similarly, and even more strikingly, Luke presents angelic powers with the surprising role of strengthening—not just ministering to—Jesus.33 Since the former

31 Luke, unlike Matthew, does not mention the confrontation between Peter and Jesus over the inevitability of Christ’s death.
32 Peter may have been used in a similar way in Matthew 16:22-23, even if to a lesser degree.
33 F. Godet, A Commentary on the Gospel of St. Luke, vol. 2 (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1976), 306 states that a “divine refreshing pervades Him, body and soul [with the coming of the angel]; and it is thus only that He receives strength to continue to the last the struggle to the physical violence of which He was on the very point of giving way.” Older studies also consider this “strengthening.” R.C.H. Lenski, The Interpretation of St. Luke’s Gospel (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1946), 1075 simply argues that “this strength was intended for the human nature of Jesus during this ordeal” and that it came “at the moment when it was most needed.” Raymond F. Stoll, The Gospel According to St. Luke (Cincinnati: Frederick Pustet, 1931), 365, while an older study, describes this strengthening as for Christ’s “body and soul.”
ministering is in response to Jesus’ trial by the devil, one might also interject a demonic test as a prelude to this angelic strengthening. The overall density of references to angelic powers, to the presence of Satan or other evil powers, and to Christ’s temptation makes it reasonable to consider a demonic testing prior to the ministration of angels to Jesus in Gethsemane. While such an interpretation certainly exceeds what is present in the bare words of the text, there is nevertheless some merit to the exegesis of this passage given by Maximus.

C. Christology in Hebrews: Temptation, Sympathy, Weakness, and Sin

Given the general way in which evil powers react to the presence of Christ in the Gospels, the idea that Christ endured a prolonged temptation by them is perhaps surprising. Throughout the gospel accounts, demons call out his name in fear and try to negotiate with him. In the end, though, they obey his every command. If Jesus had both the insight to know when there were demonic powers at work around him and the power to drive them away at a word, it is not immediately obvious why Christ would or could undergo a prolonged temptation by the devil. Why would the synoptic Gospel authors present Christ in this way?

For further scriptural reflection on the meaning and purpose of Christ’s temptation, no source is more important to Maximus and Thomas than the Letter to the Hebrews.34 Whereas James knows that “God cannot be tempted with evil” (1:13), Hebrews knows that Christians have a God who has taken on their state in order to heal it simply moved the reference to ministering/strengthening angels to this point in his Gospel, which, assuming Markan dependence, even more strongly suggests that Luke intends a parallel between the two passages. A discussion of the authenticity, or at least canonicity, of Luke 22:43-44 would be too disruptive: I simply take it for granted here.

34 I will make reference to a number of commentaries on Hebrews in my discussion of weakness in a moment.
from within. For the author of Hebrews, Jesus’ temptation is an essential part of Christ’s mediatorial role between humanity and God. Hebrews 2:17-18 states: “he had to be made like his brethren in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make expiation for the sins of the people. For because he himself has suffered and been tempted, he is able to help those who are tempted.” In this passage, the divine purposes of Christ’s temptation appear as central to the Christian understanding of Jesus. Whatever their most proximate sources, Christ’s temptations occur because they allow Christ to function as a merciful mediator who expiates for human sin and thus reconciles humanity to God.

A second verse, however, places an explicit limit on the ways in which Christ identifies with other human beings. One reads in Hebrews 4:15: “For we have not a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses [οὐ̄ γὰρ ἔχομεν ἀρχιερέα μὴ δυνάμενον συμπαθῆσαι ταῖς ἁσθενείαις ἡμῶν], but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin.” In short, Christ can sympathize, but he cannot (or at least does not) sin. What, though, of the middle term in these considerations: Christ’s suffering with our weakness? If, for instance, Luke can say that angels strengthen Jesus, is it appropriate to say that Christ in his own humanity was “weak”? Is such

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35 The Greek text: “δόθην ὄψειλεν κατὰ πάντα τοῖς ἀδέλφοις ὑμωθήναι, ἵνα ἐλεημόνως γένηται καὶ πιστὸς ἀρχιερεὺς τὰ πρὸς τὸν θεὸν εἰς τὸ ἱλάσκεσθαι τὰς ἁμαρτίας τοῦ λαοῦ. 18ἐν γὰρ πέπονθεν αὐτὸς πειρασθῆ, δύναται τοῖς πειραζόμενοις βοήθησαι.”

36 This final clause is decisive and interpreting its meaning will be essential both for St. Maximus and St. Thomas’s understanding of Christ’s temptation.

37 Hebrews 4:15 indicates a logical connection between temptation and weakness: because he has experienced our temptations he “suffers with” our weakness. Hebrews thus indicates that temptation is itself the starting point of human weakness, but the text does not say that temptation is itself weakness.

38 Luke 22:43. There is no etymological link between the root for weakness [ἁσθένεια] and strengthening [ἰσχύω], but the latter root only appears twice in the entire NT—the other time following immediately after Paul’s conversion in Acts 9. The meanings of the words are sufficiently opposed to merit the question, however.

39 This question is crucial for both Maximus and Thomas. In Chapter 3, I will show that Maximus is at times willing to speak of the “weakness of Christ’s flesh” at the limits of his identification with our
If one considers ways in which demonic powers relate to ἀσθένεια, there are two significant episodes. First, Luke recounts a story in which a spirit [πνεῦμα] causes a physical infirmity [ἀσθένεια] (13:11). Based on this passage, there is some ground for the belief that a spirit can cause a certain kind of weakness in someone, so long as the weakness involved is understood as physical, not emotional, mental, or spiritual, as the weakness of Hebrews 5:2 seems to be. The fact that demons are able to effect physical changes in bodies, however, is a fact that will be particularly significant in Thomas’s demonology (see Chapter 5). A second, more prominent example is the ἀσθένεια that afflicts Paul in 2 Corinthians 12:7-9. What he first describes as a “thorn in the flesh” and later re-describes as both “an angel of Satan” and a “weakness” might be physical in

human condition. In Chapter 6, it will be clear that this sort of weakness would indicate concupiscence in Jesus, a conclusion that Thomas rejects as collapsing him into a sinful state.

For Maximus and Thomas, it is these other canonical texts that would be the primary point of reference for understanding what Hebrews means here. The author of Hebrews would not have known these canonical sources (necessarily), but I am interested particularly in the way that this text would have come to Maximus and Thomas. As an indication of some of the Letter’s own background, C. Spicq, L’Epitre aux Hébreux, t. 1 (Paris: Librairie Lecoffre, 1952), 323, n. 3 takes care to point out that Hebrew (whether language or culture is unclear) is lax with regard to sins of weakness, and so does not consider them as significant as intentional sins. This laxity may be the source of some of the letter’s ambiguity on the question of Christ’s “weakness.”

Most instances of ἀσθένεια in the New Testament are references to physical ailments, and based on the essential terms of Hebrew’s affirmations about Jesus, there is no a priori reason to argue that Jesus could not have shared our susceptibility to this sort of weakness. They are, in a sense, a trial in which Christ may very well have shared without breaching Hebrews’ qualification that his testing was without sin—so long as “sin” is construed as a purely moral category. 2 Cor 5:21 affirms that Christ was “made sin,” but this claim is not identical to Christ’s committing sin. There is of course no direct evidence that he did get sick, but on the sole qualification of Jesus’ moral sinlessness there is no reason to believe he couldn’t have. As I will show in Chapter 3, Maximus distinguishes between an “ontological” appropriation (by which Christ becomes human according to nature) and a “relational” appropriation (by which Christ identifies with our sinful state). The “relational” appropriation, too, avoids the claim that Christ performed sinful actions, but further discussion must be left for Chapter 3.

One could presumably also turn to Job 1-2 for another example of angelic powers inflicting physical harm on one being tested.
character, yet the broader context of his discussion points more toward mental and emotional weaknesses, perhaps a weakness in conscience. This passage is the strongest evidence in the New Testament that demonic powers have the ability to inflict human beings with negative mental or perhaps emotional states. Insofar as this passage also appears to Paul as a test or trial, one might consider this more psychological form of ἀσθένεια as an external, demonic trial that somehow influences his internal dispositions. Again, there is no direct implication in these cases that the weakness is sin, so it may be possible to use this sort of ἀσθένεια to describe Christ’s being tempted like us in all things.

It is perhaps permissible, then, to admit the above forms of ἀσθένεια into Christ’s existential experience and as an aspect of his demonic temptation. However, many scholars note that the tone of Hebrews 5 and 7 indicates that some other form of ἀσθένεια would be contrary to Christ’s mediatorial, high-priestly role.

42 There is a great deal of dispute in modern scholarship about what this weakness is. Murray J. Harris, The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2005), 858-9 provides a taxonomy of explanations that does not explicitly include any demonic explanation. Harris’s later commentary, however, includes significant exploration of the relationship of the weakness to the angel of Satan (ibid., 860). Frank J. Matera, II Corinthians: A Commentary (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2003), 283-4 offers three main lines of commentary, one of which takes the “satan” as “Satan”; the other two interpretations are that this ‘adversary’ (the meaning of ’satan’) are as a human opponent or (as the Latin Vulgate has it) the “goading of the flesh [stimulus cari].” This last option—equating the devil with fleshly temptation—is amenable to some of the broader goals of this project, at least when the personification is taken seriously. Matera also shows that God’s providential purposes are working in this affliction, so that Paul might be made stronger (ibid., 284). Finally, Thomas D. Stegman, Second Corinthians (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2009), 270-1 takes the literal personification seriously, but recognizes the obscurity of Paul’s phrasing.

43 See the logical connection between the “test” and “weakness” in 1 Cor 13:5-10, as well.

44 Indeed, the three-fold prayer of St. Paul to have this weakness removed from him (12:8) may be an allusion to Jesus’s three-fold prayer in Gethsemane. Harris, Corinthians, 861 finds this unlikely; Matera, Corinthians, 284 takes the parallel for granted. It is possible that Jesus himself ascribes a certain “weakness” to his flesh in Gethsemane (“The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak,” Matthew 26:41), where it is not perfectly clear whether he is discussing the apostles’ sleepiness or his own distress, but it is best to leave the interpretation of those words to Maximus and Thomas themselves in the chapters that follow.

45 See Harold W. Attridge, The Epistle to the Hebrews (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1989), 148, which is
states that because the former high priests were “beset with weakness [περίκειται ἀσθένεια],” they had to make sin offerings both for the people and for themselves. The need to make a sin offering for oneself, though, indicates that the line of sinlessness indicated by Hebrews 4:15 has been crossed; Christ cannot be “beset with weakness” as the former high-priests were. It is possible, however, that the particular relationship of the high-priests toward this weakness is decisive for their making sin-offerings for themselves; whereas Christ “co-suffers [συμπαθήσατο]” with our weakness, the former

careful to explain that although Christ “is thus beset with weakness,” it is “not the weakness of sin.” Instead it was “the doleful conditions of human life, the conditions to which his followers are exposed” (ibid.). The distance is more clearly stated in the commentary on 7:28 (ibid., 214-5), which makes the weakness a point of difference. Luke Timothy Johnson, Hebrews: A Commentary (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2006), 142-4 speaks uniformly positively of the weakness of the priest in 5:2. Johnson there discusses the being “clothed” with weakness almost as a synonym of the “suffering with” weakness from 4:15. Johnson, however, admits something of a contrast between the priests and Jesus in his discussion of 7:28 (ibid., 196). Philip Edgcumbe Hughes, A Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B Eerdmans Publishing Co, 1977), 176-7 makes the term “weakness” an essential soteriological term: “Sympathy, or compassion, and gentleness in dealing with others go together; and this compassionate gentleness springs from a community of weakness.” However, Hughes then equivocates. On the one hand, Christ experienced the “weakness Christ experienced in his human nature”; on the other, the author of Hebrews here speaks “of that weakness which is the consequence not so much of human nature as of human depravity. … this is a weakness in which Christ did not share” (ibid., 177). Hughes does not explain how this lack of weakness does not result in a corresponding lack of sympathy. Victor C. Pfitzner, Hebrews (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1997), 90-92 (and to an extent 114) consistently speaks of the weakness of the priests as a point of contrast from Christ. Alan C. Mitchell, Hebrews (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1989), 112-113 only provides minimal discussion of the problem of Christ’s “weakness.” This brief review of the literature shows just how much disagreement there is on the specific role of “weakness” in the vocabulary and theology of Hebrews. It is appropriated by some as a clear indication of identity between Christ and the faithful; it is appropriated by others as a sinful point of difference between normal human beings and the perfectly sinless Christ.

46 Hebrews 7:28 considers a similar contrast: “For the law appoints men who have weakness [ἔχοντας ἀσθένειαν] to be high priests, but the word of the oath, which was taken after the law, appoints a son, who has been made perfect forever [ὅς τὸν ἀιώνα τετελειωμένον].” Here, there is a clear contrast being drawn. The high priests who “have weakness” are defective in their mediation, whereas the son, who “has been made perfect forever” is a sinless, eternal mediator. This statement of the contrast is stronger than that in 5:3, for now it is clear that having weakness is also opposed to the perfect mediation offered by Christ. Hebrews does affirm a process of perfecting that took place in Christ, so perhaps the “strength” of Christ’s humanity might not be considered as static throughout his life, but the passage does point toward an ultimate “strength” in Jesus, so that he could not be described as “having weakness.”

Just as weakness is related to sin in Hebrews, a similar, though not equivalent, relation exists between desire [ἐπιθυμία] and sin [ἁμαρτία] in James 1:15, where desire takes us as prisoners [συλλαμβάνει] into sin and bears [τίκτω] sin as a mother bears forth children. This passage especially emphasized the natural, perhaps even necessary, link between desire [ἐπιθυμία] and sin. The ways in which these relations (both between weakness and sin and between desire and sin) plays out will be crucial in Maximus’ Christology.
high-priests were “beset [περίκειται]” with it. It is possible that the sin in this passage is not the weakness itself but rather how one responds to the weakness. The precise interpretation of “weakness” in Christ’s humanity will be an important component in the chapters that follow.47

These scriptural observations set the stage as the “primary sources” for the discussion of Christ’s demonic temptation in the thought of both Maximus and Thomas. For the remainder of this chapter, however, I will focus on sources that had an influence on Maximus in his approach to anthropology (particularly concerning his ascetic view of the passions and demonic temptation) and Christology. Later, in Chapter 4, there will be time to consider other influential sources for Thomas’s understanding of Christ’s temptation.

47 As will be discussed in Chapter 3, Maximus affirms that Christ shares a fallen kind of weakness [ἀσθένεια]. In Opuscula 7, one reads: “For that he has by nature a human will, just as he has an essentially divine will, the Word himself shows clearly, when … he humanly begged to be spared from death, saying, Father, if it be possible, let the cup pass from me (Matt. 26:39), in order to manifest the weakness of his own flesh [ίνα δείξῃ τῆς οὐκείας σαρκός τὴν ἀσθένειαν]” (Andrew Louth, Maximus the Confessor, Opuscula 7, p. 186; PG 91:81C). He reiterates the same claim shortly thereafter in an explanation of a passage from Athanasius: “’For the spirit is eager, but the flesh is weak,’ we understand [as meaning] ‘that two wills are manifest here: the human, which belongs to the flesh, and the divine. For the human will, because of the weakness of the flesh [διὰ τὴν ἀσθένειαν τῆς σαρκός], seeks to avoid the passion; the divine will is eager’ [νοοῦμεν ὡς δόο θελήματα ἐνταθὰ δείκνυσι· τὸ μὲν ἄνθρωπον· ὧν εἶστι τῆς σαρκός· τὸ δὲ θεῖκον. Τὸ γὰρ ἄνθρωπον διὰ τὴν ἀσθένειαν τῆς σαρκός παρατέται τὸ πάθος· τὸ δὲ θεῖκον ἀυτοῦ πρόθυμον]” (ibid., 187. PG 91:81C). We may have here simply a different understanding of “weakness”; it is important to note that Maximus does not cite Hebrews 5 anywhere in the vicinity of this claim. Nevertheless, Maximus’s sense does seem clear: his understanding of “the spirit is eager, but the flesh is weak” applies not only to the sleeping apostles but to Jesus in his test in the Garden. How, if at all, such a claim can be rectified with the book of Hebrews, is an important question moving forward.

Thomas, on the other hand, will consider this weakness largely in terms of the ‘defects’ of Christ’s human soul and body; see especially ST III.14 and 15, and my discussion of these questions in Chapter 6.
II. Anthropological Sources

Having completed a review of the scriptural sources for Maximus and Thomas’s account of Christ’s demonic temptation, I move now to the post-biblical era to focus specifically on Patristic sources that influence Maximus’s anthropology. I will consider first the thought of Basil of Caesarea and Gregory of Nyssa concerning the origin of the passions in human nature (A). I will then turn to Nemesius of Emesa for an investigation of his theory of the moral act (B). Finally, I will discuss Origen of Alexandria and Evagrius of Ponticus on their theories of internal demonic temptation (C). I will occasionally mention Christological matters that arise from this material, but my focus is to understand how these authors conceive of human nature in relationship to passions and the devil.

A. The Origin of the Passions in the Cappadocian Fathers

Before considering Maximus’s own understanding of the origin of the passions, it will be helpful to trace the thought of some of his predecessors in the Greek tradition.

Two important figures in this tradition are St. Basil of Caesarea and St. Gregory of Nyssa.48 Both figures offer extended commentary on the original state of humanity before

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48 Work has also been done by Richard A. Layton to describe the origin of the tradition of *propassions* (so important to the later Latin tradition—see Chapter 4) in Origen and Didymus the Blind. Richard A. Layton, “Propatheia: Origen and Didymus on the Origin of the Passions,” in *Vigiliae Christianae* 54 (2000), 262-282. His essay argues that Origen and Didymus “found the *propatheia* a useful concept to distinguish between spontaneous, involuntary affective movements and passions over which agents exercised at least some measure of authority” (ibid., 262). For both Origen and Didymus, “This preliminary affective event demarcated a significant frontier in the human self—between being involuntarily subject to external forces and being an agent who initiated self-directed actions—and designated the point at which an agent became a moral being” (ibid., 262-3). Significantly, though, “this frontier in the self … was neither securely guarded, nor permanently fixed. Alterations in the concept *propatheia* also created the possibility for a new cartography of the human psyche” (ibid., 263). Layton concludes that “Origen used the concept to protect certain spontaneous reactions from imputation as ‘sin,’ and incidentally ensured in this manner the integrity of the frontier that separates involuntary reactions from voluntary dispositions” (ibid., 282). Didymus, however, reappropriates the term and blurs the boundary established by Origen: “the line between voluntary and involuntary
the Fall and on sin’s effects on that state. Basil’s reflections are highly allegorical but, as I will argue, they can be read so as to indicate that passions are natural to the human condition even before the Fall, but in such a way that they enjoyed perfect rational governance before Adam’s sin. Gregory’s consideration of the question is more explicit and precise. For Gregory, the passions, when carefully defined, should only be attributed to the human condition after the Fall, though as I will show this does not mean that Adam and Eve lacked affective qualities in Eden. I will treat Basil’s thought on the origin of the passions first and then turn to the Nyssan’s account of the passions.

1. Basil of Caesarea. Basil’s discussion of the state and composition of human nature is, perhaps not surprisingly, based on the early chapters of Genesis, chapters 1 and 2—notably ending before the account of Adam and Eve’s disobedience in Genesis 3. Even though the authorship of this work is disputed, it is worth considering as a possible early reflection on the passions that could have come into Maximus’s own hands. Although Basil’s commentary is confined to Genesis 1 and 2 (thus excluding the sin of Adam and Eve), this commentary provides enough information to reasonably ascertain what his view of sin and the resultant disorder in fact is. Since his direct purpose in this

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49 English translations in the following are from Basil the Great, *On the Human Condition*, trans. Nonna Verna Harrison (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 2005). Citations are to the paragraph numbers in Harrison’s text.

50 Harrison notes that the authorship of this piece is contested (ibid., 14), but if the work could have come to Maximus under Basil’s name, it is worth considering here. Failing this, in any case, the consideration of the Nyssen in the following section stands as a significant example of early reflection on the origin of the passions.
work seems to fall more toward moral exhortation than toward a precise categorization of the ‘parts’ of human nature, Basil’s reflections on the passions are not systematic and must be reconstructed from the progression of his moral thought. The presentation that follows, then, is much more schematic on the question of the origin of the passions than Basil’s own treatise is. I will aim to show two things about Basil’s understanding of the passions: that the current human experience of them is a consequence of human sin; and that there is a primordial form of passion that antecedes the Fall.

As seen in Stephen M. Hildebrand’s recent work on Basil of Caesarea, Basil’s reflections on human nature and the Fall are best perceived in statements about the relationship between humankind and the animals in his exposition of the creation narrative. Structurally, Basil compares human emotionality to the animals in the garden of Eden, so I will proceed here in two steps: first, I will explain Basil’s literal understanding of the relationship of humanity and the animals, then consider its symbolic meaning for human nature itself. Reading the beginning of Genesis, Basil understands that humanity was created with the “image of God” that cannot be effaced, namely the “power to rule.” At the literal level, this rule is exercised over the animals of the earth, which in turn live in a perfectly ordered relationship with the world around them, not engaging in any conflict with human beings or each other. Indeed, Basil is clear that in the original creation, all animals were vegetarians and no animals lived by killing other

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51 Basil’s text intertwines anthropology and exhortation, routinely oscillating between contemporary moral application and relevant exegesis of the first two chapters of Genesis to show the foundations of humanity’s current circumstances.


54 Basil, *On the Origin of Humanity*, Disc. 2, §6: “Nature was not divided, for it was in its prime; nor did hunters kill, for that was not yet the custom of human beings; nor did wild beasts claw prey, for they were not carnivores.”
animals.\textsuperscript{55} This ordered, harmonious relationship between human beings, soon-to-be carnivores, and other animals ends, however, with the introduction of human sin. First of all, this original order gives way to a new (dis)order in which humans are permitted to eat flesh.\textsuperscript{56} The consequences of human sin do not only affect human activities; they restructure the way the entire creation interacts. Thus, the order that existed between animals breaks down into hunting and being hunted, killing and being killed, and introduces death, perhaps the greatest disorder of all.\textsuperscript{57} Finally, it is a consequence of sin that these carnivores can now turn in open rebellion against the humans who were appointed to rule over them.\textsuperscript{58}

This analysis of the relationship of animals and humans becomes significant in light of Basil’s allegorical reading. Allegorically, Basil refers to the animals as the “irrational passions,”\textsuperscript{59} repeatedly invoking the parallel as part of a moral exhortation to his audience. Just as human beings were created to rule the animals, just so are we to use our reason to control our passions. The human’s “sovereignty given you by God” is “that you have reason as master of the passions” and, indeed, the image of God in humanity consists in “the power to rule” both exterior realities and one’s own passions: “You are indeed created ruler, ruler of passions, ruler of beasts, ruler of creeping things, ruler of winged creatures.”\textsuperscript{60} Basil conceives of this original condition as one in which human beings, although bodily, are internally ordered and “unenslaved to the passions of the

\textsuperscript{55} Lions and other carnivores existed, but they “followed the diet of swans and all grazed the meadows” (ibid.). Carrion birds, too, lived on such a diet, because in the original creation, no animals died: “it is customary for vultures to feed on corpses, but since there were not yet corpses, not yet their stench, so there was not yet such food for vultures” (ibid.).

\textsuperscript{56} Ibid., §7: “the cause of our variety in diet was the introduction of sin.”

\textsuperscript{57} Ibid., §6. For instance, it is as a consequence of human sin that “the lion is a carnivore … [and] vultures await carcasses.”


\textsuperscript{59} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{60} Ibid.
Even though human beings are not enslaved to these passions at the beginning, however, the force of Basil’s analogy indicates that these passions would have existed in some ruled, orderly form. That is, Basil’s belief that the passions are in a sense original to our created state is seen primarily in the fact that the animals themselves existed before the Fall.

Despite the fact that humans have the power and the duty to rule their passions, Basil is well aware that in our current condition they do not. Basil does not explicitly state that this lack of governance comes from the same source as the disorder that follows human sin, yet such is the force of the parallel that he has constructed. Hildebrand, too, has noted that, for Basil, the Fall brings about “enjoyments centered on the flesh” that previously did not exist.

Considering the ways that humans fail to rule correctly, Basil states:

You rule every wild beast. So, you say, what beasts do I have in myself? Indeed you have thousands, a great crowd of beasts in yourself. ...Anger is a little beast when it barks in the heart. Is it not wilder than every dog? Is not the deceit lurking in a deceitful soul harder to tame than every lurking bear? Is not hypocrisy a beast? Is not one sharp in insults a scorpion? Is not one who in hiding strikes out in revenge more dangerous than a viper? Is the greedy person not a rapacious wolf? What kind of beast is not in us?

If the allegorical reading that Basil has constructed is taken seriously, such battles between beasts and human beings could only take place in humankind after the cosmos-

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61 Basil, *On the Origin of Humanity*, Disc. 2, §7. This same condition marks how human nature will function at the end of time, as well: “the restoration after the present age will be such as was the first creation. And the human being will come again to his original condition, rejecting evil, this life of many troubles, the soul’s enslavement involving life’s concerns; putting aside all these things, he will return to that life in paradise unenslaved to the passions of the flesh, free, intimate with God...” (ibid.).

62 Hildebrand does not draw this particular conclusion; his analysis focuses primarily on Basil’s affirmation of human *bodiliness* prior to the fall, as even that fact was contested in the preceding philosophical tradition. See Hildebrand, *Basil*, 24-31. Presumably, something of human bodily need would also come with this initial bodiliness, as well.

63 Ibid., §32.

64 Ibid., §17.
altering event of human sin; before, the animals and humans lived together in harmony. Just as the order of the external world is destabilized by human sinfulness, so too is the internal order of the human soul, to the point where he can describe its current condition in terms of slavery to passion. In short, since the human being is a microcosm of the universe, external disorder maps onto internal disorder as well.

Having clarified the contours of Basil’s allegorical interpretation of the passions, two concluding remarks are in order. First, the current human experience of the passions is a consequence of the protological sin of humanity. If Basil’s allegory is taken seriously, human sin introduced disorder into the universe, both outside and inside the human subject. While Basil envisions a future release from the power of the passions, it seems that a certain “enslavement” to them is a necessary condition of human life in the present age. St. Basil does not make clear what the prospects of the human subject are with respect to the attempt to rule the passions; perhaps he believes we can rule them perfectly in this world—or perhaps not. In any case, Basil makes clear that our final freedom from passion is an eschatological event. However this freedom is ultimately to be attained (and again, the answer is not immediately forthcoming in his work), human beings must make the attempt to rule their passions in the way our primordial parents were once able. These matters will merit further investigation when they are taken up in Maximus’s thought in the next chapter.

Secondly, Basil’s allegory also indicates that even though the current state of human nature is marked by a disorderly form of passion, the drive that is the basis of these fallen passions existed prior to Adam’s sin. Just as the animals lived for a time in harmony with human agents in the garden, so too did the passions live for a time under

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65 As quoted above; Basil, On the Origin of Humanity, Disc. 2, §7.
the rule of human reason. Basil gives little indication of what such rule looked like or how it was accomplished, but the nature of Basil’s comparison leads one to believe that some “ruled” form of passion existed within the original constitution of human nature. It will be necessary in the next chapter to investigate Maximus’s thought for any parallel affirmations about our original constitution.

2. Gregory of Nyssa. In On the Soul and the Resurrection, Gregory of Nyssa devotes a significant portion of his discussion with his sister, Macrina, to the question of the passions: where they come from, their moral quality, and their end (τέλος). The verdict of this text toward them is not positive; yet in order to understand this judgment toward the passions, it is important to perceive the broader context of Gregory and Macrina’s anthropology, as this reveals a much more positive meaning for emotionality and affective impulse than a simple investigation of the word “passion” would indicate. Here, I will begin by providing some anthropological background before considering the current state of the passions in the human soul. I will show, on the one hand, that Gregory has a conception of a positive affective “impulse” in human nature prior to the Fall. On the other, it will be clear that the postlapsarian condition includes much more negative emotional components that are introduced by means of demonic activity in human nature.

Much like St. Basil’s understanding of the passions above, St. Gregory’s is based on an allegorical understanding of a central scriptural passage. For Gregory, this passage is the parable of the tares (Matthew 13:24-30). In the parable, a farmer goes out to his field and sows good seed in the field and anticipates a good harvest. However, in the

66 Discussion of this subject can also be found in Lucas Francisco Mateo-Seco and Giulio Maspero, eds., The Brill Dictionary of Gregory of Nyssa (Boston: Brill, 2010), 53 (on dispassion) and 220 (on the passions in human nature). These articles do not discuss significantly the role of the Fall in the origin of the passions. See also the sources cited below concerning the Nyssen’s intellectual understanding of the Fall and consequent introduction of passion.
night, an evil man comes out and sows tares among the good seed. When both begin to sprout, his workers ask if they should pull up the tares, but the owner responds that, out of a concern that the good seed might be uprooted in the process, the workers should permit both to grow. Only at the harvest are the two separated and the tares consumed by fire.

Many modern interpreters read this text so that the different seeds represent individual human beings, some of whom will be saved on the day of judgment and some of whom will be damned. For Macrina and Gregory, however, the meaning is quite different. In their interpretation, God is the farmer who establishes within each human individual seeds of natural “impulses” (ὀρμή) or “motions” (κινήματα). These impulses, Macrina explains, are something “sown” in human nature by God from our creation. If cultivated and allowed to produce fruit, these motions are the good seed planted in our soul that “would undoubtedly have produced the fruit of virtue for us” and that are “truly good by nature.” Thus, from the creation of humankind, we were in a sense emotional beings, capable of righteous anger and desire, as long as such were directed toward their natural ends. In the case of desire, this end is a tendency that “raise[s] us toward the union with the heavenly”; for love, this natural end is to join us with the divine; for anger, the purpose is as a “weapon” against “our adversary.” Each of these purposes is so important and deep-set within the constitution of human nature that it would be unthinkable to put them at risk, even if it would also free us from other less savory consequences.

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68 Ibid., 59.
69 Ibid., 60.
70 Ibid., 59.
When Macrina explains the tares, the “enemy” that emerges is clearly the devil. But the devil does not act without provocation of a sort; human sin still plays a role in Macrina’s conception of passion as well. Without the “cover of darkness” the devil may never have had an opportunity to sow the tares, yet such darkness—human sin—did come: “the judgment of the good has been sown through sin [δι’ ἀμαρτιαν].” There is a mutual interplay between human culpability and demonic intervention; without the sin, the devil would not have found opportunity, and the opportunity led to a further increase in sin. The tares that are sown by the enemy are not the passions as such, but rather a process of judgment concerning the good that was absent prior to sin and the sowing.

This judgment process, which is in part open to error under the devil’s influence, is the root cause of the passions and consequently sin.

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71 Ibid., 58-9. I have modified Roth’s translation here. The judgment is technically the object of the sowing, which is done through sin. The phrase, and what follows is: Ἐπειδὴ δὲ παρενεπαρῆ τούτοις ἡ περὶ τῆς τοῦ καλοῦ κρίσιν δι’ ἀμαρτίαν, καὶ τὸ ἄντος καὶ μόνον κατὰ τὴν ἰδίαν φύσιν καλὸν, διὰ τοῦ συναναφωνότος βλαστῆς ἡ ποίημα ἐπεσκοτίσθη...” [PG 46:64C]. Roth has “But since error in the judgment of the good has been sown along with these impulses...”

72 The secondary literature discusses why Gregory explains the passions after sin in terms of an intellectual change. As argued by J. Warren Smith, Passion and Paradise: Human and Divine Emotion in the Thought of Gregory of Nyssa (New York: Crossroad Publishing Company, 2004), 75-103, the “Nyssen shares with the Stoics and Aristotle the belief that passion and sin are ultimately the product of errant judgment or mistaken belief” (ibid., 101). Later, “his account of the passions as both arising from our sensually oriented impulses as well as from mistaken judgments about the Good and the Real reflect both [Platonism’s tripartate soul and Chrysippus’s unitary soul]” (ibid., 102), and the “Nyssen’s solution to the problem of the passions rests upon a highly unified doctrine of the soul in which the intellect functions as the hegmonikon that harnesses all the soul’s powers into an alliance enabling its ascent to God” (ibid.). Kevin Corrigan, Evagrius and Gregory: Mind, Soul and Body in the 4th Century (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2009), 103-112 also discusses Gregory’s doctrine of the Fall as largely intellectual. “The mind’s own activity is tiny without the reflective capacity to be illuminated by the Divine. When this capacity is shut off, the mind is forced to adjust to a world without genuine semantic height or insight, in object-dependency and with its own cramped ego … to haunt it” (ibid., 112). For both of these authors, then, Gregory conceives of the passions as a subsidiary by-product of a fall that is largely intellectual in nature. One might also cite here Mateo-Seco and Maspero, The Brill Dictionary of Gregory of Nyssa, 220, as it includes a close analysis of the passage just cited in the main text. However, as said in a note above, the dictionary does not speak of the Fall in significant detail.

73 The Socratic overtones of this doctrine of sin should be clear, yet the sin does not consist in misjudgment alone but in the wrong use of choice, as I will discuss next. The implicit demonic aspect of the Nyssen’s thought here is not discussed in the secondary literature.
Only at this juncture does passion, properly so called, arise in Gregory and Macrina’s discussion. When free choice (προαιρέσεως) makes a decision for evil on the basis of an impulse and an incorrect judgment, passion results. On the other hand, when free choice makes a decision for good on the basis of an impulse and a correct judgment, virtue results:

we shall declare that these [motions] are neither virtuous nor wicked in themselves, since they are impulses of the soul [κινήματα τῆς ψυχῆς] which lie in the power of the users to serve good or otherwise. When their movement is toward the better, we shall declare that they are material for praise. … If, on the other hand, their inclination is toward the worse, then they become passions and are named accordingly.

This passage does not resolve the role of judgment [κρίσις] in the psychology of the moral act, and some ambivalence remains. If demons have sown a faulty judgment alongside or within the human impulsive faculty, how can one ever know that they have in fact sought the good? Does judgment precede choice (as it appears here) or, as one might alternatively formulate the structure of human choice, is judgment rather part of or the result of choice? These questions will arise again when we consider Maximus’s moral psychology in the next chapter; for now it suffices to indicate how Gregory thinks judgment and choice are related.

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74 At one point (PG 46:61A), Macrina misspeaks and calls the motion (κινήματα) a “passion [πάθη]” but her later discussion shows that such a term is in fact inappropriate without the judgment of free choice (προαιρέσεως).
75 Gregory, *On the Soul and the Resurrection*, 60. In another important passage, the animal imagery that was the key to Basil’s understanding of the passions arises: “if reason should let go of the reins and like some charioteer entangled in the chariot should be dragged behind it, wherever the irrational motion of the yoke-animals carries it, then the impulses are turned into passions, as indeed we can see also in the irrational animals. For when reason does not control the impulse which naturally lies in them, the fierce animals are destroyed by anger because they fight among themselves” (*On the Soul and the Resurrection*, 57).
Concerning the end times, though, Gregory’s exegesis shows that the passions will necessarily pass away, consumed by the fire. Because they will pass away and because an individual like Moses can remain human without them, Macrina argues that the faculties of desire and anger, or perhaps more accurately their use in developing passions, do not pertain to human nature as such. It would be wrong to think that Macrina here intends to exclude affective impulses (ὁρμή) from human nature, as her later discussion of this faculty embeds it more deeply in human nature than the passions discussed at this earlier point in the narrative.

Having reviewed this material, a few summative comments are in order. First, Gregory generally refuses to call the original affective faculties of human nature “passions.” While humans always had an emotional component, these drives were paired before sin with right judgment and a choice for the good and thus do not deserve the technical designation of “passion.” Thus, in Gregory’s terminology, the passions are only postlapsarian. There is no question in either Basil or Gregory whether humans were originally constituted with emotions of a sort (they certainly were); rather, there is a lack of clarity between Basil and Gregory about what these impulses should be called.

Second, it is worth mentioning again the role of demonology in Gregory’s conception of the passions. While ultimately only the human subject can cause a passion in the soul through a free choice toward evil, demons play an essential role in the determination of this choice when they introduced or introduce judgment concerning the

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76 Indeed, Gregory is perhaps more optimistic than Basil on the question of perfect dispassion in this life, giving the concrete example of Moses as someone who has been completely purged of all passion even in this life (On the Soul and the Resurrection, 52-3). Of course, Basil’s reflections are not systematic enough to make any definitive judgments on this question.

77 The example of Moses appears quite early in this chapter of On the Soul and the Resurrection before the introduction of the category of impulse, so it seems likely that Macrina only intends to exclude passion and not impulse from human nature as such.

78 This may stand in some contrast to Basil, but Basil is unclear.
good into human nature. To be clear: demons introduced judgment; human subjects create passion. But without the former, it is unlikely that the latter would take place as frequently as it does, if at all. In this way, Gregory adds a component to his conception of the postlapsarian state that is absent from that of his older brother, Basil.

Third, this introduction of judgment by the devil through sin is perhaps parallel to Basil’s conception of the altered conditions of the human passions that occur after Adam’s sin. It is surprising that Gregory is able to countenance the idea that the devil was allowed to alter human nature after sin; whether such a change constitutes an alteration of the essence of human nature will be worth considering when parallel ideas arise in Maximus. For now the problem itself is the object of interest. For neither Gregory nor Basil do these consequences of sin amount to a clearly articulated guilt transmitted from generation to generation, but they are certainly alterations of human nature that, in the short term, change it for the worse.79 For further consideration of these demonic influences in humanity after the fall, I will return to Origen and Evagrius in the final subsection below. First, I will consider Nemesius of Emesa’s anthropology as a central source for Maximus’s own.

B. Nemesius of Emesa’s Anthropology

For Maximus’s general understanding of the human person, there is no source more important than Nemesius of Emesa, who wrote the treatise On the Nature of Man around the end of the fourth century.80 After briefly outlining the rational and non-

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79 I make this reference to a change “for the worse” in anticipation of certain remarks in the final conclusion about the appropriation of this Greek anthropology in the post-Tridentine West.

80 Though Nemesius’s anthropology is absolutely central to Maximus’s own, Nemesius gives scant evidence regarding either demonology or the fall, as Nemesius’s own sources were largely non-Christian. For a more comprehensive analysis of Nemesius’s anthropology (and the key source for the present summary), see Nemesius of Emesa, On the Nature of Man, trans. R.W. Sharples and P.J. Van Der Eijk (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2008), 1-32. Concerning the question of created
rational faculties of the soul as Nemesius understands them, I will focus on three areas of Nemesius’s thought that are of particular importance for Maximus’s understanding of Christ and, eventually, of Christ’s temptation. First, I will give an overview of the way Nemesius conceives of the faculties of the soul (1, a and b). There are two major aspects to consider here: the rational faculty (a) and the irrational faculties capable of obeying reason (b). In the first (a), the way Nemesius understands memory, imagination, and thought will be especially important in comparison with Evagrius below. In the second (b), I will consider in more detail the appetitive power, which is not rational, but which, as Nemesius indicates, has a real relationship with reason and is therefore somewhat capable of control by reason. Since passions and desires are both closely related to demonic forces for Evagrius, it is important to consider how Nemesius conceives of them as well. In a second section (2), I will consider Christological problems that arise with respect to Nemesius’s account of the moral act. The way in which he defines terms such as intention, choice, deliberation, and autonomy has consequences on how his reader would understand the person of Christ. Even though Nemesius does not consider those Christological questions, they are important for the consideration of Maximus that will follow in Chapter 2.

Nemesius is incredibly capable at summarizing the arguments of the philosophers, theologians, and biologists who have preceded him. This fact, however, leads to beings changing their own nature, he only specifically addresses the way that angels changed when they became attracted to the material world (Nemesius of Emesa, On the Nature of Man, §41 (118.21-119.4)). In principle this introduces the possibility that humans too could change their own nature by means of attachment to material things. Elsewhere (ibid., §3 (44.15-.21)), though, Nemesius refuses to enter into speculation about any Origenist conception of human souls falling into bodies. In the end, Nemesius is not clear enough on this point to warrant focused study. Concerning the question of temptation, Nemesius briefly addresses the ways in which external objects are the origin of vicious actions in ibid., §30 (96.2-.13). He does not, however, discuss demons in this context. I will briefly consider this paragraph below.

81 Affections (πάθη) is a possible exception to this rule that will be considered below.
interpretive difficulties, as he does not always explain which perspective, among the
many he summarizes, he himself prefers. Often, the best way to decide what his own
views are is to follow the structure of the treatise as a whole; in this way, it is possible to
trace what he believes to be the most plausible understanding of the constitution of the
human being.

1. An overview of Nemesius’s anthropology. In the broadest terms, Nemesius
considers the human being to be composed of two substances, a body and a soul. The
soul is active in the material body by “relation” and not by “location” because the soul
itself is not material and does not have qualities like “location.” Nemesius affirms that the
soul “is not controlled by the body, but itself controls the body,”82 and so the body is
understood as instrumental, not interfering with the powers of the soul, but only carrying
out their commands.83 The various powers or faculties of the soul have their own physical
expression in the body, but this should not throw into question the rule of the soul over
the body. Even the most basic bodily functions have a corresponding faculty within the
soul that carries them out. Thus, the body does not have powers of its own, but only
carries out the commands given to it by the soul’s faculties.

The Aristotelian sources upon which Nemesius draws divide the soul in different
ways in different treatises, so Nemesius is forced to try to reconcile these different
presentations. In brief, Nemesius’s harmonization consists of ‘ranked’ faculties that fit in
two broad categories, the rational and irrational.84 The following typology indicates the
various relationships between rational and irrational the Nemesius investigates: the
rational or psychical powers (technically only thought, but in close relationship with

82 Ibid., §3 (41.8-.10).
83 Ibid., §5 (54.23-.5).
84 This division of the faculties is, at least, the form that is most influential on Maximus.
imagination, sensation, and memory); the combined powers that share qualities of both rational and irrational faculties (respiration and “evacuation”); the non-rational powers capable of obeying reason (aversion and desire); and the non-rational powers not capable of obeying reason (either the “natural” and “vital” powers, or the “nutritive and generative” and “pulsative” powers). In what follows, I will concentrate on the rational powers (a) and the non-rational powers capable of obeying reason (b).\(^{85}\)

\textit{a. The rational power.} Three faculties relate to one another here: the imaginative (φαντασιαστικόν), the thinking (διανοητικόν), and the remembering (μνημονευτικόν) faculties, each with its own location in the brain.\(^{86}\) In the process of imagination, the external sensory organs of the body (according to the five-fold division of the senses) first interact with sensory objects in the outside world. Sensation, secondly, takes note of these interactions. Imagination finally considers the data collected by sensation, interprets it into a mental representation (φαντασία) or image (εἴκον), and passes that image on to thought for judgment and consideration. In short, imagination collects and organizes particular data from the outside world and passes it on to thought.\(^{87}\)

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\(^{85}\) For the sake of thoroughness, I will explain the other faculties here. The ‘lowest’ faculties are those that are most essential to life. The “vital” faculty is the power of pulsation, that is, the heart, which functions independently of rational control. The “natural” faculties are nutrition and generation. The nutritive faculty is that by which bodies digest food, integrate it into themselves, and grow. The generative faculty is the production of the basic components that preserve the species through reproduction. These components are seeds and flowers for plants, but for humans include the production of semen and, presumably, menstruation. The “composite” faculties are different than the non-rational that are capable of obeying reason. The composite faculties have portions that are truly incapable of rational but other portions that are highly obedient to reason. Thus respiration is capable of control for short periods but continues regardless of rational thought and even when asleep. The ‘evacuative’ power relates to the nutritive but concentrates on the removal of waste from the body. Most of this process happens without rational control in the intestines or kidneys, but the final component lies within rational control. See ibid., §22-25, 27-28.

\(^{86}\) Technically, only thought is a rational power, but the other two are too closely connected to treat elsewhere. This grouping is not artificial; Nemesius himself follows it in his presentation.

Thought, on the other hand, is concerned with the consideration of the data given to it by the imagination as well as with universal knowledge or ideas that Nemesius calls “natural concepts.”\textsuperscript{88} As Nemesius explains these concepts, they are truths that exist in everyone without needing to be taught—an idea that is apparently Platonic in origin, relating to knowledge of the forms.\textsuperscript{89} Thought considers these two types of information, judges, agrees to a course of action, and commands movement.\textsuperscript{90} Because of this central role, thought is the highest faculty of the soul, the one that rules over all the rest.\textsuperscript{91}

When the images or natural concepts no longer need consideration or action, they are passed on into memory, where they are able to be recalled at a later time. Memory, too, passes on images to thought, but it differs from imagination in that the object of the image does not need to be present to the body when it is remembered.\textsuperscript{92} This discussion of the intellectual powers is sufficient for now; a similar pattern of faculties will be found in Evagrius below.

\textit{b. The non-rational faculties capable of obeying reason.} Nemesius further discusses the actions of the appetitive faculty (ὄρεξις) of the soul, which he calls passions (πάθη). These passions are subdivided into desire (ἐπιθυμία) and aversion (θύμος), things that are to be sought and thing that are to be avoided. These drives are essential to life, both human and animal because “without them life cannot be sustained,” presumably because the being without desire and fear would quickly deteriorate or be destroyed. For Nemesius, the appetitive faculty also mediates between thought and the body concerning

\textsuperscript{88} Ibid., §13.
\textsuperscript{89} Ibid. Nemesius hints at a distinction between διανοητικόν (which would deal with particulars) and νοητικόν (which would deal with universals), but never develops their difference clearly. I treat these two as equivalent here.
\textsuperscript{90} These are “judgment, assent, avoidance, and impulse” in ibid., §12.
\textsuperscript{91} Ibid., §6.
\textsuperscript{92} Ibid., §13.
physical movement, what he calls “movement according to impulse [ὁρμή].” Partly because of this cooperation with thought in the physical movement of the body, Nemesius argues that the appetitive faculty is “capable of obeying reason.”

The two major divisions of the appetitive part, desire and aversion, can be further subdivided according to whether the object is currently present or anticipated in the future. When the desirous part attains what it seeks in the present, it is called “pleasure”; when it anticipates the arrival of the object, it is called “desire.” When the repulsive part experiences its object, it is called “distress”; when it anticipates its object, it is called “fear.” Nemesius is incredibly detailed in his descriptions of the possible expressions of appetition, but the categories above are enough to understand, later, how Maximus was influenced by Nemesius on this point.

2. Christological implications of Nemesius’s structure of the moral act. In considering what Nemesius believes about virtuous and vicious actions, there are two separate Christological problems that need to be addressed—though Nemesius himself does not do so. The first arises from Nemesius’s definition of “intentional” actions and concerns whether Christ can be said to be ignorant concerning particular facts. The second arises from Nemesius’s definition of “choice,” “deliberation,” and “autonomy” and concerns whether Christ should be said to be impeccable in an absolute sense.

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93 Ibid., §16; see also §27. The “impulse” Nemesius refers to here must not be confused with the sort of affective desire that Basil of Caesarea see in the human condition before the Fall. His sense is specifically that of an action chosen in thought, mediated by appetition, and carried out by the body.

94 Ibid., §16. The other two reasons he mentions are vague: they “are of a nature to obey reason” and “to be subordinate to it.” The question of the “movements” that it causes is, for Nemesius very different than the “movement of the sensitive appetite” that will occupy much of St. Thomas’s presentation of the passions.

95 Ibid., §17.

96 For those details, see ibid., §17-21. Maximus will be decisively influenced by Nemesius’s division of the appetitive part into desire (ἐπιθυμία) and aversion (θυμός). When considering Christ’s demonic temptation, Maximus chooses the categories of Nemesius over those of Evagrius, who will be considered shortly. Nemesius is hardly alone in affirming the basic categories of ἐπιθυμία and θυμός; even Evagrius will use them, though in a different way.
For the first problem, something needs to be said about how Nemesius defines intentional acts as “that which has its origin in the agent who knows the particular fact concerning the action.” As such, Nemesius sees two ways in which actions become unintentional: either through force or through ignorance of particular facts. He is careful to explain that ignorance about “universal and general truths” is itself intentional—what might be called “vulnerable” or “vincible” ignorance in modern categories. Because of this fact, any misjudgment or ignorance about universal truths leads to an intentional moral evil. However, ignorance of particular truths can be unintentional. He gives the example of a man who, shooting arrows in an “accustomed place,” killed his father who was passing by. This man, it could be said, knew the relevant universal truths: that murder is wrong, that arrows are fatal, and perhaps that one should not shoot arrows in the direction of friends and family. None of these universal truths, though, prepared him for his ignorance of the decisive particular, what Nemesius calls a “circumstantial truth,” namely, that his father was walking by the range. Such a person, because they acted unintentionally, would not be morally culpable for the action, for unintentional acts are not capable of praise or blame.

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97 Ibid., §32.
98 Concerning the first, it does not seem valuable to consider whether Christ could be forced to do something, say, by the devil. Whereas Scripture argues that Christ’s temptation has redemptive value, I would simply argue that Christ’s being possessed by a demon, while technically exculpatory, would not serve God’s redemptive purposes in the incarnation and would simply not be permitted to take place. Related to the unintentional through force, though, is a subordinate question that touches on the subject of the current study. Nemesius asks whether actions undertaken because of the enticements or provocations of external objects are still considered intentional—his examples are a prostitute goading one to licentiousness and an assailant who provokes one to anger. The question is of interest because, even though Nemesius does not consider such an example, demonic forces can act for Maximus in much the same way as Nemesius’s examples. However, since Nemesius’s conclusion is a straightforward argument that these actions are still intentional and since this reasoning does not seem to have had a significant effect on Maximus, the topic can be largely avoided here.
99 Though the term is not stated explicitly, see the Catechism of the Catholic Church, §1791 and 1793.
100 Ibid., §31.
Nemesius does not consider Jesus in his treatise on human will. However, by the definitions provided here, a perfectly sinless Jesus could be the man in Nemesius’s example. To be perfectly sinless, one needs to have knowledge of universal truths, certainly, but ignorance of all particular truths is blameless and for the average human being, inevitable. Christologically, the essential question is whether Christ’s divine knowledge (which presumably contains knowledge of all particulars) should be understood as present to Christ in his humanity and, if so, in what way. Certainly, Christ’s human mind was finite and could not even theoretically contain knowledge of all particulars at once, but one must choose: either Christ’s divinity must permit that Jesus might unintentionally perform an objectively evil deed as in the example above; or Christ’s divinity must infuse knowledge of particular truths into Christ’s human mind on a need-to-know basis. The former raises potential problems about the unity of Christ as a moral agent; the latter raises questions about the essential equivalence of Christ’s humanity with our own. When Maximus considers whether Christ could be ignorant, these questions must remain close at hand.

The second Christological problem is associated with Nemesius’s definition of choice and autonomy. To introduce the question, I must first define a few of Nemesius’s relevant terms. Nemesius defines choice more narrowly than intention; we can intend things that we do not choose, as one intends to encounter friends on the street even when such happens unexpectedly and without choice. Basically, if something is surprising but induces pleasure, it is intentional but not chosen. More precisely, though, Nemesius defines choice as a collection or combination of appetition, selection,

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101 Physiologically, Nemesius broaches this topic through a discussion of the intentional and the unintentional, which does not directly concern me here (see ibid., §29).
102 Ibid., §33.
and deliberation. Appetition is, for the current purposes, the same as the two drives discussed above, desire (ἐπιθυμία) and aversion (θυμός). Selection indicates the end of the deliberative process, which also denotes that one has finally chosen. Finally, and most importantly, deliberation “is concerned with things that are still under investigation,” meaning that one has yet to decide whether to select them. Nemesius restates that deliberation is not “about what is agreed upon or the impossible” because if something is certain to occur or not to occur, there can be no deliberation about it. Rather, deliberation is concerning the *contingent*, which Nemesius defines as something that is equally likely to happen or not, “for if we could not do both, both it and its opposite, we would not have deliberated.”

Autonomy, too, is an essential characteristic of humanity in Nemesius’s anthropology. He argues that autonomy is in fact synonymous with rationality; if one wished to blame God for our ability to choose good and evil, one would also have to blame God for creating human beings as rational. That is, autonomy and rationality stand and fall together; if one denies human autonomy, one also denies human rationality. In its essence, human beings are said by Nemesius to be autonomous with respect to things that they deliberate—things that can either happen or not happen and the object of which attracts praise or blame. It is with regard to these self-motivated *contingent* things that human beings are considered to be autonomous.

Here, again, Nemesius is not concerned with the Christological implications of his anthropology, but they are important to explore when looking forward to Maximus’s.
thought on the subject. The essential Christological question this time is the precise way in which one should express the impeccability of Christ—the idea that Christ not only did not sin but that he was incapable of it. If this impeccability were stated in absolute terms within Nemesius’s anthropology, it would follow that Christ was incapable of virtue and that he was not fully human. For, on the one hand, if Christ was in an absolute sense incapable of sin, there were no actions that had an “equal” chance of happening or not happening in Christ. Consequently, there was nothing in Christ that could be deliberated and hence nothing in him that could attract praise or blame. On the other hand, if Christ could not deliberate, it follows by Nemesius’s definitions that Christ was not autonomous. But for Nemesius, autonomy is equivalent to rationality, so a Christ who lacks autonomy lacks human rationality and cannot be fully human—an essentially Apollinarian position. It will be essential in the coming investigation of Maximus’s thought to consider the ways in which this Christological problem might be resolved.

With this brief review of Nemesius’s anthropology complete, I turn now to a final discussion of how Origen and Evagrius view the devil as exercising an internal influence in human nature concerning the passions. In this final section, the true center of this project begins to come into focus, as this theory will influence both Maximus’s general anthropology and his theory of Christ’s temptation.

C. Demonic Temptation before Maximus

In the following two sub-sections, I will consider predecessors of Maximus whose contribution to the intersection of anthropology and demonology is particularly important: Origen of Alexandria and Evagrius of Ponticus.106 Much work has been done

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106 An additional source that could be treated here is Gregory of Nazianzus; Dayna S. Kalleres, “Demons and Divine Illumination: A Consideration of Eight Prayers by Gregory of Nazinzus,” in Vigiliae
in recent years on early Christian concepts of the devil and the demonic; my purpose here is to introduce only those aspects of the demonic that relate to the largely universal phenomenon of human temptation toward evil, especially by means of the passions.\textsuperscript{107}

\textit{Christianae} 61, no. 2 (2007), 157-188 performs close textual analysis of some of the Nazianzen’s works. Kalleres argues that the internal psychological attacks Gregory considers are troubling because “Gregory’s primary mode of defense—i.e., rational thought—was comprised of the precise set of faculties so easily inhabited and manipulated by the devil” (ibid., 184). Nevertheless, Kalleres recognizes \textit{discernment} as a key weapon against demons, as well as apotropaic language (ibid., 184-6), much like that of Evagrius, discussed below. Kalleres’s hope is to show that demons could exist not only in Evagrius’s desert, but in Gregory’s urban life as well—and the argument is quite successful.


Okholm’s text is wonderful as an attempt to retrieve ancient Christian conceptions of the human moral struggle and as an application of those conceptions to the modern world. He sets out his purpose: “First, I intend to bring forward the insights of early church monks in order to offer what one might call a \textit{truly} Christian psychology … Second, I intend to make a bit of an apologetic case for the priority of this Christian psychology over against the presumption of moderns that we are the first to understand the etiology and treatment of the disorders and unregulated passions that will be discussed” (Okholm, \textit{Dangerous Passions}, 8). However, as a retrieval, it fails precisely where Evagrius may have been most insistent. Okholm recognizes that Evagrius uses the terms ‘demon’ and ‘thoughts’ “almost interchangeably” (ibid., 2) and closes the text with another recognition of the demonic aspect of this battle (ibid., 183), but the body of his text entirely reduces the ascetic struggle to a merely anthropological or psychological self-struggle. It may be, then, that Okholm’s “\textit{truly} Christian psychology” is not yet truly Christian enough—at least as far as the monks he is reading are concerned.

Russell’s text, along with its predecessor \textit{Devil}, gives a solid introduction to early Christian conceptions about demons with a particular focus on theodicy and the problem of evil. Russell shows that in early writings, including the \textit{Epistle of Barnabas} and the \textit{Shepherd of Hermes}, many early Christians thought of the individual soul as a battleground in which good and evil angels worked (Russell, \textit{Satan}, 39-45). These angels and demons did not displace the human will, but rather both attempted to incline it to good or evil (respectively). Among the many other figures he treats, his discussions of Origen and Evagrius are particularly valuable, for both of them consider the ‘inner’ workings of demons within human subjects. Russell argues that, for Origen, the evil angels assigned to a human being after the Fall can be identified as the primordial source of human inclination toward evil and sin (ibid., 135), though the passages he cites do not fully substantiate this claim. Russell is also not entirely consistent on this point. He later refers to the “evil inclination in us” as though it were completely prior to demonic intervention (ibid., 137), but then goes on to explain that inclination by reference to Barnabas’s idea of an evil spirit. Thus, the source of this inclination remains unclear in Russell’s text.

Brakke’s text extensively introduces both Origen and Evagrius’s demonology, particularly with an
1. Origen on Demonic Temptation. Origen’s reflections on the nature and purpose of demonic temptation are some of the earliest and most influential in the Christian tradition. Origen’s works reflect early Christian and Jewish attitudes toward evil desires
and, in turn, become the basis of some of Maximus’s own reflections on the subject. I will discuss here Origen’s understanding of the relationship between demonic beings and human nature (a); the way demons are related to human vices and passions (b); the defeat of demonic powers (c); and the reasons for which God permits humans to be afflicted with demonic temptation (d).

a. Demonic and human beings. For Origen, demons and human beings both originated as equal spiritual natures that fell out of divine contemplation due to satiety.

Angels fell the least, humans fell somewhat farther, and demons fell the farthest. Humans certainly have hope of returning to their original spiritual contemplation, but demonic forces interfere and attempt to prevent them from doing so. Origen, in his exegesis of Old Testament battles, describes this demonic effort as a concerted and organized battle front. At the head of this army is Satan, who oversees the various ranks. Within the army, there are others of intermediate rank. Some of these demons are devoted to particular

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108 For a discussion of Origen’s continuity with rabbinic thought on the yetser hara, one can look to Monka Pesthy, “Logismoi Origéniens—Logismoi Évagriens,” in Origeniana Octava, vol. II, ed. L. Perrone (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2003), 1017-22. For some of Origen’s other sources, see Dragos-Andrei Giulea, “The Watchers’ Whispers: Athenogoras’s Legatio 25, 1-3 and the Book of the Watchers” in Vigiliae Christianae 61 (2007), 258-281, which considers how Athenagoras stands as an essential source for later Christian reflection on internal demonic temptation, including Clement, Origen, and Evagrius. For detailed discussion of early Christian understanding of demons, see David Brakke, Demons and the Making of the Monk, especially Chapter 1 (3-22). On Origen’s contribution to a tradition of internal ‘discernment of spirits,’ see Henri Crouzel, Origen, trans. A. S. Worrall (San Francisco: Harper & Row Publishers, 1989), 133 (though this is really just a passing reference), Dominique Bertrand, “Origène et le Discernement des Esprits,” in Origeniana Octava, vol. II, ed. L. Perrone (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2003), 969-975, Pamela Bright, “The Combat of the Demons in Anthony and Origen,” in Origeniana Septima, ed. W.A. Bienert and U. Kühneweg (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1999), 339-343, and Jean Daniélou, Origen, trans. Walter Mitchell (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1955), 241-2: “If Origen mentions suggestions coming from the bad angels as well as the suggestions made by the good, the reason is that although we cease to be in the power of our bad angel when we are baptized, the bad angel nevertheless goes on attacking us” (ibid., 241). Daniélou later continues: “Origen explains at length that their function is to tempt the just and so put them to the test,” and as Daniélou points out Origen is even willing to use the language of necessity to describe their importance in bringing people to salvation (ibid., 242; see the discussion below, as well).

109 Origen, Homilies on Joshua, trans. Barbara J. Bruce (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2002), homilies 14 and 15 (following references are to homily number). In both cases, “Jabin” the commander of an army, is understood by Origen as Satan.
vices, such as fornication, wrath, avarice, and arrogance; others are designated according to the form of sin they attempt to elicit, that is, thoughts, words, or deeds. Origen affirms that the demons assigned to particular vices are in turn the commanders of another, lower ranks of demons, which are then assigned to human beings to wage war against them. Normally, an individual would only interact with this lowest rank of demon, and demons from numerous different categories can be and are attached to one human being at the same time.

b. Demons and the passions. In this highly organized battle formation, Satan and his armies move against human souls. Already the close association between demons and vices has been noted; the nature of that relationship is not always stated clearly because of Origen’s diverse and sometimes varying allegorical Scriptural interpretations. In one passage, certain “horses” are read alternately as demons, vices, and “evil thoughts” that must be destroyed, though not in such a way that these readings are considered to be completely interchangeable. For instance, Origen indicates that there are passions that do not need to be destroyed as demonic. On the other hand, there is no clear evidence that evil passions exclusively arise from demonic temptation; presumably, people are capable of producing evil passions on their own, as well. The formulation that most

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10 Origen, *Homilies on Joshua* 15.
13 Origen, *Homilies on Joshua* 15.
14 Ibid. It is specifically the “horses of Jabin,” that is, the passions of the devil, that are to be “hamstrung,” that is, destroyed. This may indicate that there are other horses not belonging to Jabin that are not to be hamstrung.
15 Passions such as these will not be considered closely in this study. Since the goal is an investigation of Christ’s temptation by the devil, I am not directly interested in what is possible for sinful human
closely associates demons and vices is the phrase “spirit of x,” which Origen uses to denote the assignment of particular demons to particular vices.116

The precise activity of these demons is somewhat unclear in Origen: Are they visible apparitions? Do they speak invisibly in one’s ear? Do they plant thoughts in one’s mind? Can they physically manipulate human bodies? Origen’s vocabulary in the relevant passages indicates that he thinks of the demons as having a largely psychological or mental effect—thus the answer to the first question above would be no. Origen says that the demons “stir up” sin; that humans are “driven” by them; and that demons reside “within” evildoers, “seduce” people to vice, and “kindle” sins of their assigned type.117 This vocabulary simultaneously shows the hidden cunning of demons and, perhaps more importantly, externalizes the negative “drives” that humans experience by assigning their source as an outside evil or force. The immediate effect of this explanation is that the Christian is encouraged to fight against (and conquer) these sorts of temptations precisely because they are not constitutive of the human subject but instead form part of a cosmic battle between God and the powers of evil. Thus, while preserving straightforwardly the goodness of human nature, this explanation gives an account for the common experience of inner turmoil, an account that simultaneously spurs on toward victory over the immoral impulses human beings commonly experience.

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116 Ibid., 15.5.
117 Ibid. In another homily, Origen takes the image of a demon “driving” a human being even further; he speaks of the human being as a horse that can be ridden by either Jesus or the devil (Origen, *Homilies on Exodus* 6). This analogy is an odd reversal of the Platonic conception of the soul, in which the human mind or reason is understood as (ideally) the charioteer guiding two horses, which are faculties of attraction (like desire) and repulsion (like anger). In Origen’s analogy, the entire human person can apparently give themselves over to the devil in such a way that they are simply the devil’s servant, though presumably some freedom to rebel against the rider would be maintained.
c. The defeat of these demons. Origen’s exegesis also provides some important reflections on the prospects of success in the battle between demons and human beings. Origen conceived of Satan’s army as vast, yet ultimately finite. The weight of evidence also indicates that the defeat of a particular demon was definitive; a defeated demon would not be allowed to torment anyone else again—with time, Satan’s ranks are slowly diminished, if still enormous. Origen could thus envision a social impetus to ascetic combat: defeating a demon could concretely help others in their own battles. On the human side of the battle, Origen believes that baptism is a turning point in the war, decisively turning the tide of battle. Because in Christ the war has already been won, baptism gives the recipient a share in that victory. However, Origen is clear that a full victory will not come until the “consummation of the age.” Like a decapitated snake, Satan’s army continues to represent a threat to humankind in this world, attempting to strike those who are not cautious.

d. Providence in demonic attack. Finally, Origen anticipates criticisms of the strong dualism present in his account by emphasizing that God is always in charge of this battle and that none of it—not a single attack—proceeds without God’s permission. To explain how an all-loving God could permit these temptations and attacks, Origen has recourse to a divine pedagogy in which temptation and trial are an important and even necessary step toward glory and honor for those striving after virtue. Citing examples

118 Origen, Homilies on Joshua 15 and also Origen, Contra Celsum, trans. Henry Chadwick (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965), 8.44. Homilies on Joshua 14 speaks of an increase in demonic opposition the more one fights, but the position above is more common. See the editorial note on Homilies on Joshua (trans. Bruce), p. 148, n. 59.
119 This hidden love for neighbor that exists in the monastic tradition is an important and often overlooked response to the criticism that monasticism seeks to love God to the detriment of love of neighbor.
120 Origen, Homilies on Joshua 15.7.
121 Ibid., 14.
122 Daniélou cites Homilies on Numbers 13.7: “God has not deprived the devil of his power over the world,
such as Job, who wins double honor by his perseverance, and 2 Timothy 2:5, where “an athlete is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules,” Origen is able to argue that even powers opposed to God’s intentions are good, serving God’s ultimate purposes for humanity.\textsuperscript{123} In this account, Origen admittedly shies away from those cases where human beings give into these temptations—an important oversight indeed—but the point for Origen is that opposition is good for the saints “because they can overcome them.”\textsuperscript{124}

2. Evagrius of Ponticus on Demonic Temptation. Evagrius of Ponticus is perhaps the clearest and most important influence on Maximus’s conception of demonic temptation. Maximus borrows generously from Evagrius’s ascetic thought in his own ascetic writings, so it is important to review Evagrius’s understanding of the passions and of demonic temptation, as well as any discernible relationship between these and Christ’s own temptations. I will first briefly review Evagrius’s moral psychology (a) and then move to a discussion of the role of demons within it (b).\textsuperscript{125} Based on these, I will then

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\item[\textsuperscript{123}] Origen, Homilies on Genesis 1.10. Origen also claims that the devil needs God’s permission to tempt in Homilies on Joshua 15. The exegesis of 2 Timothy 2:5 will be an important point to which I will have common recourse in this study. The essential question will be the characteristics of the perfectly virtuous person—Christ. He must be perfectly virtuous on the one hand, but “tested like us in every way” (Hebrews 4:15), even “according to the rules” of our human existence (2 Tim 2:5) on the other. Also at stake is the compatibility of 2 Tim 2:5 with a robust account of temperance.
\item[\textsuperscript{124}] Origen, Homilies on Genesis 1.10.
\item[\textsuperscript{125}] For my following summary, no source was more important than Robert E. Sinkewicz, Evagrius of Pontus: The Greek Ascetic Corpus (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003). His introduction to Evagrius is excellent (ibid., vii-xl) and his numerous individual introductions to Evagrius’s texts have no parallel. His translations are what I use in the following quotations, however, for those who may wish to consult a different version, I cite the paragraph number from Evagrius’s text and not the page number in Sinkewicz’s translation. Julia Konstantinovsky, Evagrius Ponticus: The Making of a Gnostic (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2009), 36-39 provides a helpful introduction to Evagrius’s theory of thoughts, followed by a discussion of their place in Evagrius’s broader spiritual goals (ibid., 39-45). For Evagrius’s Christological reflections, see Rowan Williams’ short but excellent article, “‘Tempted as we are’: Christology and the Analysis of the Passions,” in Studia Patristica XLIV (2010), 391-404. The article focuses substantially on Evagrius and the way Christ was able to experience the three ‘fundamental’ thoughts (ibid., 395-399). Michael O’Laughlin, “The Anthropology of Evagrius Ponticus and its Sources,” in Origen of Alexandria: His World and His Legacy, ed. Charles Kannengiesser and William L. Petersen (Notre Dame: Notre Dame Press, 1988), 357-373 traces the
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treat two questions of particular importance: (c) Do demons cause the monk to sin? and (d) How does Christ relate to the monk’s ascetic struggles?

a. The human subject in Evagrius. For Evagrius, the human soul is composed of three basic powers: the rational faculty, the concupiscible faculty, and the irascible faculty. Evagrius is not particularly concerned, as Gregory and Basil were above, with the precise origin of the latter two faculties—that is, whether the concupiscible and irascible faculties exist as a consequence or in foresight of human sin, or whether they are original to the human condition independent of Adam’s sin. What is in any case clear to Evagrius is that each of these faculties as it exists in human beings has a purpose according to reason (κατὰ φύσιν) and is therefore good. Firstly, the rational faculty exists in order to contemplate the world and spiritual realities. Secondly, the concupiscible faculty exists to guide the subject toward love of God and spiritual realities. Thirdly, the irascible faculty exists to help the subject spurn evil and reject, with a holy hatred, the advances of demonic powers.

However, as Evagrius conceives of the matter, if we were composed of only these three faculties, impassioned sin would not form in us. In addition to these powers of the soul, there must be added the data made available to the soul by means of the body. For
Evagrius, sensory data reaches the soul first by means of images, which Evagrius commonly refers to as “mental representations” that in turn become “thoughts \(\lambda\o\gamma\iota\sigma\mu\iota\sigma\mu\iota\) in the soul. Mental representations that an individual has encountered are stored by the mind in memory, which can be recalled at a later time as thoughts. Thoughts, though, occur one at a time; it was a commonly held psychological insight that only one thought can be entertained at a time and Evagrius follows this teaching. Even when our mind recalls a number of memories in quick succession, Evagrius clarifies that these should not be considered to occur simultaneously, but only in rapid succession.

This process of sensation, mental representation, and thought \(\lambda\o\gamma\iota\sigma\mu\iota\sigma\mu\iota\) closely resembles the combination of sense, imagination, and thought \(\delta\iota\alpha\nu\o\nu\o\sigma\iota\z\) that was seen in Nemesius above, but Evagrius does not follow the same distinctions as Nemesius concerning the non-rational parts of the soul capable of obeying reason to some extent.

All these processes are natural to the human subject and cannot be the subject of sin in us. Thoughts become morally relevant when they are willfully contemplated and held by the soul in its concupiscible and irascible faculties in a way contrary to nature \(\pi\a\r\a\ \phi\o\sigma\i\nu\)\). Only these thoughts against nature are, technically speaking, “passions” in Evagrius’s thought, and so one can say without hesitation that for Evagrius, the monk’s job is to be completely purged from passion, impassible. Only in this state is one perfectly purified from sin. Note that this does not mean that the monk somehow ceases to use the faculties pertaining to passion; the irascible and concupiscible faculties both have a function according to nature even in one who has reached perfect impassibility.

Evagrius, like Gregory of Nyssa, has simply defined passion in such a way that the

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128 Ibid., §25.
129 Ibid., §24.
130 Ibid., §19.
morally upright person must be purged from them. Passion is, for Evagrius, against nature by definition.

b. The origin of thoughts in the soul. Evagrius is committed to the fundamental goodness of human nature; no sin that arises in us can take its rise from that nature as such. Evagrius admits that evil thoughts can come from within us through a misuse of our free choice, but he is insistent that such thought does not derive from our nature, “for we were not created evil from the beginning, if indeed the Lord sowed a good seed in his field.” In considering the origin of different kinds of thoughts, Evagrius clarifies that all thoughts contrary to nature have their origin in demonic temptation:

I am not saying that all memories of such objects [the mental representations present in thoughts] come from the demons—for the mind itself, when it is moved by a human agent, naturally brings forth images of things that exist—but only those memories that bring on irascibility or concupiscibility contrary to nature. Therefore, the main role that demons play in Evagrius’s moral psychology is the presentation of evil or immoral mental representations to the mind of the monk, either through sensible objects or through the evocation of the monk’s memories of the past. These demonic attacks are the origin of passion in the soul—not our nature itself, but demons at work in the ‘weak point’ of human sensibility.

While demons commonly attack by presenting the mind with mental representations that arouse our irascibility and concupiscibility in a way contrary to

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131 Ibid., §19 and §30.
132 What he says next appears to be a total rejection of the idea that any faculty of our humanity was damaged in such a way that we are ‘naturally’ inclined to sin: “If we are capable of something, this does not necessarily mean that we possess also the power for it, since though we are capable of non-being we do not possess the power of non-being, if indeed powers are qualities and non-being is not a quality” (ibid., §31). Replacing the considered property, non-being, with the original topic of the discussion, evil thoughts, Evagrius seems to be saying that evil ideas must come to the human subject from without—indeed, the invocation of Matthew 13:24 immediately calls to mind that the bad seed is sown in the soul by the “enemy,” who for Evagrius is certainly the Devil. While this passage is somewhat ambiguous on this point, Evagrius is clearer in the passage cited below.
133 Ibid., §2.
nature (that is, the passions), it is clear that demons are capable of more crass forms of temptation, physically touching the skin either to induce a sleepy state or to arouse lustful thoughts. In any case, demons do not have complete access to our thoughts and minds; they remain fundamentally external and must discern the effectiveness of their temptation by means of the outward reactions the monk has to their stimuli. Evagrius is clear that demons “do not know our hearts” and “recognize the many mental representations that are in the heart on the basis of a word that is expressed and the movements of the body.”

c. The progression of sin. It is important to ask whether Evagrius’s moral psychology has not in fact led to the necessity of sin because of the ability of demons to arouse passion within us. That is, if passion is sin, and demons inspire passion in us, do not the demons force the monk to sin at least in thought if not in deed? While certainly passion has its origin in demonic activity in the soul, Evagrius clarifies that these passions only become truly culpable with the addition of willful consideration of the thoughts contrary to nature. When, for instance, someone has a thought according to nature that is subsequently perverted by a demonic suggestion, that suggestion only become culpable if it is allowed to remain in the thought. If we cut off the intervening thought against nature, “we will receive the reward only of those thoughts posited first, because,” Evagrius explains, “being human and occupied in the fight with the demons, we do not have the strength always to hold onto the right thought intact.”

134 Ibid., §18.
135 Ibid., §33.
136 Ibid., §16.
137 Ibid., §37.
138 Ibid., §7.
Indeed, certain impassioned thoughts occur suddenly because of the assignment of new demons to a monk after he has nearly defeated a previous opponent:

When thoughts associated with a particular passion become rare over a long period and there is a sudden boiling up and movement of this passion without our having given any pretext for it out of our negligence, then we know that a demon more formidable than the first has succeeded him and, watching over the place of the one who had fled, has filled it with his own wickedness."\(^{139}\)

In such a case, Evagrius makes no indication that the renewed attack necessarily results in any culpable act on the part of the monk. Indeed, Evagrius elsewhere makes it clear that there is no compulsion to submit to the thoughts that demons suggest: “it is possible to overthrow all the thoughts inspired by the demons.”\(^{140}\) So while the thoughts themselves may enter against our will and give rise to the beginning of passion in the soul, it seems that the demons to not cause sin in the monk, because there is still freedom of choice in how the monk responds to the thought once it has been suggested. It is this willful response to the suggested thought contrary to nature that constitutes the essence of the moral act regarding demonic temptation.

\(d.\) The temptation of Christ in Evagrius. Evagrius’s moral theory involves, most commonly, eight vices, each one with its own demonic spirit to encourage thoughts of it in us: gluttony, fornication, avarice, anger, sadness, acedia, vainglory, and pride.\(^{141}\) These thoughts constitute the battle lines of the monastic war against demonic power, yet as Evagrius draws these lines, they can in fact be further reduced to only three thoughts:

\(^{139}\) Ibid., §34.
\(^{140}\) Evagrius, \textit{Practical Life}, §80.
\(^{141}\) These eight recur in several places in Evagrius’s corpus. See, for instance, the \textit{Eight Thoughts}. That treatise, however, constitutes an exception in Evagrius’s works since it is the one prolonged treatment of the logismoi that does not commonly pair the thoughts with demons. In part, this may be attributed to the short, aphoristic format of the text, which does not permit deep speculation into the origin of the vices, but only a brief treatment of the characteristics of each. Other demons appear from time to time; in \textit{On Thoughts}, two additional demons called “vagabond” (§9) and “insensibility” (§11) appear. In \textit{On the Vices Opposed to the Virtues}, he adds a ninth vice called “jealousy” (§8).
gluttony, avarice, and vainglory.\textsuperscript{142} The other five thoughts represent incursions of
demons into the monk’s moral battlefield, so that they have had to retreat to a secondary
line of defense. For instance, thoughts of fornication represent prior failures of the monk
regarding thoughts of gluttony; Evagrius would thus also trace anger, sadness, acedia,
and pride back to the fundamental thoughts of avarice and vainglory.

In part, this moral psychology is intended as an aid to the monk who is trying to
diagnose his thoughts and failings, yet this psychology rests more fundamentally on
deeply Christological and soteriological footings. As it turns out, Evagrius’s reason for
tracing all evil thoughts to gluttony, avarice, and vainglory is found in the gospel
accounts of Jesus’ temptation in the desert. Evagrius writes:

\begin{quote}
no one can fall into a demon’s power, unless he has first been wounded by those
in the front line. For this reason the devil introduced these three thoughts to the
Savior: first, he exhorted him to turn stones into bread [gluttony]; then, he
promised him the whole world if he would fall down and worship him [avarice];
and thirdly, he said that if he would listen to him he would be glorified for having
suffered no harm from such a fall [vainglory].\textsuperscript{143}
\end{quote}

There is a quite subtle argument at work in this reasoning. Christ here emerges for
Evagrius as the moral exemplar \textit{par excellence} for the monk, but what is implicit in this
exemplarity is that Christ has essentially been tested in every way that a morally perfect
person can be. By establishing the battle lines of the ascetic confrontation as he does,
Evagrius has encoded Hebrews 4:15 into his treatise: Christ was tempted like us in every
way, yet without sin. Since all evil thoughts can be reduces to gluttony, avarice, and
vainglory, any thought of the other five vices is already an indication of a previous moral
failure; thus, since Christ was a perfectly sinless human being, he was only tempted along

\textsuperscript{142} Again, see Williams, “‘Tempted as we are,’” 395-399 for an excellent treatment of the material I
consider here.

\textsuperscript{143} Evagrius, \textit{On Thoughts}, §1.
the original battle lines, never having need to retreat to the secondary thoughts against
nature that the sinful monk must repel.

Evagrius does not elsewhere expound at any great length on Christ’s temptations,
yet this one passage yields a great harvest for how he thinks of Christ’s as a model for the
monk’s own battles against demons. Christ was truly tempted in the same way as other
human beings, suffering demonic thoughts along the original battle lines of human nature
and not capitulating in any way. Because Christ perfectly repelled the attack, he drove
away both the temptations and the devil in the process. Christ, then, shows the monk how
he must in turn respond to the thoughts that are insinuated into the mind by demonic
forces.

A potential point of weakness, however, in Evagrius’s treatment of Christ’s
temptation is its lack of a causal relationship between Christ’s defeat of demonic
thoughts and the monk’s. That is, it is not clear in Evagrius’s work that Christ functions
as anything more than a model of behavior—whether Christ in fact empowers the monk
to defeat his own demons. This question will arise once again when I consider Maximus,
who more clearly integrates this causal aspect into his treatment of Christ’s temptation.

III. Christological Sources

I have made the case above that Basil of Caesarea and Gregory of Nyssa both
believed human nature to have been somehow affected by Adam’s sin in the Garden of
Eden. In a parallel vein, I have argued that many Christian authors thought very deeply

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144 For Basil, there is some sort of passion prior to the Fall that becomes disordered and disobedient to
human reason afterward. For Gregory, there were basic “impulses” in human nature that, after the Fall,
developed into full-blown passions. Both, in any case, take some alteration of our nature in the Fall for
granted. In the West, this idea will develop into the doctrine of original sin, with the concomitant
about how demonic powers exercised internal influence in the human subject. What must be investigated here is what, according to important Greek-speaking theologians, that alteration and that temptation mean for the ways in which Christ was tempted. Did Christ, in his human temptations, have the constitutional advantages of Adam from before he sinned, or did Christ suffer temptations that pertained particularly to human life after the Fall? This Christological and soteriological point will factor significantly in Maximus’s conception of Christ’s humanity and Christ’s temptation. While Maximus lived in Rome and the Christian West for many years, it is difficult to say with any certainty how any given Latin figure may have influenced his thought about Christ. Since their influence is more directly seen in Thomas’s thought, I will address early Latin speaking Christians on this question in Chapter 4. In the East, however, I will show how a tradition developed prior to Maximus that emphasized the human weaknesses of Christ as the bait with which Christ lured and conquered the devil.

On the one hand, these thinkers indicate that in his temptations Christ suffered, to some extent, from our fallen condition. In particular, the passions Christ encountered and

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145 Some recent scholars have made efforts to categorize and analyze this early tradition. Most prominently, Thomas Weinandy, in his *In the Likeness of Sinful Flesh*, has provided a very good survey of much of this material. He locates the affirmation that Jesus assumed a fallen human nature in both Eastern and Western Christianity up to and including the Council of Chalcedon (see Thomas Weinandy, *In the Likeness of Sinful Flesh: An Essay on the Humanity of Christ* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1993)). However, the consensus Weinandy locates is called into question in a more recent article by Ian McFarland, where he argues that “the majority tradition of Western Christianity in particular has not thought it possible to affirm both that Christ had assumed a fallen human nature and that he was without sin” (Ian McFarland, “Fallen or Unfallen? Christ’s Human Nature and the Ontology of Human Sinfulness,” in *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 10, no. 4 (Oct. 2008), 404). In particular, he finds “unpersuasive Thomas Weinandy’s attempts to show that Christ’s assumption of a fallen human nature was a matter of consensus in the patristic period” (ibid., 402, n. 9). I side with Weinandy in my following presentation.

146 One important figure in the West on this question is St. Hilary of Poitiers, but for Thomas, Augustine and Gregory the Great are also formidable figures; see Chapter 4.
the demons he fought pertained particularly to the postlapsarian condition of humanity. On the other hand, this experience, for these thinkers, is still good news for Christ’s followers because, despite his disadvantaged condition vis-à-vis Adam and Eve prior to their sin, Christ nevertheless gained a perfect victory. These passions—precisely our passions that routinely gain the upper hand and to which we routinely acquiesce—and these demonic temptations—precisely the temptations that attack us and drive us all too easily into sin—are defeated during Christ’s perfect and sinless human existence.

In dealing with St. Paul’s affirmation that Jesus came “in the likeness of sinful flesh,” the Fathers emphasize either the reality or the dissimilarity indicated by the term “likeness” [ὁμοίωμα], depending on the context in which they write. When the latter is emphasized, the risk encountered is Docetism, the heresy of making Jesus’ humanity unreal or incomplete. When the former is emphasized, the risk is the implication that Jesus sinned. Both errors must obviously be avoided, and I will show how certain Eastern thinkers—Origen (A), St. Basil of Caesarea (B), St. Gregory of Nyssa (C), Gregory of Nazianzus (D), and St. John Chrysostom (E)—attempt to do so. These figures are important because their study of these biblical passages and themes was particular focused and because their potential influence on Maximus is substantive.

147 A number of early interpretations of Jesus’s temptation by the devil are considered in M. Steiner, La Tentation de Jésus dans l’Interprétation Patristique de Saint Justin a Origène (Paris: Librairie Lecoffre, 1962). The analysis of Origen on this subject is happily accepted and I will make mention of it below. I have not included Ephrem the Syrian in this section as I have no clear evidence of his influence on Maximus here. Nevertheless, an excellent article has been written on Ephram’s views of Christ’s temptation: T.J. Botha, “An Analysis of Ephrem the Syrian’s Views on the Temptation of Christ as Exemplified in his Hymn De Virginitate XII,” in Acta Patristica et Byzantina 14 (2003), 39-57. Significantly, Botha discusses the theme of Christ’s defeat of the devil in battle at ibid., 46.
A. Origen

Origen’s thought on Christ’s temptation shows that he affirms Christ’s solidarity with humanity’s weakened moral conditions as a ploy by which he defeats the devil. In his exegesis of the verse from the Gospel of John, “the light shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it” (John 1:5), he reads darkness as ignorance, evil conduct, hatred, and the like as they are present in sinful human beings. In the treatment of Christ that immediately follows, he states that despite Jesus’ sinlessness, it could not be said of Him that there was no darkness in Him. For if Jesus was in the likeness of the flesh of sin … then it cannot be said of Him, absolutely and directly, that there was no darkness in Him. We may add that “He took [ἐλαβέ] our infirmities and bare [ἐβάστασε] our sicknesses,” both infirmities of the soul [ἀσθενείας τὰς τῆς ψυχῆς] and sicknesses of the hidden man of our heart [νόσους τὰς τοῦ κρυπτοῦ τῆς καρδίας ἡμῶν ἀνθρώπου]. On account of these infirmities and sicknesses which He bore away from us, He declares His soul to be sorrowful and sore troubled, and He is said in Zachariah to have put on filthy garments, which, when He was about to take them off, are said to be sins.

This passage is particularly significant when read in light of my treatment of the concept of “weakness” from the Letter to the Hebrews above. Origen states that Christ “took our weaknesses [τὰς ἀσθενείας ἡμῶν ἐλαβέ],” but immediately follows with the close association of these weaknesses with “filthy garments” and, in turn, sin. The fact that Christ also “bears away [ἐβάστασε]” these sicknesses indicates that Origen has in mind a

148 Some secondary discussion of Origen’s Christology and related demonology can be found in Daniélou, Origen, 270-273, where the author describes in detail Origen’s ransom theory of atonement. According to Daniélou, Origen places a heavy emphasis on Christ’s death as the liberating event par excellence (ibid., 272) and Daniélou does not discuss Christ’s temptation in the passage. The same can be said of the discussion of Origen’s Christology in Crouzel, Origen, 194-6.


150 Ibid., 338. PG 14:160: “Κἂν γὰρ ἐν ὁμοιώματι σαρκὸς ἀμαρτίας κατακρίνας τυγχάνῃ ὁ Ἱησοῦς τὴν ἀμαρτίαν τῷ τὸ ὅμοιωμα τῆς σαρκὸς τῆς ἀμαρτίας ἀνεῖ ληφέναι, οὐκέτι ἔξει πάντη ὑγίας <τὰ> λεγόμενα περὶ αὐτοῦ ὁτί ἵσκοτα ἐν αὐτῷ οὐκ ἐστίν οὐδεμία». Προσήθη σομεν δ’ ὁτί «αὐτὸς τὰς ἀσθενείας ἡμῶν ἔλαβε καὶ τὰς νόσους ἐβάστασε», καὶ ἀσθενείας τὰς τῆς ψυχῆς καὶ νόσους τὰς τοῦ κρυπτοῦ τῆς καρδίας ἡμῶν ἀνθρώπου· δ’ ὁτί ἀσθενείας καὶ νόσους, βαστάσας αὐτὰς ἅρ’ ἡμῶν, περίλυπον ἔχειν τὴν ψυχὴν ὠμολογεῖ καὶ τεταραγμένην καὶ ρυπαρὰ ἵματα ἐνδεδύσθαι παρὰ τῷ Ζαχαρίᾳ ἀναγέγρασται· ἀπερ, ὅτε ἐκδύσεσθαι ἔμελλε, λέγεται εἶναι ἀμαρτήματα. ”
vicarious “taking on,” whereby Christ assumes the weaknesses without actually living out their sinful consequences. However, as Origen clarifies, these weaknesses are not simply something Christ carried without being affected by them, for he was “sorrowful and sore troubled” on account of them. In some sense, it can be said that Christ truly suffered these weaknesses—they are not wholly indifferent to him. Thus, these weaknesses are for Origen affirmed as consequences of Christ’s taking on the “likeness of the flesh of sin,” but qualified in part by his perfect sinlessness.\footnote{The emphasis on Christ’s sinlessness is seen in the following quote, where Origen points to the importance of the new way in which Christ comes into human existence in the virgin birth. The fact that Christ was not conceived out of the pleasureful joining of man and woman means that he has brought about a new beginning for human nature: “What is said, \textit{in the likeness of sinful flesh}, shows that we have the flesh of sin, but that the true Son of God had flesh in the likeness of sin and not the flesh of sin. For all of us humans, who are conceived by the seed of a man joined with a woman, we necessarily make our own the words of David: \textit{I was conceived in iniquity and my mother conceived me in sin}. By contrast, the one who, out of no contact with a man but by the one Holy Spirit coming over a Virgin and covering her by the shadow of the power of the Most High, came in an immaculate body, certainly had the nature of our body, yet he did not have the stain of sin that is transmitted to those who are born from the movement of concupiscence” (Origen, \textit{Commentaire sur l’Epitre aux Romains}, t. III, trans. Luc Bresard and Michel Fedou (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 2011), 206-7; the above translation is mine, from the Latin with the aid of Bresard and Fedou’s French—unfortunately, the original Greek of these passages seems to be lost). The last sentence is fairly clear in affirming that Christ’s humanity did not have the “stain of sin [\textit{pollutionem peccati}]” that comes to everyone else because of desire in sexual generation. The lack of this stain, however, is only indicative of the origin of his nature, not the nature itself, which Origen affirms as the same as ours. The concern that Origen shows here for the origin of Christ’s humanity will later find its own expression in Maximus’s thought on Christ’s humanity.}

Another passage helps clarify how the woundedness and demonic temptations of human nature do not, in the case of Christ, imply sinfulness. Here, certain nets referred to in the Song of Songs become a symbol in Origen’s thought for the devil’s attempts to ensnare us in our enfeebled state:

So the snares of temptations and the craftily contrives gins of the devil are called nets. And, because the Enemy had spread these nets everywhere and had trapped almost everyone in them, it was needful that somebody should come who should be stronger than they and stand out above them and should destroy them. Therefore is the Savior also tempted by the devil before He could enter into union and alliance with the Church; so that, conquering the snares of temptations, He might look through them and through them also call her to Himself … There was … none other who could overcome these nets. … Therefore Our Lord and Savior
Jesus Christ alone is He who did no sin; but the Father made Him to be sin for us, that in the likeness of sinful flesh and of sin He might condemn sin. So He came to these nets; but He alone could not be caught in them. Instead, … He has torn and trampled them …

Origen envisions in this passage a theme central to the investigation of this work. Closely bound, if not identical, with Christ’s coming in the “likeness of sinful flesh” is his apparent vulnerability to the “nets” of the devil. He “came to these nets” by entering into demonic temptation and thereby entered into “alliance with the Church” and the “likeness of sinful flesh.” Origen does not explicitly identify these nets as human weaknesses, but the nets are at least an important case in which Christ’s identity with our fallen state is strongest; the temptation happens so that Christ could “enter into union and alliance with the Church.” However, at some point in the process of trying to catch Jesus in them, the devil is instead thwarted and his nets destroyed; Christ conquers the tempter and frees humanity from the devil’s trap. Thus, however far Christ allows the temptation to continue, he never becomes ensnared in the devil’s ploys. He never lapses into sin and thereby remains the true savior.

One should also take note of the work done by M. Steiner to expost Origen’s thought on Christ’s temptation by the devil. Origen’s explanation of Christ’s temptation does not consider in great detail the psychological aspects of how Christ was tempted, yet he is keenly aware of significant theological and soteriological reasons for this temptation. Origen recognizes connections between Jesus’ temptation and that of Job,

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\[153\] Another instance of this interest can be found in Origen, Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, t. III, trans. Thomas P. Scheck (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2001), 322-3.

\[154\] M. Steiner, La Tentation de Jésus, 135.
Adam, and Israel, considers the pedagogical and providential reasons for the previous
tests, and reflects on Christ’s temptation as a defeat of the demonic powers. As Steiner
puts it, Origen sees Christ’s fast as

The fact that these claims are not easy to reconcile is not
the object here; rather, it will be my ultimate goal to show how Maximus himself
attempts to resolve these tensions in his own thought.158

155 Ibid., 142, my translation: “Il semble donc bien qu’Origène a mis en rapport le jeûne du Christ, qu’il
considère comme une victoire sur le diable, avec la constitution du monde et de l’homme, pour montrer
que l’événement ineffable dans le désert touche au fondement même de la création: Dans ces
combats … s’inaugurent la reprise de l’univers assujetti à la vanité, et la libération de l’homme
tyrannisé par le diable. Nous sommes devant une nouvelle origine du monde et un nouvel Adam.”
156 Ibid.
157 It is of course possible that Origen was not consistent on this point, but since we do not have his
original Greek and since he himself is not perfectly clear, it is possible to interpret him consistently.
158 Even if Origen does read Romans 8:3 in conflicting ways, one should not read such inconsistency as a
weakness of his exegesis, as if he simply changed his minds about these passages. Rather, it shows that
their exegesis was flexible and able to be adapted to different biblical contexts and different audiences.
B. St. Basil of Caesarea

Basil’s thought here is significant because of the moral distinctions he introduces as part of an affirmation of Christ’s weakened or wounded humanity. Those moral distinctions, and not his theory of Christ’s temptation, are the object of this subsection. In one of Basil’s letters one finds the following excursus on the humanity of Christ:

For if the flesh which was ruled over by death was one thing, and that which was assumed by the Lord was another, death would not have ceased accomplishing his own ends, nor would the sufferings of the God-bearing flesh have been our gain; He would not have killed sin in the flesh; we who died in Adam would not have been made to live in Christ; that which had fallen apart would not have been put together again; that which had been thrown down and broken would not have been set aright again; that which was alienated by the serpent’s deceit would not have been joined to God.\(^{159}\)

The context for this letter is the debate over the thought of Apollonarius,\(^{160}\) who denied that Christ had a human mind. Although Apollonarius denied the presence of all the “parts” of human nature in Jesus, St. Basil’s response to this error goes well beyond that particular concern. It is not only the “parts” but also their \textit{condition} that concern Basil; it is not so much a question that human nature itself must be taken up by Jesus, but precisely the weakened state of that nature after the Fall. The phrases “flesh … ruled over by death,” “falling apart,” “throwing down,” and “broken” indicate that for Basil the incarnation is not simply about Jesus’ coming with the proper components but also about Jesus’ taking their broken condition and putting them back together in his person.

Basil affirms, then, that the conditions of Christ’s humanity are those of Adam after his sin. But Basil makes a further distinction within this “postlapsarian” nature that helps to maintain Christ’s sinlessness. There is, Basil argues, a necessary distinction between “natural passions [φυσικά πάθη]” (or “natural and necessary [φυσικά καὶ

\(^{160}\) See ibid., 40-1, n. 2.
ἀναγκαῖα” ones) and “wicked passions [κακίας πάθη].” The key difference between them, as seen in the following quote, is that the latter represent a sinful misuse of human nature that originates in the will.

It is peculiar … to soul that has made use of a body that it has griefs and anxieties and cares and all such things [λύπαι καὶ ἀδημονίαι καὶ φροντίδες καὶ ὀσα τωρωτα]. Of these some are natural and necessary to the living being, others are brought on by a perverse will through lack of discipline in living and of training in virtue. Therefore it is apparent that while the Lord took upon Himself the natural feelings to the end of establishing the true and not the fantastic or seeming incarnation, yet as concerns the feelings that arise from wickedness, such as besmirch the purity of our lives, these He thrust aside as unworthy of His unsullied divinity.\footnote{Ibid., 81. The distinction introduced here is not the same as the distinction found in the previous section between the “ruled” passions before Adam’s sin and the unruly passions that come after it (a “prelapsarian” and a “postlapsarian” nature, respectively). Basil’s list includes passions, such as pain of body or mind, distress, and death, that do not conform with what Basil elsewhere affirms of Adam’s state before sin, so the natural passions he describes are not prelapsarian. Thus, “natural desires” and “wicked desires” do not correspond (respectively) to the human condition before and after Adam’s sin; Basil is not saying here that Christ’s humanity was unfallen.}

One must therefore clarify a further distinction that pertains particularly to the postlapsarian passions: some of these passions are necessary to human survival in a broken world but others represent a willful misuse of human nature. Basil affirms that Christ had the former sort of passion (and thus the postlapsarian nature from which he experiences them), but the latter passions slip into true moral evil, arising from a “perverse will [προαιρεσισθας μοκθηρας]” and staining “the purity of our lives.”\footnote{Ibid., 80-1.}

For now, it is sufficient to note that Basil affirms that Christ assumed that “flesh which was ruled over by death” and took on the human passions that are essential to human nature after the Fall.\footnote{Basil does not, to my knowledge, associate this falleness with a prevalence of demonic temptation.} Basil does not refer to these as a “weakness” of human nature, but given his distinction between “natural” and “wicked” passions, he is sensitive to the fact that our postlapsarian condition slips easily into evil. By means of this
distinction between natural and wicked passions, Basil avoids the danger of imputing moral error to Christ. This division of the passions will be important to keep in mind when investigating Maximus’s theory of the passions in Chapter 2.

C. St. Gregory of Nyssa

The work of Basil’s brother, Gregory, affords an opportunity to consider the central question of Christ’s confrontation with the devil. In his well-known Life of Moses, he identifies Christ’s nature as identical to our nature as it was affected by sin in a passage interpreting the miracle of Moses’ staff before Pharaoh’s sorcerers:

the rod’s changing into a snake … seem[s] to me to signify in a figure the mystery of the Lord’s incarnation, a manifestation of deity to men which effects the death of the tyrant and sets free those under his power. … For if the father of sin is called a serpent [ὄφις] by Holy Scripture and what is born of the serpent [ὄφεως] is certainly a serpent [ὄφις], it follows that sin is synonymous with the one who begot it. But the apostolic word testifies that the Lord was “made into sin for our sake” [2 Cor. 5:21] by being invested with our sinful nature [τὸν τὴν ἁμαρτήτητην ἡμῶν φύσιν περιβαλλόμενον]. … For our sake he became a serpent that he might devour and consume the Egyptian serpents produced by the sorcerers.

For secondary discussion on the state of Christ’s humanity in Basil, one can see the following. Brian Daley, “Divine Transcendence and Human Transformation: Gregory of Nyssa’s Anti-Apollonarian Christology,” in Re-thinking Gregory of Nyssa, ed. Sarah Coakley (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2004), especially 69, where Daley states that “the human nature of Christ … should gradually lose the mortality, the capacity to change for the worse—and take on the characteristics of the divine nature.” The “gradually” implies that this transformation takes place in the course of Christ’s human life. In Hans Urs von Balthasar, Presence and Thought: Essay on the Religious Philosophy of Gregory of Nyssa, trans. Mark Sebanc (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1988), especially 135-142, summarizes Gregory’s understanding of human transformation through the incarnation, though Sebanc analysis tends to focus on the subjective transformation in Christ’s followers and less so on how Christ’s own humanity was glorified. Lucas Francisco Mateo-Seco and Giulio Maspero, eds., The Brill Dictionary of Gregory of Nyssa, trans. Seth Cherney (Boston: Brill, 2010) has limited discussion of the state of Christ’s humanity. Only the article on the devil addresses Christ’s defeat of the devil as a soteriological theme (ibid., 223-6), wherein Christ conquers the devil despoils him of his ‘rights’ over humanity primarily in his death and resurrection. The article’s evaluation of Gregory’s thinking here is completely negative: “The theory as it stands [in Gregory] is unacceptable” because, as Gregory of Nazianzus points out, it is “injurious to God” (ibid., 225) to say that Christ ransomed humankind from the devil. While I do not wish to evaluate these claims with regard to the Nyssen himself, the article’s dismissal of ransom soteriology is too quick. The failing of the dictionary, in my view, lies in the fact that there is little relationship between the articles on Christology (esp. 139-152) and soteriology (694-699) (on the one hand) and the article on the Tunics of Hide (768-770) (on the other) or to other quintessentially fallen characteristics of human nature: what do the Tunics have to do with Christ? Did he put on such a tunic in the incarnation?

To restate what I said above, Gregory claims in no uncertain terms that Christ was
“invested with our sinful nature,” without any qualification about the “likeness” present
in Romans 8:3. Of particular interest here, though, is the way that Gregory associates
Christ’s coming in a “sinful nature” with Christ’s defeat of the devil. He does not specify
*means* here, but the analogy is clear that only by taking on our “sinful nature” in the
incarnation was Christ able to “devour” and “consume” the “father of sin,” that is, the
devil.

In another passage, from one of his homilies on Ecclesiastes, Gregory indicates
how an affirmation of Christ’s human “weakness [ἀσθένεια]” is wholly in accord with
God’s saving will:

> What is the way back for the wanderer, and the way of escape from evil, and
towards good, we learn next. For he *who has had experience like us in all things,*
*without sin,* speaks to us from our own condition. *He took our weaknesses upon him* [Ο τας ασθενειας ήμων ἄναλαβων], and through these very weaknesses of our
nature [αυτων ασθενημάτων της φύσεως] shows us the way out of the reach of
evil.\(^{166}\)

For Gregory, Jesus’ identity with human nature goes all the way to a susceptibility to the
weaknesses of our postlapsarian nature, the weaknesses that, again, Hebrews sees as the
very limit and boundary between temptation and sin. In Gregory’s mind, these
weaknesses constitute an essential part of Jesus’ coming to save humankind, for by
identifying with us in our weakness, he takes us by the hand and leads us into freedom
from sin. If Gregory is perhaps not overly concerned about reaffirming Christ’s
sinlessness here, Gregory is elsewhere careful to ensure that Christ is free from any stain
of moral fault.

\(^{166}\) Gregory of Nyssa, *Homilies on Ecclesiastes*, trans. Stuart George Hall and Rachel Moriarty (Berlin:
Walter de Gruyter, 1993), homily 2 (305.14), p. 53. The Greek can be found at Gregory of Nyssa,
One sees this attentiveness in another passage from the Life of Moses. Gregory, in marked contrast to his previous understanding of the serpent and Christ’s humanity, uses similar imagery pertaining to the bronze serpent in the desert to indicate Christ’s sinlessness. Here, Gregory emphasizes instead that Christ only came in the likeness of sinful flesh because, unlike other human beings, Christ did not in fact activate that nature in a sinful way. Before, Gregory could claim that Christ became a serpent by being invested with our “sinful nature,” but now the snakes in the desert are equated with sinful desires which are wholly absent from Jesus. Whereas Gregory was earlier concerned to show Jesus’ similarity with other human beings in the constitution of his nature, the emphasis here falls squarely on the moral difference between Christ and others, because it is precisely by Jesus’ evasion of sinful passion that he plots the course to salvation out of the fallen state.

Gregory, then, affirms that Christ came in our “sinful nature.” For Gregory, Christ’s assumption of this weakness is an essential aspect of his mission to free us from sin, evil passions, and the devil. On the other hand, this weakness does not mean that Christ had evil passions, because that would mean that there was moral fault in Christ. For Gregory, weakness and sinlessness are not incompatible and, in fact, without this combination of factors, Christ would not free humankind from the devil’s dominion.

167 Gregory, Life of Moses, 124. This passage is adduced by Ian McFarland to “prove” that Gregory is not clear enough to determine whether he thought Jesus’ human nature was “fallen.” See Ian McFarland, “Fallen or Unfallen?,” 401.

168 This complete reversal of the meaning of the serpent is brought about because of Gregory’s attentiveness to the broader context of the passage. The earlier passage dealt with the theme of God’s miraculous “changing” of a substance in order to bring about Israel’s liberation. This passage, however, deals with the Israelites’ failure to keep God’s command, and thus with sin properly so called. Thus, there should be no cause to believe that Gregory somehow changed his mind. Rather, it simply shows that Gregory’s exegesis is sensitive to the larger “sense” of the passage at hand. Individual components in Gregory’s exegesis cannot be separated or abstracted from the context in which they are found. Based on context, he uses the same object to refer to different, and indeed opposed, aspects of Jesus’ saving mission.
D. Gregory of Nazianzus

A close friend of Basil and Gregory of Nyssa, Gregory of Nazianzus shares in many ways their theological outlook on Christ’s humanity. As a window into Gregory’s affirmations about Christ, I will consider briefly three of his orations. In them, the Nazianzen balances an affirmation of Christ’s self-emptying with a recognition of the reason for Christ’s self-emptying: our salvation from the devil.

Gregory assigns the devil and his cohort an active role in the Fall of humankind. The demons “drove us away from the tree of life,” and “have attacked us in our present weakness, taking captive the mind that should rule us, and opening the door to our passions.” Because Adam’s sin was at the devil’s instigation, God takes pity on humankind; even the “punishment” that Adam receives is already the beginning of the restoration of the human race. Adam “forgot the command that had been given him,” so God clothed him with “tunics of skin,” our mortal and passible nature. Gregory explains, however, that “even here [Adam] drew a profit of a kind: death, and an interruption to sin; so wickedness did not become immortal, and the penalty became a sign of love for humanity. That, I believe, is the way God punishes!”

But this initial “punishment” is only the first step of God’s plan to restore humankind. Christ, in his incarnation, identifies with our woundedness precisely in order to free us from it. For Gregory, Christ “takes on a share of what is worse” and he “made our thoughtlessness and waywardness his own.” This identification is

170 Gregory of Nazianzus, Oration 38, §12 in Daley, Gregory of Nazianzus, 123.
171 Gregory of Nazianzus, Oration 38, §12 in Daley, Gregory of Nazianzus, 123.
172 Oration 38, §13, in Daley, Gregory of Nazianzus, 124.
paradoxical, as it both identifies with human weakness and destroys its sources. In a passage that shapes Maximus’s thought on this topic, the Nazianzen compares Christ’s incarnation to a consuming fire: Christ “bares the whole of me, along with all that is mine, in himself, so that he may consume within himself the meaner element, as fire consumes wax or the Sun ground mist.” In this passage, there is both identity with our ‘meaner element’ and liberation from it.

Other analogies used by Gregory include this double-aspect. On the one hand, Gregory can affirm that Christ “comes down to the same level as his fellow-slaves”; on the other, Gregory compares Christ to one “leaning, out of kindness, over the pit, in order to rescue the beast who had fallen into it.” In the former, Gregory emphasizes that Christ’s existential circumstances are those of the people he comes to save, but in the latter, Gregory makes sure that such an identification does not simply “strand” Christ in our same situation.

The above examples speak of human liberation from a generic evil, but other passages explicitly recognize Christ as liberating humanity from the power of the devil. Christ’s humanity acting as a deceptive “bait,” the devil “is himself deceived by the screen of [Christ’s] flesh, and thinking he was attacking Adam, [the devil] encountered God. In this way the new Adam succeeded in saving the old Adam.” Similarly, Christ, the light of the world, allowed himself to be “hunted by the other darkness (the evil one, the tempter…” But whereas Adam and his progeny fell into the power of that darkness,
Christ “entirely escaped,” freeing us from that power. In all of these examples, one sees that the Nazianzen conceives of Christ’s incarnation as a ploy to trick the devil and redeem humankind. In order for Christ to serve as effective bait, however, he must appear in the same condition as rest of humanity that has fallen under the devil’s power. Only by appearing as a captive does Christ undo the devil’s captivity.

**E. St. John Chrysostom**

The final figure to be considered here is John Chrysostom, whose imagery in descriptions of the incarnation also sheds light on the way in which Christ baits the hook for the devil. His exegesis of Romans 8:3 includes the following analogy:

> He that hath saved the soul it is, Who hath made the flesh also easy to bridle. For to teach is easy, but to show besides a way in which these things were easily done, this is the marvel. Now it was for this that the Only-Begotten came … But what is greater, is the method of the victory; for He took none other flesh, but this very one which was beset with troubles. So it is as if any one were to see in the street a vile woman of the baser sort being beaten [by evil men], and were to say [to them] he was her son, when he was [in fact] the king’s [son], and so to get her free from those who ill treated her. And this He really did, in that He confessed that He was the Son of Man, and stood by it (i.e. the flesh), and condemned the sin. … For if it were not in the flesh that the victory took place, it would not be so astonishing … but the wonder is, that it was with the flesh that His trophy was raised and that what had been overthrown numberless times by sin, did itself get a glorious victory over it.

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179 The inclusion of John Chrysostom as a source for Maximus’s thought stands (among the authors cited thus far) in most need of justification. There is evidence that Maximus knew John’s work; other scholars have noted places where Maximus cites or quotes John. See Adam G. Cooper, *The Body in St. Maximus the Confessor: Holy Flesh, Wholly Deified* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 130 and Demetrios Bathrellos, *The Byzantine Christ: Person, Nature, and Will in the Christology of Saint Maximus the Confessor* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 92, 136–7, and 144. While I cannot prove that John’s Christology had a direct impact on Maximus, he nevertheless represents the theological atmosphere in which Maximus wrote.

180 Philip Schaff, ed., *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, vol. IX (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1899), 432. Bracketed text is my addition for clarity. In all likelihood, one should not take Chrysostom’s “vile woman” as a symbol for Mary, first and foremost because there is an “adopted” relationship between the woman and the king’s son. Essentially, Chrysostom is not, in all likelihood, calling Mary a “vile woman.”
The analogy is striking, and merits further comment. First, Jesus’ confession to be the son of the “vile woman” should not be taken to signify a mere seeming (δοκεῖν) to be human. While in the analogy, the man only says that he is the woman’s son, Chrysostom’s explanation clearly identifies the man’s vocal confession with the incarnation itself, not a fanciful, if well intended, lie. Second, the woman with whom Christ identifies in the incarnation is human nature in its wounded state, “which was beset with troubles” and “had been overthrown numberless times by sin.” Third is the identity of the attackers. The most likely meaning is that the men represent demonic powers who, by their active violence against her, keep the woman under their power.181 Fourth, the king’s son does not simply join the woman on the ground and allow himself to be beaten as well; somehow, his speech convinces the attackers to withdraw. Christ, then, cannot simply join sinners, but must rather empower them to prevail over sin. If Christ is to be an effective redeemer, his triumph over the assaults of the devil must be complete and perfect.

Chrysostom’s intention to argue that Christ took on our nature “beset with troubles” can also be seen in Chrysostom’s commentary on Hebrews 4:15:

“after our likeness, without sin.” In these words another thing also is suggested, that it is possible even for one in afflictions to go through them without sin. So that when he says also “in the likeness of sinful flesh,” he means not that He took on Him [merely] “the likeness of flesh,” but “flesh.”182

Here, Christ is an exemplar to those who are struggling; but he can only encourage those “in afflictions” if he can say that he overcame precisely the same struggles “in the

181 If the men were meant to represent sin, the woman is surprising passive in her situation. As the text says, she does not wish to remain there, but “those who ill treated her” keep her there. These details do not make her sound like a vicious and unrepentant sinner.

likeness of sinful flesh.” Chrysostom, then, sees this identification with our current condition essential to Christ’s mission. Since Jesus plots a course from our fallen state back to a state of purity and sinlessness, one need only follow in his path. But without this condescension to the very form of wounded humanity, Jesus’ coming would have been ineffectual and, in fact, discouraging.

One final quotation from Chrysostom shows how Jesus’ coming in our flesh should spur one on to moral excellence:

The strong one is in bonds … Why are you afraid of him? Do you not know the sort of help you have? After all, not only has the enemy become weaker, but also your assistance is greater. The rebellion of the flesh is crushed, the weight of sin has been abolished, you have received grace of the Spirit, power of anointing. [Chrysostom here quotes Romans 8:3-4] He [Jesus] made the flesh obedient, he presented you with weapons, a breastplate of righteousness, a belt of truth [etc...].

Here, the weakening of the “enemy,” the devil, is paralleled by the “crushing” of the “rebellion of the flesh”—both of which are accomplished through Christ’s coming “in the likeness of sinful flesh.” Because of Christ’s identification with our condition, the reader is encouraged to fight temptation all the more vigorously, since Jesus, in our same nature, has proven that such a battle is not futile and, moreover, has rendered the flesh obedient and all the more easy for us to conquer. Once again, Christ’s saving mission is intimately connected to his identity with humanity’s weakened conditions; only this complete condescension is capable of tricking the devil into an unjust and unmerited attack.

Chrysostom too sees Christ’s coming in the likeness of sinful flesh as an identification with humanity in its weakened condition, though only so far as it still permits for Christ’s sinless victory over sin and the devil. Christ was “afflicted” and

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entered into battle with the “enemy” and the closely related reality of the “flesh.” In doing so, Christ is both an exemplar and an empowering savior; he both proves that humanity can overcome its struggles and lightens humanity’s burden by thwarting the powers and principalities that hitherto held humanity in bondage.

Having completed this review of a number of Patristic figures for their understanding of Jesus’ human nature as the bait for the devil, it is worth briefly summarizing the contours of their position. Jesus is affirmed as coming in our “sinful nature” (a phrase unique to Gregory of Nyssa), taking on our ontological brokenness, all while remaining free from moral stain. As for Christ’s identification with humanity, his human nature includes an altered form of the passions that pertains to human nature after the Fall (as in Basil), our “afflictions” (as in John), and the particularly strong attacks of the devil that pertain to our current state (as seen in Origen, Gregory of Nyssa, and John). In fact, Origen and Gregory are willing to ascribe to Christ the “weakness” that is so ambiguous in the Letter to the Hebrews (4:15-5:3). He takes these sufferings on so that he can repair the damage done to human nature from within it, thereby uniting himself to others, showing them that victory is possible, and providing them with a path to a life free of sinful desires and victorious over the promptings of the devil. As for Christ’s unique moral status, Christ can be affirmed as sinless because he does not fabricate wicked desires that come from a perverse will, as seen in Basil and, in a different ways, in Gregory and John. While none of the above examples explicitly use the analogy of Christ’s humanity as a “bait” for the devil, the variety of analogies and images point to this sort of arrangement as a fitting way of explaining the purposes of the incarnation.
These affirmations constitute the background for Maximus’s own affirmation of Christ’s sinless victory over sin, the passions, and the devil.

Having finished this survey of significant sources for Maximus’s thought on Christ’s demonic temptation, I turn now to consider Maximus’s anthropology, with a particular focus on its ascetic context and with attention to the way that he integrates Nemesius’s anthropology with Evagrius’s demonology.
Maximus was a monk. The importance of this fact for his theology should not be underestimated, for his thought frequently refrains to the spiritual development of the reader. Christ himself is a central component of the development of the monk, for Christ is, in Maximus’s thought, an empowering exemplar for the ascetic’s journey. Particularly in his overcoming of temptation, Christ provides a powerful example that, by means of liturgical and ascetic practice, enables the monk to follow and become like Christ. In order to be of help to the reader, however, it is important for Maximus to clearly articulate the human situation in all its stages. To this end, Maximus gives the reader a clear indication of how God created humankind, the ways that humanity was changed by Adam’s sin, and the way that that humanity will be restored at the end of time: the first two explain how humanity got where it is, the first and the third explain in different ways how it will be, and the second clarifies or at least sets the context for how one makes progress toward the goal.¹ This overarching cosmic and chronological approach will also structure my own overview of Maximus’s anthropology in this chapter, considering in turn the three general categories of humanity’s exitus and reitus: its original state and

¹ Even without sin, the first and third stages would still have taken their turn, in Maximus’s eyes; the created state, while good, was not yet the perfection that it would have enjoyed in heaven.
Fall (I), its current, fallen state (II), and its final state (III). Since the goal is still a close consideration of Christ’s demonic temptation, I will consider along the way how temptation functions in Maximus’s anthropology—where it comes from, how it proceeds, what its purpose is (according to both God and the devil), and why it is allowed by God.

In the first section (I), I will briefly introduce some basic components of Maximus’s conception of humanity’s created state and of its Fall. The focus here will be on those aspects of humanity that will be most radically altered by Adam’s sin—a comprehensive introduction to his anthropology will be provided in the second section (II) where humanity’s current state will be the focus. It would be possible to consider in detail the specific event of Adam’s temptation by the devil here, but much of that discussion would not be directly relevant to the ultimate goal of Christ’s temptation. Instead, I will simply consider the ways in which Adam did not already possess the full stasis or immutability of virtue and knowledge that is proper to the final state of humanity (A). I will finish this section with a brief account of the Fall and the changes that it introduced to the way human beings live out their humanity after Adam’s sin (B).

In the second section, I will consider a number of topics relevant to human temptation as it is experienced in the current condition. First, I will give a comprehensive account of human nature in Maximus’s thought: its structures, faculties, thoughts, and the individual components of moral action (A). Second, and most importantly, I will consider the ways that demons have the ability to interact with this anthropological structure in an

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2 These could loosely be mapped to Maximus’s own categories of creation, motion, and rest.
3 The problem of satiety, for one, would be beyond the current scope. Primarily, however, the temptation of Adam and the temptation of Christ do have significant differences, as Adam may in fact have benefited from certain ‘natural’ advantages that no longer attain after Adam’s sin and that were not applicable to Christ’s humanity, such as an absolute freedom from physical pleasure and pain. Because of these differences, it will be more productive to compare Christ’s temptation with that of the monastic after Adam’s Fall, as the monk will share these important components of the experience of temptation.
attempt to elicit sin (B). In particular, this section will consider the forms of demonic attack through human sensibility, the passions, thoughts, memories, and ignorance. Third, I will introduce the ways that the monk attempts to overcome these temptations and reach spiritual perfection through *praxis*, contemplation, and sacramental participation (C). Of central interest here are the ways that perfection is attainable in this life and whether demonic temptation can ever be completely overcome before death.

The third and final section will be somewhat briefer. I will consider two larger questions about the relationship of emotionality and temptation to humanity’s final end. The first section will consider Maximus’s categories regarding divine providence (A). The second section hopes to show how the final resurrected state of humanity differs from even the spiritually perfected monastic on earth (B). It will be most significant in this last section to consider how the sensitive faculties of attraction (ἐπιθυμία) and repulsion (θυμός) continue to function even in the parousia. Rather than a complete purging of humanity’s sensibility or emotionality, Maximus believes that the final state of humankind will simply be a redirection of those faculties to their original, intended purpose.

This study of Maximus’s anthropology will set the stage for a focused consideration in the next chapter of Christ’s demonic temptation in Maximus’s thought. Specifically, the work here will allow a detailed comparison of Christ’s temptations with those of other human beings, with the ultimate hope of showing the reality of Christ’s temptation while still affirming his unique and perfect *victory* over the devil.
I. Adam’s Created State and Fall

In this section, I will consider first Adam’s original condition (A) and then the general consequences that his sin introduced into universal human experience (B). In the first, it is my intention to explain the aspects of human nature that were unique to Adam’s humanity before his sin. I will point to some of the basic characteristics of humanity before the Fall and consider the mutability present in Adam and Eve that was the basis of both the Fall and, ultimately, the final deification of human nature. In the second, I will not consider Maximus’s conception of Adam’s sin itself, either that in which his sin consisted or how it came to be. I am concerned there primarily with a categorization of the ways in which human nature was affected by Adam’s transgression.⁴ In the second part of the chapter (II), I will follow up this initial statement of the Fall with a more systematic presentation of human nature, its faculties, and the structure of the moral act.

A. Adam’s Created State

In the beginning, Adam was created in a good, though not unchangeable, state. His constitution, with all its natural faculties, was oriented and directed toward God; nothing natural in Adam resisted God.⁵ As part of that nature, Adam experienced a “spiritual pleasure”⁶ that drew him toward the divine. Indeed, because of the greatness of God and the smallness of the human subject, Adam was also constituted with a natural

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⁴ In Maximus’s language, this distinction between Adam’s sin itself and the consequences of that sin can be articulated as “my sin” and the “sin that I caused.” The first is properly called sin; the second is only improperly so called. See QT 42 [PG 90:405B-409A, CCSG 7:285-289], in Blowers and Wilken, Cosmic Mystery, 119-122.

⁵ Theological and Polemical Opuscula (hereafter TPO) 7 [PG 91:80A], in Andrew Louth, Maximus the Confessor (New York: Routledge, 2006), 185; TPO 3 [PG 91:45B-48A], in Louth, Maximus, 193. Larchet argues the same at Vinel, QT, t. 1, 33.

⁶ QT 61 [PG 90:625D-628B; CCSG 22, 85-87], in Blowers and Wilken, Cosmic Mystery, 131.
fear of God that respects and falls reverently before God’s greatness. At that time, Adam’s spiritual gaze was fixed on God and, while he had the basic faculties that would enable him to be naturally drawn to God, he did not experience desire or fear with regard to the created order. He enjoyed a balance in his nature, even though his intellectual faculties and sensible faculties naturally consider different objects. He had the ability to continue in this relationship with God and with the world indefinitely, enjoying a “natural virtue” and knowledge of God.

Since Adam was in motion from his creation, there is a certain mutability concerning Adam’s state of being. In principle, Maximus believes that nothing that pertains to human nature as such is fundamentally changeable; the λόγος of Adam’s nature is immutable. To admit a change of nature would be to say that Adam had become a different being. Maximus makes this claim largely in order to protect the distinction between the Creator and the creature, so that even deification does not make Adam ontologically divine. The nature of human mutability, then, does not pertain strictly to what human beings are. Instead, Maximus speaks of different “laws” active in human nature in different periods of human history. As humanity passes from one of these “laws” to another, the ways τρόποι in which human beings activate their humanity change. Most importantly, for instance, when Adam fell, a new law was introduced by

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8 QT 1 [PG 90:268D-269D; CCSG 7, 47-49], in Blowers and Wilken, Cosmic Mystery, 97-8.
11 Amb. Io. 42 [PG 91:1345B, Latin trans. in CCSG 18:207-8], in Blowers and Wilken, Cosmic Mystery, 92.
God, in one sense, but also by the devil. I will explain this new “law” in a moment, but for now I only wish to point out that these “laws” and not human nature itself are what change at the Fall.

Along with the above natural perfections, Adam also had the ability to activate his nature in different ways; Adam was self-governing, self-determining, and free. God created him in this way so that he could choose the good freely and thereby be rewarded with paradise, but his freedom also contained the possibility of a misuse of human nature—sin. Indeed, freedom could be considered the first and most important test that God gives to humankind. Even in his created state, Maximus affirms that there was in Adam an imaginative appetite (βούλησις)—an ability to seek specific ends (τέλη) that arises from thought—whereby he sought things that appeared desirable, thereby inclining toward a perceived good. Again, Adam was naturally inclined toward God and the possibility of sin was merely that. But, because Adam came into being in a state of spiritual motion, the possibility of sin was still a real one. While Adam was created with a natural desire and knowledge of God, it was possible for that desire to be diverted toward

12 See for example QT 61 [PG 90:625D-641B; CCSG 22, 85-105], in Blowers and Wilken, Cosmic Mystery, 137, which speaks of the devil as the cause for the introduction of the law of pleasure and pain in human nature; see also below concerning the providential interaction of divine and demonic intentions in the introduction of this law.


14 QT 40 [PG 90:396A-B; CCSG 7:267], in Vinel, t. 1, 404-5. Maximus does not give a precise definition of this appetite here, but he does in TPO 1 [PG 91:13B-16A], in Maximus the Confessor, Opuscules Théologiques et Polémiques, trans. Emmanuel Ponsonye (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1998), 113-114. As this passage is not as technical as that later text, it is possible that Maximus is using it interchangeably with the “deliberation [βούλευσις]” that makes decisions about things that are “up to us [ἐφ’ ἡμῖν].” The context indicates, though does not say, that nature’s imaginative desire [βουλήσις] was responsible for emptying or rendering void [κενώσαντες] knowledge of the human ability to achieve the good. I will return to the meaning and moral character of βούλησις in section II.B. below. Sorting out the meaning of βουλήσις and βούλευσις may have significant Christological implications, as the latter, but not the former, is eventually denied by Maximus to be in Christ for technical reasons to be discussed below.
other objects and for that knowledge to be corrupted.\textsuperscript{15} Precisely how Adam’s choice and knowledge became diverted from their natural object is not the subject of this project—though it is a very important question indeed. For now, the centrally important affirmation of Maximus is that Adam was good but not immutable in his created state.\textsuperscript{16} It is on the basis of these facts that I will next consider the consequences of Adam’s sin.

\textbf{B. The Fall}

Since Adam’s nature is in itself immutable in the sense that its $\lambda$\-\gamma\-o\-z remains the same and cannot change, the kinds of change that Maximus understands here do not alter what Adam is, \textit{per se}.\textsuperscript{17} Instead, the kinds of changes Maximus envisions concern unintended consequences for his nature that were implicit in Adam’s free choice to transgress God’s law.\textsuperscript{18} There is an unbalancing of Adam’s nature bound up with the activity of Satan, so that the original equilibrium of Adam’s faculties is offset.\textsuperscript{19}

The fact that these consequences are introduced and maintained both through divine and demonic intention is of high importance in this chapter. The devil is described at times as both bringing about our fallen condition \textit{and} insuring that this condition results in sinful activation of our nature. Concerning the original introduction of this new “law” of nature, Maximus variously states that Adam’s transgression introduced the

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{16} Maximus may even consider that, in a hypothetical sense at least, there was a certain “natural weakness [φυσικής άσθενείας]” in human nature apart from divine grace, though such a situation did not attain, in any case, before the Fall. See \textit{QT} 52 [\textit{PG} 90:496A, \textit{CCSG} 7:421], in \textit{Questions}, trans. Vinel, t. 2, 172-3.
\item \textsuperscript{17} See \textit{Amb. Io.} 42 [\textit{PG} 91:1341C-D], in \textit{Ambigua}, trans. Ponsoye, 316 and \textit{Ambigua}, v. 2, trans. Nicholas Constas, 173-5.
\item \textsuperscript{18} \textit{QT} 42 [\textit{PG} 90:405B-D, \textit{CCSG} 7:285], in Blowers and Wilken, \textit{Cosmic Mystery}, 119. Larchet argues that these are summarized by Maximus as the “law of sin.” See text and notes on \textit{QT} 49 in \textit{Questions}, trans. Vinel, t. 2, p. 113-5.
\item \textsuperscript{19} \textit{QD} 48 [\textit{CCSG} 10:40-2], in \textit{Questions}, trans. Prassas, 71.
\end{itemize}
“deadly venom” of the “cruel beast”\textsuperscript{20} the devil introduces the “crookedness of sin” to human nature;\textsuperscript{21} and human nature was killed by a “diabolical fever.”\textsuperscript{22} Most importantly, the addition of pleasure and pain to human sensibility was “devised \[\textit{μεμηχάνητο}\]” by the devil as a means of human enslavement.\textsuperscript{23} When Maximus lists these unintended consequences of Adam’s sin they are most commonly categorized as corruptibility \[\varphiθαρτός\], death \[\thetaνητός\], and passibility \[\piαθητός\].\textsuperscript{24}

First, corruptibility is, generally speaking, a susceptibility to change and to be inclined toward earthly realities. Corruption is associated with the physical mode of human conception after Adam’s sin. Thenceforth, human beings come into being in the same way as “irrational animals,” in a mode that is perhaps not altogether becoming for the rational creatures that human beings are.\textsuperscript{25} Second, death also entered human nature as a consequence of Adam’s transgression. If Adam had obeyed God and only eaten of the permitted trees, “he would not have lost immortality.”\textsuperscript{26} In this way, too, Adam unintentionally gave up the “divine life” that was his in the garden and put on a way of life that was like that of “irrational being,” giving nature over to death.\textsuperscript{27} In both of these consequences, Adam is inclined toward earthly realities and loses something of the
rationality that is distinctive of human nature,\textsuperscript{28} though in themselves nothing in these consequences can be called evil.

The third of these consequences—passibility—implies that the human faculties of attraction and repulsion no longer contemplate purely spiritual realities, but are instead inclined toward physical realities. Concerning this passibility, I must take particular care here to explain the concomitant action of demonic power. When Adam chose to incline his will, desires, and knowledge toward earthly realities instead of God, the natural balance between human intellect [\(νοῦς\)], and sensibility [\(αἰσθεσις\)], was upset in part through the evil intentions of the devil. Adam’s intellect chose to listen to sensibility instead of leading it, and thereafter, the sensible power, the “most irrational part of nature,” was infiltrated by evil spirits and happily suggested further worldly objects of investigation to the intellect that further distracted it from its original object: divine realities.\textsuperscript{29} Maximus is explicit that demons make use of this new form of human passibility in an attempt to elicit sin.\textsuperscript{30} The main object that sensibility seeks out in this newly unbalanced condition is bodily pleasure and the main thing that it seeks to avoid is pain. When kept under the control of reason, these natural faculties, even in their fallen state, have the ability to be activated in a way “according to nature” (κατά φύσιν), that is, in a way that promotes the physical and spiritual well-being of the subject.\textsuperscript{31} Because of

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{28} Although Maximus understands the consequences of the Fall in terms of the “garments of skin” and thus in light of God’s ultimate providential purposes, it is difficult to see the immediate providential purposes of corruptibility and death in Maximus’s thought. They are perhaps reminders to humanity of its finitude and therefore an indirect way of encouraging humility. See for instance \textit{QT} 52 [\textit{PG} 90:496A, \textit{CCSG} 7:421], in \textit{Questions}, trans. Vinel, t. 2, 172-3, for the need for humility concerning humanity’s natural gifts.
  \item \textsuperscript{29} \textit{QT} 1 [\textit{PG} 90:268D-269D; \textit{CCSG} 7, 47-49], in Blowers and Wilken, \textit{Cosmic Mystery}, 97-8.
\end{itemize}
this possible “natural” activation, these faculties are still good and still intended to bring about human flourishing.

In the crucial text of Questions from Thalassius (hereafter QT) 21, Maximus spells out in detail how this introduction of passibility took place. After the Fall, the natural sensibility of humanity—intended by God to promote humanity’s physical and spiritual flourishing—is instead used by the devil to “drive [ἐλαύνουσα]” the human subject into sinful action, “unnatural passions [τὸν παρὰ φύσιν παθὸν]”:

For in this passibility, through natural finitude, [nature] had an increase of sin, suffering the opposing power of the principalities and powers according to the sin born out of our passibility, by the burial of the energies of the natural passions beneath the unnatural passions. Through the energy of the natural passions, all evil powers are at work, driving the deliberative will, according to the possibility of nature, into the corruption of the unnatural passions through the natural ones.  

Notice that the “energies [ἐνεργείας]” of the natural passions are still present; Maximus thereby indicates the perduring goodness of human nature itself. These energies, however, are “buried” or, more literally, hidden within [ἐγκεκριμένας] the unnatural passions solicited by demonic powers. But it is precisely in the natural passions that the “evil powers” work.  

Thus, while one could not say that demons force human nature into an unnatural mode [τρόπος] of activation after Adam’s sin, demonic power is certainly part of the postlapsarian “law” imposed on Adam. These forces are given new fodder for temptation

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33 Maximus affirms that these natural passions are the only way that unnatural passions arise in the soul (QT 55 [PG 90:541A, CCSG 7:487], in Questions, trans. Vinel, t. 2, 242-3). This fact indicates that the devil must work with what is natural in humanity in order to solicit activity contrary to its own nature.
when sensible pleasure and pain are introduced into human sensibility—human nature “suffers \([\pi\sigma\delta\nu]\)" these powers in a new way after Adam’s transgression. The passions, even natural ones, thus become closely associated with demonic activity for Maximus and it would be difficult to consider fully the functioning of the natural passions without taking into consideration the concomitant “suffering” of the activity of demonic powers and principalities in and through them.

Maximus, despite a theoretical optimism regarding human triumph over these forces, still affirms fallen humanity’s universal sinfulness.\(^{34}\) The changed arrangement of human faculties after the Fall results time and again in sinful action through a misuse of sensibility. There are thus serious moral consequences to Adam’s sin. Due to the transgression of the law, humanity lost its natural virtue, which is cut off by the seduction of sensation.\(^{35}\) Nature no longer bears fruit after Adam’s transgression.\(^{36}\) The ability \([\delta\omicron\omega\omicron\mu\varsigma]\) to make decisions in keeping with the divine law that belonged to Adam in his original condition is rendered “empty and without water \([\kappa\epsilon\nu\eta\nu \ldots \kappa\alpha\iota \dot{\alpha}\nu\delta\rho\omicron\nu]\)” and humanity no longer knows how to remove the “filth of evil \([\tau\eta\zeta \kappa\acute{k}\iota\acute{a} \varsigma \ldots \tau\omicron \rho\acute{u}\omicron\nu]\).”\(^{37}\) This “empty power” indicates that humankind no longer enjoys a stable attraction to the good, but, in part through demonic activity, instead vacillates with regard to what is good. This way \([\tau\rho\omicron\omicron\omicron\varsigma]\) of activating sensibility is what Maximus refers to as a gnomic will—a topic of central importance to his dyothelite affirmations about Christ in his later life.\(^{38}\)

\(^{34}\) OD 118 [CCSG 10:86-7], in Questions, trans. Prassas, 104: “no one dies without faults and [everyone] is crushed by sin, but only the Lord died intact and without any sin.”

\(^{35}\) Dispute with Pyrrhus [PG 91:309B], in Dispute, t. 2, trans. Doucet, 566 (French translation on 648).


\(^{38}\) See Larchet’s introduction at Vinel, t. 1, 40.
Does this mean that Maximus believes human sin after the Fall to be “necessary”? It is important to remember that the gnomic will is not essential to humanity—it does not constitute the λόγος of human nature but is rather categorized as a sinful τρόπος of its activation. In fact, the nature, as mentioned above, is fundamentally static and immutable, so what must be asked is whether the current τρόπος of human nature is unavoidable.

Because human nature remains completely good even when ‘covered’ by an evil activation, Maximus may affirm a sort of theoretical possibility of a natural avoidance of sin. However, in practice, human beings have universally failed to avoid sin; Maximus clearly affirms universal sinfulness. The universality of the gnomic will should not call into question a Christological point important to Maximus’s later Christology: Christ did not need and in fact needed not to have a gnomic will in order to come as a perfect and ‘natural’ human being.

Nevertheless, Christ is affirmed by Maximus as having been tempted like us in every way—including temptation that comes to human beings through demonic suggestion. How Christ took on and overcame this activity is the central concern of the next chapter; for now, it is important to first clarify in detail what it means to “suffer” demonic powers, for this suffering will also clarify precisely what it is that Christ “takes on” in the incarnation. For this, I now turn to a more complete account of Maximus’s anthropology and, after, the activity of demonic powers in and through human nature.

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39 Such a claim is obviously at variance with an Augustinian non posse non peccare, but even Augustine attributes enough to the human will that it is still responsible for its sins. Augustine does not mean to say in an absolute way that human beings are required to sin as a consequence of their natural construction. If that were so, God would be the one responsible for creating human nature with a disposition toward sin.

40 QD 118 [CCSG 10:86-7], in Questions, trans. Prassas, 104: “no one dies without faults and [everyone] is crushed by sin, but only the Lord died intact and without any sin.” It seems unlikely that Maximus, in this passage, is intending to contradict the rising Greek perception of Mary as all-holy.
II. Human Nature and Demonic Temptation after the Fall

A. A More Complete Account of Maximus’s Anthropology

Up till now, I have been addressing the aspects of human nature in Maximus’s anthropology *ad hoc*, emphasizing the ways that human nature, or at least its τρόπος, was altered by Adam’s sin. Now, however, I will be concerned with three topics that will introduce the categories of Maximus’s anthropology in a more orderly fashion, each topic interacting with Maximus’s anthropological sources from Chapter 1 in often creative ways. First, I will consider humanity’s composition as a combination of body and soul, including the faculties or powers of reason and sensation (1). As part of this investigation, I will provide a more precise definition of a “passion” in Maximus’s thought, influenced as it is by Cappadocian and Evagrian conceptions of the term, and indicate some of the ambiguities that surround its various uses. Second, I will consider the role of imagination, thought, and memory in Maximus’s anthropology, where Maximus’s indebtedness to Evagrius is most clear (2). Finally, I will consider the structure of the moral act as it is presented by Maximus, defining and relating important categories such as deliberation, choice, ignorance, and judgment that bear a distinctly Nemesian flavor (3). The account of human nature in this section concerns both the λόγος of human nature and the concrete τρόπος of its activation after Adam’s sin, but this account will remain incomplete without the investigation of the following subsection (C) about the way demons are active in this nature after the Fall. As shown in the above section (I.B.), for Maximus, demonic temptation is very closely associated with the τρόπος of human action after the Fall, so

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41 Since this study is concerned with the ways that Maximus considers Christ to have shared or not shared in fallen human nature, it is most crucial to explain human nature in those terms and only to a lesser extent the original condition of Adam.
the division here is artificial and separated only for clarity of presentation.

Methodologically, it is merely useful to map out the structures of human nature and activity before investigating the vulnerabilities of this structure to demonic suggestion and temptation.

1. Body/soul and the three faculties of reason, attraction, and repulsion. First, then, is a consideration of humanity’s constitution as body and soul. Because of the spiritual nature of the soul and the physical nature of the body, there is a natural sort of tension between the two, though when the spiritual leads the physical as it is supposed to, they are in harmony. Maximus describes the objects of these two components of human nature as opposed to one another: “The intellect [νοῦς] and sensibility [αἴσθησις] have operations that are naturally opposed to one another through the supreme variance and otherness of those [things] subjected to them.”

At the level of the λόγος of human nature, there is not necessarily opposition, but when activated by the τρόπος of a gnomic will, the two operations become disordered, the spiritual following the sensible instead of the other way around. When such disorder occurs, Maximus can even describe the body as the “enemy” of the soul, though the essential goodness of the nature itself must be kept in mind.

Closely associated with this mind/body distinction is that between reason and sensibility, which is in turn subdivided into attraction (ἐπιθυμία) and repulsion (θυμός).

This three-fold Platonic distinction of human faculties is drawn, at least, from Gregory of


44 QT 49 [PG 90:447B449A; CCSG 7, 353], in Questions, trans. Vinel, t. 2, 96-7, QD 41 [CCSG 10:34-5], in Questions, trans. Prassas, 66. For the subdivision of sensibility into attraction and repulsion, see QT 43 [PG 90:412D, CCSG 7:295], in Questions, trans. Vinel, t. 2, 32-3, where the faculties are described by their actions: pleasure (ἡδονή) and pain (δόνη).
Nyssa, who also used it in his explanation of the passions. For Maximus, the “power of sin [τῆς ἁμαρτίας … ἡ δύναμις]” has been “mingled [πέφυρταί]” into these latter two powers—where the “power of sin” is likely a reference to the passions with the connected demonic powers. Sensibility and rationality in themselves are good—but they are the seat of both good and bad activations of nature, either natural or unnatural passions.

As for passions themselves, Maximus’s definition is somewhat fluid, based in part on the ambiguity of his own sources that I have already discussed in Chapter 1. As far as the constitution of a passion is concerned, Maximus defines it as a combination of a sense object [αἰσθητοῦ τινός], a sensation [αἰσθήσεως], and a natural power [φυσικῆς δυνάμεως]—either reason, attraction, or repulsion. In other words, there is an external, physical object that is perceived in the soul by the operation of a natural power. One should note that this definition is immediately followed with a qualification; he clarifies that it is a passion when the combination of these three elements has been diverted from its natural action. One sees this same sort of definition elsewhere, where a passion is “an impulse of the soul contrary to nature.”

At other times, however, Maximus is perhaps more precise, stating that a blameworthy [ψεκτὸν] passion is “an impulse of the soul contrary to nature.” Thus,

45 See Chapter 1 above.
46 Q 90:264-C-D, CCG 7:11, in Questions, trans. Vivel, t. 1, 112-3. Later in the same paragraph, Maximus equates the “power of sin” with the “law of sin [ὁ νόμος τῆς ἁμαρτίας]”; Larchet, at least, argues that this law of sin is the corruptibility, mortality, and passibility of the body introduced by Adam’s transgression (see his notes on Q 49 in Questions, trans. Vivel, t. 2, 113-5). I will be arguing at greater length for the association of passions with demonic powers in subsection C below.
48 Ibid.
reflecting his own sources, Maximus sometimes defines a passion as something against nature by definition while at other times he acknowledges that some passions are according to nature. An attentiveness to the context will thus be necessary when considering what kind of passion Maximus is considering in any given passage. Certainly, the distinction in the Questions from Thalassius between “natural” and “unnatural” passions indicates that he grew more precise than he was in the early Centuries on Love, the source of the two opposing texts cited above. Later, by the time he was writing the Theological and Polemical Opuscula (TPO), Maximus may have devised a shorthand way to refer to these two different kinds of passions. The distinction that he makes there between punitive [ἐπιτιμία] passions and disgraceful or dishonorable [ἀτιμία] passions may be the same as the distinction between natural and unnatural passions, though I will have reason to return to this question when considering Christ’s passions in Chapter 3. Certainly, when he is considering the presence of the passions in Christ, as he does in QT 21 and other important passages, he has in mind a basically morally neutral definition of passion.

It is also valuable for the coming study of Jesus’ temptation to note that Maximus often repeats an Evagrian sub-division of the passions, though with an important modification. To recall, the basic Evagrian passions are vainglory, avarice, and gluttony—and these are found unaltered in Maximus’s early articulation. For Evagrius,

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52 The passions of ἀτιμία should almost certainly have a negative connotation; the phrase comes from Romans 1:26.
these three passions are identified with demons that must be combated even in the morally upright and they correspond with the three temptations that Christ experienced in the desert. Building on this Christological framework from Evagrius, Maximus expands his Evagrian sources in the *Questions from Thalassius* by including these three temptations toward pleasure alongside other demonic temptations by pain. Unlike Evagrius, then, Maximus does not consider the faculty of repulsion [θυμός] only as a tool for combating demons; he recognizes that demons can use θυμός as a tool for inciting temptation and sin. This modification deeply shapes Maximus’s view of Christ’s temptations and will be of great significance in the next chapter.

2. *Imagination.* The next, and rather brief, structural and anthropological topic to discuss here is the function of imagination, thoughts, and memories. Much like the psychological structure for sensation, imagination is composed of a subject, an object, a faculty, and the action of that faculty. Specifically, for imagination, there is an imaginer [τό … φανταστικόν], an external object that is imagined [τό φανταστόν], imagination [τῆς φαντασίας], and a mental image [τό φάντασμα] of the external object. The word for this final component varies in different texts; it is elsewhere called an “image [τὰς εἰκόνας],” “memory [μνήμη],” and, in some places, it goes by the same word that Evagrius uses for these “mental representations”: νόημα. Maximus also occasionally uses it interchangeably with “thought [λογισμός].” Recall that for Evagrius λογισμοί were

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56 It is possible that these two different topics—sensation and imagination—are different stages of Maximus’s own vocabulary for the same process.
58 The φάντασμα is equated with εἰκόνας at *QT* 49 [PG 90:449B-C; CCSG 7, 355-7], in *Questions*, trans. Vinel, t. 2, 100-1.
60 See, for instance, the *CL* III.52-3 [PG 90:1032C-D], in *Philokalia*, v. 2, trans. Palmer, Sherrard, and Ware, 91.
angelic, human, and demonic, corresponding nearly exclusively with good, neutral, and evil thoughts. For Maximus to associate λογισμός with the activity of a human faculty thereby emphasizes the morally neutral character of these thoughts, but this fact does not mean that Maximus has lost sight of Evagrius’s demonology, as will be seen in the next section.  

Couched in this anthropological context, imagination forms images of things both past and present—it creates images of things currently present and recalls objects experienced in the past. Because of the wide range of terms used for this mental process and because it involves mental functions such as memory that are not ascribed to sensation, imagination is best understood as a faculty distinct from sensation that belongs to the more rational parts of the soul, the νοῦς or intellect, and that considers, reflect on, and stores images of external objects. The ways in which demons exploit imagination will be considered in the subsection below (C).

3. A detailed account of the moral act. The final anthropological structure to consider here is the progression of the moral act. Maximus provides numerous considerations of this subject in his works, but perhaps the most developed (and also the most Nemesian) is that found in TPO 1, which presentation I will follow here. After (a) mapping this basic structure, I will (b) briefly consider the moral quality and relationship of two other topics: ignorance and intention.

a. The moral act. The basis in the λόγος of human nature for all moral activity is a “natural desire [Θέλημα φυσικόν]” called the “will [θέλησις].” This desire pertains to the λόγος of human nature and is therefore wholly good, seeking what is good for the

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63 As mentioned above, sensation generally appears more “physical,” involving the “most irrational part of the soul” (QT 1 [PG 90:268D-269D; CCSG 7, 47-49], in Blowers and Wilken, Cosmic Mystery, 97-8.
subject. Thanks to this natural will, human beings “stretch out toward Ὀρέγόμενοι” objects that realize its “full natural being φυσικὴ καὶ πλήρους ὄντότητος.” It is an “appetite ὄρεξις” that is in no way “up to us ἐφ ’ἡμῖν”—it only depend on what is natural to humanity. It is, in short, the seat of positive, healthy desire in human nature.

In addition to θέλησις, there is another source of “appetite ὄρεξις” in the human subject called “wish βούλησίς.” It bears some similarity with that category of desires that Nemesius calls “intentional ἐκούσιος” in that it concerns both things that are up to us, on the one hand, and things that are not up to us ἐφ ’ἡμῖν καὶ οὐκ ἐφ ’ἡμῖν and do not come to be through us δι ’ἡμῖν, on the other. It differs, however, in that it excludes “rational deliberation τοῦ βουλευτικοῦ λόγου” and seeks only ends, τέλη.

Maximus’s examples of these ends are important, since they are things that pertain to this world and this earthly life and are thus not absolutely good, but that might generally be agreed to be desirable. He lists health, wealth, and immortality: all things that might be called desirable, but that, given one’s physical and social conditions, might be impossible to bring about through one’s own action. The ends that it has in mind, then, are not spiritual ends, but physical, this-worldly ones. Furthermore, the vocabulary for βούλησίς associates it closely with the imaginative faculty considered above. βούλησίς is an “imaginative appetite ὀρεξὶς φανταστικὴ” that arises from thought διανοίᾳ alone.

65 Ibid. θέλησις and βούλησις are also considered at PG 91:317B-320A. His definition of the latter is different there, but I take his presentation in TPO 1 as definitive.
66 Aristotle taught that one cannot deliberate about ends, as these are considered to be self-evident; what can be deliberated is the means to those ends. Maximus follows this Aristotelean psychology without comment.
67 The “this-worldliness” of βούλησις is important in considering the fear that Christ demonstrates in the Garden of Gethsemane. See Chapter 3 below.
Thus, the source of these desires, even if not deliberated, is nevertheless related to the subject matter of imagination: past and present mental images that enter the mind through memory and from external, physical objects. The object of νοῦς, then, is remembered or physically present this-worldly realities that are accepted as desirable without deliberation.

These desires are the beginning of the process of choice (προαίρεσις), which is a combined activity composed of appetite (ὁρέξεως), deliberation (νοῦς), and judgment (κρίσεως). προαίρεσις combines these three in this order, moving from either...

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68 TPO 1 [PG 91:16B-C], in Opuscula, trans. Ponsony, 114. When presenting Maximus’s anthropology, certain fundamental decisions must be made. My decision to consider choice as a faculty of human rationality is one of these. The secondary literature has much to say on the subject of choice, and not all of it is consistent. I will explain here my own reasoning and briefly discuss where it fits in the secondary literature.

I have decided to place choice in my consideration of the λόγος of human nature because (1) no purely anthropological passage in Maximus’s corpus contradicts this placement and (2) such a reading is consistent with Maximus’s own anthropological source material; I will return to this decision in Chapter 3. As I have discussed in Chapter 1 above, Nemesius defines human rationality by its ability to deliberate and choose. I had indicated at that time that there were certain Christological difficulties that arise because of this definition, but these difficulties are completely unacknowledged by Nemesius, whose goals are at some distance from Christology. In the majority of Maximus’s anthropological texts, he accepts Nemesius’s definition. In Maximus, however, the Christological impasse comes to light, and Maximus works hard to overcome it. It is only late and only in relationship with his reflection on the person of Christ that Maximus comes to realize the problems of Nemesius’s categories. When Maximus argues that choice is not constitutive of the human λόγος, the only examples he can give are eschatological: the saints in heaven. With Paul Blowers (“The Passion of Jesus Christ in Maximus the Confessor” in Studia Patristica XXXVII (Leuven: Peeters, 2001), 377), I take this to be a sign that Maximus’s thought about choice implies a history to human nature. Not only did Maximus himself change his mind on the question of choice, his latest, most developed thought on the matter implies at least two different stages in the deification of human nature, the latter of which is only realized eschatologically (for the “stages” of human nature in Maximus, see QT 41 [PG 90:404C-405D, CCSG 7:281], in Questions, trans. Vinel, t. 2, 16–7 and QT 38 [PG 90:389C-392A, CCSG 7:255-7], in Questions, trans. Vinel, t. 1, 394-5).

Some authors treat Maximus’s thought on choice fairly inadequately. Ian A. McFarland (“‘Naturally and by Grace’: Maximus the Confessor on the Operation of the Will” in Scottish Journal of Theology 58 (4): 410-433 (2005)) does some violence to Maximus’s thought concerning choice. Early in the essay McFarland refers to choice as a distinct category of Maximus’s reflection on human nature, but in what follows, he completely subsumes choice under a broader discussion of γνώμη that, in light of other secondary material, is confused and unhelpful. He does not help clarify whether choice is “natural” to humanity. Adam G. Cooper (The Body in St. Maximus the Confessor: Holy Flesh, Wholly Deified (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005) speaks of the deliberative will (γνώμη) and the “corrupted faculty of choice” as nearly equivalent terms (ibid., 214), both signalling the heart of human falleness. This association appears to place these realities on the side of human misuse—our deviant τρόπος—but by calling it a “faculty,” he does imply that choice is natural to human nature. He...
a natural or imaginative appetite (which seeks an end directly), to deliberation about the means for the attainment of that end, to a judgment about the course of action to be pursued, ending in a choice. The origin of the appetite was just considered; deliberation and judgment can be briefly explained.

Maximus defines deliberation and the object of deliberation [βουλευόμεθα] in precisely the same way as Nemesius. Unlike a wish [βούλησίς], deliberation only concerns things that are up to us, that take place through our action, and the end of which

does not address whether there is an “uncorrupted” faculty of choice or whether such would be present in Christ. According to Cooper, Christ restores human nature to itself (albeit in a new mode) without changing its essence (ibid., 157), but he does not address whether choice is part of that essence or not. Philipp Gabriel Renczes (Agir de Dieu et Liberté de l’Homme: Recherches sur l’Anthropologie Théologique de Saint Maxime le Confesseur (Paris: Ed. du Cerf, 2003) takes for granted the choice is part of the human λόγος and does not investigate the matter closely (ibid., 269-272).

A number of authors explicitly (and rightly) acknowledge that Maximus’s thought on choice evolved in response to the Christological challenges he was facing. Marcel Doucet (“Vues Recentes sur les ‘Metamorphoses’ de la Pensee de Saint Maxime le Confesseur” in Science et Esprit XXXI, no. 3 (1979), 300) argues that Maximus bends his anthropology to his Christology and not the other way around—I wholly agree. Balthasar (Cosmic Liturgy: The Universe according to Maximus the Confessor (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1988), 260-271) also provides what I take to be an adequate account of choice, placing some “deified” form of it in the λόγος of human nature. So too with Jean-Claude Larchet’s texts (Maxime le Confesseur Médiateur entre l’Orient et l’Occident (Paris: Ed. du Cerf, 1998), 89 and 114; also La Divinisation de l’Homme selon Saint Maxime le Confesseur (Paris: Ed du Cerf, 1996), 241); he is clear that Maximus “sera amené à moduler (mais non à contredire, il le soulignera lui-même) sa conception antérieure en affirmant que le Christ [ne possède pas] de proairesis.”

Two other authors are hard to categorize. Jean-Miguel Garrigues (Le Dessein Divin d’Adoption et le Christ Rédempteur à la lumière de Maxime le Confesseur et de Thomas d’Aquin (Paris: Ed. du Cerf, 2011)) considers Maximus’s thought on choice in light of later Thomistic reflection on this tradition. While Thomas (and thereby Garrigues) parts ways with Maximus’s denial of choice in Christ, they do so precisely on anthropological definitions that were not at Maximus’s disposal. Thomas invents the category of a “non-deliberative choice” that was oxymoronic to Maximus’s anthropology (ibid., 131-140). This choice can be affirmed as constitutive of human nature and affirmed in Christ. I take such a solution to be very helpful, but one must admit that it goes beyond Maximus himself.

Lastly, Demetrios Bathrellos (The Byzantine Christ: Person, Nature, and Will in the Christology of Maximus the Confessor (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004) also provides commentary on modern authors’ accounts of choice in Maximus. He disagrees with Farrell, who places choice in nature, but his reasons for disagreeing are only Christological, not anthropological (ibid.,156). He argues in the end that choice is merely related to our fallen τρόπος (ibid., 153) and therefore not natural. Throughout, Bathrellos argues for a “self-determination” in Christ without choice—but what he means by self-determination without decision is unclear to say the least. This confusion is betrayed in his conclusion, where he undermines Maximus’s categories, saying that “Maximus’s exclusion from Christ of the possibility of choosing evil does not necessarily mean that choice itself must be excluded from him” (ibid., 191). Such a claim, while perhaps correct, must be taken as evaluative of Maximus’s anthropology and not a direct commentary on it. At the least, this reassessment requires Bathrellos to place choice back in the human λόγος, which he earlier explicitly denies.

69 See Chapter 1.
is unseen \[\ddηλον \varepsilon\chi\omicron\nu\tau\omicron\ το \tau\epsilon\omicron\lambda\omicron\zeta\]. Firstly, while one can wish for something outside of one’s power, one cannot choose or deliberate such a thing; therefore, deliberation only concerns what is up to us and takes place through us \[\tau\omicron\nu \varepsilon\omicron\rho\ ν \varepsilon\omicron\mu\varrho\nu, κα\iota \deltai \varepsilon\omicron\mu\varrho\nu \gamma\nu\nu\omicron\mu\acute{\epsilon}\nu\omicron\nu\]. That is, deliberation concerns things that are possible for the subject but not necessary. In another place Maximus briefly summarizes this aspect of deliberation, saying “we deliberate only those things the accomplishment of which in action is equally possible.” Secondly, deliberation requires that the end of the action be unseen, perhaps meaning that there has to be some uncertainty or lack of knowledge about whether the considered action will accomplish one’s natural ends. One must speak of the τέλος envisioned here in a qualified way; Maximus is clear that deliberation does not consider ends themselves \[\tau\omicron\vartheta \tau\epsilon\omicron\lambda\omicron\us\varsigma\], but rather only the means to an end \[\pi\rho\omicron\varsigma \tau\omicron \tau\epsilon\omicron\lambda\omicron\varsigma\]. Thus, deliberation is still subordinate to wish. It is not that wish is sure about its goal \[\beta\omicron\upsilon\lambda\eta\sigma\varsigma\] and deliberation is unsure about that same goal \[\beta\omicron\upsilon\lambda\epsilon\upsilon\sigma\varsigma\]; rather, the former formulates a goal or goals the means of the accomplishment of which the latter considers as its indeterminate, subordinate end. Finally, judgment is simply the end of the deliberative act, which results in a choice \[\pi\rho\omicron\omega\mu\epsilon\tau\omicron\tau\omicron\]. Free will is that by which human beings act out their appetites and choices, thereby attracting praise or blame depending on the use that is made of them.

There is one important difference between Maximus and Nemesius in this passage. When Maximus considered these questions in the Dispute with Pyrrhus, he defined human rationality by its ability to search, deliberate, judge, make a choice, and so forth—just as Nemesius. In the Dispute, these activities were summarized in the will

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[θέλησις] instead of in choice [προαίρεσις] (as in the later TPO).71 The importance of this shift cannot be underestimated; as discussed in Chapter 1, Nemesius implicitly encounters a Christological impasse because of his definition of rationality in terms of deliberation. A strong affirmation of Christ’s impeccability was impossible there, for if Christ was fully human (and therefore rational), Christ deliberated; and if Christ deliberated, there were actions that were indeterminate for him, whose outcome was unknown and in need of investigation—a claim apparently at odds with a strong sense of Christ’s impeccability, an absolute inability to sin. In TPO 1, however, Maximus has redefined will and choice so that the essential characteristic of human nature—will [θέλησις]—can be present in Christ, while still denying that Christ vacillated in regard to God’s will, thereby admitting a stronger sense of Christ’s impeccability. The adequacy of this solution to Nemesius’s problem will be considered in Chapter 3.72

b. Moral qualities of ignorance and the intentional. For Maximus, as for the vast majority of the Christian tradition, moral evil arises from bad choice and free will, not simply because one is ignorant of the correct course of action or thought. Formally, Maximus defines moral evil in the soul as the “irrational movement of natural faculties according to an erroneous judgment [κατ’ ἐσφαλμένη κρίσιν] toward something other than its end.”73 Thus, it is part of the deliberative process of choice described above that often ends in sin. But ignorance takes a key, perhaps even generative, role in this erroneous judgment. Ignorance “blinded humanity’s intellect [τὸν μὲν νοὸν πηρόσασα

71 See Dispute with Pyrrhus [PG 91:293B-D], in Dispute, trans. Doucet, 549 (French on 628).
72 One might bemoan that Maximus chooses to bend his anthropology to serve Christological ends, but if nothing else this creative incident shows that Christology remains Maximus’s primary object of investigation. For Maximus, Christ reveals to us who we are; if our conceptions of who we are conflict with what Christ shows us about humanity, it is clear which one must be changed.
73 QT Introduction [PG 90:253A-B, CSG 7:29], in Questions, trans. Vinel, t. 1, 132-135); translation in body is mine. One might note the similarity to Gregory of Nyssa on this point.
Ignorance removed knowledge of God and filled the human subject with “passionate knowledge of sensible realities [τῆς δὲ τῶν αἰσθητῶν ἐμπαθοῦς ἐπλήρωσε γνώσεως].”

I also wish to point out here that Maximus recognizes moral distinctions that somewhat mitigate the wholly negative impression that the preceding comments may give about the moral quality of ignorance. Above, Maximus indicates that ignorance may precede or cause erroneous judgment and choice, but Maximus elsewhere distinguishes between ignorance that is in some sense chosen and another kind that is not intended. In the earlier *Questions and Doubts*, Maximus had argued that there is one kind of ignorance that is up to us—that is, we could have known, but do not—and another kind that is not up to us—that it was not in our power to have known. The former is “reproachable” and the latter is “irreproachable”: we could know the former, but do not; we want to know the latter but cannot. In this way, the moral roots of sin continue to spiral between choice and ignorance: ignorance is sometimes unintentional but in other cases ignorance is intentional. Maximus seems to avow that when ignorance is of the unintentional kind, it is not morally culpable. Here, too, there are important Christological implications of these distinctions that will be addressed in the next chapter.

In the next chapter, I will show that the role of ignorance in evil has concrete effects on the way Maximus conceives of Christ’s humanity and the ways in which he is susceptible to temptation.

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74 *QT* Introduction [*PG 90:2257A, CCSG 7:35*], in *Questions*, trans. Vinel, t. 1, 140-1); translation in body is mine.

75 Ibid.

76 *QD* I.67 [*CCSG 10:155*], in *Questions*, trans. Prassas, 148-9. These categories slide rather easily into modern ones of “vulnerable” and “invulnerable” ignorance. The important Christological question that Maximus will have to answer when considering whether there is ignorance in Christ is whether there is anything that is beyond Christ’s power to know.
Finally, having just referenced the categories of “intentional [ἐκουσίων]” and “unintentional [ἀκουσίων]” in relation to ignorance, I should also clarify precisely how Maximus defines these categories since they are also frequently used by Maximus in connection with different categories of passions. While these terms are often translated as “voluntary” and “involuntary,” the Nemesian roots of Maximus’s usage does not support this translation. As explained in the preceding chapter, Nemesius defines intentional as a larger category than choice and will. For example, one can intend to find buried treasure while digging a grave—even if one had not chosen to stumble across these hidden riches. In the case of unexpected fortune, such an action is intentional but not chosen because the finding of the treasure was not up to the one who found it. This fact can work to one’s moral detriment as well; if one accidentally kills a man who is one’s enemy (and whose death is met with joy), such an action is considered intentional [ἐκουσίων]. On the other hand, when a result of an action is met with sadness, that result is unintentional [ἀκουσίων]. Thus, when a son accidentally kills a father with an arrow while hunting, the son neither chose nor intended to do so.

When these categories are applied to passions by Maximus, intentional passions are usually associated with pleasure [ἡδονή] and unintentional passions are usually associated with pain [ὀδόντης]. The reason for this association is fairly clear. Generally speaking, pleasure is something sought and pain something to be avoided, so even if one does not choose to experience pleasure in a given circumstance, such a result can generally be referred to as “intended” because it is met with approval. Similarly, even if

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77 Most translations of Maximus’s works renders these terms as “voluntary” and “involuntary,” but there are times when this translation clearly does not carry the meaning of what Maximus is trying to say. In my translation, I am following the lead of R. W. Sharples and P. J. Van Der Eijk in their translation of Nemesius (see Chapter 1).

one does not *choose* to experience pain, that experience can still be called “unintentional” because it is met with disapproval. These nuances of meaning are obscured when ἑκουσίων is rendered as “voluntary” and ἀκουσίων as “involuntary,” as the English term seems to imply that the experience is chosen or rejected in deliberation, which Maximus would deny.

Maximus further subdivides these voluntary and involuntary passions into bodily and spiritual passions, producing four different kinds in all. Following the natural opposition between body and soul mentioned above, Maximus argues that intentional passions are pleasurable to the body but spiritually painful and that unintentional passions are painful for the body but spiritually pleasurable. Thus, in his naming of these passions, they are called “intentional” and “unintentional” with respect to how they are received by the body: happily and with disapproval, respectively. When one’s reason is controlled by the passions, however, the soul also experiences these passions in the same way as the body, even though this perception is objectively wrong. But when one’s soul has reasserted its control over the body through temperance and patience, the soul ceases to consider the experience of the body—in fact, spiritual joy then arises from physical pain and spiritual pain can arise from physical pleasure. This means that there is a sense in which virtue reverses the meaning of “intentional” and “unintentional” passions, responding to pain with joy and to pleasure with disapproval.

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81 Maximus explicitly considers the existence of a category of “intentional pain” that arises through patience. The virtue of patience, then, clearly has the role of reversing the associations of intention and passion. Certainly, one can choose to seek or avoid pleasure or pain, but when these befall one unexpectedly, temperance and patience make these pleasures and pains unintentional and intentional, respectively (Patience is seen as the remedy for pain at *QD* 163 [CCSG 10:114], in *Questions*, trans. Prassas, 124 and QT 26 [PG 90:344B-C, CCSG 7:177], in *Questions*, trans. Vinel, t. 1, 306-7 (esp. Larchet’s notes); both are clearly associated at *Amb. Io.* 10 [PG 91:1204C-1205B], in *Ambigua*, trans.
Maximus also occasionally describes these intentional and unintentional passions as coming from “within [ἐνδοθεν]” and “without [ἔξωθεν],” and it is important to explain what Maximus does and does not mean by this distinction. On the one hand, it means that intentional passion (pleasure) arises in human nature on the basis of ends conceived by appetites of either nature or thought; coming from “within” thus refers to a spontaneous, non-deliberative movement toward the object. Similarly, it means that unintentional passion (pain) comes to the subject as something to be avoided; coming from “without” simply means that it is a passion that does not originate in a natural appetite or rather that originates in the negation of a natural appetite. On the other hand, coming from “within” does not mean that these are unsavory desires that originate in human nature in the manner of a negative Latin conception of the word “concupiscence.” In fact, Maximus explicitly avows that external forces can influence these appetites coming from “within.” Similarly, coming from “without” does not mean that the attack can leave the faculties of the individual involved utterly unperturbed. With these unintentional passions, there is a corresponding reaction, at least, from the faculty of repulsion; an “external” attack corresponds to a response from the sensitive faculty.

This completes a review of the relevant anthropological topics that constitute the foreground for a consideration of demonic temptation of the human subject. I turn now to

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82 See QD 153 [CCSG 10:107], in Questions, trans. Prassas, 120 and QD 163 [CCSG 10:114], in Questions, trans. Prassas, 124. In both cases, the intent here is to escape from the cycle of enslavement to pleasure and pain in order to remain unmoved by them—but, to use my own analogy, in order to straighten what is bent, one must bend it beyond the position one hopes it to maintain.

the question of how demons interact with the natural and psychological structures outlines above.

**B. Demonic temptation in human nature**

Maximus’s view of demonic temptation is particularly complex and rich. While it certainly reflects the sources upon which he drew (especially Evagrius), Maximus’s account is also original and creative. He takes care to diagnose this temptation in great detail because he ultimately wants to prescribe a solution for it—a solution that is both spiritually rigorous and Christologically deep. This material, then, is absolutely essential to the purpose of the coming chapter, for one must understand how human beings are tempted if one is to consider how Christ was “tempted like us in all things, yet without sin” (Heb. 4:15). In the preceding subsection, my concern was to elaborate the psychological structures of Maximus’s thought along the same lines as previous studies of Maximus. In this section, however, it is my hope to show how the existing studies fall short of a full description of Maximian psychology due to a lack of attention to his demonology. A few comments on the existing literature will help illuminate the state of research.

As seen in the preceding sections of this chapter, Maximus is consistently concerned with an affirmation of the goodness of human nature. It is axiomatic for Maximus that anything that God creates is good, inclining by nature toward God. It is especially important to note that this is the case even of the “second nature” of passibility, corruptibility, and mortality added to human nature after the Fall. Thus, the natural impulses of pleasure and pain that arise from human nature would still be directed toward the good of human nature. In the existing literature, though, many authors are much too
quick to explain Maximus’s account of human sinfulness by referring to an innate perversity in nature that causes it to rebel against itself. Certainly, there is a natural tension between the bodily and spiritual aspects of humanity, but this is not for Maximus the internal spiritual warfare much more easily articulated in Latin and especially post-Augustinian Christianity as the *fomes peccati*. This same explanation is seen when authors “ontologize” the *gnomic* will of normal human beings so that this will is somehow explanatory of the vacillation human beings experience with respect to the good, whereas in fact the *gnomic* will, as a τρόπος of human willing, is used descriptively by Maximus to speak of the way human beings do in fact activate their will. To say that the *gnomic* will explains unnatural desires is wrong both because it implicitly places this will in the ranks of the λόγος of nature and because it puts the cart before the horse, explaining what precedes (unnatural desire) in terms of what follows (human experience of deliberation and vacillation regarding the good).

Of course, there will always remain something mysterious to the way in which human beings turn from their final end. For Maximus, however, the human experience of

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84 Ian A. McFarland (“Naturally and by Grace’: Maximus the Confessor on the Operation of the Will” in *Scottish Journal of Theology* 58 (4): 410-433 (2005)), in an attempt to paint a thoroughly Augustinian picture of Maximus, is particularly guilty of this over-hasty explanation. He speaks of a “perversion of desire” (ibid., 412), an “internal division,” a “sinful disposition, and a “divided self” (ibid., 416) in Maximus’s thought without any reference to demonic powers, and with reference only to Thunberg, where he does not pay adequate attention to the basis and context of Thunberg’s statements.

Jean-Claude Larchet (*Maxime le Confesseur Médiateur entre l’Orient et l’Occident*, Paris: Ed. du Cerf, 1998) makes much more reserved claims in the same vein. He remarks on Maximus’s “sombre” view of human nature in order to argue for a possible rapprochement with Augustine’s understanding of concupiscence. He speaks of two tendencies toward sin, one that arises from demonic temptation and a second that arises from passibility’s “search for pleasure” and the “flight from pain.” Larchet asserts that, these two tendencies being easily separable in Maximus, the second of them may correspond to an Augustinian view of concupiscence (ibid., 121). While one must admire and respect the ecumenical approach Larchet takes, the texts that Larchet cites for the separability of these two tendencies do not bear the weight of his claim (see Ibid., 88-9); especially *QT* 61 [PG 90:633B; *CCSG* 22:95], in Blowes and Wilken, *Cosmic Mystery*, 137 and *QT* 21 [PG 90:312B-316D, *CCSG* 7:127-33], in Blowes and Wilken, *Cosmic Mystery*, 109-113 have deep and significant references to demonic activity to explain the human tendency toward sin and even the flight from pain and search for pleasure. A solid ecumenical rapprochement must take this fact into account.
temptation is regularly—even systematically—related to the activity of demonic forces in and through the psychological structures laid out in the previous section. On the one hand, one must admit that it is possible for human beings to conceive a thought of sinful action, dwell on it, deliberate it, and bring it into action on their own with no “outside” help. On the other hand, the question of this study is not so much to catalog the ways in which normal human beings are capable of sinning but rather to consider the ways in which those striving after moral perfection and those who are morally perfect can nevertheless experience temptation to deviate from nature. If there is something mysterious in human sin, it is not, for Maximus, an ambiguity about the goodness of human nature, but rather how something fundamentally good is misused. Especially for those who live or strive to live according to nature, the devil becomes an indispensable component of ascetic spirituality, throwing up obstacles against even the most trained moral athlete and, as I will discuss in the next chapter, even Christ himself.

The secondary literature occasionally acknowledges the role the devil plays in the genesis of human sinfulness, but most authors immediately minimize this role, seeing such activity to be somehow incongruous with a clear affirmation of human freedom and responsibility for sinful actions. Because of this widespread mitigation of Maximus’s

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85 John Meyendorff ("Free will in Saint Maximus the Confessor" in The Ecumenical World of Orthodox Civilization: Russia and Orthodoxy: Volume III, ed. Andrew Blane (Paris: Mouton, 1974)), for instance, attributes even the deviance or internal conflict of γνώμη to the action of the devil, but his discussion, being primarily Christological, does not broach the anthropological question of a “natural” inclination to sin (ibid., 75). Claire-Agnes Zernheld ("Le Double Visage de la Passion: Malédiction due au Pêché et/ou Dynamisme de la Vie" in Philohistor: Miscellanea in Honorem Caroli Laga Septuagenarii, ed A. Schoors and P. Van Deun (Leuven: Uitgeverij Peeters, 1994)) acknowledges that the “vulnerability” of passibility is linked to the action of hostile powers, but remains unclear as to whether “evil passions” are to be considered a “natural” product of passibility (ibid., 508).

86 First of all, there are authors who overlook the demonic in texts they treat closely and replace it wholesale with an Augustinian corruption of the will. I mentioned McFarland’s article above as a key example. Juan Miguel Garrigues (Maxime le Confesseur: La Charité, Avenir Divin de l’Homme (Paris: Ed. Beauchesne, 1976) also speaks of a “corruption of free will” or “peccability” that exercises its “enslaving” power in the sensible appetite of the natural passions. At the root of this peccability lies
self-love, the “root of sin” (ibid., 90). This analysis proceeds without reference to demons, even though Garrigues himself later quotes Maximus saying that “à l’origine le diable séducteur, par une ruse que lui inspirait méchamment son amour de soi, trompa l’homme par l’atteinte du plaisir…” (ibid., 109, emphasis original). Thus, while γνώμη is appropriately called a corruption of free will rooted in self-love, Garrigues overlooks the network of demonic associations that come with that corruption in Maximus’s thought.

Adam G. Cooper (The Body in St. Maximus the Confessor: Holy Flesh, Wholly Deified (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005) makes the same mistake concerning self-love. He is aware at times of the role that demonic temptation plays in Maximus’s anthropology (ibid., 244-6; see also ibid., 208), referring to self-love as “the first progeny of the devil” (ibid., 215), and relating humanity’s “state of being curvatus in se” to the “operations of evil powers” but these references are dispensable in the course of his argument. Elsewhere, he completely ignores this key aspect of Maximus’s thought. Cooper’s analysis of the faculties of repulsion and desire, most importantly, treats these faculties much too negatively: its passions “manifest themselves as a penchant for deviance” and under the influence of “generic sin” the will drives toward what is unnatural (ibid., 222-3). Here, the soul’s involvement “in conflicting and contrary dispositions” is explained without any reference to demonic powers, even calling this inner conflict “second nature,” as though God’s creation could be in open conflict with itself (ibid., 223; see also ibid., 148 and 159-60 for passages that discuss demons that are passed over in relative silence).

In his excellent study of person, nature, and will in Maximus’s thought, Demetrios Bathrellos (The Byzantine Christ: Person, Nature, and Will in the Christology of Maximus the Confessor (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004) at times downplays the devil’s role in human temptation. In his broad anthropological analysis, Bathrellos speaks of human choice as “ensnared in the power of evil” without acknowledging the personified and demonic character of that power in Maximus (ibid., 159). He also states that Christ’s human will is free from “concupiscence” as it is “steadily and unmistakably inclined to the good,” as though the natural will of other human beings would incline toward evil (ibid., 173). As already argued, however, Maximus would take issue with the idea that anything natural could be inclined against its Creator. In the end, Bathrellos’s claims are not as misleading as Garrigues and Cooper’s. More will be said about Bathrellos’s book in Chapter 3, as his text is more immediately directed toward Christ’s humanity than toward general anthropological arguments.

In a different vein, other authors do not ignore Maximus’s demonology yet also do not provide a systematic explanation of the relationship between human responsibility and demonic temptation. Thunberg, Microcosm, 155 acknowledges that the devil’s “seduction” is the “active cause of evil” in another and that the devil attempts to “persuade” Adam to sin, but in his analysis, the emphasis still falls here on Adam’s freedom to choose. I find nothing objectionable to his presentation of Maximus in that passage; however, Thunberg does make some slight missteps later. When he summarizes Maximus’s view of human fragility, for instance, he leaves out reference to demonic powers (ibid., 227) and he overlook Maximus’s demonology when he discusses both Evagrius and Maximus’s conception of vice while maiming no reference to demonic powers whatsoever (ibid., 248). Because Evagrius’s identification of vices with demons is so clear and consistent, this oversight is quite significant. Even if Maximus’s demonology is different than Evagrius’s (and it is, to an extent), a full account of the vices in Maximus’s thought cannot be made without reference to demons (especially in light of QT 47 [PG 90:421A-429C, CCSG 7:313-325], in Questions, trans. Vinel, t. 2, 52-67).

Even Jean-Claude Larchet’s magisterial La Divinisation de l’Homme selon Saint Maxime le Confesseur (Paris: Ed du Cerf, 1996) makes minimal use of Maximus’s demonology. He acknowledges the indispensable role of the devil in the Fall of Adam (ibid., 188-90) and notes that “c’est dans ce passé que les puissances démoniaques, à cause du péché, ont fait leur résidence … et que c’est sur lui qu’elles font pression” (ibid., 197). He is quick to note (correctly) that Maximus does not “entende par là un déterminisme absolu,” but he does not explain in detail how Maximus does conceive of human freedom alongside such demonic temptation. In other passages, however, Larchet leaves this component of Maximus’s thought aside, even in texts where its presence is undeniably important (ibid., 240-1, where there is no discussion of the demonic powers in Amb. Thom. 4 [CCSG 48:13-9], in Ambigua to Thomas, Second Letter to Thomas, trans. Joshua Lollar (Turnhout: Brepols, 2009), 59; and ibid., 238, where he treats Christ’s resistance to temptation without discussing its source from Satan).

Here, as in Thunberg’s text above, I do not think any serious mistake has been made; rather, they
demonology, no modern author has devoted significant attention to the ways Maximus speaks of the devil as the source of natural impulses that can develop unnaturally—that is, sinfully—within human beings. Certainly, it is essential to maintain a fundamental human freedom; it would not do to say that human beings simply become the devil’s play things. When it comes, however, to the goodness of human nature and God’s providential arrangement of affairs even after the Fall, it is dangerous to ignore Maximus’s view that demonic temptation is a significant and perhaps definitive source of such impulses. If current articulations in the secondary literature are correct—and deviant, unnatural desires originate from within human nature (even second nature)—then (in Maximus’s mind) the innate goodness of human nature would indeed be called into question and, in turn, so too would God’s benevolence.

To fill this gap in Maximian scholarship and ultimately to enable a consideration of Christ’s own temptation by the devil in the next chapter, I will address the question of demonic temptation in four sections. I will first (1) briefly review how human nature was rendered susceptible to demonic temptation by Adam’s transgression; second, (2) consider how demons interact with human passibility to elicit sin; third, (3) recount how simply do not treat demonic temptation in sufficient detail to make its proper interpretation clear.

Among the secondary literature, only Zeljko Pasa (The Influence of Evagrius Ponticus on the Thought of Maximus the Confessor: A Comparison of Three Spiritual Struggles in the Works of Evagrius Ponticus and Maximus the Confessor, (Rome: Pontificium Institutum Orientale, 2010) has argued explicitly that Maximus intentionally distances himself from Evagrius’s demonology. On the one hand, Pasa admits that both Evagrius and Maximus speak of demonic use of thoughts to lead human beings into sin (ibid., 33). On the other, he argues that while Maximus personifies the passions, he does not identify them with demons as does Evagrius (ibid., 44). Pasa believes this distance arises from the fact that Maximus understands the passions to have an “interior, possessive, and destructive action in the soul” (whereas Evagrius sees such attacks as coming from without). However, Pasa’s investigation is based on three relatively short passages and is by no means comprehensive; I believe a broader perspective over Maximus’s corpus provides alternative explanations. For instance, this distance from Evagrius’s thought on this matter can also be explained by means of Maximus’s category of natural and blameless passions which, in themselves, are certainly not demonic in origin and could not be directly equated with demonic powers (this is, for instance, how Garrigues interprets Maximus’s view of the passions (Garrigues, Maxime le Confesseur, 89); see also the sections below).
Maximus relates demons with thoughts and memories; and forth, (4) argue that Maximus maintains human autonomy in the two preceding subsections.

1. Susceptibility to demonic attack after the Fall. There are a number of passages in which Maximus makes it clear that demons are especially active in the natural faculties of human nature after the Fall. Together, they show that the demonic is an intrinsic part of Maximus’s conception of the Fall and human nature. Perhaps one of the most significant passages is his discussion of the Fall in QT 21, where Maximus makes an important reference to the cheirograph—a bond of debt—that Adam had contracted in his sin. Maximus states that in his temptation in the desert Christ put off the principalities and powers … and expunged in himself the cheirograph of Adam’s assent of deliberation [γνώμη] concerning the passions of pleasure. Through this cheirograph, humanity sank into deliberation [γνώμη] having a disposition toward wicked pleasures against his own best interest…

While Maximus does not explicitly state that the cheirograph of Adam was contracted with the devil, he does equate Adam’s defeat of the principalities and powers with the cancellation of the cheirograph. Throughout QT 21, there is a clear chiastic structure

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87 QT 21 [PG 90:316B-D, CCSG 7:131-3], in Blowers and Wilken, Cosmic Mystery, 112, with some modification of their translation.

88 Even without explicit statement that the cheirograph was with Satan, Michael E. Stone, Adam’s Contract with Satan: The Legend of the Cheirograph of Adam (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2002) has shown that Christian authors after the year 200 C.E. viewed the cheirograph in this way (Michael E. Stone, 104); the weight of contextual evidence indicates that Maximus did as well. Stone’s excellent text attempts to make a sharp distinction between cheirograph legends that are based on Colossians 2:14, associated with sin and Christ’s crucifixion, and those based on the later legend, associated with Satan’s trickery and Christ’s baptism (ibid.,7-9 and 103-8). There seems to be merit to this division; however, the nexus of ideas Maximus associates with the cheirograph makes this passage a significant and unique step in the development of the legend of the cheirograph mapped by Stone. Stone states that “the shared Greek term [between Colossians and the later legend] provides an obvious basis for linking the legend of the contract with Christ’s crucifixion, for drawing the two cheirographs together and identifying Christ’s two redemptive acts. Yet that link is almost never realized” (ibid., 9); Maximus’s QT 21 [PG 90:312B-316D, CCSG 7:127-33], in Blowers and Wilken, Cosmic Mystery, 109-113 comes very close to doing so. At the least, Maximus’s reference fails Stone’s test for association with the Colossians reference since Maximus makes no reference to Christ’s crucifixion in the immediate context of the cheirograph. Instead, in terms of its placement in Christ’s biography, Maximus is much closer to identifying the cheirograph with Christ’s baptism, one of Stone’s criteria for the later legend. Since QT 21 as a whole does refer to both, however, Maximus may unite these
regarding Adam’s fall into the power of demonic forces and Christ’s redemption from those forces. Maximus’s emphasis in that text falls on the latter half of this structure, but my point here is that Maximus’s argument is predicated on the existence of a Fall into the grasp of demonic powers.

There are a number of other passages in which there is a close association between the Fall and increased demonic activity against humanity.\(^89\) I will only provide two more examples here. In Maximus’s exegesis of the story of the prophet Jonah, Jonah’s being cast into the sea becomes a metaphor for the Fall. In this wounded condition, nature is swallowed by the devil and carried by the devil through the “water” of temptation and attachment to material objects. Similarly, it has also been driven by evil powers into ignorance.\(^90\) This analogy draws out the active role that demons have taken in bringing about the fallen state of human nature. Through this double-submersion into evil and ignorance, demonic power attacks both the sensible and rational faculties of human nature. Much of what constitutes the imbalance of human nature after the Fall is reason’s inability to guide sensibility; one sees here that this imbalance is attributed to the devil actively and to human nature only passively.

In another passage exegeting the “filling of the valleys and leveling of the mountains” proclaimed by John the Baptist, Maximus again shows the close association

\(^89\) See for instance, Letter 2 [PG 396D-397B], in Lettres, trans. Emmanuel Ponsoye (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1998), 84, where demonic activity is placed at the root of the key consequences of the Fall (ignorance, self-love, and despotism). Many notice these effects as linked with the Fall, but none have noted that Maximus also connects their source with demonic activity. One can also see the link clearly in QT 61 [PG 90:625D-641B; CCSG 22, 85-105], in Blowers and Wilken, Cosmic Mystery, 137, where the devil, the “sower of sin,” is said to have contrived the addition of pleasure and pain to human nature after the transgression. Although an early text, QD 9 [CCSG 10:8-9], in Questions, trans. Prassas, 46-7 is perhaps the most striking. It says that the devil “infused the law of sin in our flesh” and “mingled the crookedness of sin” into humanity through Adam’s transgression. Given that the “law of sin” is richly associated with our fallen condition for Maximus, the demonic association of this law in Maximus’s early work is fairly important. See also the discussion of the Fall above in II.A.

between humanity’s fallen condition and demonic temptation. In his exegesis, the valleys are human flesh “cleft by a great stream of passions [σάρξ, ἡ τῶ πολλῷ ρεύματι τῶν παθῶν ἐκχαραδρωθεῖσα]” as well as the soul when it is “hollowed out by the great storm of ignorance [τῶ πολλῷ χειμῶνι τῆς ἀγνοίας κοιλανθεῖσα].” These passions and ignorance are the same categories of human weakness seen in the exegesis above.

Continuing this exegesis, Maximus notes that valleys are most often “set together [συνίστασθαι]” with mountains. These mountains represent the “spirits of false knowledge and of evil [πάντα τῆς ψευδωνύμου γνώσεως καὶ τὰ τῆς κακίας πνεύματα]” and the “demons trading in unnatural ignorance and evil [οἱ δαίμονες τὴν παρὰ φύσιν ἀγνωσίαν τε καὶ κακίας ἐδημιούργησαν].” Given their close geographical placement, the relationship that Maximus sees between the two is intimate, even intrinsic. Indeed, Maximus states that the “leveling” of these mountains is also “the restoration [ἀποκατάστασις] of the natural powers of the body and soul.” Thus, the end of demonic activity itself restores the natural functioning of human faculties. I will provide a closer analysis of this passage in the next section, but for now, I only point out the close connection between human fallenness and the demonic activity he describes.

If demonic activity is bound up with the consequences of Adam’s sin, what precisely is it that demons are permitted to do in human nature? Maximus provides at

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93 Ibid. The word ἐδημιούργησαν indicates that it is the demons’ habitual trade or business to concern themselves with ignorance and evil; they are actively bringing about these things in human nature.
94 The word συνίστασθαι indicates a very close union between the two objects considered and can even denote a marriage. The word συνίστασθαι can also mean “to associate, unite, band together,” “to form a league with” or “be connected with” or “allied.”
95 Ibid: “Ταπείνωσιν οὖν ἔστι τῶν νοημῶν καὶ συνηρμῶν ὀρέων καὶ βουνῶν ἡ τῆς σαρκὸς καὶ τῆς ψυχῆς πρὸς ἐναρτάς τῶν κατὰ φύσιν δυνάμεων ἀποκατάστασις.” See also ibid., 64-5. A third passage that indicates the close relationship between the Fall and demonic forces is QT 21 [PG 90:312B-316D, CCSG 7:127-33], in Blowers and Wilken, Cosmic Mystery, 109-113. How the “mountains” of demonic activity are made low is the subject of the third chapter.
least two different catalogues of this activity, and a close investigation of this activity will follow in the next three subsections. For now, a systematic categorization of these activities will suffice. One list includes demonic activity in the three faculties of human nature: reason [τὸ λογιστικὸν], attraction [τὸ ἐπιθυμητικὸν], and repulsion [τὸ θυμικὸν];

another includes other attacks that come from memory and thoughts. These latter temptations from memory and thought include both recollections of material realities (attacking the sensitive faculties) and the suggestion of vice to the mind (attacking the reasoning faculties). Similar to Evagrius, Maximus associates different demons with different temptations, though he does not provide a rigorous catalog of temptations with the associated demons.

2. Demonic temptation and the passions. Every demonic temptation has as its basis a natural faculty of human nature. Since these faculties are intrinsically good and oriented toward the natural flourishing of that nature, it is the demon’s job to attempt to

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96 CL II.12 [PG 90:988A], in Philokalia, v. 2, trans. Palmer, Sherrard, and Ware, 66-7: “Οἱ κατὰ συγχώρησιν Θεοῦ πειράζοντες ἡμᾶς ἢ τὸ ἐπιθυμητικὸν τῆς ψυχῆς ἐκθερμαίνουσιν ἢ τὸ θυμικὸν ἐκτραίσσουσιν ἢ τὸ λογιστικὸν ἐπισκοτίζουσιν ἢ τὸ σῶμα ὀδύναις περιβάλλουσιν ἢ τὰ σωματικὰ διαρπάζουσιν.”


98 To be more precise, Maximus here has in mind the distinction between the enemies of the “left” and “right.” To the left are evil things, such as evil thoughts; to the right are good things, like askesis and good thoughts that, if reflected on in the wrong way, lead one to vainglory and pride. Thus, even good things can be used by the devil to elicit vice. See note 1 in Questions, trans. Vinel, t. 2, 86-7.

99 QT 26 [PG 90:345D-348A, CCSG 7:181], in Questions, trans. Vinel, t. 1, 312-3. It is a noteworthy difference that Maximus associated the demons with temptations [πειρασμῶν] instead of thoughts [logismoi] (as Evagrius does). This fact indicates that Maximus may considers demonic temptation though means other than thoughts, though thoughts are certainly one of the devil’s tools.

100 Maximus avows this fact more than once. One sees it in QT 55 [PG 90:541A, CCSG 7:487], in Questions, trans. Vinel, t. 2, 242-3: “the reprehensible and unnatural passions … have no other origin in us than the movement of natural passions [διαβεβλημένων καὶ παρὰ φύσιν παθῶν, οὐκ ἐχόντων ἄλλην ἀρχήν ἐν ἡμῖν πλὴν τῆς κινήσεως τῶν κατὰ φύσιν παθῶν].” As mentioned above, in QT 21 [PG 90:312B-316D, CCSG 7:127-33], in Blowers and Wilken, Cosmic Mystery, 109-113, Maximus again states that “Through the energy of the natural passions, all evil powers are at work, driving deliberation, according to the possibility of nature, into the corruption of the unnatural passions through the natural ones [ἄν πάσα πονηρὰ δύναμις ἐνήχει, κατὰ τὸ παθητὸν τῆς φύσεως αἰς τὴν φθορὰν τῶν παρὰ φύσιν παθῶν τὴν γνώμην διὰ τῶν κατὰ φύσιν ἐλαιόνουσα.].”
elicit an activation of those faculties that goes against nature.\textsuperscript{101} Indeed, Maximus argues in \textit{TPO} \textit{7}, that while human beings are to be blamed for the perversion of nature,

According to this [perversion], we became inclined to evil by the originally evil snake, but according to that [original creation], we came into existence formed by God and as a valued creature by nature.\textsuperscript{102}

In the construction of this sentence, the “snake” and “nature” play the same structural role in their clauses. In our perversion, the “snake” takes the place of nature by perverting it, replacing or at least covering its natural functions with its own activities. While natural desires of attraction remain directed toward one’s natural good, the devil can use them for his own purposes, prodding the human subject on to something quite different. The devil, for instance, attempts to excite the faculty of attraction with an “appetite contrary to nature [ὄρεξιν τῶν παρὰ φύσιν].”\textsuperscript{103} In another place, the devil “yokes [ὑποζεύξαντα]” the natural operation of the soul into what is against nature through “undisciplined impulses [ἀτάκτοις όρμαις]” of desire and repulsion.\textsuperscript{104} In yet another place, the devil produces “confusion, impiety, and ignorance” which in turn bring forth “evil, error, and atheism” in the one they attack.\textsuperscript{105} Similarly,

\begin{quote}
Scripture thus calls “powerful” the evil demon who presses on toward attraction [ἐπιθυμίας] and inflames it toward an unseemly appetite [ἀπρεπεῖς ὀρέξεις] for shameful pleasures; for nothing is more powerful [δυνατώτερον] or more violent [βιαιότερον] than a natural appetite [φυσικῆς ὀρέξεως].\textsuperscript{106}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{101} See, for instance, the exegesis of David and Goliath in \textit{QT} \textit{53} \cite{QT53}, in \textit{Questions}, trans. Vinel, t. 2, p. 184-5.

\textsuperscript{102} \textit{TPO} \textit{7} \cite{TPO7}, in Louth, \textit{Maximus}, 185; to draw out the parallel structure, the translation in the body is mine: “Κατά ταύτην μέν γάρ, πάσης τε γνωμικῆς κακίας γινόμεθα κατά τὸν ἀρχαίαν ὀφίν: κατ’ ἐκείνην δὲ, πλάσμα Θεοῦ καί τίμιον κτίσμα κατά φύσιν ὑπάρχομεν.”

\textsuperscript{103} \textit{QT} \textit{50} \cite{QT50}, in \textit{Questions}, trans. Vinel, t. 2, 134-5.

\textsuperscript{104} \textit{Letter 4} \cite{Letter4}: “οἷς δὲ τὴν κατὰ φύσιν ἐνέργειαν, παρὰ φύσιν ταῖς τοῦ θεμοῦ καί τῆς ἐπιθυμίας ἀτάκτοις ὁρμαῖς ὑποζεύξαντα.”

\textsuperscript{105} \textit{QT} \textit{25} \cite{QT25}, in \textit{Questions}, trans. Vinel, t. 1, 296-7.

\textsuperscript{106} \textit{QT} \textit{50} \cite{QT50}, translation in body is mine: “Δυνατὸν οὖν ἑκάλεσεν ἢ Γραφή τὸν ἐπικείμενον τῆς ἐπιθυμίας πονηρὸν δαίμονα καὶ πρὸς τὰς τῶν αἰσχρῶν ἠδονῶν ἀπρεπεῖς ὀρέξεις αὐτὴν ἐκκαίοντα· οὕδεν γὰρ φυσικῆς ὀρέξεως ἐστὶ δυνατώτερον ἢ βιαιότερον.” Schoenborn’s otherwise excellent discussion of pleasure and pain in “Plaisir et Douleur,” 273-284 falls short because it fails to take into consideration the devil’s intentions.
The same is the case for the faculty of repulsion and the faculty of reason, each of which has a demon assigned to it. The “natural appetite [φυσικῆς ὀρέξεως]” referred to in the above quotation is important, for it indicates that the desires involved are not intrinsically sinful (or perhaps, in the medieval sense “disordered”), but that they are incited by the devil in a certain, even “violent [βιαιότερον],” way so that they might become sinful. As in Evagrius and Origin, Maximus too conceives of different demons having their own specialties, arranged under the devil by divine permission into something of a demonic army.

Demons use different passions in different ways. Recall that Maximus says that intentional passions arise from “within” and unintentional passions arise from “without.” In both cases, though, Maximus affirms that demons are involved in bringing them about. One should not think, then, that passions from “within” come without the solicitation of demonic activity, nor that passions from “without” do not have a component of internal motivation. Rather, “intentional” passion corresponds to what is

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107 Ibid., my translation: “And [Scripture] names ‘warrior’ the demon who sit in the faculty of repulsion [τῶ θυμικῶ] and unceasingly prepares [it] to fight for pleasure. [Πολεμιστὴν δὲ τὸν ἐπικαθήμενον τῷ θυμικῷ καὶ ὑπὲρ τῶν ἥδονῶν ἀπαστεροῦσαν μάχεσθαι παρασκευάζει προσηγορεύει δαίμονα].”


109 This is seen, at least, at QD 163 [CCSG 10:114], in Questions, trans. Prassas, 124. The question of whether Maximus has an equivalent to the negative Latin sense of “concupiscence” or the fomes peccati is relevant here. I have argued through the preceding that human nature is unqualifiedly good for Maximus, yet obviously there is a certainly fragility to human possibility. Since the fomes is literally the “tinder” of sin, it makes sense to see how Maximus makes use of “tinder” vocabulary. Maximus briefly describes humanity’s willingness to sin as “timber” in Centuries on Various Texts IV.62 [PG 90:1332C], in Philokalia, v. 2, trans. Palmer, Sherrard, and Ware, 251, but the reference is too brief to be particularly meaningful. The most substantive discussion of “tinder” as desire in Maximus’s corpus is in QT 62 [PG 90:652D-656A, CCSG 22:125-7], in Questions, trans. Ponsoye, 287-8, where he describes the house of the devil, the faculties of attraction and repulsion, as being composed of timber and stone—metaphorically desire and anger. When Christ destroys this house, his first action is to drive the devil out of it. Thus, if one can speak of “tinder” in Maximus’s thought, it is not easily separable from demonic activity; the faculties themselves do not seem to move against nature without their willingly being moved thus.

110 The distinction between “internal” and “external” temptation will be a key concern in the investigation.
desirable, “unintentional” passion to what is to be avoided. Intentional passions [τῶν ἐκουσίων παθῶν] are put to use by demonic powers by convincing the human subject to seek and prefer physical realities over eternal goods. Their goal, then, is to cause the νοῦς or rational faculties to divert their activity from natural contemplation to a consideration of physical realities with a view to passion. On the other hand, demons also have their own purpose in eliciting unintentional passions [τῶν ἀκουσίων παθῶν]. Here, the demons hope to drive the human subject to lose “hope in God [τῆς θείας ἐλπίδος]” “under the great weight of painful misfortunes [τῷ πολλῷ βάρει τῶν ὀδυνηρῶν συμφορῶν],” even hoping to elicit atheism. In both cases, though, what is necessary for these to become sinful is for human beings to subject their rational and intellectual faculties to their sensible faculties.

It is necessary at this juncture to investigate how the above demonic activities fit into Maximus’s psychology. As explained above, an appetite [ὀρεξίς], whether pertaining to the natural will or to imagination, is an unsolicited desire that is not subject to deliberation. When from the natural will [θέλησις], such an appetite is, almost by definition, according to nature; it reaches out to God and seeks spiritual realities. How demons can elicit “unseemly appetites [ἀπρεπεῖς ὀρέξεις]” or even one “against nature [ὁρεξῶν τῶν παρὰ φύσιν]” (as Maximus sometimes indicates) is difficult to understand—and Maximus’s language on this question is somewhat imprecise. Perhaps the best way to understand is to say that by making natural desires “violent,” demons

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bring them to the brink of being unnatural or disobedient to reason. From there, it only takes a slight miscalculation on the part of the human subject in order for such a natural appetite to become an unnatural passion. On the other hand, when this appetite is from the imaginative will, it is possible that Maximus has in mind an Evagrian mechanism to explain the insertion of an “unseemly appetite [ἀπρεπεῖς ὀρέξεις].” The details of this insertion will be explained in the next subsection, but for now I will simply point out that an imaginative appetite may not have the same sorts of restrictions that an appetite based on the natural will does. That is, it may be possible for a spontaneous appetite to arise in the imagination that would not necessarily be in accord with human nature.

3. Demons, thoughts, and memories. On this topic Maximus is perhaps at his most Evagrian. For Maximus, this component of the demonic attack is important because thoughts involving passion are commonly the origin of an unnatural passion. In order to arouse unnatural passion within the soul, demons are most commonly able to use external objects as a way of forming thoughts about sensible realities. These are the “habitual” means by which the devil attacks human beings, though those who have separated themselves from society are not as easily attacked in this way. In these circumstances, the devil turns to somewhat extraordinary measures, calling to mind “material representations [τῶν υλικῶν νοημάτων]” which attack the soul with “appearances and forms of sensible realities [τὰ σχήματα καὶ τὰ εἴδη τῶν αἰσθητῶν].”

115 The question of human culpability will be addressed more fully in the forth subsection below (d).
116 Larchet argues that all sin has at its origin an evil representation or thought (see Questions, trans. Vinel, t. 1, 225, n. 3). Larchet’s citation in Maximus is not perfectly clear on this point, but he may be right—it does not matter for the current argument.
118 Ibid. See also ibid., in Questions, trans. Vinel, t. 2, p. 100-101: “the evil and deadly powers stand against and are at war with [the soul] through icons and images of sensible objects [τὰς τῶν ἀθητῶν εἰκόνας τε καὶ φαντασίας].” It is unclear whether these appearances are meant to be physical manifestations of sensible objects that are not truly present or if, on the other hand, they are merely representations of
Demons call these representations to mind by means of the recollection of evil thoughts.\(^ {119} \) When sensibility perceives these appearances, it often becomes the devil’s tool because its “natural” function is to react to these objects.\(^ {120} \)

Because wish [βούλησίς] is a natural appetite [ὁρεξίς] of created humanity in the same way as the natural will [θέλησις], a demonic attack through thoughts may be described by Maximus in a way parallel to the way demons attempt to elicit unnatural passions. As discussed above, wish is a natural appetite that seeks a natural τέλος regardless of whether it is attainable or not.\(^ {121} \) Maximus’s examples for what wish seeks are health, wealth, and immortality: this-worldly things that are desirable but not in an absolute sense. In fact, some of these objects could be sought in inappropriate ways if given too much consideration. The monk, for instance, might spontaneously recognize wealth as something desirable, but the monk is not thereby compelled to seek wealth through deliberation nor is he compelled to dwell on that thought.\(^ {122} \)

Since the objects of wish are affirmed to be the object of this natural, non-deliberative appetite [ὁρεξίς], they too would be susceptible, in principle, to the demonic manipulation described above. In other words, it would be possible for the devil to elicit or implant thoughts of these natural ends—even in people or in circumstances where that end is not something to be pursued.\(^ {123} \) Such an understanding of these natural desires fits

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\(^ {119} \) CL III.20 [PG 90:1021B-C], in Philokalia, v. 2, trans. Palmer, Sherrard, and Ware, 85-6. Here, anger is stirred up by memories of those who have offended the monk. More explicit, however, is QD 85 [CCSG 10:67], in Questions, trans. Prassas, 90, where demons “stir up the memory through the recollections of evil thoughts.”


\(^ {121} \) See Chapter 2, II.B.3.a.

\(^ {122} \) These desires may be the most significant way in which Maximus is able to speak of a natural desire for a merely natural end. The way Maximus describes them, these desires may not be capable of spontaneously seeking after humanity’s final end.

\(^ {123} \) Such a scenario may be what Maximus believes to occur for Christ in the desert and in Gethsemane; see
with what Maximus affirms about wish and the workings of demonic powers in and through natural appetites. Maximus never identifies or reproduces Evagrius’s structure of angelic, human, and demonic thoughts, but these considerations make it clear that Maximus does believe there to be such a thing as a demonic thought.

4. Human autonomy and responsibility for sin. The last question to be considered here is whether the devil can be said to “force” humanity into sin. While Maximus would want to guard against such a charge, I have shown that he at times uses rather striking language to describe the devil’s power over fallen humanity.\textsuperscript{124} It is best to consider the situation according to the two forms of attack considered above: attacks against sensibility and attacks through deception directed against the intellect. Maximus protects against a demonic “cause” of sin in passibility by means of the distinctions he draws about what constitutes sin. Attacks against the intellect, however, are less easily explained and must be treated separately. I will close this section with some broader reflections on Maximus’s conception of human culpability.

When demonic attack comes from sensuality, Maximus clearly delineates the boundary between what is culpable and what is more or less “natural.” In the \textit{QD}, Maximus considers four ‘stages’ in the development of sinful actions: the attack \([\piροσβολή]\), the desire \([\ἐπιθυμία]\), the consent \([συγκατάθεσις]\), and the act. In his exegesis, only the final two categories are culpable; the attack and the desire are not in our power and therefore do not attract praise or blame.\textsuperscript{125} His terms do not correspond

\textsuperscript{124} \textit{QT} 21 [\textit{PG} 90:312B-316D, \textit{CCSG} 7:127-33], in Blowers and Wilken, \textit{Cosmic Mystery}, 109-113, for instance says that demons “drive” humanity to unnatural passion; \textit{QD} 85 [\textit{CCSG} 10:67], in \textit{Questions}, trans. Prassas, 90 says that demons can use passion to “force open [the soul] as with a crowbar \([ἐκμοχλεύω]\).”

directly with terms he uses later, but the προσβολή appears to be a reference to a demonic attack and the ἐπιθυμία corresponds most closely with the natural appetite the attack attempts to elicit in an unnatural way. If this is accurate, Maximus is clear that the natural desires roused by demons do not result in an activity in the genus of sin; these “first movements” (to borrow a medieval term), being stimulated from without, are not within the power of reason to prevent. Only when the intellect offers consent [συγκατάθεσιν] does the desire become culpable.

It is worth inquiring about the relationship between these demonic attacks and demonic possession. I would argue that an adequate definition of possession requires two components: the one possessed is (1) unable to exercise their will in the domain of the body and (2) their body is overtaken by other forces in order to produce immoral actions. In the scenarios Maximus outlines, the first criterion is possibly met; the second, however, does not attain. Since the thoughts and passions suggested by the devil are essentially still in accord with the natural functioning of those faculties, the devil is not causing anything in the human subject in the genus of sin. For Maximus, it is only with the consent of the will that these attacks and desires become sinful; human freedom is not bound and no intrinsically sinful thoughts or passions arise. For this reason, these “internal” temptations should not be considered to be possession.

When it comes to demonic deception of the intellect, Maximus is less clear how human culpability is maintained. As discussed above, the devil’s first act against Adam was to inspire ignorance of God; trickery or deception is at the root of many sins with

126 Only possibly; it is unclear whether human beings ever have directed, willful control over the bodily functions in question—more like a beating heart than a clenched fist.
demonic origin. The question is this: can the devil, due to intellectual deception, cause a human being to do something “objectively” evil without the consent of the will? Perhaps surprisingly, Maximus seems to answer affirmatively. He speaks in the *QD* of three kinds of “involuntary [αδιαθετως]” sin: sin through “tyrannical constraint,” through deception, and through ignorance. When such an attack occurs, he is clear that the monk is to make a hasty retreat so that the passion involved does not cause him to sin “of his own volition [ἐνδιαθέτως]”; he does not recommend repentance but ascetic discipline. Both of these facts indicate that he does not believe the human subject to have incurred moral guilt through such an involuntary sin.

As discussed above, however, Maximus acknowledges that within the category of actions performed through ignorance there are some actions where the ignorance itself was preceded by a decision not to seek the appropriate knowledge of the situation. In such a case, the “involuntary” sin could still be called voluntary indirectly, and the subject could thereby incur guilt for the act, or at least for the ignorance. Regardless, there are also scenarios where one does not know the correct course of action and where one simultaneously has no recourse to investigate the matter properly. In these circumstances, it seems that Maximus would assign no guilt to one so deceived or ignorant.


128 *QD* 29 [*CCSG* 10:24], in *Questions*, trans. Prassas, 58-9: “tyrannical constraint” is Prassas’s translation of πραξιν̈ της τυραννίδος; it could also be the “exercise of tyranny.” Since “tyranny” is one of the three major consequences of the Fall, it is possible that Maximus has in mind here the sort of constraint that one person has over another, as when one forces another to do an action under pain of death. However, there is no immediate reason to constrain Maximus to this narrow anthropological reading of tyranny; the other two causes, at least, are both commonly associated with the devil.

129 While there are many important Christological questions that arise from this investigation, they must wait for the next chapter. If the devil is able to produce actions in the genus of sin through deception and ignorance in such a way that the human subject involved does not incur guilt, should such “sinless” action be applicable to Christ? Maximus will decide that it does not. Preliminarily, and in the categories
Humans are still responsible, generally speaking, for the misuse of their sensibility and rationality, even when demonic forces are at work attempting to divert their powers against nature. In order for such responsibility to make sense, Maximus has to affirm that there are some movements in sensation and even in intellect for which one cannot be held responsible. Does this mean that Maximus cedes human sensibility to irrationality, so that our nature is not capable of subordination to our rational faculties? No: the initial impulses are capable of use or misuse, and it is only from the basis of these natural inclinations that praiseworthy and blameworthy actions and thoughts arise.

C. Goals and means of monastic life

Having considered how Maximus sees demonic powers to be capable of tempting human beings from “within,” I will consider the monk’s resistance against these temptations: what is the goal of resistance? How is it attained? In what ways is it attainable in this life?

Most succinctly, Maximus envisions the goal of the monastic life as knowledge and dispassion. One who “does not give himself to bodily pleasure and does not fear pain at all” has become dispassionate; by putting self-love to death, such a monk also destroys “ignorance which is, above all, the origin of evils.” Maximus elsewhere provides a sub-division of dispassion in four stages: restraint from evil action; lack of assent to evil thoughts; the “immobility” of desire; and the total purification from phantasms of the

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passions. The first two correspond quite closely to the fourth and third “generations” of sin Maximus described in the *Questions and Doubts*: restraint from evil action reverses the fourth generation and lack of assent to evil thoughts undoes the third generation. Thus, these two forms of dispassion are required for one to avoid culpability in sin. The latter two may further attempt to reverse the first two “generations” of sin.

How, then, are these goals attained? A full elaboration will only be possible in the next chapter, as Christ ultimately enables the monastic to pursue and attain knowledge and virtue. Speaking more proximately to the monk, however, there are two important and clear means by which Christ’s power and, thereby, knowledge and dispassion are attained: sacramental participation and the monastic disciplines of praxis and contemplation. Since the devil is involved both in the origins of ignorance and passion, the means of overcoming them also involve one’s defeat of powers opposed to God. I will briefly consider both the Eucharist and monastic discipline as they relate to the defeat of demonic powers.

Maximus’s most important discussion of the sacraments is in the *Mystagogy*, where he explains the spiritual meaning of various components of the Liturgy. Since the devil must be rejected before the Eucharist itself takes place, Maximus’s reflection on the devil concerns events relatively early in the Liturgy: the sign of peace and the readings from Scripture. In the sign of peace (between readings), the aid of the angels comes to the

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131 *QT* 55 [PG 90:544C-D, *CCSG* 7:493], in *Questions*, trans. Vinel, t. 2, 246-9. It is interesting to note that, though Maximus does not discuss Christ in this context, Christ himself does not meet the latter two definitions of dispassion, as Christ certainly demonstrates fear in the garden. Since Maximus’s claims here are strictly bound to the exegesis of a particular text, one might question whether, in the context of his thought, he truly accepts the latter two stages of dispassion, which stages might be characterized as perhaps more Stoic than the broader strokes of his thought.

132 *QD* I.31 [CCSG 10:149], in *Questions*, trans. Prassas, 146. It is possible that the third and forth impassibility correspond inversely to the second and first “generations.” The third impassibility concerns desire, as does the second “generation” of sin; the fourth impassibility (lack of thoughts about passions) may somehow correspond to the “attack” Maximus mentions in the first generation.
believer and God calls off the “invisible struggle” against “hostile powers.” When the battle has been called off, God gives an opportunity for the believer to strengthen the powers of the soul to “disperse the armies of the evil spirits” as members of Christ’s army who “scatters the sharp and wily machinations of the devil.”¹³³ In the readings themselves, the believers are armed with virtue to “set themselves bravely and unshakenly against the devil’s wiles.”¹³⁴ The Eucharist itself takes place without reference to the devil—in part because the rejection of the devil took place earlier. The Christological center of the Eucharist is revealed in the distribution of the sacrament, which “transforms [those who worthily share in it] and renders [them] similar to the causal good by grace and participation.”¹³⁵ The substance of that transformation will be discussed in the next chapter when I consider Christ’s defeat of the devil; my purpose here is to indicate that the Liturgy allows the participant to become like Christ.

Much more can be said about monastic discipline. There are three components of this discipline that reach out toward dispassion and knowledge: praxis, natural contemplation, and theological contemplation.¹³⁶ While praxis in a sense precedes the other two stages, these disciplines should not be considered as completely distinct “stages” through which one passes toward spiritual perfection; each of these disciplines (even praxis) has a place as one continues to progress toward perfection.¹³⁷ Here, I will

¹³⁷ QT 45 [PG 90:417C-420A, CCSG 7:305], in Questions, trans. Vinel, t. 2, 46-7. Larchet argues at Questions, trans. Vinel, t. 2, 50-1 that praxis and contemplation cannot be separated strictly into two periods of one’s life: “les vertues ne sont pas simplement la base ou la condition de la connaissance, et ne sont pas un degré de la vie spirituelle appelé à être dépassé par celui de la gnose, mais elles constituent un corréléat permanent de celle-ci, jusqu’aux plus hauts degrés de la vie spirituelle” (ibid., 50). Some degree of dispassion is likely a prerequisite to the stages of contemplation, but praxis never
focus on the first two of these components. The practical life is the various ascetic activities undertaken by the monastic—their goal being to dry up the passions and cut off the attacks of demons that attempt to inflame them.\textsuperscript{138} Natural contemplation, on the other hand, seeks to separate thoughts from passion by entering into consideration of the nature of things in themselves. This separation also requires one to struggle against demonic forces, who seek to infiltrate the intellect by means of sensation.\textsuperscript{139}

Different demonic attacks require different responses from the monk. On the one hand, while Maximus considers contemplation to be the better part of the monastic life, in \textit{QT 49}, he admits that demonic temptation can often require the monastic to have recourse from natural contemplation to askesis. When one is engaged in natural contemplation, the devil can assault the soul with images and phantasms of sensible realities that natural contemplation alone cannot defeat. Maximus affirms that it is by means of representations of sensible realities that the devil usually “forges [δημιουργεῖσθαι]” passions relating to the appearances of visible realities.\textsuperscript{140} In those circumstances, Maximus suggests the following:

Let us put an end to natural contemplation and advance by prayer alone and by the affliction of the body … so that the Evil One might not treacherously and unwittingly attack …\textsuperscript{141}

Here, where the monastic is in danger of falling into passionate attachment to the objects of contemplation, the response is to cease such contemplation and turn to discipline of the body that helps separate thought from passion.

\textsuperscript{140} \textit{QT 49} [\textit{PG} 90:449D-452B; \textit{CCSG} 7, 355-7], in \textit{Questions}, trans. Vinel, t. 2, 100-1).
\textsuperscript{141} Ibid. The same can be seen in \textit{QT 49} [\textit{PG} 90:456D-457B; \textit{CCSG} 7, 365-7], in \textit{Questions}, trans. Vinel, t. 2, 110-1, where he also suggests retreat from contemplation to askesis.
On the other hand, askesis itself can become a source of temptation. The devil attacks the intellect by means of the “realities of the right,” meaning that positive monastic askesis can easily become a source of vainglory and pride through demonic thoughts of one’s goodness.\textsuperscript{142} In such cases, Maximus suggests that one turn to humility and moderation so that one not become vainglorious.\textsuperscript{143} At other times, the monk need not turn to askesis to defeat demonic thoughts. The monastic can also defeat them by turning them to contemplative use, thereby making the thoughts good.\textsuperscript{144} When a natural desire is suggested by a demon, at times the monk can consider that desire closely so as to preserve the desire as wholly natural.\textsuperscript{145} The desires in themselves are not evil, but require close examination to determine what in them is necessary and what in them would give rise to unnatural passion. All of these successful responses to these attacks are made possible by God’s gifts to the monastic.\textsuperscript{146}

Because the demons are constantly attempting to bring forth sinful thoughts and actions, there is always something “practical” to Maximus’s suggestions to the monk. Sometimes, it is best to retreat from contemplation to askesis; other times it is best to cut off askesis and return to natural contemplation. While he has ideas about when each of these will be most effective against the devil, his advice can appear \textit{ad hoc}, leaving some discretion for the individual monastic.

In his reflection on demonic temptation, Maximus is largely optimistic about the possibility (if not always the reality) of successful struggle.\textsuperscript{147} Both contemplation and

\textsuperscript{146} QT 54 [PG 90:516B-C, CCSG 7:453], in \textit{Questions}, trans. Vinel, t. 2, 204-5
\textsuperscript{147} This optimism can at least in part be explained by Maximus’s desire not to make moral stumbling a
askesis are seen, in their own places and circumstances, to lead to successful struggle. In one’s askesis, the practice of the virtues is key—especially the central Maximian virtues of humility (driving away vainglory), temperance (against pleasurable things), and patience (against painful things).148 On the basis of these practices, Maximus will admit that the monk is able to stop the passions entirely and also “to expel the demons who rouse them up.”149 The monastic can completely destroy each attack of the devil and free the soul from slavery to passion;150 like the apostles, he can even become “perfect” by healing the soul’s sickness and driving out demons.151 Examples can be multiplied152 but the sense is clear; Maximus is very optimistic about the monastic’s defeat of the devil even in this life.

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151 QD 5 [CCSG 10:5], in Questions, trans. Prassas, 44-5. The “demons” are interpreted allegorically by Maximus as the “sickness of the soul,” but one should not thereby read a ‘demythologization’ or ‘psychologization’ of the devil.

152 One passage that gives an indication toward the possibility of total defeat is in the Ambigua ad Johannam, where he states that the devil can be overcome “little by little” until no trace of the devil’s deception remains (Amb. Io. 38 [PG 91:1297C-1301A], in Ambigua, trans. Ponsoye, 290 and Ambigua, v. 2, trans. Constas, 89-95). Another: the devil has “no power to arouse any passion at all” in an individual who possessed “love and self-control” (CL II. 85 [PG 90:1012B-C], in Philokalia, v. 2, trans. Palmer, Sherrard, and Ware, 79-80). A third: humility “tames every demonic power” (CT, I, 15 [PG 90:1088D-1089A], in Philokalia, v. 2, trans. Palmer, Sherrard, and Ware, 117; see also CT I, 16 [PG 90: 1089A], in Philokalia, v. 2, trans. Palmer, Sherrard, and Ware, 117). And so forth: ibid., II, 94. Maximus, Centuries on Various Texts, II.65 [PG 90:1244C-D], II.79 [PG 90:1249B-C], II.82 [PG 90:1252B-C], in Philokalia, v. 2, trans. Palmer, Sherrard, and Ware, 201, 204, and 205, respectively (where the monk can “send the devil packing with his tail between his legs”), and Centuries on Various Texts III.96 [PG 90:1301C], in Philokalia, v. 2, trans. Palmer, Sherrard, and Ware, 233-4. This last passage indicates, as Maximus holds in common with Origen, that perfection actually requires one to have undergone temptation: “A perfect man is one who with the power of his intelligence has struggled against the pleasure and pain of the flesh and has overcome them” (ibid.).
But are there limits to what is possible in this life? Is it ever possible to completely prevent the “attack” of the devil in the first place? Is perfect virtue compatible with demonic temptation? Maximus gives some indications that there will always be some form of temptation in this life. In the QD, he expresses that temptations can be crushed and sent away unsuccessful—but he does not speak of an absolute prevention of demonic temptation. Other passages speak of the compatibility of virtue with demonic temptation. In QT 52, he speaks of a virtuous lover of God who is still assailed invisibly in his intellect by evil spirits. In QT 47, Isaac is said to maintain a “state of virtue and knowledge” and a total absence of evil passions “even when he was attacked by the evil spirits.” In the Ambigua ad Iohannam 10, Maximus speaks of virtuous saints who remain beyond the grasp of “troubling temptations,” but continues in the passage to speak of them being “assailed” by temptations attributed to demonic activity. They are not “vanquished” by these temptations, but the temptations are not wholly prevented, either.

153 Certain forms of virtue theory would argue, for instance, that one who is perfectly virtuous would foresee and forestall the apprehension of merely apparent goods before they could reach appetition; see Thomas’s theory of virtue (especially temperance) in Chapter 4. In his account, absolutely perfected temperance prevents irrational internal movements of appetition before they even start; thus, one who is tempted ‘interiorly’ may already be morally culpable for permitting the movement in the first place. Questions such as those posed in the main text thus have Christological implications; if the virtuous monastic were able to completely prevent demonic assaults, it seems that Christ himself, who is quintessentially virtuous, should not be tempted internally by the devil in the first place.

On the other hand, a theory of virtue such as Origen’s takes for granted that true virtue is not possible without trial (see Chapter 1 above). For Origen (and most likely for Maximus as well), moral strength comes through practice and training; the demons thus constitute an essential aspect of moral perfection.

154 QD 64 [CCSG 10:50-1], in Questions, trans. Prassas, 78.
155 QT 52 [PG 90:497B, CCSG 7:425], in Questions, trans. Vinel, t. 2, 176-7. In what follows, Maximus accuses this individual of pride, which renders him less than perfectly virtuous. In the set-up of the problem, however, there is no indication that the person in question is in any other way morally deficient before the demonic attack.
157 Amb. Io. 10 [PG 91:1204C-1205B], in Ambigua, trans. Ponsoye, 223 and Ambigua, v. 1, trans. Constas, 339-343. The attribution of the temptations to the devil comes at the beginning of the passage (Ponsoye, 222). As a final example, see the final two reasons God allows temptation in CL II, 67 [PG
If Maximus is able to speak both of monks stopping demonic temptations and of the virtuous continuing to be assailed by the devil, how are these to stand together? The two do not formally contradict one another; one can hold together that the monk can always be attacked, but that he is in no way doomed to succumb to the temptation. Concerning those passages where Maximus speaks of a complete cessation of demonic temptation, there is likely an eschatological sense to his meaning. Such is the case in the *Centuries on Theology*, where a certain “rest” from any phantasms associated with passions takes place only on the “Sabbath,” the seventh day that only exists at “the limit of the flow of temporal existence.”158 Such an interpretation indicates that complete rest from temptation is only eschatological. The first “generation” of sin—a demonic attack—is only definitively put off at the end of earthly life.159 In order to explain why moral struggle against the demonic would be an ongoing component of human existence, I will explore in the final section of this chapter God’s providential action in temptation as well as the devil’s own purposes for it. I will close with an exposition of Maximus’s understanding of desire and repulsion in the eschaton.

III. Providence and Affectivity in an Eschatological Perspective

A. Providence and temptation

As has been pointed out by Panayiotis Nellas, there is a certain ambiguity to the second nature added to humanity after the Fall. He provides the helpful image of the

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159 As I will discuss in the next chapter, even Christ experiences temptation up to the end of his human life.
garments of skin in Orthodox thought as “biform,” like, for instance, the “duck-rabbit” popularized by Ludwig Wittgenstein in his *Philosophical Investigations*—a single image that can appear in two different ways without any physical change in the image. I would argue that Maximus’s thought concerning demonic temptation is much the same. When viewed the way the devil wants humanity to view temptations, they are inevitable traps that lead the believer inextricably to sin; when viewed the way God would have the believer view temptations, they are reminders of human finitude, tests to prove and strengthen our moral resolve, and the means by which we may be crowned with glory (2 Tim 2:5).

I have noted that Maximus at times attributes the very existence of material pleasure and pain in human nature to the devil; for instance, the arrangement of human nature after the Fall—including the introduction of pleasure and mortality—is described in *QT 61* as having been “contrived by the sower of sin and father of evil, the wicked Devil, who … in his envy both toward us and toward God, banished Adam from paradise in the attempt to destroy God’s handiwork...” This affirmation should not be understood as contradicting my introduction to the consequences of the Fall earlier in this chapter; rather, they are different perspectives on the same event. The changes to human nature that occurred after the Fall can be described, on the one hand, as the devil’s corruption of humanity; they can also be understood more fundamentally as God’s

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161 To admit this kind of “perspectivalism” is not to say there is no correct way of looking at temptation; in fact, the devil’s very interpretation of temptation may itself be part of the devil’s deception, driving one to despair in God’s providence.

162 *QT 61* [PG 90:633B; CCSG 22, 95], in Blowers and Wilken, *Cosmic Mystery*, 137.
providential arrangement in anticipation of God’s saving, economic work in the incarnation.¹⁶³

Focusing now on demonic temptation itself, a similar dual-interpretation is given in QT 26, which states that the devil “is simultaneously the enemy and vindicator [ἐκδικητής] of God.”¹⁶⁴ First, and briefly, the devil is God’s enemy because he attempts to persuade human beings to move their natural faculties contrary to nature. Through pleasure, the devil entices the believer’s faculty of attraction to abandon love of God in exchange for ephemeral realities.¹⁶⁵ The devil can also be seen as God’s enemy when he inflicts human beings with pain, thereby inflaming the faculty of repulsion. Maximus explains that the devil’s intention in this punishment is to make us lose hope in God and even fall into atheism.¹⁶⁶ The intellectual faculties, finally, are attacked when the devil suggests to the monk that he should consider his goodness, thereby eliciting vainglory. Taken together, these are the basic intentions of the devil in tempting the monastic. It is important to recognize that the devil does not purposefully undermine his own interests when he tempts—he does not tempt humankind in order that humankind might prevail over him. But at a more fundamental level, God’s intentions for allowing this temptation are even more important to investigate.

Before explaining God’s intentions for demonic temptation, I must first explain the three ways in which Maximus holds that God intends or wills different activities: by good pleasure, by divine economy, and by permission.¹⁶⁷ The first of these wills concerns

¹⁶³ As I will describe in the paragraphs that follow, this “corruption” of human nature by the Devil should most likely be categorized as God’s “economic” will, aiming toward its ultimate restoration and glorification.
¹⁶⁵ Ibid.
¹⁶⁷ One can find these three wills explained carefully in at least two passages in the Questions and Doubts:
things that God does completely gratuitously, such as creation and the election of Israel. The second “economic” will concerns apparently unfortunate or even evil circumstances that take place so that God might bring about some greater good from it. Maximus’s recurring example of God’s economic will is Joseph’s enslavement in Egypt; it is a real evil perpetrated by his brothers (and others) that God allows so that God might eventually bring his people out of that land with power. Of course, the central example of this will is Christ’s incarnation, a condescension into human nature whose ultimate purpose renders it worthwhile. Finally, God’s permissive will concerns intentional sin that results immediately in evil, such as the case of Job. The latter two categories are perhaps not as well defined as they could be; after all, God brings good out of Job’s suffering, yet the devil’s actions there are categorized by Maximus as “permissive,” not economic. Similarly, the immediate consequence of the decision of Joseph’s brothers is Joseph’s slavery, something that should be categorized as permissive, but is considered by Maximus as “economic.” Perhaps the best way to explain the difference between these latter two is that when Maximus is able to articulate the positive end toward which an action takes place, it is economic; when Maximus cannot or does not discern the good that comes from an evil, he categorizes it as permissive.

When Maximus states that the devil is God’s vindicator and even God’s “servant,” he is dealing exclusively with the final two categories of will. It is never God’s good pleasure that creatures fall from God, yet God permits it for a variety of reasons.

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168 Joseph is mentioned both in QD 83 [CCSG 10:65-6], in Questions, trans. Prassas, 123, and in QT 26 [PG 90:345B-D, CCSG 7:181], in Questions, trans. Vincel, t. 1, 310-1 as an example of the divine economy and, in the latter case, typologically in relationship with Christ.
Some of these are best characterized economically, others only permissively. As just mentioned, there will always be some instability to any categorization, as the proper category for these temptations is partly determined by one’s ability to determine the reason for which the temptation takes place. For instance, Maximus is able to give a clear redemptive purpose for demonic infliction of temptation through the appetite of repulsion: suffering “scrapes the rust of pleasure” from our souls. God thereby hopes to encourage the one so tempted to return to virtue and give up the unending search for pleasure. In a slightly different sense, a similar divine purpose is seen when demons tempt the monastic to vainglory; from God’s perspective, such temptation hopes to inspire humility and gratitude to God as the sole, ultimate cause of the monk’s virtue and success in contemplation.

The form of temptation that is best understood by Maximus as merely “permissive” is demonic temptation to pleasure. In the normal course of things, the believer is only tempted to pleasure when they have already sold themselves into submission to the devil by taking on the devil’s disposition toward God’s will. Maximus describes it as both “fitting [πρέπον]” and “just [δίκαιον]” that those who have willingly given in to the devil’s evil council should be further punished by the devil with other temptations toward pleasure. There is no clearly “positive” outcome of this permission; Maximus does not claim a didactic or pedagogical purpose for this temptation. It would

169 Since in QT 26, Maximus is only concerned with showing how the devil is ultimately subservient to God, he does not invoke the distinction between the two “permissive” wills of God.
perhaps be possible to explain temptation toward pleasure in terms of development in temperance, but Maximus only rarely invokes this explanation.\textsuperscript{173}

Temptation toward material pleasure remains the most difficult component of demonic temptation to square with God’s providential action. It may be possible to explain sensory attraction to physical realities by saying that pleasure itself can spur the creature on toward self-preservation and continued bodily existence—though Maximus is somewhat circumspect regarding this possibility.\textsuperscript{174} Instead, Maximus is usually content to point out that pleasure was bound providentially by God to unpleasant feelings broadly categorized as pain.\textsuperscript{175} Thus, in Maximus’s account material pleasure arises almost solely by divine permission to the devil; only pain enters into the realm of God’s economic will.

In the end, the existence of a “second nature” introduced after the Fall—along with its concomitant temptations by demonic forces—can only be explained by the redemptive action of Christ that enables humanity to attain its final state at the end of time. All the components of human nature and all the temptations we undergo show their providential purpose most clearly when one investigates how human beings will be in their glory. In the final subsection, then, I turn to a brief summary of how these various demonic activities serve God’s eschatological purposes for human nature.

\textbf{B. Affectivity in Humanity’s Final State}

It is perhaps a troubling fact Maximus believes that the passions are not a permanent fixture of human nature—that they will be removed at the end of time.

\textsuperscript{173} See \textit{QT} 49 [\textit{PG} 90:452B-D; \textit{CCSG} 7, 357-9], in \textit{Questions}, trans. Vinel, t. 2, 102-3.

\textsuperscript{174} He described the passions as existing “for the present life” (\textit{QT} 55 [\textit{PG} 90:541A, \textit{CCSG} 7:487], in \textit{Questions}, trans. Vinel, t. 2, 242-3), thus indicating that they have a concrete purpose in our earthly existence. His lists of the natural and blameless passions (such as hunger, thirst, fear) also describe things necessary for our bodily survival in the fallen world.

Following Gregory of Nyssa, Maximus explains that because the passions (as we now experience them) were not part of human nature in the beginning, they also will not exist in our final state. If misunderstood, this belief could easily be translated to a rejection or denial of the importance of human emotionality, as if who we are as humans can be separated from our real desires, attractions, fears, and aversions. Maximus certainly wishes to say that the final resurrection will bring about very different bodily conditions, but he does not completely reject the experience of attraction and repulsion in humanity’s final state. In part, this transformation of human nature relates to the conquest of demonic powers, so I will consider here how humans, emotionality, and the demonic relate in the eschatological state.

Maximus is reticent to describe the final state of humanity in great detail. Such is partly a result of our current conditions; we “know partially and prophesy partially” (1 Corinthians 13:9), as Maximus admits. He is also hesitant because he believes that too much concern for our resurrection condition can in fact arise from demonic thoughts. The devil asks questions to inspire us to doubt the resurrection; he attempts to convince us that if human nature is anything like it has been in any of its previous states, life will still be “vain and useless,” still uncleaned of past evils and susceptible to future change.

178 QT 38 [PG 90:389C-392A, CCSG 7:255-7], in Questions, trans. Vinel, t. 1, 394-5. This concern is almost certainly a response to the objections raised against the resurrection by Gregory of Nyssa, who also considers at great length the final state of human nature, repeatedly objecting that any similarity to the way things are now is a great misfortune and unworthy of our hope for a future existence. Perhaps most troubling in that investigation, Gregory and his sister do not reach a definitive resolution, other than to say that our future state will be incorruptible (Gregory of Nyssa, On the Soul and the Resurrection, trans. Catherine P. Roth (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf & Stock, 1992), Chapter 10 (pp. 103-121)). Maximus does not necessarily think that Gregory was giving in to demonic thoughts by considering these objections, but he thinks there is a real risk of transgressing the boundaries of what God wants us to know in this life.
Indeed, such speculation “clearly introduces [mere] chance and casts Providence from reality.”

In response, Maximus speaks merely of the “incorruptibility” of human nature in its resurrected state. God renders the body and soul similar to God though the life-giving human existence of Christ. What exactly that transformation looks like remains intentionally unclear. Maximus denies that our final state will be like any of our earlier states or “laws” but reassures that Christ himself guarantees the worthiness of this final condition. In making this argument, he implies that the final condition must exceed our original Adamic condition—our end is better than our beginning.

In all these different states, what was the final purpose of demonic struggle? Referring to 2 Timothy 2:5, Maximus explains that those who “competed according to the rules” are rewarded with the gift of God’s salvation. In context, these “rules” that must be obeyed appear to be the possible conditions of humanity—along with “bearing the divine combat,” it seems, with the enemies of God. Thus, it was only through struggle that the virtues come to their full stature for the monastic. The final state of incorruptible dispassion that Maximus anticipates succinctly summarizes the final and definitive conquest of the devil. In an exegesis of a passage from Joel (2:20), the “law of sin” and the devil both come to their demise at the resurrection of the body. In that exegesis, the “‘face’ of the adversary” vanishes in the “first sea” of baptism—the devil’s

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180 Ibid.; see also *QD* 190 [CCSG 10:131-2], in *Questions*, trans. Prassas, 137).


182 *QT* 38 [PG 90:389C-392A, CCSG 7:255-7], in *Questions*, trans. Vinel, t. 1, 394-5. This claim is in explicit contradiction with Gregory of Nyssa (or rather Macrina), who argues that our final condition will be like our first (*On the Soul and the Resurrection*, 103-121).

defeat draws near—but the “back parts of the enemy” are not defeated until the “last sea” of the resurrection. It is only then that “our nature completely puts aside the law of sin that was placed in us through the transgression,” at least in part through the devil’s intervention. Then, at last, human desire will return to its original purpose, seeking after and adoring the all-desirable Creator.

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In this chapter, I have traced the role that the devil plays in the origin of sinful actions after the Fall. Maximus takes great interest in this subject because he and his audience are both greatly concerned with how the monastic might adequately respond to the various demonic ruses they encounter in their discipline. Though Maximus is optimistic about the monk’s theoretical ability (with God’s help) to overcome the devil, there are limits on what one can expect in this life; the devil does not give up the battle until the war comes to an end in the monk’s death and resurrection. In the preceding, I have emphasized the struggle of the individual monastic in interior combat with the devil and have made little reference to the Christological center of Maximus’s thought on temptation by the devil. Indeed, a full account of the monk’s victory over the demonic must grapple with the exemplary and empowering human life of Christ, whose virtue and knowledge definitively destroys the devil’s power over humankind. Christ functions as that empowering exemplar by living from the same human conditions experienced by the monk, and so the central topic of this study draws near. How is Christ, the one who has

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185 See my discussion of QT 61 earlier in this chapter for the devil’s role in sowing the law of pleasure and pain in human nature.
the power to cast out demons, able to be tempted? And how can that temptation be salutary for those who strive to imitate him?
CHAPTER 3
MAXIMUS ON CHRIST’S TEMPTATION

In the previous two chapters, I have set the stage for the central questions to be investigated in this final chapter on the thought of Maximus the Confessor. In Chapter 1, I introduced the sources that help the modern reader to understand Maximus’s affirmations about human beings, demons, and Christ. In Chapter 2, I explained how the first two—Maximus’s anthropology and his demonology—interrelate. In Maximus’s ascetic theology and texts directed toward monastic experience, he shows a close attentiveness to the ways that the devil is not only active “without” in visions and external stimuli but also active in the monastic’s own mind, stirring up desires for material realities and implanting impassioned thoughts.¹ Since this sort of temptation comes to the monastic regardless of their spiritual progress or purity of virtue, Maximus can and does apply this understanding of temptation to Christ, who is both an exemplary and empowering figure for the monastic who follows in his steps. In Christ’s temptation by the devil, one sees the depths of Christ’s identification with the fallen human condition as well as the ultimate defeat of the powers and principalities opposed to God’s

¹ I indicated at the time that these are not the only way in which the monastic sins; it is certainly possible that the monk might come to consider material realities in an impassioned way contrary to nature without demonic intervention. However, the specific mechanisms of the temptations I have outlined in Chapter 2 become essential here because they indicate temptations that come to human beings regardless of their moral perfection—the most depraved sinner and Christ can be and are tempted in these ways.
will. Christ’s temptation is, for Maximus, salvific because it exorcises from human nature the demonic powers that had been active in it from the moment of Adam and Eve’s Fall.

In this final chapter, I will explain in detail this aspect of Christ’s saving work in Maximus’s corpus. I will proceed in three parts. First, I will consider how Maximus affirms Christ’s identity with our fallen condition (I), for it is on the basis of a humanity that is conditioned by the same existential circumstances as other human beings that Christ is capable of providing a meaningful example and efficacious aid. In this material, I will first explain Maximus’s common categories for relating the Fall to Christ’s humanity: mortality, passibility, and corruption (A). Further, I will consider Maximus’s distinction between the essential and relational appropriation of humanity, through which Maximus attempts to draw a clear line between what is blameless and natural to humanity and what is unnatural and outright sinful (B). Christ takes on the former in the incarnation, but he has a merely apparent relationship with the latter. In Maximus’s own thought, the former, essential appropriation is expressed in two ways that I will consider: in Christ’s “emptying” and “condescension,” and through a certain “weakness” and “confusion” in Christ’s humanity (C). First, the “emptying” and “condescension” of the incarnation is seen in the Ambigua ad Iohannam to be an essential appropriation that sets the trap of his human passibility in which he will snare the devil. Second, the weakness and confusion of Christ’s humanity is closely associated with Christ’s entering the house of the “strong man” in order to bind him—he lowers himself in order to conquer the one who appears strong. By investigating these terms, I will argue that, in Maximus’s thought, Christ’s temptation by the devil is a consequence of his essential appropriation
of humanity and not something that Christ only considers “as if” he himself had done or suffered it.

Second, it is necessary to consider abstractly how this condescension of Christ into human passibility and demonic temptation is compatible with the sorts of perfections Maximus also affirms in Christ (II). There is a tension here; a strong account of Jesus’ temptation by the devil can appear incompatible with other claims that Christians have always made about Jesus, particularly his perfect virtue (A), knowledge (B), and sinlessness and impeccability (C). Much is at stake in the way that one reconciles these claims, including the nature of temptation, the kind of power that the devil has over humanity, and the nature of Christ’s sinlessness. This second section will attempt to reconcile Maximus’s account of Christ’s condescension with these three perfections. The groundwork laid in the previous chapter will make the work concerning the first two perfections relatively simple. I have already addressed in Chapter 2 how Maximus considers the compatibility of virtue and demonic temptation (A). I have also taken time in Chapter 2 to consider the two different kinds of ignorance (intentional and unintentional) considered in Maximus’s thought; this distinction is also essential in reconciling Christ’s knowledge with his temptation (B). The third section, on the compatibility of Christ’s impeccability with his temptation (C), will require the most work. I will argue that Maximus’s ability to affirm Christ’s temptation is tautologous with his ability to affirm choice in Christ, for both of them require one to speak of a certain indeterminism to Christ’s activation of his human nature. I have already shown in Chapter 2 that in Maximus’s anthropological works, he believes choice to pertain to the λόγος of human nature. While Maximus qualifies this claim in his later TPO, he never
completely reverses this claim, and on this basis, I will argue that just as Maximus can speak of an oxymoronic “immutable choice” in Christ (in which Christ salvifically stabilizes human nature by transforming it into something new), he can also speak of temptation in Christ as a moment of salvific stabilization of what was theretofore mutable, vacillating, and inconstant.

In the third and final portion of the chapter, I will consider how, for Maximus, Christ’s human temptation constitutes a defeat of the devil and an empowering exemplarity for the monastic seeking to imitate Christ. The central object of this section will be the action of demonic powers in Christ’s passible faculties of desire and repulsion. Two texts from the *Questions from Thalassius* are particularly important: number 47 and number 21. In the former, Christ’s defeat of the devil is described as the restoration of the human passible faculties to their natural functioning. In the latter, which is the central and most important text, Maximus considers the two biblical events that constitute Christ’s demonic temptation: the temptation in the desert and the temptation at the time of his death. Based on the psychological structures exposited in Chapter 2 and reaffirmed in the first half of the current chapter, I will discuss how Maximus sees Jesus’ confrontation with the Tempter in the desert and at the time of his death as a victory over the devil. In the end of this section, I will turn to the effects that this defeat has on those who seek after a life of moral perfection.2 By explaining how Christ’s temptation empowers the monastic to follow Christ, I will fill in the piece of Maximus’s asceticism

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2 When investigating Maximus’s sources in Chapter 1, I argued that Evagrius, for instance, lacked a strong account of the empowering quality of Christ’s victory over the devil. For Evagrius, Christ is an exemplar, but it is not clear that he actually enables the monastic to pursue virtue; this section argues (even if not the direct object of the study) that Christ corrects this shortcoming in his sources.
missing from the previous chapter, thus showing its Christological center and completing the investigation of this half of the dissertation.

I. Christ’s Humanity, Human Fallenness, and the Devil

In this first section, my goal is to explain how Maximus considers the limits of Christ’s identity with fallen human nature, particularly in the ways that Christ’s humanity renders him susceptible to demonic attack. I will first (in A. below) briefly review what was said in the last chapter concerning the Fall and discuss briefly how Christ’s humanity relates to the characteristic features of fallen human nature. Second (in B.), I will introduce Maximus’s distinction between an essential and relational appropriation—a distinction indispensable for a consideration of the limits of Christ’s identity with fallen humanity. Third (in C.), I will explore the terms that Maximus uses to indicate the depths of Christ’s essential appropriation and how those terms bear relevance to a discussion of Christ’s passibility and, therein, demonic temptation.

A. The Fall and Christ’s humanity

Although already discussed at the beginning of Chapter 2, a few words reviewing the origin and Fall of humanity are helpful before considering Christ’s humanity. Maximus understands Adam’s original state as one that was good according to the composition or λόγος of his nature but that was not immutably fixed on his highest spiritual good—its mode (τρόπος) of being was not determinate. All of Adam’s faculties were naturally oriented toward his highest good and all the “appetites [ὄρεξεις]” of his natural faculties (reason, attraction, and repulsion) and of his imagination directed him toward that end.

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3 Maximus would even say that Christ provokes this attack through his deceptive ploy against the devil.
4 Even in his created state, Adam experience spiritual pleasure concerning God and even a spiritual fear that
When Adam was distracted from this highest good by material reality,⁵ he set his τρόπος in a new direction and through this Fall, three major consequences resulted within human nature: passibility, corruptibility, and mortality.⁶ Even these consequences, as understood by Maximus, were good because they were intended by God to serve Adam in a changed environment. Most importantly, the passionate component of nature served Adam in the material world by helping him preserve his physical life, seeking pleasurable things and avoiding harmful things.⁷ These consequences are passed on from generation to generation because of the passionate mode of procreation humanity experiences after the Fall.

When Christ is born of Mary, he is born according to a new mode that is free from passion, and so he was not naturally bound to take on these characteristics of human nature. Concerning the introduction of pain and pleasure, see QT 1 [PG 90:268D-269C; CCSG 7:47-9], in Questions, trans. Vinel, t. 1, 154-5 and Blowers and Wilken, Cosmic Mystery, 97-8; QT 40 [PG 90:396A-D; CCSG 7:267-9], in Questions, trans. Vinel, t. 1, 406-9; and QT 61 [PG 90:625D-628B; CCSG 22:85], in Blowers and Wilken, Cosmic Mystery, 131. On the specific way in which human nature was naturally drawn toward God, see TPO 7 [PG 91:80A-B], in Louth, 185; TPO 3 [PG 91:48B-C], in Louth, 194; and Jean-Claude Larchet's introduction at Questions, trans. Vinel, t. 1, 33. While Balthasar argues that “our fallen, vulnerable nature is in some way also essentially a sinful nature” (Hans Urs von Balthasar, Cosmic Liturgy: The Universe According to Maximus the Confessor (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2003), 268), much more clarity is needed for his “in some way.” To say this without clarification may distract from the core affirmation that Maximus would uphold about the goodness of created nature.

⁵ How Adam become distracted is an important subject that cannot receive direct treatment in this dissertation. The core of the answer, it seems to me, has to do with the fundamental mutability of his τρόπος in the Garden and Maximus’s threefold structure of creation—movement—stasis.


⁷ See Doucet, “La Volonte humaine du Christ,” 138, Christoph Schoenborn, “Plaisir et Douleur dans l’Analyse de S. maxime, d’apres les Questiones ad Thalassium” in Maximus Confessor: Actes du Symposium sur Maxime le Confesseur, ed. Felix Heinzler and Christoph Schoenborn (Fribourg: Editions Universitaires Fribourg Suisse, 1982), 273-284, and Dispute with Pyrrhus [PG 91:297-300], in Dispute, t. 2, trans. Doucet, 552-557 (French translation on 632-637). Schoenborn’s article treats the goodness of human nature’s faculties especially well, particularly in relation to pleasure and pain. Even corruptibility and mortality were of a certain spiritual use to Adam in his changed state; they could be used as reminders of Adam’s final destination and the coming end of his earthly life.
nature consequent to the Fall. Nevertheless, Maximus argues that Christ willingly took on a possible, corruptible, and mortal body in order to heal each of these aspects of human life. In another passage, Christ suffers “out of weakness [ἐξ ὀσθονείας]” precisely in order to save those striving after Christ’s example, and for this reason, Christ assumed a human nature with the consequences of Adam’s sin. Thus, while in an absolute sense he did not need to, he willingly bore in his humanity the punishment of Adam, in particularly the passibility, corruptibility, and mortality that all other human beings experience. In precisely this way, Christ’s humanity can be described as “fallen,” though one must take care to distinguish that, for Maximus even this fallen humanity is entirely good and that in another sense—that of Christ’s mode of procreative origin—he is not fallen. The fact that Christ does share certain fallen characteristics, however, is the origin of his natural susceptibility to passibility and thereby temptation.

**B. Christ’s appropriations of human nature**

It is necessary to establish with greater precision how Christ shares in these fallen characteristics of human nature. That is, what, according to Maximus, should be categorized as “sin” and what should be considered blameless “temptation”? On this question, the crucial distinction in Maximus’s thought is that between Christ’s essential and relational appropriation, or “taking on,” of human nature. According to the former

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8 See Larchet’s note to QT 21 in *Questions*, trans. Vinel, t. 1, 250-1.
10 Of course, Christ must be able to serve as an example to the most advanced monk as much as to those at the very beginning, but as Maximus understands it, Christ can fully take on the corruption of passion and demonic temptation without failing to provide an example to the most advanced monks as well. As mentioned in a preceding note, praxis and contemplation are not progressive stages, but elements that repeatedly arise in the ascetic’s life.
12 *TPO* 19 [PG 91:220B], in *Opuscula*, trans. Ponsonye, 234. Balthasar also draws attention to this
appropriation that Maximus calls an “essential [οὐσιόδη]” assumption, Christ assumes what is an intrinsic aspect of the λόγος of human nature; according to the second, called a “relational [σχετικήν]” appropriation, Christ takes on, out of love of humanity, what belongs to others “without suffering or doing it himself [μηδὲν τούτων αὐτοῖ ή πάσχοντες, ἢ ἑνεργοῦντες].” The essential assumption is Christ’s taking on the λόγος of human nature in the incarnation; by it, Christ becomes everything that other humans are by nature. What Christ appropriates relationally—what he does not experience—is truly sinful, a “falsification of nature [ὁ δὲ δι’ ὅλου],” The relational appropriation is the way in which Christ relates to our evil activation of nature; he does not himself do it, but he understands the nexus out of which it arises.

C. “Weakness” and “confusion” in Christ: passibility and demonic temptation

In his later Ambigua ad Thomam, Maximus considers in a different way how Christ lowers himself in becoming human. Drawing on a text of Gregory of Nazianzus, he argues that there are two moments of Christ’s lowering into human nature: a “self-emptying” and a “condescension.” The distinction, while largely logical (and not temporal) expresses two forms of Christ’s essential appropriation of humanity. By the first, he entered into human nature in its unfallen state, free from material forms of
distinction. See Balthasar, Cosmic Liturgy, 266-7.

13 See Dispute with Pyrrhus [PG 91:304A-B], in Dispute, t. 2, trans. Doucet, 559-560 (French translation on 640); “κατά ποιὰν οἰκεῖον τούτο φασιν; Ἅρα τὴν οὐσιώδη, καθ ἓν τά φυσικάς προσόντα ἐκαστος ἔχων, διά τὴν φύσιν οἰκειούμεθα· ἡ τὴν σχετικὴν, καθ ἓν φυλικάς τά ἀλλήλων οἰκειούμεθα καὶ στέργομεν, μηδὲν τούτων αὐτοῖ ἢ πάσχοντες, ἢ ἑνεργοῦντες;”

14 TPO 20 [PG 91:237B-C], in Opuscula, trans. Ponsonye, 245. In the same passage, he calls these passions “opposition” and “revolt,” also explicitly stating that these things “are culpable in us” (TPO 20 [PG 91:237B-C], in Opuscula, trans. Ponsonye, 245).

passion. By the second, he further entered our condition, existing “as a man passible by
nature.”\footnote{Ibid., in \textit{Ambigua}, trans. Lollar, 58.}

Maximus twice indicates that the reason for this double-condescension pertains to
Christ’s salvific defeat of the devil. By his condescension into passibility, Christ “became
a slave because of me who am a slave by nature, that he might make me master of the one
who rules tyrannically by means of deceit.”\footnote{Ibid., in \textit{Ambigua}, trans. Lollar, 59.} Thus, while the means are left unclear, the
end envisioned is explicit: Christ enters into human passibility in order to free humanity
from demonic tyranny. At the end of the \textit{Ambigua} 4, he marvels at the mystery of
Christ’s salvific condescension by quoting without commentary Gregory of Nazianzus’s
\textit{Fourth Theological Oration}: “it is a more wonderful thing that [Christ] should have been
chased [by the evil one and the tempter] than that we should have been captured.”\footnote{Ibid., in \textit{Ambigua}, trans. Lollar, 61. Translation from Edward Rochie Hardy, ed, \textit{The Christology of the Later Fathers}, Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1954), 181.}
Maximus thereby puts a stamp on Gregory, affirming that human salvation through
Christ’s temptation by the devil is even more wonderful than the fact that other human
beings gave into that temptation in the first place.

Preliminarily, this passage allows one to recognize that Christ’s passibility is
closely related to his defeat of the demonic powers. In the depths of Christ’s
condescension into the human condition, he encounters the weakest aspect of human
nature: human passibility and its susceptibility to demonic attack. I will investigate
Maximus’s use of two terms—the word “weakness [\(\alphaσθενεια\)]” and the term “confusion
[\(\sigmaγχυςις\)]”\footnote{Even in the New Testament, the term “weakness [\(\alphaσθενεια\)]” plays and important role in the soteriology
and Christology of the Letter to the Hebrews, where Christ is said to “suffer with” our weakness by
experiencing temptation without sinning. On the one hand, Christ is said to “sympathize with our

animalistic components of human nature. In the case of both ασθενεια and of σύχωσις, Maximus is dealing with the very limits of Christ’s assumption of human nature; these terms express the cusp of what falls into outright sin, in which Christ shares without becoming, per se. In order to “co-suffer” them, he must in a sense enter into the conditions in which they arise culpably in us—an essential appropriation. In order to redeem us from them, he must not himself live out these conditions as other human beings do—a relational appropriation. In the rest of this section, then, I will consider how the passions and demons coincide to effect a true temptation of Christ, thereby putting a fine point on the meaning of the weakness and confusion of Christ’s human nature in Maximus’s thought.

As for the term ασθενεια, in TPO 7 Maximus discusses Christ’s human will in the Garden of Gethsemane, arguing that Christ’s refusal of the cup manifests “the weakness of his own flesh ινα δειξη της οικειας σαρκος την ασθενειαν.” He reiterates a similar claim shortly thereafter in an explanation of a passage from Athanasius: Christ’s human will, “because of the weakness of the flesh δια την ασθενειαν της σαρκος, seeks to

weakness [συμπαθησαι τας ασθενειας ημων]” and to have been “similarly tested in every way, yet without sin [πεπειρασμενον κατα παντα καθ ομοιοτητα χωρις ἁμαρτιας]” (Hebrews 4:15). Here, human weakness is associated closely with Christ’s experience of temptation but lack of sin; he is said to “suffers with” our weakness. Similarly, the Gospel of Luke’s statement that angels strengthened Jesus in the Garden (Luke 22:43), may also indicate a way in which one might affirm Christ’s humanity to be “weak.” But, on the other hand, Hebrews 5:1-3 and 7:28 place distance between Christ and that weakness for deep soteriological reasons. Whereas the former high priests of Israel were “beset by weakness [περικειται ασθενειαν]” and for that reason made an imperfect offering for sin, Christ’s mediation is contrasted because he “has been made perfect forever εισ τον αιωνα τετελειωμενον.” Just as weakness is related to sin in Hebrews, a similar, though not equivalent, relation exists between desire [επιθυμιας] and sin [αμαρτιαν] in James 1:15, where desire takes us as prisoners [συλλαβουσα] into sin and bears [τικτει] sin as a mother bears forth children. This passage especially emphasized the natural, perhaps even necessary, link between desire [επιθυμια] and sin. The ways in which these relations (both between weakness and sin and between desire and sin) plays out will be crucial in Maximus’ Christology.

20 TPO 7 [PG 91:80C-D], in Louth, Maximus, 186: “For that he has by nature a human will, just as he has an essentially divine will, the Word himself shows clearly, when … he humanly begged to be spared from death, … in order to manifest the weakness of his own flesh.”

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avoid the passion; the divine will is "eager." In both of these passages (as in others) Maximus indicates that the weakness of Christ’s flesh helps Christ to demonstrate the λόγος of his humanity. But, as I will consider in greater depth in the third part of this chapter and as seen clearly in Question from Thalassius 21, one cannot forget that Maximus also believes there to be a demonic component to Christ’s temptation in the Garden. The “weakness” that Christ demonstrates there certainly pertains to his human passibility, but it also bears a close relationship to the powers and principalities that rise up to tempt Christ to sin through that passibility.

On the other hand, Maximus also trades heavily on the term “confusion” when considering the extremes of Christ’s identification with postlapsarian human nature. This confusion has strongly negative associations for Maximus in relation to our lived experience. One sees in his early Questions and Doubts that the one who enters the “confusion of life [συγχυεϊ τοϋ βιου]” becomes a temple to the devil; in the Questions from Thalassius, the “seed of confusion” is captivity to the passions, and the world [κόσμος] is the devil’s “residence of corruption and perpetual confusion.” Despite these negative associations, Christ’s entrance into this confusion is emphasized in several

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21 TPO 7 [PG 91:81B-C], in Louth, Maximus, 187: ‘For the spirit is eager, but the flesh is weak,’ we understand ‘that two wills are manifest here: the human, which belongs to the flesh, and the divine. For the human will, because of the weakness of the flesh [δια την ασθενειαν της σαρκος], seeks to avoid the passion; the divine will is eager’ [νουμεν ως δυο θεληματα ενταυθα δεικνυσι το μεν ανθρωπινον οπερ εστι της σαρκος το δε θεικον. Το γαρ ανθρωπινον δια την ασθενειαν της σαρκος παρατειτα το παθος, το δε θεικον αυτου προθυμον].”

22 QT 42 [PG 90:405B-409A, CCSG 7:285-289], in Blowers and Wilken, Cosmic Mystery, 119-122 ends with a reference to the salvific possibilities of a “weakness of nature [φυσικὴν ασθενειαν].” By entering into this weakness, Christ prevents the “wickedness of choice [την κακίαν της προαιρέσεως]” from proceeding into action (PG 90:409A, CCSG 7:289, in Blowers and Wilken, Cosmic Mystery, 122).


passages with a soteriological focus. In the *Questions and Doubts*, Christ goes down into the “sea of life [θαλάσσῃ τοῦ βιου]” which is the “confusion of the passions [συγχυεῖ τῶν παθῶν]” to draw out human nature and dissolve the passions from it.\(^{26}\) In the *Questions from Thalassius*, Christ enters the devil’s residence of “perpetual confusion”—the κόσμος—in order to bind him.\(^{27}\) In another passage of the *QT*, Christ was conceived, born, and entered the world in the confusion of our nature [ἐν τῇ συγχύσει τῆς φύσεως ἡμῶν] and he became human according to nature to return nature to [humanity] after having separated it from confusion. He was not born captive with us and he was not exiled into the confusion of the passions [πρὸς τὴν τῶν παθῶν … σύγχυσιν], for he did not commit sin and no treachery was found in his mouth; but in the midst of us who were captive he was born captive and was counted among us who were lawless …\(^{28}\)

The way in which σύγχυσις is a limit-concept of Christ’s identity with humankind is clear in these passages. Christ came into human existence in the confusion of our nature, but he was not exiled into the confusion of the passions. Did Christ “suffer” this σύγχυσις? In one sense, yes; he was born into it and lived in its midst. In another sense, no; he did not live it out and was not personally deceived by it. In the course of his own life, he was in the process of separating out this confusion from human nature. He experiences the passions and, through them, demonic temptation by an essential appropriation, but he does not live out those conditions as does every other human being. The σύγχυσις and, above, ασθενεία of Christ’s humanity thus mark the very limit of Christ’s identity with fallen humanity in passibility and demonic temptation.

\(^{26}\) *QD* 45 [CCSG 10:38], in *Questions*, trans. Prassas, 69.


\(^{28}\) *QT* 54 [PG 90:517A-B, CCSG 7:455], in *Questions*, trans. Vinel, t. 2, 206-7, my translation: “ὁ ἐν τῇ συγχύσει τῆς φύσεως ἡμῶν συλληφθεὶς καὶ κυηθεὶς καὶ τεθεὶς, καὶ τέλεος κατὰ φύσιν γενόμενος ἄνθρωπος, ἵνα πρὸς εαυτὸν τῆς συγχύσεως ἀποστάσαν ἐπαναγάγῃ τὴν φύσιν, ὁ μὴ γενόμενος μὲν σὺν ἡμῖν αἰχμάλωτος καὶ πρὸς τὴν τῶν παθῶν ἀποκισθεῖς σύγχυσιν οὐ γὰρ ἐποίησαν ἁμαρτίαν, οὐδὲ εὑρέθη δόλος ἐν τῷ στόματι αὐτοῦ, ἐν ἡμῖν δὲ τοῖς αἰχμάλωτοις ὡς αἰχμάλωτος γεννηθεὶς καὶ μεθ’ ἡμῶν τῶν ἁνόμων λογισθεὶς…”
What is the devil actually able to do to human beings and, in particular, to Christ?

I have largely answered this question in the previous chapter, but I will here briefly summarize those findings and consider their application to Christ.\(^{29}\) Maximus, following a Nemesian psychology, argues that according to the λόγος of their nature, humans are endowed with a natural will [θέλησις] that is also described as an “appetite [ὀρεξίς]” in no way “up to us [ἐφ’ ἡμῖν]” that generally seeks out what is according to nature, though without a specific object of consideration available.\(^{30}\) Humans are also naturally constituted with “wish [βούλησις],” which is an “imaginative appetite [ὀρεξίς φανταστική]” that arises from thought [διανοία]” alone.\(^{31}\) βούλησις constitutes a specification of θέλησις with regard to an end presented as desirable. βούλησις, like θέλησις, is not dependent on rational deliberation and is a spontaneous desire for an end, a τέλος.\(^{32}\) The “appetites [ὀρεξεῖς]” produced by the passible faculties of attraction and repulsion are in accord with nature and therefore do not in themselves direct the human subject from their natural end—they do not, on their own, “tempt” one to sin.

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\(^{29}\) To the best of my knowledge, this argument concerning the activity of demonic forces in passibility has not been put forward in the secondary literature. Current studies of Maximus’s theological anthropology focus only on the purely internal structure of the moral act and do not consider ways in which demons interact with this structure. For analysis of the psychological structure of the moral act, see Doucet, *Dispute de Maxime avec Pyrrhus*, t. 1, 355-382 and Thunberg, *Microcosm and Mediator*, 208-230.

\(^{30}\) See *TPO* 1 [PG 91:12C-13A], in *Opuscula*, trans. Ponsonye, 112-3.

\(^{31}\) Ibid.

\(^{32}\) Thunberg and Doucet are not in agreement about how Maximus understands βούλησις. Thunberg argues that βούλησις is already a part of the gnomic deliberative process that would be absent in Christ (see Thunberg, *Microcosm and Mediator*, 218-219). However, Doucet argues—I believe convincingly—that βούλησις is prior to choice and is a necessary component of human nature: “La βούλησις peut donc se porter, parce qu’antérieure à tout examen, aussi bien vers des objets pour nous impossible que vers des objets pour nous possibles. Prise en elle-même, elle ne constitue pas encore un acte concret de volonté, elle n’est que l’orientation de l’être ou de sa puissance volitve vers une réalité déterminée dans laquelle se concrétise le bien naturel” (Doucet, *Dispute avec Pyrrhus*, t. 1, 357). Later: “βούλησις peut être dite nécessaire: une fois l’objet désirable, possible ou impossible, présent à la pensée, il ne peut pas ne pas y susciter l’attrait de l’appétit” (Doucet, *Dispute avec Pyrrhus*, t. 1, 360).
What makes these desires truly tempting for human beings is their association with the devil and the demonic. Maximus believes that demonic forces are at work in the natural activity of the sensitive faculties of attraction and repulsion, attempting to “disorder” humanity’s original constitution.33 As a brief reminder, Maximus states the following about demons assigned to the cultivation of pleasure:

Scripture thus calls “powerful” the evil demon who presses on toward attraction [ἐπιθυμίας] and inflames it toward an unseemly appetite [ἀπρεπεῖς ὀρέξεως] for shameful pleasures; for nothing is more powerful [δυνατώτερον] or more violent [βιαιότερον] than a natural appetite [φυσικῆς ὀρέξεώς].34

Thus, in the hands of the tempting demons, natural appetites are apparently brought to the cusp of “unnaturality,” being both “powerful” and “violent.”35 As seen explicitly in QT 21, the demons incite even Christ through these natural and imaginative appetites, though they fail to arouse in him any desire contrary to nature.36 Christ does not allow his passions to gain dominance over his rational faculty; rather, he expresses his desires by activating his passionate faculties as “natural and blameless passions.”37 Nevertheless, the...
nexus of Christ’s experience of this temptation is identical to that of other human beings, for whom even the slightest “push” of these appetites in the wrong direction (especially with the suggestion of demonic powers) would render them contrary to nature and therefore sinful.

Through the preceding, one can see with greater precision how ασθενεια and of σύγχυσις are affirmed in Christ by Maximus. The natural appetites [ὀρέξεις] involved in this weakness do indeed pertain to the λόγος of nature—and thus a strictly ontological appropriation when assumed by Christ.38 The intensity and aggressiveness with which these ὀρέξεις are incited by demonic powers does not pertain as such to the λόγος of nature, but the action of these powers and principalities is deeply bound to their functioning in the fallen condition of humanity. Because this basic subjection to demonic temptation and the passions is part of the common condition of fallen human nature, they pertain most adequately to Christ’s essential appropriation of that nature—not to a relational assumption wherein Christ would not be said to suffer these passions. These appetites—with the concomitant demonic temptation in and through them—constitute the deepest point of fragility in human nature,39 and the deepest aspect of Christ’s identification with the fallen human condition.

38 Indeed, since the sorts of temptations that demons suggested to Christ (as to others) are not up to us [εφ’ ημιν], they do not fall into the category of moral blame and praise in Nemesian and Maximian psychology and cannot be sinful in a strict sense.

39 One could say that our gnomic will is also a point of fragility, but it does not pertain strictly to the λόγος of nature, as I have argued elsewhere in this dissertation.
II. The Perfections of Christ’s Humanity and His Temptation

Having completed an account of how Maximus accounts for Christ’s human weakness through the intertwined components of human passibility and demonic temptation, I turn now to a consideration of the perfections of Christ’s humanity acknowledged by Maximus. In doing so, I will focus on the compatibility of Christ’s temptation with Maximus’s articulation of these perfections. The three matters I wish to address are Christ’s perfect virtue, knowledge, and impeccability. The first two matters will move rather quickly, as I have already introduced some of the main resources for addressing them in the previous chapter. I will consider the question of Christ’s temptation and impeccability last and at greater length.

A. Christ’s perfect virtue

The point of this subsection is relatively easily made. Given that Maximus affirms Christ’s perfect virtue, how is it that temptation is still possible for him?40 Certain theories of virtue would argue that one who is perfectly temperate, for instance, would feel no inner movement toward excessive stimulation or satiety. If Christ can be violently and powerfully driven through his natural desires toward things that would be unnatural if activated incorrectly, does that mean that he is not perfectly virtuous? Or, contrariwise, would not his perfect virtue preclude the kind of temptation that was just discussed in the previous section?

The key consideration in a Maximian response is that the real source of these temptations is not one’s own humanity, as if Christ were not properly controlling his

desires; rather, the source is the movement of evil forces within that naturally good humanity attempting to corrupt it with the consent of our free will. The presence of these impulses is not a matter of virtue or its lack; for mere human beings, demonic temptation is simply not something that is dealt with once and then left behind. As discussed in Chapter 2, Maximus believes that it may be possible to expel demons for a time, but the devil is overcome progressively through life and only definitively at the resurrection. As Maximus affirms in Question from Thalassius 21, Christ himself experienced temptation from the devil all the way to the end of his life, but surely this does not mean that he was somehow lacking in perfect virtue before that defeat.

Indeed, Maximus explicitly affirms that the devil does not give up attacks even on those who have attained a state of virtue. Hezekiah, the “God-loving” and “virtuous man,” is still attacked by evil demons in this state of virtue. Similarly, Isaac, who was “totally free from the passions” and had an “insatiable appetite for contemplation,” guarded and maintained his virtue and knowledge even when he was attacked by evil spirits. Maximus certainly envisions a state of human nature that is free from all shadow of temptation, in which even the passions used by demonic powers in our current state will be extinguished. He is clear, however, that this state is not attained until the resurrection.

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attainment of virtue, is simply a sign that demonic forces will be at work throughout the present age. So long as human nature remains passible, it will have a fundamental susceptibility to demonic temptation.

The way that QT 21 speaks of Christ’s “taking off” of the powers and principalities, however, also indicates that there is something unique and definitive about each attack of the devil against Christ. The demons of pleasure rise up against him in the desert—and he defeats them there with no further explicit battle against them. The demons of pain rise up against him at the time of his death—and he defeats them once and for all in his voluntary death. Thus, it seems that Christ experienced each temptation only once. One could speculate that there are other confrontations not mentioned in the Gospel accounts but Maximus does not consider this possibility, perhaps because Maximus may be following Origen in a belief that when a demon is defeated, it is definitively prevented from attacking again. From that perspective, if Christ were to allow the same demon to attack him twice, it might undermine an affirmation of Christ’s perfect victory over these powers. So Christ’s virtue does not prevent the devil and his minions from attacking Christ all the way to the point of his death, but the perfection of Christ’s virtue does seem to prevent any one of them from attacking him twice.

B. Christ’s knowledge

In Chapter 2, it became clear that ignorance was a key component of the devil’s attack against Adam, Eve, and their progeny. It was deception and trickery, in part, that enabled Adam and Eve to choose to disobey the commandment and it is ignorance of God that continues to drive human sinfulness in the present age. Since deception and ignorance are a key component of the devil’s tools in human temptation, does Christ’s
temptation “like us in every way” require that he in some way share in the common experience of deception, demonic trickery, and ignorance?

To provide an adequate response to this question, one must pay close attention to Maximus’s categories of knowledge, ignorance, and culpability identified in the previous chapter. At the heart of all Christian theories of sin is the idea that one can choose to do something that one knows to be wrong.\textsuperscript{47} Knowledge and ignorance are morally relevant in these theories, but in the end they are not the source or origin of moral evil—while they can be the source of other objective evils, an ignorance that has no foundation in a previous, morally reprehensible choice cannot be categorized as a moral evil. Such a distinction is found in Maximus’s own thought, who recognizes two kinds of ignorance: \textit{intentional} and \textit{unintentional} ignorance.\textsuperscript{48} The former kind ultimately traces its source back to the will. In that case, one should have known or had good reason to have known that something is wrong or right, but decided not to investigate the action properly. In that case, this kind of ignorance would properly be called morally culpable. On the other hand, when an ignorance is truly \textit{unintentional}—not rooted in a prior decision of the will—such ignorance does not fall into the realm of morally relevant actions. While one might perform an action that is objectively evil in such a state, in those particular circumstances, the action does not add to or subtract from one’s virtue or moral integrity.

It is on these foundations, in part, that one must understand Maximus’s denial of ignorance in Christ.\textsuperscript{49} On the one hand, it is easy to explain why Christ did not have the former kind of ignorance, intentional ignorance. Since responsibility for that ignorance

\textsuperscript{47} In Christian Scripture, this claim is usually traced to St. Paul’s psychological dilemma described in Romans 7. It stands against Greek and specifically Socratic theories that all evil is ultimately rooted in ignorance.
\textsuperscript{49} Ibid.
redounds morally to the subject, it would be a straightforward denial of Christ’s sinlessness to say that he was intentionally ignorant. In this way, the problem of demonically inspired ignorance is still a moral problem, since the problem lies fundamentally not in the ignorance itself but in the way in which the ignorance came about—namely, though a decision of the will. This concern can be adequately addressed, then, by reference to Christ’s sinlessness. That is, if one wishes to consistently affirm that Christ’s will stays fixed on the good, it would clearly be erroneous to say Christ was intentionally ignorant—that he could have sought knowledge about a morally relevant subject but chose not to. One might be able simply to stop there; since the Logos has perfect knowledge in the divine nature, it is possible that the category of unintentional ignorance would be null in Christ’s case. The unity of the subject of Christ would thereby be sufficient to show that Christ could have sought to know any morally relevant data, and therefore did. It is also possible that the only kinds of ignorance that the devil could induce would be this kind of intentional ignorance.

But even if, on the other hand, one were to argue that there could be things that Christ would not and could not be expected to know as a human being, the above distinction shows that any action performed in those circumstances would not morally redound to Christ. One could use this fact to argue that Christ could be ignorant in this way, but the grounds for this argument would not be whether Christ lived a sinless life from the same moral circumstances as other human beings. In other words, even if such a case were demonically inspired, true unintentional ignorance could not be categorized as a temptation, as a temptation implies some relationship to human choices and decisions. Consequently, no argument about Christ’s being “tempted like us in every way yet

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50 Maximus himself indicates that this might be the case in ibid.
without sin” could be made relating to the presence of unintentional ignorance in Christ—not because the resulting action would not be sin (which, technically, it would not be), but because it would not be temptation. In this way, Christ’s being “tempted like us in every way” has nothing to do with whether he was unintentionally ignorant of morally relevant information. The decision about whether this ignorance would be present in Christ, then, is ultimately only a decision about what other non-moral characteristics one expects to find in the God-man. Maximus speaks of other divinely inspired messengers as the standard here.51 If other prophets were granted extraordinary knowledge of the world as part of their mission to God’s people, how much more would Christ have access to such knowledge? As united as the prophets were to God, the hypostatic union guarantees that Christ—the divine Logos—enjoys perfect knowledge in the divine nature.

In short, an affirmation of ignorance in Christ would have to come in one of two forms: intentional or unintentional ignorance. If one were to say that Christ were intentionally ignorant, Christ’s sinlessness would thereby be contradicted. If one were to say that Christ were unintentionally ignorant, one needs grounds other than Hebrews 4:15 to argue in its favor since that kind of ignorance bears no direct relationship to the question of Christ’s human temptations. However, since Christ’s revelatory mission involves more than just his perfect moral virtue, Maximus can argue on other grounds that Christ would in fact have knowledge where others might remain blamelessly ignorant.

In other ways, this knowledge would also be a clear indication of Christ’s perfect defeat of the devil, whose first and most serious victory was to inspire ignorance in our

51 Ibid.
first parents. In Maximus’s protological account, he is sometimes inconsistent in his explanation of Adam and Eve’s essential error. He argues at times that ignorance is the fundamental problem; he also argues that Adam and Eve consented to the devil’s deceit, thereby placing the will at the origin of their sin. The two are almost inextricably intertwined. For Christ perfectly to overcome the devil, then, a dual affirmation of Christ’s knowledge and his complete moral rectitude also becomes necessary.

Finally, the fact that Maximus denies ignorance in Christ also has a corollary for Christ’s moral psychology, albeit only implicitly. Maximus defines deliberation and choice as concerning matters of action that are indeterminate—things that are possible and of which the end is unknown.\textsuperscript{52} Formally speaking, then, an affirmation of Christ’s perfect knowledge could be one of the roots of Maximus’s claim that Christ did not deliberate or choose. If Christ had perfect knowledge of the end of all his possible actions, this alone would preclude deliberation and choice. However, when Maximus qualifies choice in Christ, he does not mention this reason. Instead, he does so because he believes an affirmation of choice in Christ would substantially conflict with an affirmation of Christ’s impeccability. In the next section, then, a final theoretical question must be addressed: in Maximus’s thought, how are temptation and impeccability compatible?

\textit{C. Christ’s impeccability}

In his late polemical texts against the monothelites, Maximus repeatedly affirms not only Christ’s sinlessness, but also his impeccability, the idea that Christ is completely incapable of sinful action. The problem here can be stated briefly: What could it possibly mean to say that one who cannot sin is tempted to sin? Are they not contrary terms? That

\textsuperscript{52} See \textit{TPO} 1 \textit{[PG 91:16D-17B]}, in \textit{Opuscula}, trans. Ponsonye, 115.
is, does the fact that Maximus affirms Christ to be impeccable mean that Christ was incapable of experiencing temptation in a meaningful way? If Christ is impeccable, how does Christ’s human nature have any capacity for decision-making and free will?

In the following, I will first explain how Christ’s impeccability is related to the hypostatic union and to human choice in Maximus’s thought. These topics represent, respectively, the Christological and anthropological principles that come to loggerheads in Maximus’s thought. In the rest of this section, I will show that the way that Maximus resolves the conflict is crucial to understanding Christ’s temptation. My goal will be to argue that in Maximus’s thought, impeccability and temptation are compatible in Christ in exactly the same way that impeccability and choice are compatible in him.

Before considering the compatibility of these two terms in Maximus’s thought, I must first clarify the precise basis for Maximus’s denial that Christ was able to sin. In his late TPO, Maximus twice explains Christ’s impeccability. In TPO 1, Maximus’s argument for Christ’s impeccability begins as a criticism of monothelitism. Arguing a reductio ad absurdum on the basis of monothelite assumptions, Maximus first shows that, when activated according to nature, a single “choice [προαίρεσις]” in Christ implies a single intermediate nature, much like Eutyches’ Christology. He continues his criticism:

And if the choice of Christ was according to nature, not only do we accuse them of audaciously and arbitrarily creating another nature of the divine Christ, but we laugh at their foolishness of saying that [Christ is] naturally [capable] of opposing things by choice, as a bare human being in the way Nestorius makes Christ capable of experiencing.54

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53 TPO 1 [PG 91: 29B], in Opuscula, trans. Ponsonye, 121-4.
54 TPO 1 [PG 91: 29B], in Opuscula, trans. Ponsonye, 121-4; translation in body is mine: “Καί εἰ μὲν κατά φύσιν ἤ τοῦ Χριστοῦ προαίρεσις ἤ, οὐ μόνον ἐπὶ τοῖς αὐτοῖς πάλιν αὐτοῖς αἰτιασάμεθα, φύσιν ἄλλην Χριστοῦ θεότητος μέσην καὶ κτίσεως τολμηράς σχεδιάζοντας: ἄλλα καί ληρούντας γελάσομεν, φύσει τῶν ἀντικειμένων κατά προαίρεσιν ὡς ψυλὸν ἄνθρωπον κατὰ Νεστόριον τὸν Χριστοῦ δεκτικὸν ποιομένους.”
Maximus then argues that, even if this choice were activated according to nature, it also falls into the opposite error of Nestorius, who divided Christ in two and made the humanity independent of the divinity. While this argument accuses Maximus’s enemies of both Eutychianism and Nestorianism—of confusing and of separating Christ’s natures—the key criticism for my purposes is that of Nestorianism. What, precisely, did Nestorius make Christ capable of experiencing that Maximus must reject? As it is explained above, a Nestorian Christology implies that Christ’s humanity was equally capable of either following or not following nature, as if the two options were, in an absolute sense, equally possible for Christ and as if Christ’s humanity were really a separate subject from his divinity. Because choice implies an indifference toward humanity’s final end, Christ, who is always oriented toward that end, cannot choose like other human beings.

In a second text, TPO 20, Maximus explains that Christ’s orientation toward humanity’s final end is a consequence of his “highest union” with God:

For the human will [θέλειν] of the Savior, even if it was natural [φυσικόν], was not bare like ours, no more than was his humanity, as [it was] above us and deified with the highest union, upon which, properly speaking, [his] impeccability [ἀναμάρτητον] hangs.

While a “bare” human, like the Nestorian Christ in the previous example, would be capable of activing his natural will in a way that is contrary to nature, Maximus believes that Christ’s hypostatic union with God precludes such an activation of his humanity.

Similarly, in TPO 1, one reads

The idea that choice [προαίρεσις] concerns things that are “equally possible” comes from Nemesius; see Chapter 1 above. In these texts, Maximus accepts Nemesius’s definition uncritically but in the texts to come, this definition is fundamentally questioned.
For the humanity of God was not moved according to choice \([\text{κατά προαίρεσιν}]\) as we are, working through deliberation and judgment the discernment of opposites; in order that [his] nature might not practice a liability to be turned according to choice, but taking [his] being at the moment of its union with God the Word, he undoubtedly had a stable motion according to natural appetite \([\text{κατ´ ὁρεξίν φυσικήν}]\), that is, truly a will.\(^{57}\)

Here again, choice—προαίρεσις—is the essential sticking point. According to Maximus, προαίρεσις concerns, in its essence, a capacity to move in one direction or another, as though two moral contraries were equally possible. From this perspective, a humanity activated through προαίρεσις would not be directed perfectly according to natural appetite \([\text{κατ´ ὁρεξίν φυσικήν}]\), but would instead consider both the natural and the unnatural indifferently.\(^{58}\) Because of the way that προαίρεσις is defined by those who preceded Maximus, Maximus’s developed thought very strongly qualifies any sense of προαίρεσις in Christ’s humanity.\(^{59}\)

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\(^{57}\) \textit{TPO 1} [\textit{PG} 91:32A-B], in \textit{Opuscula}, trans. Ponsonye, 121-4; translation in body mine: “Τὸ γὰρ ἀνθρώπινον τοῦ θεοῦ, κατὰ προαίρεσιν ὡς ἥμεις οὐ κεκίνηται, διὰ βουλῆς πεποιημένον καὶ κρίσεως τῇ τῶν ἀντικειμένων διάγνωσιν· ἵνα μὴ φύσει κατὰ προαίρεσιν νομισθῇ τρεπτόν· ἀλλ` ἁμα τῇ πρὸς τὸν θεοῦ λόγον ἐνόσις τὸ εἴναι λαβὼν, ἀδίστακτον, μᾶλλον δὲ στάσιμον τῇ κατ´ ὁρεξίν φυσικήν ἤτοι θέλησιν, κίνησιν ἔσχεν.” The following passage (untranslated above) is as follows: “ἳ κυριότερον εἶπεν, τὴν στάσιν ἄκινητον ἐν αὐτῷ κατὰ τὴν ἀκραίωνεστάτην οὐσίαν τῷ θεῷ λόγῳ παντελῶς θεωθείσην· ἴνα φυσικῶς τυπὸν τε καὶ κυνῶν, ὡς οἴκειαν, καὶ τῆς αὐτοῦ ψυχῆς φυσικῆν, ἀφαντασιάτως πεπλήρωκε τὸ μέγα τῆς ὑπέρ ἡμῶν οἰκονομίας μιστήριον.”

\(^{58}\) If such indifference is problematic in Christ, it seems that it should also be so in other human beings. If the λόγος of human nature includes, by definition, deliberation (which Maximus affirms in places, as I have said in Chapter 2 and will say again below) Maximus has already defined human nature as, in some sense, indifferent to its final end. This indifference is a deep anthropological problem in Maximus’s thought; either one must change the definition of deliberation so as to exclude a total indifference or “equality” in the choice, or deliberation must be excluded from a definition of the λόγος of human nature.

Elsewhere he argues, “For if in us [opposition (ἐναντιότητας) and revolt (ἀντίταξιν)] are not natural but are rather considered to be against nature and λόγος, how can one, even if in thought and subtle consideration [δι´ ἐπινοίας ἢ προσεπινοίας] attribute [these things to Christ]? [Εἰ γὰρ ὡσε ἐν ἡμῖν προφθοῦ, ἀλλα παρὰ φύσιν προσεπινείσθαι καὶ λόγον, πῶς ἐν ἐκείνῃ κάν δι´ ἐπινοίας ἢ προσεπινοίας, ἢν οὕτως εἴπο, προσπάθειν ἔστων:]” \(\text{TPO 20} [\textit{PG} 91:237A-B], \) in \textit{Opuscula}, trans. Ponsonye, 245; above is my translation). The reverse of his question would also seem to hold, however: if something natural were to be considered blameworthy in Christ, would it not also be blasphemous to consider that same thing were naturally present in other human beings? Such is one possible reading of Maximus’s consideration of choice.

\(^{59}\) Blowers and Wilken state openly that Maximus “retracts” προαίρεσις from Christ in \textit{TPO 1} (see Blowers and Wilken, \textit{Cosmic Mystery}, 120, n. 1), but as has been pointed out by others, what Maximus says in \textit{TPO 1} does not outright contradict what he said earlier in the \textit{Questions from Thalassius}. Balthasar, for
Maximus’s qualification of choice in Christ is problematic in light of the fact that in his anthropological texts, Maximus takes choice to be essential to the nature of created, rational nature. I have made this point in Chapter 2 above, but I will briefly review the relevant aspects of that claim here. On the one hand, Maximus avows in principle that Christ’s human λόγος is identical to that of other human beings—everything that pertains to the λόγος of human nature is present in Christ. But on the other hand, I have shown earlier that Maximus’s anthropological source material—Nemesius of Emesa—believes that προαιρεσις is constitutive of human rationality, and Maximus sometimes reflects this Nemesian heritage. For instance:

Certainly, the human being, having by nature a living rationality, is endowed with appetite, and reason, and desire, and the ability to search and to examine, and choice [προαιρετικός], and motion [ὁρμητικός], and realization.

If one takes a statement like this perfectly seriously, there is a clear contradiction: something that pertains to the λόγος of human nature as such is denied in Christ.

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60 TPO 20 [PG 91:237A], in Opuscula, trans. Ponsoye, 244-5; following is my translation: “The humanity in us is not something other than the humanity in the Savior, nor is the will different according to the λόγος of nature, even if is different as above us, for it is divinely that the one [nature as in us] is founded, and that the other [nature as in Christ] is informed through its highest union with the divine [Οὐν ἔστι οὖν ἄλλο τὸ καθ’ ἡμᾶς, καὶ ἄλλο τὸ κατὰ τὸν Σωτῆρα ἀνθρώπινον· οὐδὲ τὸ θέλειν ἄλλο, κατὰ γε τὸν τῆς φύσεως λόγον, εἰ καὶ ἄλλος ὑπὲρ ἡμᾶς· θεϊκός γάρ, ὁ μὲν ὑπέστη, τὸ δὲ ἐτυπώθη, διά τῆς πρὸς τὸ θεϊκὸν ἄκρας ἐνόσσεως].” Another example: “Nothing at all received by nature was diminished in him, except sin—absolutely nothing of which was sown [by God] in the λόγος of beings. [μηδὲν τοῦ προσλήμματος φυσικόν παντελῶς ἀπομειώσας, πλὴν τῆς ἀμαρτίας· ἂς οὐδεὶς οὐδεὶς τῶν ὄντων καθάπαξ ἐνόσσαρται λόγος]” (TPO 1 [PG 91:36A-B], in Opuscula, trans. Ponsoye, 126, translation above is mine).

61 TPO 1 [PG 91:21D-24B], in Opuscula, trans. Ponsoye, 119: “Ὁὐδεὶς γὰρ κέχρηται, μὴ πρότερον ὀρμήςατος· καὶ οὐδεὶς ὀρμή, μὴ προαιρεμένος· καὶ οὐδεὶς προαιρείται, μὴ κρίνα· καὶ οὐδεὶς κρίνει, μὴ βουλευσάμενος· καὶ οὐδεὶς βουλεύεται, μὴ σκεψάμενος· καὶ οὐδεὶς σκέπτεται, μὴ ζητήσα· καὶ οὐδεὶς ἤμετρος, μὴ βουληθῆς· καὶ οὐδεὶς βούλεται, μὴ λογισάμενος· καὶ οὐδεὶς λογίζεται, μὴ υπάρχον φύσει λογικός. Λογικὸν οὖν φύσει ξοῖον υπάρχον ὁ ἀνθρώπος, ὁρμητικός ἤστι, καὶ λογιστικός, καὶ βουλητικός, καὶ ζητητικός, καὶ σκεπτικός καὶ προαιρετικός, καὶ ὁρμητικός καὶ χρηστικός.” As seen in Chapter 1, Nemesius is even more adamant in stating that choice is essential to the definition of human rationality, but Maximus almost surely follows Nemesius’s definitions in passages such as these. Balthasar also notes that προαιρεσις is an essential quality of human nature; see Balthasar, Cosmic Liturgy, 260.

62 The context shows that other qualities share the same problem: “No one realizes [an action] without first...
There are two ways of resolving the conflict between choice and impeccability: one can either (1) deny that choice is essential to the λόγος of human nature or (2) change the definition of choice so that it is not necessarily opposed to impeccability. In the first option, one can argue that choice, being an aspect of our humanity that leaves us indifferent to God, is not something that constitutes human nature as such. And if choice is not natural, it does not need to be taken on by Christ in order to redeem humankind. In the second option, one could attempt to redefine choice so that it does not imply an indifference or vacillation with regard to the Good. If that is the case, one who is impeccable could still be affirmed as having choice. Maximus seems to recognize this conflict between these statements and, rather surprisingly, attempts at different times to resolve the problem in both ways.

In some passages, Maximus offers a solution along the lines of option (1) above by clarifying that προαιρεσίς is not necessary for humanity in an absolute sense. Maximus argues that when the truth concerning material realities is clear, judgment and choice recede, since the correct course of action recommends itself:

putting into motion, and no one puts into motion without choosing, and no one chooses without judging, and no one judges without having deliberated, and no one deliberates without having considered, and no one considers without seeking, and no one seeks with desiring, and no one desires, without reasoning, and no one reasons without having an appetite, and no one has a rational appetite without being rational by nature [Οὐδεὶς γὰρ κέχρηται, μὴ πρότερον ὀρμήσας- καὶ οὐδεὶς ὀρμά, μὴ προαιρομένος- καὶ οὐδεὶς προαιρέται, μὴ κρίνας- καὶ οὐδεὶς κρίνει, μὴ βουλευσάμενος- καὶ οὐδεὶς βουλέται, μὴ σκεύασμος- καὶ οὐδεὶς σκέπτεται, μὴ ζητήσας- καὶ οὐδεὶς ζητεῖ, μὴ βουληθεῖς- καὶ οὐδεὶς βουλεύεται, μὴ λογιστήμενος- καὶ οὐδεὶς λογίζεται, μὴ ρηγόμενος- καὶ οὐδεὶς λογικῶς ὀρέγεται, μὴ ὑπάρχον φύσει λογικός] (TPO 1 [PG 91:21D-24B], in Opuscula, trans. Ponsonye, 119). Logically speaking, only the terms prior to deliberation would be absent from Christ, not necessarily the terms after. The terms after, however, seem fairly essential to a definition of human nature, as well. According to this passage, a Christ without προαιρεσίς would be incapable of realizing actions and self-motion.

63 It is possible that Maximus’s early reflections on choice are simply less technical, and that as he grew to recognize how Nemesius defines choice, such a definition became Christologically untenable. Maximus may be attempting to redefine choice in some of his later works; this second option (redefining choice) will also be pursued by Thomas Aquinas, explicitly correcting John of Damascus who denies choice in Christ (all while he thinks he is faithfully transmitting Maximus).
Therefore, since ambiguity concerns deliberation, judgment, and choice about what is up to us, whenever there is no ambiguity, truth brilliantly showing its ὑποστάτος to all, then there is no [need for] choice among intermediate things and things that can be accomplished by our action. Wherefore there is [also] no judgment, making a determination between opposites—which one of them we consider to be taken as higher [better] than the other. But if according to the law now holding sway in nature, there is no [need for] choice, all ambiguity of beings having been taken away, the active appetite will be intellectual alone in those animated by appetite in this way according to nature…

Since the immediate context of this passage concerns the resurrection, there is some lack of clarity here about whether Maximus is referring to a condition that currently obtains in human nature or whether he is referring to humanity’s resurrected condition. Either way, the passage is clear: προαίρεσις is not essential to the λόγος of humanity because even in mere human beings, it does not occur in cases where there is full knowledge of what is under investigation. If mere human beings will be able to exist without choice, then so too can Christ.

In another passage, however, Maximus offers a solution along the lines of option (2) above, where he discusses the relationship between his earlier texts in which he acknowledged προαίρεσις in Christ and what he later meant by denying this προαίρεσις in Christ. As he explains, Christ’s essential and relational assumptions of human nature bring about a new stability of human nature that includes a transformed, stabilized choice:

In considering this [matter] extremely closely, your servant and disciple spoke of προαίρεσις in [my] exposition to my most holy lord and teacher Thalassius, concerning difficulties in the holy Scriptures. If indeed for us the maker of...

\[64\] TPO 1 [PG 91:24B–C] in Opuscula, trans. Ponsonye, 119-20; translation in body is mine: “Οὐκόν ἐπειδή τῶν ἁμφιβόλων ἐστίν, ὡς ἐφ’ ἡμῖν, ἢ τε βουλή καὶ ἡ κρίσις καὶ ἡ προαίρεσις, ὅταν οὐκ ἦστι τὰ ἁμφίβολα, τῆς αὐθ’ ὑποστάτου πᾶσιν ἑμφανοῦς ἀληθείας δεικτείσης, προαίρεσις οὐκ ἦστι διὰ τῶν μέσων καὶ ἐφ’ ἡμῖν ἀντικείμενην πραγμάτων- ὅτι μηδὲ κρίσις, ἀφορισμὸν ποιούμενον τῶν ἀντικεϊμένων, ἢν τὸ κρείττον ποιούμεθα πρὸ τοῦ χείρονος ἀιρέτον· εἰ δὲ τότε κατὰ τὸν νῦν κρατοῦντα νόμον τῆς φύσεως, προαίρεσις οὐκ ἦστι, πάσης ἀπαγορευμένης τῶν ἁμφιβολίας, ὀρέξεις ἐνέργης ἔσται μόνη νοερά, τοὺς οὕτω κατὰ φύσιν ὀρκετίκοις· μόνης ἀφράστους ἐπειλημμένη τῆς τοῦ κατὰ φύσιν ὀρκετοῦ μυστικῆς ἀπολαύσεως,”
humanity became human, then the unchangeable creator clearly set straight for us the immutability of προαίρεσις. He freely accepted the passions of punishment through his experience [δι’ αὐτῆς τῆς πείρας] by essential assumption [οὐσιωδὸς], and accepted the dishonorable passions by relational assumption [κατ’ οἰκείωσιν] and out of love of humanity. By the passions taken relationally, he made a beginning for the [human] race in choice without passion; and by the ones taken by experience [τὴν δὲ πείραν], he gave to the faithful the first fruits of incorruptibility that naturally follows.\(^\text{65}\)

In this passage, Maximus decides to redefine choice rather than exclude it from human nature—he does not deny choice in Christ as he does above. Instead, Maximus argues that Christ brought about a new form of choice, “immutable” and “without passion.” Because he did not himself experience the sinful “dishonorable [ἀτιμίας]” passions, he shows that “choice without passion [τῆς προαίρετικῆς ἀπαθείας]” is possible and, in fact, brings about choice in this new mode. The force of this argument is that choice does pertain to human nature as such. If it did not, there would be no reason to try to affirm it in Christ in any form—indeed, it would otherwise pertain to the falsifying “dishonorable” passions that Christ only assumes relationally. The new form of choice present in Christ, however, differs essentially from the Nemesian definition; as immutable and without passion, it does not look on two possible actions equally or indifferently.

Why would Maximus resolve the tension in both directions? After all, only one solution is necessary to remove the contradiction. I would argue that the two solutions should be understood as coordinated and even interrelated. As argued in the previous chapter, Maximus conceived of human nature as existing in different, concrete historical

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\(^{65}\) TPO 1 [PG 91:29C-32A], in Opuscula, trans. Ponsonye, 123-4, translation in body is mine: “Ὅδη μάλιστα σκοπήσας ὁ σῶς δοῦλος καί μαθητής, ἐν τοῖς πρὸς τὸν ἀγιώτατον μου κύριον καὶ διδάσκαλον περὶ τῶν ἀπόρων τῆς ἁγίας Γραφῆς ἐκτεθεισὶ Θαλάσσα, εἰπὼν προαίρεσιν· εἰδάς, ὡς εἰπέρ ἡμῖν γέγονεν ἀνθρώπος ὁ ποιητὴς τῶν ἀνθρώπων, ἣμιν δηλοῦντι καὶ τὴν ἀτρεψίαν κατώρθωσε τῆς προαιρέσεως, ὡς ἄτρεψιας δημιουργός· τὰ μὲν τῆς ἡμῶν ἑπτημίας ὁ δὲ ἀτρέψιας τῆς πείρας, οὐσιωδὸς καὶ ἐξουσίαν πάθη δεχόμενος· τὰ δὲ τῆς ἀτμίας, κατ’ οἰκείωσιν φυλανθρώπος ἀναδεχόμενος· ἐν τὴν μὲν οἰκείωσιν, τῆς προαιρετικῆς ἀπαθείας ἀιτήσων τῷ γένει πεποίηται· τὴν δὲ πείραν, τῆς ἐπομένης φυσικῆς ἀφθαρσίας πιστῶν ἀῤῥαβώνα διδώρηται.”
stages, most importantly a created state, a fallen state, and (ultimately) a perfectly deified state. The first transition between these stages is effected by the sin of Adam and Eve, but in the question of Christ’s choice, Maximus is dealing with the minutiae of the transition from the fallen condition to a renewed and, eventually, resurrected condition. In this way, both of the options explored by Maximus above are true. Choice, as it exists now, is not absolutely essential to human nature and, as will be seen in the resurrection state, this choice will be eradicated. But that state only comes about because of the stabilization of our choice effected by Christ’s human life, in which choice exists not as an indifference to humanity’s final end, but as a dispassionate resting in a disposition toward that end.

Based on Maximus’s reasons for affirming Christ’s impeccability, there are two ways I need to discuss Christ’s temptation. First, I will consider the way that Christ’s temptation can be considered in parallel with Christ’s choice. Second, I will trace the effects of the way Maximus speaks of the hypostatic union on an affirmation of Christ’s temptation. Concerning the first, a few last words on the relationship of impeccability and choice are in order, as their relationship sheds light on the relationship of impeccability and temptation. There is no short and straightforward answer to the question of whether Christ had προαιρεσις. Insofar as προαιρεσις is a deliberation between two equally attractive possibilities and a fundamental ‘neutrality’ with regard to what is according to nature, Christ did not have it. But, insofar as προαιρεσις can be activated as an immutable resting in “a stable motion according to natural appetite [στάσιμον τήν κατ’ ὀρεξιν φυσικήν … κίνησιν],” one may be able to answer affirmatively. The point is that

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66 TPO 1 (PG 91:32A, my translation).  
67 The caveat, of course, is that a choice that is immutable is, according to the original definition of choice, no longer a choice at all. Balthasar makes a similar assessment in Cosmic Liturgy, 270-1: “the imperfect stage of having to choose must surely be present in Christ, too—though surely as something
Christ accepts προαίρεσις only to make it immutable and, therefore, to no longer have προαίρεσις as it formerly existed. One might speak of Christ’s humanity as having an oxymoronic “immutable προαίρεσις.” Even when demonic forces are at work attempting to arouse “natural appetite [δρεξιν φυσικήν]” against nature, Christ’s immutability of choice remains firmly within natural bounds and fundamentally oriented to what is according to nature, never considering what is against nature to be ‘equally possible.’

Much the same can be said, in turn, of the relationship between Christ’s impeccability and temptation. Was Christ tempted like others in all things? If temptation means that Christ would have to look on the natural and unnatural indifferently as though both were equally attractive, then Christ cannot be tempted in this way because his humanity was always inclined naturally and willingly toward what was according to nature. To say otherwise would, formally speaking, impinge on Christ’s impeccability and his stabilization of our προαίρεσις.68 If temptation means, on the other hand, that demons were active in Christ’s passibility, affecting his natural appetites in ways that make them violent and strong and consequently requiring a certain discernment of spirits concerning how they must be properly activated, then Christ may be said to have been tempted. The point is that Christ accepts temptation by the devil precisely in order to heal human nature from the insinuation of demonic powers that made such temptation possible in the first place. There is, perhaps, an ‘unassailable temptation’ of Christ; the One who, as God, is incapable of disobeying God’s will can and is, as human, tempted by

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68 One might further add that even in other human beings, this sort of indifference toward the good might already be considered sin and not temptation.
the devil to disobey God. By the very experience of allowing the devil to approach him through his passibility, he essentially and definitively overcomes the experience of temptation that other human beings encounter throughout their life, thereby bringing about a state of human nature that can be irrevocably free from demonic perturbation.

Secondly and finally, Maximus’s conception of the hypostatic union also stands in some tension with Christ’s temptation. Because of Maximus’s Christological protections against Nestorianism, Maximus’s method most commonly precludes an examination of Christ’s humanity alone—for instance, he denies ignorance in Christ on the ground that one must divide Christ in order for ignorance to make sense. Scripturally, however, Maximus is able to avoid an impasse concerning ignorance because, while Scripture sometimes makes Christ appear ignorant, it never actually says that he is. The fact that God is omniscient and that Christ appears not to be can be reconciled with reference to Christ’s relational appropriation of human nature—he was able to speak as if he were ignorant even though he was not. The scriptural evidence for temptation does not allow for this solution, however. Scripture is clear, on the one hand, that God cannot be tempted but Scripture is also clear, on the other, that Christ most certainly is tempted, even “like us in every way.” If Maximus were to attempt to resolve the question of Christ’s temptation as he resolves the question of Christ’s apparent ignorance, he would end up denying that Christ was really tempted, and arguing that Christ only acted as if he were. Temptation, perhaps more than any other Christological concern, strains the affirmation of Christ’s unity and veers all too easily into Nestorianism. On this question, Maximus has no ready solution. Nevertheless, Maximus remains faithful to the affirmation of the

70 On the one hand, James: “God is not subject to temptation to evil” (1:13). On the other hand, Hebrews: he was tempted like us in all things (4:15).
scriptural texts and rightly takes the scriptural affirmation of Christ’s temptation perfectly seriously. In the final section, I turn at last to Maximus’s explanation of the salutary and empowering nature of Christ’s temptation by the devil.

III. Salvation through Temptation: Christ’s Victory over the Devil

The preceding sections have explained the conditions under which Maximus would affirm that Christ was tempted by the devil; it is now left to show how that temptation itself constitutes Christ’s victory over the devil. How, according to Maximus, is Christ’s temptation part of his salvific mission? What did Maximus see in Christ’s temptation that affected the practice and contemplation of believers throughout history? In this final section, I will consider how Maximus views Christ’s temptation as a central moment of Christ’s defeat of the devil, who had formerly ruled over humanity by means of the corruptibility, passibility, and death that had entered humanity through the Fall. By defeating the devil, Christ undoes these consequences and effectively saves humanity from demonic tyranny active through them.

As has been repeatedly mentioned, the three most significant consequences of the Fall for Maximus are corruptibility, passibility, and death. I have discussed above how Maximus believes Christ to have been naturally free from these consequences, yet bearing them willingly (not from necessity) out of love of humanity. He does this, in part, in order to serve as an appropriate exemplar for those who strive after perfection.71 While one should not speak of a progressive deification of Christ’s humanity, Christ’s human experiences accompany the believer in the various practical and contemplative moments

71 For example, QT 21 [PG 90:312B-313A, CCSG 7:127], in Blowers and Wilken, Cosmic Mystery, 109-10.
of the spiritual journey. Christ is adaptable, appearing in different forms for different believers, becoming “all things to all.” Again, as mentioned earlier, Christ suffers “out of weakness [ἐξ ἁπάθειας]” precisely in order to save those in each part of the spiritual

Larchet argues against Riou, Lethel, and Garrigues, who claim that Maximus sees a “progressive” character in Christ’s deification (see Jean-Claude Larchet, La Divinisation de l’Homme selon Saint Maxime le Confesseur (Paris: Ed. du Cerf, 1996), 275-8). They have evidence in such passages as QD 71 [CCSG 10:54], in Questions, trans. Prassas, 80-1), which may refer to progressive stages in Christ’s moral life, though QD 71 is more likely thinking of Christ’s “members” as his followers. When considered from the perspective of a progress toward virtue, Larchet is correct to object to a “progressive” deification of Christ; Christ should not be understood as deficient in virtue at any moment or period of his life. On the other hand, QT 21, for one, is clear that there is in Christ a progressive “putting off” of temptation by demonic forces through the passions, even if it is on the basis of a wholly deified human nature. In any case, the specific sort of accompaniment of the monastic stages in the ascetic life, and He nails their impassioned energies to the cross with divine fear. He rises again and ascends into heaven for those who have put off all of their battles, who have perished according to the desires of deceitfulness. [Εἰς ἑσπερίδωσιν δὲ ἡμῶν ἀπὸ ἀκάταστον ἔνδον, τὸν τοῦ εὐαγγελίου ἔνδον, πάντα γινέσθαι φάσκον. Σταυροῦται τοῦν τοῖς ἐπὶ προς ἐνεσεβοῦς πρακτικῶς εἰσαγωγοῦν, τὰς ἐμπαθεῖς αὐτῶν τὸν θεῷ φόβον προσήλον ἐνεργεῖας. Ἀνίσταται δὲ καὶ ἄνεον εἰς οὐρανοὺς, τοῖς ἐν τούς παλαιὸν ἀπεκδυσαμένοις ἐνθρώπων, τὸν θεοφάνειας κατὰ τὰς ἐπιθυμίας τῆς ψυχῆς· καὶ ἐν τὸν νέον ἐνθυσμόν].” CT I.13 [PG 90:1129D-1132A], in Philokalia, v. 2, trans. Palmer, Sherrard, and Ware, 140: “To beginners He appears in the form of a servant; to those able to follow Him as He climbs the high mountain of His transfiguration He appears in the form of God … It is therefore possible for the same Lord not to appear in the same way to all who stand before Him, but to appear in some one way and to others in another way, according to the measure of each person’s faith [Ὁ γὰρ πάς ἐστι κατὰ τὸν κόσμον εἰς δόξαν ἐκάλυψε τοὺς πάντας τοὺς εἰς ἀκάταστον ἐνθρώπων, εἰς προς θεοῦ ἐνθρώπων, ἐν ἀκάταστον ἐνθρώπων. Εἰς ἐνθρώπων ἐκάλυψε τοὺς πάντας τοὺς ἐνθρώπων, ἐν ἀκάταστον ἐνθρώπων. Εἰς ἐνθρώπων ἐκάλυψε τοὺς πάντας τοὺς ἐνθρώπων ἐν ἀκάταστον ἐνθρώπων. Εἰς ἐνθρώπων ἐκάλυψε τοὺς πάντας τοὺς ἐνθρώπων ἐν ἀκάταστον ἐνθρώπων. Εἰς ἐνθρώπων ἐκάλυψε τοὺς πάντας τοὺς ἐνθρώπων ἐν ἀκάταστον ἐνθρώπων." Perhaps most eloquently, Maximus expresses this “adaptability” of the Logos in an extended analogy concerning the Israelites’ manna in the desert: “The manna which was given to Israel in the desert is the Logos of God. Those who eat it find that it supplies every spiritual delight. It is blended to suit every taste in accordance with the different desires of those who eat it, for it has the quality of every kind of spiritual food. Thus, to those who through the Spirit have been born from above by means of incorruptible seed, it comes as pure spiritual milk; to the weak it comes as vegetables sustaining the soul’s possible aspect; to those in whom the soul’s organs of perception have been trained by long practice to distinguish between good and evil, it serves as solid food” (CT I.100 (PG 90:1123C-D, translated in Palmer, Philokalia, 135-6). In another passage he states that like the sun, “the Logos appears sometimes as risen and sometimes as set, depending on the manner of life and the spiritual status and essence or quality of those pursuing virtue and searching for divine knowledge” (CT II.31 (PG 90:1139A and translated in Palmer, Philokalia, 145)).
journey, and for this soteriological reason, Christ assumed a human nature with the consequences of Adam’s sin. Thus, even if Christ’s coming in passibility, corruptibility, and mortality is not necessary per se, it was soteriologically fitting for him to enter into these consequences in such a way that they are reversed and healed.

I have argued that, for Maximus, all three of these consequences are related to demonic activity, and the way in which Christ undoes the devil’s tyranny over human nature is the focus of this final section. While the second consequence—passibility—is particularly important for Maximus’s treatment of Christ’s temptation (and thus will be the main focus below), all three consequences bear relevance to the theme of Christ’s defeat of the devil. In what follows, I will address corruptibility, passibility, and death in Maximus’s habitual order of presentation, though passibility is by far the most important to consider here.

For Maximus, one comes under the reign of the three consequences of the Fall—and under their most proximate instigator, the devil—through our bodily and impassioned mode of birth introduced after Adam’s sin. For human nature up until Christ, the consequences propagated themselves cyclically, pleasure giving rise to corruptible bodily birth and corruptible bodily birth giving rise to pleasure in one’s progeny. Thus, in the concrete pattern of human life after Adam, corruptible and impassioned birth lies at the

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74 CT II, 27 (PG 90:1137A-B and translated in Palmer, Philokalia, 144).
75 Of course, Christ must be able to serve as an example to the most advanced monk as much as to those at the very beginning, but as Maximus understands it, Christ can fully take on the corruption of passion and demonic temptation without failing to provide an example to the most advanced monks as well. As mentioned in a preceding note, praxis and contemplation are not progressive stages, but elements that repeatedly arise in the ascetic’s life.
76 Amb. Io. 31 [PG 91:1273D-1276D], in Ambigua, trans. Ponsoye, 272-3 and Ambigua, v. 2, trans. Constas, 39-43, speaks of Christ’s undoing of our natural origin through his incorruptible and dispassionate birth. See also QT 61 [PG 90: 628C-629B, CCSG 22:7], Blowers and Wilken, Cosmic Mystery, 133); in this passage, Maximus explicitly refers to pleasure (related to passibility), death, and—later in the passage—to birth and corruptibility. The devil is explicit somewhat later (ibid.; Blowers, Cosmic Mystery, 137).
origin of the devil’s tyranny. In order to undo this tyranny, Maximus believes that Christ’s human existence has to break this cycle at its very beginning. Since Christ’s birth was in no way preceded by pleasure, he heals humanity’s origin by restoring it to a new mode of origin—herein lies the importance for Maximus of the virgin birth. By breaking the cycle in our origin, Christ begins to undo the curse of the devil who planted pleasure in nature “justly” as a consequence of Adam’s transgression.\(^77\) By his very mode of origin, Christ had already brought an end to the essential and necessary corruption humanity experiences.

Christ also freely came in a passible body and, by taking on this quality, enters into a salutary and reconciling war against the enemies and adversaries of human nature; it is here that Christ’s temptation must be considered as a salvific and empowering event.\(^78\) In two essential passages, \(QT\) 47 and \(QT\) 21, Maximus speaks of the way in which Christ’s passibility constitutes the reversal of the devil’s power over humanity in pleasure and pain. In \(QT\) 47, Maximus allegorically explains how the “valleys are filled and the mountains made low.” The valleys, he explains, are the evil passions and ignorance that enter human nature through the transgression—they represent the corruption of the natural powers of human nature. The mountains, on the other hand, represent evil and demonic powers that are closely associated with these valleys. They are both destroyed by the coming of Christ:

\[
\text{And every mountain and hill will be made low}.\]

Valleys, it seems, are most frequently set together with mountains and hills. The mountain is every lofty power that raises up against the knowledge of God and the hill [is] every evil that

\(^{77}\) Ibid., 133.

\(^{78}\) See \(QD\) 22 [CCSG 10:20], in Questions, trans. Prassas, 55 and \(QD\) 33 [CCSG 10:27-8], in Questions, trans. Prassas, 61. To a lesser extent (as the devil is not named here), one could also reference \(QD\) 18 [CCSG 10:16-17], in Questions, trans. Prassas, 53 for the restoration of human nature by the removal of sinful passion.
takes a stand against virtue. If the mountains are every spirit working for ignorance and the hills those who produce evil, supposing that as said before every valley, that is, the flesh and soul that prepared, as I was saying, the way of the Lord and made straight his pathways, will be filled will knowledge and virtue through the coming of the Word that moves about in them through the commandments of God, then all the spirits of false knowledge and of evil will be lowered, the Word tramples them under foot, places [them] under [him], overthrows the evil powers that rise up against human nature, and, as one tearing down the greatness and height of mountains and hills and bringing them to the valleys, he fills [them] up. For, in reality, if one were to understand by the power of the Word that, as greatly as the demons take hold against [human] nature, working (as their profession) toward [ἐδημιουργήσαν] ignorance against nature and evil, in no way whatsoever does he support the heights of ignorance and evil, just as there would be neither mountain nor hill of visible sensation if someone were able to devise a means to bring down mountains and hills and fill up valleys. Certainly, the toppling of the perceptible and evil mountains and hills is the restoration [ἀποκατάστασις] of the natural powers of the body and soul to themselves …

Maximus here argues that the destruction and defeat of the devil is coterminal with the restoration of the natural functioning of human nature. When Christ battles and defeats the devil on the field of human passibility, he thereby brings about the end of evil activation of human nature, not for himself (as he never activated it in this way), but for the rest of humanity.

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79 QT 47 [PG 90:425B-D, CCSG 7:319-21], in Questions, trans. Vinel, t. 2, 60-1:
“Καὶ πάν ὁ ὄρος καὶ βουνός ταπεινώθησαι. Ταῖς φάραγξιν, ὡς ὑπεκαίν, μάλιστα περικαίσι πως συνιστάσθαι τὰ ὡρία καὶ οἱ βουνοί. Ὅρος ἐστὶ πάν ὠψώμα ἐπαρέρομεν κατὰ τὴν γνώσεως τοῦ Θεοῦ, βουνός δὲ πᾶσα κακία καταπανισταμένη τῆς ἁρετῆς. Εἰ γοῦν ὡρὶ μὲν εἰσὶ τὰ ἑνεργητικά τῆς ἁγνοσίας πνεύματα, βουνοὶ δὲ τὰ ποιητικὰ τῆς κακίας, ὑπονικὰ προδήλος πάσα φάραγξ, ἤγουν σάρξ ἢ ψυχή τῶν ἐποίμασάντων, ὡς ἐπαιν., τὴν ὅδον τοῦ Κυρίου καὶ εὐθείας ποιηράσαν τὰς τρίβους αὐτοῦ, διὰ τῆς τοῦ περιπατοῦντος ἐν αὐτοῖς διὰ τῶν ἐντολῶν Θεοῦ Λόγου παρουσίας πληρωθῆ ἡγνοσίας τε καὶ ἁρετῆς, πάντα τὰ τῆς ψευδονύμου γνώσεως καὶ τὰ τῆς κακίας πνεύματα ταπεινώθηται, πατοῦντοι αὐτὰ τοῦ Λόγου καὶ ὑποτάσσοντος καὶ τὸ ἐπαρέρομεν κατὰ τῆς ἁνθρωπινῆς φύσεως ποιηρῶν κράτος καταβάλλοντος καὶ ὁδὸν τὸ μέγεθος καὶ τὸ ψυκόν τῶν ὀρέων καὶ τῶν βουνῶν κατασκάψαντος καὶ εἰς τὴν τῶν φαράγγων ἁγνοσίας ἀναπλήρωσιν. Τὸ ὅντι γάρ, εἰ πάντα λήψεται τὰ διὰ τῆς τοῦ Λόγου δύναμεως διὰ παρὰ τῆς φύσεως λαβόντες οἱ δαιμόνες τὴν παρὰ φύσιν ἁγνοσίαν τε καὶ κακίαν ἐδημιουργήσαν, οὐδεμᾶς ὑποστήριζε καθ’ οἰκονομήστε τρόπον ἁγνοσίας ἢ κακίας ψυχος, όσοπερ οὐδὲ ὄρος ἢ βουνός τῶν αἰσθητῶν φαινομένων, εἰ μηχανή τῆς ἡ τοῦ ἁνθρώπου αὐτὰ μὲν κατασκάψαν τὰ ὡρία καὶ τοὺς βουνοὺς, τὰς δὲ φάραγγας ἀναπλήρωσεν.
Ταπεινώσης οὖν ἐστὶ τῶν νοητῶν καὶ ποιηρῶν ὀρέων καὶ βουνῶν ἡ τῆς σαρκῶς τε καὶ τῆς ψυχῆς πρὸς ἐαστάς τῶν κατὰ φύσιν δυνάμεων ἀποκατάστασις …”

As a brief commentary, one more thing about this passage is noteworthy. Because of the way that evil passion, ignorance, and the demonic are considered in QT 47, Maximus also indicates that it is not human nature that resists God, but only the devil who incites nature and tries to drive it against God. This distinction between the natural and the demonic requires that one take Maximus’s demonology extremely realistically; any reductive psychologization of the demons would undercut the essential anthropological point of Maximus’s argument. The distinction also makes clear where the monastic must mount his or her own battle against evil. On the one hand, the devil and his evil suggestions must be rooted out wherever they are found. As a part of this battle against the demonic, Maximus seems to require a discernment of spirits even within one’s natural desires to determine which are to be acted on and which are not. This inner discernment of spirits would appear to be a necessary component of a Maximian moral theology. On the other hand, the natural passions themselves are neither evil nor to be resisted in themselves; when the devil is removed from influencing them, they are restored to their “natural functioning.” On this basis, Maximus would still argue that human nature itself is good, even if demonic forces are active within it. One might legitimately question whether such discernment is compatible with a clear affirmation of the goodness of human nature, but the realism of Maximus’s demonology rests at the basis of any justification one can make of it.

QT 47 does not exposit fully the way in which Christ defeats the devil in his temptation, merely how Christ’s victory results in the healing of human nature and the end of demonic tyranny. The means of this defeat itself are seen most clearly in QT 21. In this essential passage, Maximus explains in greatest detail how Christ’s temptation
occurred and how it had salutary consequences for the rest of humanity. Christ “puts on” the activities of evil powers and principalities at the incarnation, wherein Christ assumes human passibility and with it the activity of evil spirits working through the natural passions in an attempt to elicit unnatural passion—a process that I have attempted to explain in detail in the last two chapters. Though Maximus does not discuss in this passage the precise psychological mechanisms involved, my previous discussion of those mechanisms provide a coherent vision for this temptation. I will explain these temptations and the mechanisms involved in the order that Maximus considers them: the temptation toward pleasure in the desert and the temptation to flee from pain at the time of Christ’s death.

In the desert, Christ allows the devil to approach him and tempt him with desirable things. Maximus does not consider in detail which passions are involved in these temptations, but at the least the implication is that each of the three temptations considers something in some sense naturally desirable, for the unnatural passions have no other basis in human beings other than natural desires. In the first case, the desire is clear: Christ is tempted on the basis of his natural hunger. In the second and third instances, the natural desire involved is unfortunately quite unclear. One might speculate in the Temple temptation about a “natural” desire to know God’s care for oneself and, in the temptation

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81 This same pairing is also seen in the earlier QD 194 [CCSG 10:136], in Questions, trans. Prassas, 140), where Christ overcomes voluntary passions (that is, those associated with pleasure) in the desert and involuntary passions (those associated with pain) on the cross. I have already explained that Maximus denies ignorance in Christ, but it is important to note that Maximus occasionally ranks ignorance alongside other natural passions that Christ assumes in his human nature (see TPO 19 [PG 91:220B-224B], in Opuscula, trans. Ponsoye, 234-6, and Larchet’s commentary on it in Opuscula, trans. Ponsoye, 70-1). Ignorance is not a passion, per se, and is not something that the devil is able to “inflict” on Christ in the way that the devil can inflict certain movements of passibility; Maximus does not consider Christ to be tempted through internal deception or ignorance, perhaps because such interference in the higher faculties of the mind would be more closely akin to possession than temptation.
to rule the nations a “natural” desire for proper ordering of the world. Maximus is simply not clear enough here to say anything with certainty. This lack of specificity is certainly a shortcoming of his analysis in this passage. Whatever the desires might be, Christ is victorious over the demonic proddings because he remains impervious to their attack, rejecting their suggestion to activate his humanity unnaturally and thereby stabilizing the natural human faculty of desire, “eliminating [the demonic powers] from human nature.”

This stabilization is effective not for Christ, who had no personal need for it, but for the rest of humanity who are freed from slavery to the devil because of Christ’s victory. I have spoken earlier of the different historical stages of human nature envisioned by Maximus; in different ages, it is activated according to different laws. In this passage, Maximus is directly concerned with the movement of this nature from one historical state or stage to another. By overcoming temptation to pleasure, Christ reestablished the natural functioning of human nature as discussed in QT 47. By removing the powers and principalities from the faculty of desire, desire is restored to its natural condition.

The second half of Maximus’s interpretation of Christ’s temptation concerns the end of Christ’s life—not a single moment, but the period from Christ’s agony in the garden until his death on the cross. This series of events is framed in QT 21 as a battle against the demonic within Christ’s faculty of repulsion in order to restore the natural functioning of that faculty to itself. Christ overcomes this second kind of temptation at “the time of [his] death,” when he showed fear in the Garden of Gethsemane and accepted death on the cross:

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82 QT 21 [PG 90:313B-D, CCSG 7:129], in Blowers and Wilken, Cosmic Mystery, 111.
83 Few authors note the inclusion of Gethsemane in Christ’s victory over fearful temptations—while on the other hand, none argue for its exclusion. Cooper, Body in St. Maximus, 227 concurs with my argument. It can be noted also in Doucet, “La Volonté Humaine du Christ,” 142.
Since, therefore, by his first experience according to pleasure the Lord destroyed the strength of the principalities and powers, so a second time, he allowed them to provoke him through the tempting experience of being forsaken, through pain and suffering, in order to empty completely in himself the corrupting poison of their [the demons’] evil, as a fire burns, absolutely, utterly destroying [them] in nature. He took off the principalities and powers at the time of his death on the cross, remaining unconquered by suffering, and moreover exhibiting fear of death [μάλλον δὲ φοβερὸς φανείς κατά τοῦ θανάτου], saving nature from the passions of fear…

Like the temptation toward pleasure in the desert, Maximus considers the demonic temptation to be based in a natural passion, this time a function of the natural faculty of repulsion: namely, a natural fear of suffering, pain, and death. In this passage, Maximus places demonic forces squarely in the psychological trauma that Christ endured before his death. Just like the demons of desire, these demons of fear also attempt to divert Christ from God’s will.

The secondary literature, especially when dealing with the monothelite controversy, has already frequently and consistently pointed out that Maximus views Christ’s fear in these events as a natural fear, morally blameless even if it is in some sense a consequence of the Fall. This account is accurate—to a point. It fails to

84 QT 21 [PG 90:316A-B, CCSG 7:129-31], in Blowers and Wilken, Cosmic Mystery, 112; translation in body is mine: “Ἐπειδὴ τοίνυν διὰ τῆς καθ’ ἑδονὴν πρώτης πείρας ἢττήσας τὰς πονηρὰς ἐματαιώσει δυνάμεις ἀρχάς τε καὶ ἐξωσίας ὁ Κύριος, καὶ δευτέραν αὐτάς συγχωρεῖ ποιεσθαί προσβολήν καὶ τὴν λειπομένην δι’ ὕδων καὶ πώνων πείραν τὸν πειρασμὸν προσαγαγῆν, ἵνα τελείως κενώσας ἐν ἑαυτῷ τὸν φθαρτικόν ἰὸν τῆς αὐτῶν πονηρίας ὡς πῦρ δαπανήσῃ, παντελῶς ἐξαφανίσας τῆς φύσεως, ἀπεκδυσάμενος κατὰ τὸν θανάτου καιρὸν ἐν τῷ σταυρῷ τὰς ἀρχὰς καὶ τὰς ἐξωσίας, μείνας τοῖς πόνοις ἀνάλλοτος, μᾶλλον δὲ φοβερὸς φανείς κατὰ τοῦ θανάτου, τὸ κατ’ ὕδων παθητόν ἐξηλώσας τῆς φύσεως…”

85 For some authors, the explanation that Christ’s fear is natural is a completely sufficient explanation of the scene in the garden of Gethsemane. Lévy, for instance, places all his weight on the fact that Christ’s division is not internal to his will. “[L]e ‘tiraillement’ ne se situe pas à l’intérieur de la liberté, comme chez l’homme ordinaire tâtonnant entre bon et mauvais choix; mais dans la contradiction vive entre les tendance d’un désir naturel, irréprochable, totalement humain et l’attachement de la volonté à une finalité supérieur: accomplir la volonté du Père” (Lévy, Le Créé et l’Incréé, 339). This explanation clearly separates Christ’s experience in the garden from the internal conflict one might describe in terms of the fomes peccati of later Latin theology, but it significantly flattens the account of the temptation that occurs in the garden in QT 21—which is precisely what Lévy cites in support of his view.

For Francois-Marie Léthel, Christ’s rejection of the cup takes place at the “infra-moral” level of a
consider, however, that there is in fact something—someone—actively working against God’s purposes in Christ’s fear. To speak in terms that I have developed in the preceding chapter and previously in this chapter, the clearest explanation is that in Gethsemane demonic powers are at work in Christ’s humanity driving his non-deliberative appetite to avoid death into a “powerful” and “violent” state. While Christ’s elicited human will is to do the will of the Father, the “not my will” comes from a combination of an unelicited appetite [ὀρέξις] of Christ’s human nature along with demonic forces that present it in a particularly acute form and at an extremely poignant moment. These affirmations coincide with the first two “blameless” stages of sin in Maximus’s account of the moral act: the attack and the desire are not in our power. Only the consent and the act (absent in Christ) are morally culpable. Thus, while the demons’ ability to stir up these natural thoughts and desires is so great that Christ can even describe their temptations as “my will,” he at no point consents to their goading and thereby remains blameless through their attack. This interpretation gives a very different, though not incompatible, meaning to Christ’s agony in Gethsemane than would later predominate Maximus’s writings in response to monothelitism.

“natural movement of the flesh” (Francois-Marie Léthel, “La Prière de Jésus a Gethsémene,” in Maximos Confessor: Acts du Symposium sur Maximue le Confesseur Fribourg, 2-5 septembre 1980, ed. Felix Heinzer and Christoph Schönborn (Fribourg: Éditions Universitaires, 1982), 211). This explanation is somewhat helpful, yet it does not consider the fact that the rejection certainly abuts immediately against a moral choice of Christ and is something that Christ has to reject with his will. One cannot simply say that Christ had to accept this desire as infra-moral; he had to do something with that desire when it was presented to him in the Garden by the devil.

Examples of the interpretation of Christ’s fear as “natural” could be multiplied, but the point here is that most interpretations to date fail to take seriously Maximus’s explicit statements in QT 21 (and elsewhere) about the demonic aspect of Christ’s human emotionality. See Lévy, Le Créé et l’Incréé, 339; Cooper, The Body in St. Maximus the Confessor, 144, 160, and 225; Bathrellos, The Byzantine Christ, 147; throughout Marcel Doucet, “La volonté humaine du Christ,” in Science et Esprit XXXVII, no. 2 (1985), 123-159; and Schoenborn, “Plaisir et Douleur dans l’Analyse de S. Maxime,” 278-9 (there is a turn to the demonic in QT 61 that Schoenborn here ignores).

87 The challenge of monothelitism required an emphasis on how Christ’s wills were in agreement, and the
This explanation of Christ’s death addresses three subjects tangentially related to my central theme; I only mention them here and leave the discussion of each in the notes.

First, Maximus’s consideration of repulsion as a source of demonic temptation is an important innovation on his Evagrian sources, which only discussed desire as the source of demonic temptation. Second, it indicates the way in which Maximus would attempt to affirm consistently the goodness of human nature, despite its having been handed over to demonic powers in Adam’s Fall. Third, this treatment of Gethsemane has significant

complex consideration of demonic temptation in Christ did not lend itself to the clear affirmation that, in Christ, the divine and human wills were in perfect accord. Thus, it is not that Maximus changes his mind; rather, he simply concentrated his energy on the stability of Christ’s rational human will.

88 In QT 21 [PG 90:311B-317A, CCSG 7:127-33], in Blowers and Wilken, Cosmic Mystery, 109-113, Maximus takes his Evagrian heritage and rearranges its components into something almost completely new. Firstly, Evagrius’s lack of an empowering soteriology is gone; Maximus’s Christology here is far more than an account of Jesus’ exemplarity. Christ’s defeat of the powers and principalities is the wellspring that allows others to imitate it. Secondly, beyond this Christological correction, Maximus also rearranges Evagrius’s anthropology and its most fundamental drives or temptations. One may recall that for Evagrius, Christ held the battlelines at the three fronts of the ascetic war: desire for food (gluttony—γαστριμαργία), desire for power (avarice—φιλαργυρία), and desire for esteem (vainglory—κενοδοξία). These temptations toward desire (ἐπιθυμία), however, lack the concomitant pain or repulsion (θυμός) that is insinuated into human nature with Adam’s Fall—which in Maximus’s view is equally capable of manipulation by the devil, as seen earlier. Thus, when Maximus considers the ways in which the devil tempts Christ, he accounts for both the Evagrian temptation by desire and a temptation to shy from pain. The first kind to temptation drives us into an irrational attachment to material things; the second kind drives us to an irrational fear of or anger with them. Thus, Maximus holds that there are fundamentally two fronts in the embattled war against demonic powers: the desireable (ἐπιθυμία) and the repulsive (θυμός), corresponding to the two human passible faculties. This correction may constitute Maximus’s full expression of Christ’s temptation like others “in every way.” As Maximus sees Evagrius, a Christ who was not tempted by fear has not assumed a fully human nature—and therefore cannot heal it. Only a human life lived between the poles of desire and repulsion is capable of healing the human life experienced by Adam’s progeny.

89 There is an inner tension in the way that the secondary literature speaks of the “natural” resistance to God’s will described in Gethsemane. Clearly Christ’s fully elicited will is to do the will of the Father, yet there is an “eventually” to this decision. Some of the secondary literature has recognized Christ’s decision in these terms. Léthel, “La Prière de Jésus a Gethsémane,” 212, says that Christ’s acceptance indicates that he “no longer” rejects the cup. Similarly, Bathrellos, The Byzantine Christ, 147 says that Christ “eventually” subjected his will to the Father’s and “overcame” the instinctive desire to avoid death. Piret also speaks of a first rejection and a subsequent acceptance that completely destroys our egoistic fear of death. Piret remains ambiguous as to whether the natural fear itself had to be extinguished in Christ’s case, remaining content to affirm that Christ does not hesitate in performing God’s will (Pierre Piret, Christ et la Trinité selon Maxime le Confesseur (Paris: Beauchesne, 2012), 280, 282, and 283). For the first two two authors, what happened before that ultimate submission? In Piret’s case, is Christ’s natural human fear something that has to be resisted as such? How could human nature resist God, when Maximus is elsewhere clear that nature itself cannot resist God? Is a natural desire something that can resist God after all? None of these authors have sufficiently reconciled Gethsemane with Maximus’s affirmation of the non-resistance of human nature to God’s will.
ramifications for the way that Maximus understands the relationship between the natural and the supernatural, where much is at stake concerning the “openness” of nature to sanctification and deification and concerning the gratuity of God’s grace.90

Ultimately, in the attempt to remove a Christological problem (Christ’s resistance to God’s will), the secondary literature has only been able to substitute it with a equally unacceptable anthropological problem (human nature’s resistance to God’s will).

In his polemic against the monothelites, Maximus rightly observes that the “not my will” is only the beginning clause of a larger statement of will, one in which perfect submission to God’s will is seen. When Jesus finishes his statement with “but yours be done,” he in fact indicates that his fully elicited will is in perfect agreement with his Father’s. But there remains an “eventually” to the submission in the Garden that should not be deflected onto human nature alone. Maximus does not say in QT 21 that the “Not my will” is merely a natural appetite—it is an appetite inflamed through demonic temptation. Because of this additional component, the devil (not human nature) is ultimately responsible for the emphatic resistance recounted most intensely in the Gospel of Luke. On the one hand, the “will” that is expressed is still in essential accord with nature; in this way it is still a natural appetite and not morally blameworthy. But the devil changes this appetite in intensity and brings it forward into attention at a time that is particularly inconvenient (as the devil would be expected to do). Its intensity and timing do not come from nature—in this way alone are natural desires something to be resisted or perhaps more accurately discerned. In the end, Christ is able to experience this pain “above nature,” so that it could perhaps even be described as a spiritual pleasure (see QT 58 [PG 90:592C-596D; CCSG 22:27-33], in Questions, trans. Ponsony, 253-6. Natural fear remains open to God’s will even if it is not spontaneously and internally shaped in conformity with God’s will. The natural fear itself would not and should not be described as “resisting” God’s will—only the demonic forces that incite them resist God.

I said above that while fear is among the natural consequences of the Fall, it still serves a natural purpose, namely the preservation of nature and fighting against what seeks to destroy the creature. This explanation of fear might categorize its τέλος in this-worldly terms: it is natural as opposed to supernatural. Elsewhere, however, Maximus argues specifically that the natural powers of the soul are not only inclined to what preserves the creature in being, but that they are positively oriented toward God as their final end—nothing in nature resists God (TPO 7 [PG 91:80A], in Louth, Maximus, 185).

This variance in Maximus’s definition of the natural end of the lower human faculties opens a very important question regarding the relationship of the natural and the supernatural.

The best way to make out how Maximus understands the relationship between the natural and supernatural purposes of the passions is to pay attention to their condition in the resurrection state. In their current state after the Fall, the passions are oriented toward natural ends; these ends disappear when desire and fear are directed back to their original spiritual purpose. Even in their natural state, though, the passions can also be used spiritually (see QT 20 [PG 90:308D-312A, CCSG 7:121-5], in Questions, trans. Vinel, t. 1, 244-9) to seek out humanity’s final end. There is, then, a real transformation that takes place in the passible faculties at the end of time, but this transformation is one that does not destroy the faculties as such or completely negate their functioning in this world. What one sees in Christ’s struggle in Gethsemane is a microcosmic view of this entire transformative process. Human fear, having been handed over to the devil to test humanity, has the evasion of death as its natural goal. This is the use of fear “according to nature.” However, since Christ also activates his humanity “above nature,” he can transform this fear into a spiritual pleasure (see QT 58 [PG 90:592D-600B, CCSG 22:27-43], in Questions, trans. Ponsony, 253-257). Fear does not have to be destroyed—it needs to be reoriented solely to its spiritual end. In doing so, Christ removes the powers and principalities that had ruled humanity through the passions and awakens the gratuitous supernatural orientation of desire and repulsion. Nature is not destroyed—only the power of the devil over that nature is removed. The natural is open to deification and supernatural transformation, but nature in itself cannot and does not demand its perfect spiritual orientation. This transformation remains a
The central question I must finally address, however, is how these two sets of temptations function as a moment of Christ’s saving mission. There are two aspects to Maximus’s conception of this salvific action. On the one hand, Christ functions as the perfect, exemplary ascetic who goes into spiritual warfare against the powers and principalities. As an exemplary figure, Christ “despoiled” the powers in his death; he “triumphed” over them on the cross. This theme indicates how Maximus relates Christ’s life to the life of the monastic. The monk is encouraged to strive after Christ’s example in moral combat with demonically inspired pleasure and pain. Just as Christ attained a perfect victory over the devil in his spiritual combat, so too the monk is expected to do. This victory is only possible, however, because of the second theme of Christ’s *empowerment* of human nature.

In *QT* 21, Christ is also portrayed as a doctor and a liberator, who heals humanity’s wounds and frees humanity from slavery and imprisonment. In these themes, Christ is more than an exemplar, but also an empowering figure who “freed our human nature from the evil which had insinuated itself therein through the liability to passions.” He removes the “deadly poison” of demonic wickedness from human passibility. He heals human nature of the evil passions associated with pleasure and pain. In other texts, Christ, by his fasting in the desert, frees humanity from the bondage to sin in all its forms: action, consent in thought, and even the very mental representation

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93 Ibid. One can also see a parallel between Christ’s defeat of demonic powers and the ascetic’s battle against passion in *OD* 68 [*CCSG* 10:52-3], in *Questions*, trans. Prassas, 79.
of sinful actions.\textsuperscript{94} Christ’s very human weakness becomes the means through which he destroys the power of the one who held human nature captive;\textsuperscript{95} the words of the devil that “resonate” in nature are destroyed precisely by Christ’s accepting even our “mortalwound” humanity;\textsuperscript{96} and Christ, as the first and only to undergo death voluntarily, destroys the third and final consequence of Adam’s transgression: human mortality.\textsuperscript{97} It is not pleasure and pain themselves that constitute the sickness of human nature, nor are they the oppressive forces of slavery and imprisonment implicit in \textit{QT} 21. The devil and his minions alone cause this sickness and slavery; passibility itself is not destroyed by Christ—rather, the powers and principalities are subjugated to the very passibility in which they had formerly ruled. That is, in place of the demonic enslavement of humanity through passion, Christ’s victory over the devil now puts the devil under the rule of even the lowest faculties of human nature.

In terms I developed in Chapter 2, Christ’s victory over the devil is empowering to others because it concretely effects the transition of human nature from a stage where it is dominated by the “law of sin” to a renewed condition—a transition that others enjoy by means of ascetic practice and sacramental participation.\textsuperscript{98} Only by drawing the devil out to fight in the field where he had originally conquered humanity could Christ fittingly undo the tyranny of the devil and restore human nature to itself. In the language of \textit{QT} 47, by destroying the power of the devil over human nature, Christ restores human nature to its natural functioning, oriented toward its final end in God. Desire and repulsion no

\textsuperscript{94} \textit{QD} 193 [CCSG 10:135-6], in \textit{Questions}, trans. Prassas, 140.
\textsuperscript{95} \textit{QT} 64 [\textit{PG} 90:712D-713B, CCSG 22:217-9], in Blowers and Wilken, \textit{Cosmic Mystery}, 160.
\textsuperscript{97} \textit{QD} 118 [CCSG 10:86-7], in \textit{Questions}, trans. Prassas, 104.
\textsuperscript{98} Even in these practices, it is still Christ performing the transition—Christification is not Pelagian.
longer constitute (even potentially) an obstacle to human salvation; they become a tool that draws humanity to its Creator and helps it to struggle toward that supernatural destiny.

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While the general conclusion of this dissertation will provide opportunities for more extensive commentary on Maximus’s understanding of Christ’s demonic temptation, two general closing remarks are in order. The first is primarily Christological and bears on the way that demonic temptation affords a particularly fruitful avenue for the exploration of Christ’s identity with the fallen human condition. The second set of remarks is anthropological and, more specifically, relates to certain ramifications of my current thesis in the realm of moral theology.

First, the question of Christ’s temptation requires a very precise analysis of the genesis of sinful action in the individual’s soul. I have said above that the deepest and most ambiguous aspect of human nature may be the way in which humans choose to fall away from their final end and prefer lower goods over it. How a rational being can prefer the lesser to the greater is a great mystery. Yet all too often an important component of that fall is the demonic suggestion: “Did God really say not to eat of the fruit of the tree in the middle of the Garden?” To be sure, one must also acknowledge that in the end human beings sin of their own accord—such is the nature of moral responsibility. The fallen human τρόπος with its gnomic will may indeed be fragile, but I would contest that, for Maximus, the deepest fragility that is not itself symptomatic of personal human sin lies not in human nature itself but in its exploitation by the devil. While certainly leaning
on the dualistic aspects of Christian cosmology, this demonic “fragility” may provide for a deeper and more penetrating framework for incarnational theology than would a heavy dependence on the *gnomic* will as the deepest human weakness.

Christologically, much modern discussion of Maximus’s thought reveals that it would be practically impossible to articulate coherently Christ’s solidarity with fallen humanity in a deliberative, vacillating will and inconstant choice. Since such vacillation implies peccability if not outright sinfulness, Christ can have no substantial experience of this aspect of human fallenness. But when the *gnomic* will is understood as Maximus uses it—as an aspect of our sinful τρόπος and not an explanatory cause of sin that pertains to the λόγος of nature—it is clear why Christ has no share in it. Our vacillating, deliberative will is a sinful symptom of our fallenness, a mode of willing that must be rejected, not assumed, by the God-man. If, contrarily, γνώμη is understood as the deepest fragility toward sinfulness in our nature as such (as if it pertained to the λόγος of nature), we remain broken and unredeemed by a Christ who cannot sin and thus cannot take on this *gnomic* will. But Christ’s solidarity in demonic temptation through the passionate faculties of human nature is something quite different than γνώμη. It is still a significant point of weakness in human nature, but it is a weakness that Maximus can and does affirm in a sinless and impeccable Christ. Even though it is in a sense internal, it is a weakness that can be and, in Christ, is a strength because it does not imply a division inside one’s will or nature. In and through Christ, such temptation can be and is effectively resisted and defeated. As Maximus considers it, demonic temptation is a weakness of human nature that is redeemable in a way that the inner divisions of the *gnomic* will can never be.
Second, future explanation of Maximian moral theology will also have to take account of the demonology uncovered in the preceding two chapters. One would have to say that our natural desires are themselves open to the supernatural end of humankind, but one would also have to acknowledge that our desires and fears require inner discernment. No desire is so pure that it cannot be tainted by a demonic thought for vainglory; no fear of damnation so well-intended that the devil cannot use it to elicit despair of God’s mercy. No matter the particular emotional state, the Maximian monastic is called to discern the spirits and determine what a given emotional state requires. Even a natural desire is not necessarily only a natural one—and therein lies the deepest ambiguity of human emotionality. While created good and serving positive functions both now and in humanity’s final state, the passible aspect of humanity in this world is still a decisive battlefield between the soul, God, and the devil. No matter one’s spiritual aptitude or progress, the devil presses on to defeat the believer until the end of this age.

Finally, and still in the realm of moral theology, the theory of demonic temptation presented in the preceding two chapters emphasizes the concrete decision that must be made in each concrete moment where one discerns the devil’s temptation. In doing so, it has not been clear what place remains for virtue and vice in the faculties of attraction and repulsion. In the preceding two chapters, it might appear that demonic temptation is the only way in which human sinfulness arises (as if there were no such thing as vice), but such is surely not the case. Some tangential work has been done on Maximus’s theory of virtue and that work has demonstrated that Maximus has a fairly well-developed concept of human moral dispositions and habits—virtues and vices.99 Maximus would surely say

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99 Philipp Gabriel Renczes has addressed the question of human disposition in Maximus’s thought at great length, yet his purpose in that text is to describe the relationship of human action and divine action—
that a given person’s sinful habits would shape them and bring about future sin—no need to speak of the devil at all. On the other hand, a virtuous disposition might also form an important protection against demonic temptation, though as I have said, not to such an extent that one could prevent their very attack.

An individual’s actions are not disjointed and unconnected decisions; habits, both virtuous and vicious, shape one’s moral life and give rise to active dispositions either toward or away from evil and the Evil One. The structural neglect of this truth in the preceding has been due to my orientation toward a presentation of what kinds of temptation are possible for one without vicious habits. One could also, in theory, perform a close investigation of the way that the devil tempts those who are already disposed toward evil by their vices, but such a study would have no direct bearing on a Christological study like the current one. Indeed, such a study may be rather dull; for those who are not seeking after virtue, the devil’s job is relatively simple: keeping the vicious soul on the same path. While a neglect of virtue and vice is a regrettable byproduct of the confines of my subject, the exploration of Christ’s identity with other human beings in their fallenness is, in my mind, a sufficient compensation for it.

I will leave any further evaluative comments for the final conclusion. I turn in the next chapter to the sources of Thomas Aquinas’s theory of Christ’s demonic temptation, particularly to any historical connection that exists between Aquinas and Maximus the Confessor.

CHAPTER 4

THOMAS’S SOURCES FOR CHRIST’S TEMPTATION

The purpose of this chapter is to explore the thought of notable figures between Maximus and St. Thomas concerning the ways in which Christ is understood to have been tempted by the devil. The figures I will treat here all had an influence on St. Thomas in some way and, although my selection is by no means comprehensive, I hope to trace certain major lines of inquiry that arrive in Thomas’s library in various states of development. In Chapter 1, I opened with a brief discussion of the scriptural sources that found both Maximus and Thomas’s consideration of Christ’s temptation; for that reason, I will not consider that topic here. Whereas in Chapter 1, I portrayed three distinct areas of influence on Maximus from writings prior to his own (the passions in anthropology; the devil in anthropology; and the passions and the devil in Christology), I will only expound at length two of these areas as I approach Aquinas: the devil in anthropology and the passions and the devil in Christology. Concerning the omitted subject, I do not need to address at length Aquinas’s sources for his theory of the human passions since this work has already been performed very well by Paul Gondreau in his study on Christ’s passions—and I will consider Gondreau’s findings at the appropriate moments in what follows.
As in Chapter 1, this chapter will also place certain trajectories of thought ahead of historical order of composition. Given the subject of the first half of this study, the primary division in the material for this chapter is: Maximus’s influence on Thomas (I) and the influence of everything else (II-IV). The first concerns a particular interest of this study: tracing the way that Maximus’s thought came to influence later Latin thought. Thus, in what follows below, I will trace key elements of Maximus’s thought—both anthropological and Christological—through John of Damascus and Burgundio of Pisa to the cusp of the later scholastic tradition (I). This material will be considered in two major sections, first on John’s anthropological reflections on the passions (A) and second on John’s portrayal of the passions and the devil in Christ’s temptation (B). Of course, the influence of “everything else” mentioned in the second place above is quite expansive, and will require significant space to consider in full. I have divided the material into three sections. I will first summarize the work accomplished by Paul Gondreau concerning Aquinas’s sources for the human passions (II), then move to a straightforward historical presentation of patristic (III) and medieval figures (IV) who reflected in significant ways on Christ’s temptation by the devil and whose influence on St. Thomas was also in some way significant. I have selected three figures from both the Patristic period (Hilary of Poitiers (A), Augustine (B), and Gregory the Great (C)) and Medieval period (Peter the Lombard (A), Alexander of Hales (B), and Bonaventure (C)), each because of their individual reflections on Christ’s humanity and on Christ’s temptation by the devil.

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1 In Chapter 1, I was concerned primarily with establishing areas of inquiry that came to structure my investigation of Maximus’s own thought. For monastic culture, the journey of the soul into union with God was primary and much early Christian reflection on Christ takes Christ’s exemplarity for that journey for granted. For that reason, I structured Maximus’s source material first into anthropological and Christological sections and only secondarily by order of historical composition.
I. John of Damascus as the Historical Link between Maximus and Thomas

Proceeding to the historical development concerning the theory of demonic temptation between Maximus and St. Thomas, it is indispensable, however briefly, to address the historical relationship between the two major thinkers of this study. One must admit that St. Thomas Aquinas never substantively read the works of St. Maximus the Confessor. Only two citations in St. Thomas’s corpus can be attributed to Maximus with certainty, and those come not directly from Maximus’s works but from a popular florilegia. Other citations of his name (about a dozen in all) are references to the *Scholia* on Maximus’s texts, the authorship of which has been significantly disputed since 1940. However, one need not show that Thomas read Maximus’s works directly in order to show his influence on the Angelic Doctor. A two-stage transmission bridges the thought of Maximus and Thomas: first the *De Fide Orthodoxa* by John of Damascus; second, the translation of this work into Latin by Burgundio of Pisa sometime between 1148 and 1158. Burgundio’s version of *De Fide Orthodoxa* was widespread; it is known to have been read by St. Thomas Aquinas.

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2 There are currently two modern book-length—and one article-length—comparisons of the thought of Maximus the Confessor and St. Thomas Aquinas, all in French. The most recent study—Jean Miguel Garrigues, *Le Dessein Divin d’Adoption et le Christ Rédempteur* (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 2011)—makes no significant attempt to argue for a historical relationship between the thought of the two theologians. The only possible exception in this text is a comment that both of them may structure some of their major works around God’s providential plan for the world (ibid., 17). Most generally, this text studies God’s providential plan for the universe, particularly in light of human sin, the coming of Christ in response to that sin, and the means by which God restores the filial relationship with fallen human beings (ibid., 19-20). Since the argument of Garrigues’s text is almost purely systematic, it is not necessarily harmed by its lack of direct historical justification. The other, older text concerns the roots of the debate between Orthodox and Western theology about the work of Gregory Palamas on the uncreated energies of God (Antoine Lévy, *Le Créé et l’Incréé: Maxime le Confesseur et Thomas d’Aquin, aux Sources de la Querelle Palamienne* (Paris: Librairie Philosophique J. Vrin, 2006)). While the systematic subject matter of his text also would not necessarily require historical justification for its subject, the author does provide a short, but helpful, introduction to the historical relationship between Maximus and Thomas. The following summary of that relationship is largely indebted to that study; see ibid, 36-40.

3 Ibid, 36-40. Because of this disputed authorship, I did not venture to make reference to the *Scholia* in the first three chapters, despite certain passages that would be amenable to my thesis.
been used by Peter the Lombard⁴ and, for linguistic reasons seen below, Thomas almost
certainly used it as well.⁵ Both steps in this transmission process are important; as will be
shown, Burgundio’s translation significantly modified certain key components of John’s
thought. In what follows, I will trace notable points of continuity and discontinuity in this
transmission, looking back to Maximus from time to time and glimpsing forward to
Thomas when necessary.

For the purposes of this study, I will consider John’s view of Christ’s temptation
by the devil in two sections that should be no surprise by now: first, his anthropology (A)
and second, his Christology (B). Within the first, there are three aspects worth noting:
John’s thought concerning (1) the theory of the moral act, (2) the goodness of the
passions, and (3) demonic activity “inside” human beings consequent to the Fall.
Christologically, two topics need to be addressed: (1) the way in which John arrives at a
complete, unqualified denial of choice in Christ; (2) the way that Maximus’s view of
Christ’s temptation by the devil is changed in John’s writing and in its translation into
Latin.

A. Anthropology of the Passions in John of Damascus

As I have just said, there are three points to address here.⁶ On the first point, much
has already been shown by R.-A. Gauthier about the way in which Maximus’s

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⁴ John of Damascus, De Fide Orthodoxa: Versions of Burgundio and Cerbanus, ed. Eligius M. Buytaert
(Louvain, Belgium: E. Nauwelaerts, 1955), IX-XV.
⁵ Such is also presumed by R.-A. Gauthier, “Saint Maxime le Confesseur et la Psychologie de l’acte
humain” in Recherches de Théologie Ancienne et Médiévale XXI (1954), 82, where he takes
Burgundio’s translation for granted as the basis of Aquinas’s reading of John.
⁶ Quotations and translations in this section will be from John’s Greek text from the PG and the Sources
Chrétienne edition (Jean Damascène, La Foi Orthodoxe, 2 vols, (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 2010 and
2011)); I will, however, habitually include Burgundio’s translation of these passages in the footnotes.
Only when Burgundio’s translation makes a significant difference to the meaning of John’s writings
(and there are instances of this alteration) will I quote from Burgundio’s text (or its translation) in the
body.
explanation of the moral act finds its way into the *Summa Theologica*. I will not attempt to summarize his findings in full; rather, I will focus on those aspects of the moral act that are most relevant to this study—aspects that Gauthier acknowledges but that he is not particularly concerned with in his study. On the second, work has already been done by Paul Gondreau that shows much of the Damascene’s relationship to Thomas on the valuation of the passions. In a discussion of Gondreau’s findings, I will emphasize aspects of particular importance for this study and discuss one point where his analysis is, on the basis of *De Fide Orthdoxa*, deficient as an understanding of John’s thought.

Third, and in relationship to the above deficiency, I will discuss in full John’s psychological demonology as presented in key texts of *De Fide Orthodoxa*.

1. **The structure of the moral act.** John’s psychology of the moral act follows that recounted by Maximus very closely, reproducing and perhaps even overemphasizing terms from Maximus’s account that were less than technical. My goal here is not to trace

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7 Gauthier, “Saint Maxime,” 51-100. Gauthier has shown that, even more than the two studies in the note above, the current study has foundation as both a historical and systematic study of the relationship between the thought of these thinkers. According to Gauthier, St. Thomas’s account of the moral act is substantively a gloss on the moral psychology of St. Maximus. Gauthier argues that, despite the fact that St. Thomas never read any texts by St. Maximus, one should consider St. John of Damascus to be largely a compiler and not an original scholar, at least concerning the development of St. Thomas’s theory of the moral act. Gauthier shows that, though it was the Damascene’s text that Thomas was reading, the last, most substantive developments in the theory of the moral act that it discusses were achieved prior to John’s text in the work of Maximus the Confessor. Beyond Gauthier’s argument, one can certainly trace the broad contours of Thomas’s reflection on Christ’s two wills through John back to Maximus. In the same vein, much of Maximus’s reflection on Christ’s human nature, especially Christ’s passibility, is also drawn very closely from Maximus—though I will discuss John and Burgundio’s modifications of Maximus’s thought as I proceed.

8 The article by Gauthier on this subject describes this transmission very well. Gauthier, however, is largely interested in streamlining Aquinas’s account of the moral act so as to remove redundancies taken from John’s text. Since John grants components of the moral act a technical air (that they perhaps did not have in Maximus’s account!), Gauthier wants to argue that many stages considered by John and Aquinas as distinct should be treated as equivalent—particularly the three categories of consent, command, and use. Gauthier (unfairly, in my estimation) blames the confusion of the moral act on Maximus in an attempt to excultate St. Thomas from any guilt in the supposedly confused aspects of the moral act that Thomas could not separate from the authentic ones (see Gauthier’s conclusion especially, ibid., 98). Gauthier finds particularly problematic the second “appetite” that occurs after the choice of the will. I agree that the terminology used prior to St. Thomas could have been much clearer,
every stage of the moral act through John of Damascus; I will focus particularly on three stages in Maximus and John’s account: will [θέλησις or voluntas], wish [Βούλησις or voluntas], and choice [προσίρεσις or electio]. While these terms themselves stretch from Maximus to St. Thomas, a few details are changed by John and Burgundio along the way and thus deserve close scrutiny. I will treat John’s thought in the main text and matters of Burgundio’s translation (which are relatively small in this material) in the notes.

John accurately summarizes Maximus’s thought concerning θέλησις, calling it an “an innate force [in the soul] appetitive of what is natural to the soul and embracing all those things which pertain to its nature essentially” and as “a rational and vital appetite [φυσικὴ καὶ λογικὴ ὀρεξίς] attached solely to natural things.”\(^9\) This ὀρεξίς is expressive only of natural desires and is not, in itself, the origin of anything contrary to nature; such was the case in Maximus, and such is also the case in John. The power of θέλησις is directed toward humanity’s true end(s), and seeks to draw the individual to those ends.

John’s account of wish (Βούλησις), on the other hand, is slightly different than Maximus’s.\(^{10}\) John correctly indicates that wish is the specification of θέλησις with regard to a particular object and that it seeks an end alone: wish is “a sort of natural

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\(^{10}\) DPO II.22: “"thelima (id est voluntas) est appetitus rationalis et vitalis, ex solis dependens naturalibus.’ ‘Quare thelis (id est voluntas) quidem est ipse’ naturalis et ‘vitalis et rationalis appetitus’ omnium naturae constitutivorum, ‘simplex virtus.’” And in his definition of wish, he states: “‘Bulisis (id est voluntas) autem est qualitativa naturalis thelisis (id est voluntas), scilicet naturalis et rationalis appetitus aliuis rei.’ Nam iniacet quidem hominis animae virtus rationaliter appetendi. Com igitur naturaliter motus fuerit ipse rationalis appetitus ad aliquam rem, dicitur bulisis (id est voluntas). Bulisis (id est voluntas) enim est appetitus et desiderium cuusdam rei rationalis.”
willing, that is to say, a natural and rational appetite for some thing” that “concerns the end, and not the means to the end.” With respect to these ends, however, John provides a misleading example that shows that he misconstrues the meaning assigned by Maximus to wish—and, because of their close correspondence, to will as well. Among John’s accurate and helpful examples of Βούλησις (health, being king, sleep, and exercising self-control), John includes a sinful desire as an object of Βούλησις:

We speak of wishing both in respect to things which are in our power and in respect to things which are not; in other words, in respect to possible and impossible things. Thus, oftentimes we may wish to fornicate [Βουλόμεθα γὰρ πολλάκις πορνεύσαι] or to exercise self-control, or to sleep, or some other such thing.

Since wish is nothing other than a specification of will toward a particular end, it is incorrect for John to insert an intrinsically sinful action, πορνεύσαι, into this list of objects of wish. Maximus, for his part, intentionally had no corresponding evil examples; rather, he listed as examples apparent, this-worldly goods (health, wealth and immortality)—none of which would have been considered intrinsically sinful. The reader of John’s text, on the other hand, is led to the conclusion that the natural appetites of will and wish could seek both natural and unnatural objects—which (in Maximus’s

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12 DFO II.22, in Writings, trans. Chase, 249. “Λέγεται δὲ βούλησις καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν ἑρ’ ἡμῖν καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν οὐκ ἑρ’ ἡμῖν, τούτῳ καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν δυνατῶν καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν ἀδυνάτων. Βουλόμεθα γὰρ πολλάκις πορνεύσαι ἢ σωφρονήσαι ἢ ὑπνώσαι ἢ τι τῶν τοιούτων· καὶ τὰύτα τῶν ἑρ’ ἡμῖν εἴστε καὶ δυνατά. Βουλόμεθα δὲ καὶ βασιλεύσαι· τούτῳ οὖκ ἔστι τῶν ἑρ’ ἡμῖν. Βουλόμεθα δὲ τυχὸν καὶ μηδέποτε ἁπαθανατίν· τούτο τῶν ἀδυνάτων ἐστίν.” Burgundio, as I will discuss later, does not understand the phrase “ἐρ’ ἡμῖν” and does not convey its sense correctly, though the impact of this mistake may be minimal: “Dicitur ’bulisis (id est voluntas) et in his quae sunt in nobis, et in his quae non in nobis sunt,’ hoc est et in possibilibus et in impossibilibus.’ Volumus enim multoties forniciari vel sobrii esse, vel dormire, vel quid talium; et hac eorum quae sunt in nobis et possibili. Volumus autem et reges esse; hoc non est eorum quae sunt in nobis. Volumus autem fortassius et numquam mori: hoc autem impossibili est.” The problematic “volumus … multoties forniciari” is accurately translated.

13 See Chapter 2. One might contest the example of wealth, but one detects no “judgmental” attitude in Maximus’s discussion of it. In taking the example from Nemesius, Maximus apparently understands some rightful concern for worldly provision—whatever that might be.
language) would mean that nature can tend away from God. In this way, then, John significantly alters Maximus’s sense and renders the natural appetites upon which the moral act is based indifferent to the final end of humankind. For Maximus, nature tends to God; for John (insofar as this example indicates), nature can tend toward or away from God.

A final point that will return again when I consider John’s Christology is the role of choice [προαίρεσις] in the moral act. John’s description indicates a highly structured process that governs the moral act and constitutes the “hardware” of the human faculty that moves the subject into concrete action. Unlike Maximus, John does not explicitly define the rationality of the human being by the presence of this process, yet it is clear that John sees this process as fully natural, pertaining to all human beings’ free will as a condition of action in this world.\(^\text{14}\) I have no intention of analyzing this process in detail here;\(^\text{15}\) I merely want to point out that choice is an essential part of this process. The primary definition given by John states that choice is “the choosing and picking out of this one rather than the other of two things proposed.”\(^\text{16}\) In his later Christological reflection, however, John provides the further explanation that προαίρεσις implies

\(^{14}\) In this respect, John is aware of the λόγος/τρόπος distinction from Maximus. John, however, does not invoke this distinction in quite the same way as Maximus; he states in \textit{DFO} III.14, in \textit{Writings}, trans. Chase, 247: “one must know that \textit{willing} is not the same thing as \textit{how one wills}. This is because willing, like seeing, is of the nature, since it belongs to all men. How one wills, however, does not belong to nature but to our judgment, just as does how one looks at something, whether it be favorably or unfavorably… [Πσόν γάρ, óς οὐ τοῦτόν ἐστι, θέλειν καὶ πῶς θέλειν: τό μὲν γάρ θέλειν φύσεως ὠσπερ καὶ τὸ ὄραν (πάση γὰρ ἀνθρώπους πρόσειται), τό δὲ πῶς θέλειν οὐ φύσεως, ἀλλὰ τῆς γνώμης ὠσπερ καὶ τὸ πῶς ὁ ῥάν, καλῶς ἤ κακῶς…].”

\(^{15}\) Gauthier’s analysis of this act is sufficiently thorough for those aspects I do not discuss below. See Gauthier, “Saint Maxime,” 51-100.

\(^{16}\) \textit{DFO} II.22, in \textit{Writings}, trans. Chase, 249. “προαίρεσις γάρ ἐστι δῶς προκειμένου τὸ αἱρέσθαι καὶ ἐκλέγεσθαι τοῦτο πρὸ τούτου ἐτέρου.” John also includes γνώμη as a distinct stage in this process, which also constitutes a significant modification of Maximus’s view of γνώμη as pertaining to the τρόπος of one’s action.
ignorance and a search after knowledge that involves deliberation and judgment. This fact thereby specifies that choice has a particularly close relationship with humanity’s fallen condition. With respect to the strictly anthropological presentation of choice, then, John accurately summarizes and passes on what Maximus argued on this subject. Neither Maximus nor John (nor Nemesius, whose account stands behind both of their presentations) consider demonology in their accounts of the moral act, but for neither of them does this exclusion mean that the devil plays no role in the development of evil desires. John considers the genesis of immoral action (including the action of the devil) elsewhere; I will address this subject in the following two sub-sections.

2. The goodness of the passions in John of Damascus. As Paul Gondreau has commented in his work on the passions in Aquinas’s thought, the De Fide Orthodoxa draws heavily on Nemesius of Emesa for its theory of the passions. In this respect, Gondreau concludes that John recognizes that “all aspects of human nature, including the
passions, are expressive of God’s will in creation” and that Nemesius and John consequently have a “positive appraisal of human affectivity.”

In Gondreau’s estimation, this positive appraisal is seen most clearly in John’s text from the fact that Christ’s humanity includes this affectivity. Gondreau mentions in passing the role that Maximus plays in John’s theory of Christ’s passions, but does not consider any broader anthropological influence Maximus has on John.

In his effort to portray the Damascene’s thought on the passions as largely positive, Gondreau is forced to equivocate at times concerning the role assigned by John for the passions in the human moral life. On the one hand, Gondreau states that the passions are, for John, “an essential feature of human nature” that, as just said, are an expression of God’s will in creation. On the other hand, Gondreau recognizes hesitancy in the Damascene on this question: John excludes passion from Adam and Eve’s created state; and Gondreau argues that John sees in all human beings other than Christ a “‘spirit/flesh’ conflict …[that] arises from the naturally rebellious propensity of the lower appetitive powers.” Concerning the former hesitancy, it is at least curious, if not contradictory, for an “essential” characteristic of human nature to be rejected from Adam and Eve’s original condition; in this way Gondreau overestimates the positive (or at least enduring) role that John assigns to the passions in the human moral life. As for the second hesitancy about the conflict between spirit and flesh, if such is an accurate representation of the Damascene’s thought, John would appear in conflict with Maximus.

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18 Gondreau, Passions of Christ’s Soul, 122.
19 Ibid., 60-66; this positive assessment stands in contrast to potentially troubling passages found in St. Hilary of Poitiers that seems to deny this affectivity. Gondreau treats Hilary at ibid., 48-51. I address Hilary briefly later in this chapter.
20 Ibid., 61.
21 Ibid., 63.
22 Ibid., 64.
who would not say that human nature itself is responsible for impulses that separate us from God. In this way, Gondreau appears, in fact, to overestimate the negative role that John assigns to (fallen) human nature in the moral life.

While John certainly sees that the passions can have a positive role in the moral life, there is a deeper ambivalence in John’s thought than Gondreau allows. Gondreau is right to argue that this ambivalence should not be located in human nature itself. Nevertheless, by ignoring the way in which John connects the negative role of the passions with demonic suggestion, Gondreau is forced to explain John’s thought in categories that are not his own.23 I will address the content of this ambivalence in the following, final subsection.

3. John’s theory of the passions and demonology. Gondreau’s oversight here, while minimal in the context of his own task and goals, has significant ramifications for this study. It is misleading and, for Maximus at least, theologically dangerous to claim that human nature itself has a “naturally rebellious propensity” as does Gondreau. In Maximian terms, such would be tantamount to saying that nature resists God—and that cannot be the case. Indeed, John himself never explains human sinful impulses purely by reference to the “flesh” or its “rebellion” against God; rather, his careful expressions on the matter explain them in connection to the devil and human bodiliness. First, in a consideration of the divinely providential power of the devil over humankind, John states that demons

23 The “disordered interior movements” Gondreau describes (ibid., 64) are not native to John’s terminology; nor is the distinction between “enfeebled” affectivity (affirmed in Christ) and “disordered, and, hence, sinful experiences” (denied in Christ) that Gondreau invokes to distinguish Christ’s moral life from that of others (ibid., 63). Such categories may be helpful in clarifying John’s (admittedly) less clear claims (as, certainly, Aquinas will do with precisely the terms Gondreau introduces), but they do not demonstrate the categories with which John himself worked and worried.
have no power or strength against anyone, unless this be permitted them by the dispensation of God, as in the case of Job and as has been written in the Gospel about the swine. If God does give them permission, they have strength and change and transform themselves into whatever apparent form they may desire. … [A]ll evil and the impure passions [κακία … καὶ τὰ ἀκάθαρτα πάθη] have been conceived by them and they have been permitted to visit attacks upon man. But they are unable to force anyone, for it is in our power either to accept the attack or not."²⁴

This explanation of the origin of evil and impure passion accounts simultaneously for the providential purpose of such temptation and for the goodness of human nature. John does not ascribe the origin of evil passion to a natural resistance to God, but rather to demonic powers permitted to attack through divine providence.²⁵ One should note that the “attack [τὴν προσβολὴν]”—the same term used by Maximus to describe the first generation of sin that does not incur guilt²⁶—occurs for John prior to the consent of the will, and thus the suggestion of evil passion by the devil (whatever form it takes) does not appear here as a purely “internal” suggestion of the flesh.

Similarly, in a description of how the functioning of human free will can be hampered, John explains:

With men, however, it [free will] is such that the inclination [ἐξεσθε] precedes the execution in point of time. This is because, though man is free and has this


²⁵ John does not explain whether this providence is pedagogical or punitive. I cannot address that particular issue here.

²⁶ Maximus, QD I.31 [CCSG 10:149]; see Chapter 2, where I discussed the four “generations” of sin in Maximus’s thought.
freedom of will naturally, he also has the interference of the Devil to contend with and the motion of the body. Consequently, because of this interference and the burden of the body, the execution comes after the inclination.  

Undoubtedly, the body appears as a component of the chronological separation of inclination and act, but it is placed—as John habitually does—in conjunction with demonic “interference.” While the sentiment expressed here is in its own way quite Maximian, this passage is particularly significant because the text from Maximus upon which this passage is based is not concerned with obstacles to the moral act. This view, then, is not something that John merely passively hands on from Maximus; rather, John is able to interject creatively and independently a theory of demonic interference in the human exercise of free will.

One final example from De Fide Orthodoxa shows the interdependence of the body and the devil in the origin of evil desires. This instance is perhaps the most important, since it contains John’s reflections on Romans 7 and its application to the

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27 DFO III.14, in Writings, trans. Chase, 301. The preceding part of the passage reads: “It is furthermore necessary to know that the term freedom of will is used equivocally—sometimes being referred to God, sometimes to the angels, and sometimes to men. Thus, with God it is supersubstantial, but with the angels the execution coincides with the inclination without admitting of any interval of time at all. For the angel has freedom by nature and his is unhampered in its exercise because he has neither the opposition from a body nor has he anyone to interfere with him [Δει δε εδειναι, ος αυτεξουσιωτης ομονοιμως λειται, άλλως μεν επι θεου, άλλως δε επι άγγελων, και άλλως επι ανθρωπον. Επι θεου μεν γαρ υπερουσιως, επι δε άγγελων ως συντρεχούσης τη έξει της προχειρησεως και παρενθηκην άλλως χρόνου μη παραδεχομενης (Έχων γαρ φυσικως το αυτεξουσιον άπαραμποδιςτος τητω κεχρηται, μηδε την εκ σωματων αντιπαθειαν έχουν μηδε τον προσβαλλοντα), επι δε ανθρωπων ως χρονικως της έξεως προεπινουμενης της έχερησεως· αυτεξουσιως μεν γαρ έστιν ο ανθρωπος και φυσικως έχει το αυτεξουσιον, έχει δε και την εκ του διαβολου προσβολη και την του σωματος κευσην. Δια ουν την προσβολη και το βαρος του σωματος εφυστερεζε τη προχειρησης της έξεως].” The key part of Burgundio’s Version of DFO III:14, in Fide, ed. Buytaert, 223, reads: “In homine autem ut temporaliter habitu praeeccogitante enchiriseos” (id est inceptio operationis). Name autexasios quidem (id est liber arbitrio) est homo, et naturaliter habet autexusion (id est liberum arbitrium); habet autem et ex diabolo immissionem, et corporis motum; per immissionem igitur et gravedinem corporis, posterior est enchirisis (id est inceptio operationis) habitu.”

28 The passage is drawn quite explicitly from Maximus, Dispute with Pyrrhus [PG 91:293C]. In that passage, Maximus is dealing with a technical distinction between “habit” and “energy” that seems to be lost on John. This distinction is treated in Philipp Gabriel Renzeces, Agir de Dieu et Liberté de l’Homme (Paris: Ed. du Cerf, 2003); especially relevant is ibid., 267-280. Since John does not know the distinction between “habit” and “energy,” he uses the opportunity to insert another explanation that happens to reflect another Maximian theme.
fallen human condition. In this passage, John discusses the “law of the mind” and the “law of the flesh” that conflict with one another in humanity’s fallen state. John does not frame this conflict as one between the interior aspects of “spirit” and “flesh” in human nature (as Gondreau portrays John’s thought); rather, the conflict, as John sees it, is between the individual’s conscience and the suggestion of the devil. While the law of the mind is the “commandment” of God and our “conscience,” the law of the flesh is described as follows:

Sin results from the Devil’s suggestion [τοῦ διαβόλου προσβολῆς] and our own unconstrained and free acceptance of it. And this, too, is called a law.

… The suggestion of the evil one [ἡ προσβολή … τοῦ πονηροῦ], or the law of sin, also acts upon the members of our flesh and through it attacks us. For, once we succumbed to the suggestion of the evil one and freely violated the law of God, we allowed it [this suggestion] to gain entrance and sold ourselves to sin. For this reason our body is easily brought to sin. Hence, the odor and sense of sin which is inherent in our body, that is to say, the desire and pleasure of the body, is also called a law in the members of our flesh.”

29 DFO IV:22, in *Writing*, trans. Chase, 388-9, with some modifications. The Greek text of the relevant number is as follows: “Περὶ νόμου θεοῦ καὶ νόμου ἀμαρτίας Ἀγαθὸν τὸ θεῖον καὶ ὑπέραγαθον, καὶ τὸ τούτου θελήμα· τοῦτο γὰρ ἀγαθόν, ὅπερ ὁ θεὸς βούλεται. Νόμος δὲ ἔστιν ὁ τούτου διδάκτουν ἐντολή, ἵν’ ἐν αὐτῷ μένοντες ἐν φωτὶ ὅμων. Ἡ ἐντολής ἡ παράβασις ἀμαρτία ἔστιν. Αὕτη δὲ διὰ τῆς τοῦ διαβόλου προσβολῆς καὶ τῆς ἡμετέρας ἐμπιθυμίας καὶ ἐκουσίου παράδοξης συνιστάται· λέγεται δὲ καὶ αὕτη νόμος. Ἐπιθυμίαιν οὖν ὁ τοῦ θεοῦ νόμος τῷ νῷ ἡμῶν ἐφέλλεται πρὸς ἐκείνου καὶ νῦτε τὴν ἡμετέραν συνειδήσιν. Λέγεται δὲ καὶ ἡ ἡμετέρα συνειδήσις νόμος τοῦ νοὸς ἡμῶν. Καὶ ἡ προσβολή δὲ τοῦ πονηροῦ, τούτουτον ὁ νόμος τῆς ἀμαρτίας, ἐπιθυμίαν τοῖς μέλεσι τῆς σαρκὸς ἡμῶν δὴ ἀὑτῆς ἡμῶν προσβάλλει. Ἀπας γὰρ παραβιάστες ἐκουσίου τοῦ νόμου τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ τὴν προσβολὴν τοῦ πονηροῦ παραδεξάμενοι ἐδοκιμασαν αὕτη εἰσόδον, προλήγοντες τῷ ἀντιτάξαι τῆς ἀμαρτίας. Ὡθῶν ἐστὶν ἄγεται τὸ σῶμα ἡμῶν πρὸς αὐτὴν. Λέγεται δὲ καὶ ἡ ἑναποκειμένη τῷ σώματι ἡμῶν ὑμηνία καὶ ἐκεῖνη τῆς ἀμαρτίας ἠτοι ἐπιθυμία καὶ ἠδονὴ τοῦ σώματος νόμος ἐν τοῖς μέλεσι τῆς σαρκὸς ἡμῶν. Ὁ μὲν οὖν νόμος τοῦ νοὸς μου ἢ τοι ἡ συνειδήσις συνιστάται τὸ νόμο τοῦ θεοῦ ἢ τή ἐντολή καὶ ταῦτην θέλει. Ωδὲ νόμος τῆς ἀμαρτίας ἢ τοι ἡ προσβολή διὰ τοῦ νόμου του ἐν τοῖς μέλεσιν ἢ τοι τῆς τοῦ σώματος ἐπιθυμίας καὶ ῥοπῆς καὶ κίνησεως καὶ τοῦ ἁλόγου μέρους τῆς ψυχῆς ἀντιστατεῖται τὸ νόμο τοῦ νοὸς μου, τούτουτο τῇ συνειδήσει, καὶ ἀγιαλωτείξαι με καὶ θέλοντα τὸν τοῦ θεοῦ νόμον καὶ ἀγαπῶντα καὶ μὴ θέλοντα τὴν ἀμαρτάνον ταῦτα ἀνάκρασιν διὰ τοῦ λείου τῆς ἡδονῆς καὶ τῆς τοῦ σώματος ἐπιθυμίας καὶ τοῦ ἁλόγου μέρους τῆς ψυχῆς, ὡς ἐφιν, πλανᾶ καὶ πείθει δουλεύον τῇ ἀμαρτάνον ἀλλ.’ ἢ τοῦ τοῦ διδάκτον τοῦ νόμου, ἐν αὕτη ἡ ἡμετέρα σαρκός ἡμῶν καὶ τοῦ τοῦ σώματος διατρείχοντα καὶ διὰ τοῦ λείου τῆς ἡμετέρας σαρκός μέρους τῆς ψυχῆς, ὡς ἐφιν, πλανᾶ καὶ πείθει δουλεύον τῇ ἀμαρτάνον ἀλλ.’ «θεὸς τοῦ διδάκτον τοῦ νόμου, ἐν αὕτη διατρείχοντα καὶ διὰ τοῦ λείου τῆς ἡμετέρας σαρκός μέρους τῆς ψυχῆς, ὡς ἐφιν, πλανᾶ καὶ πείθει δουλεύον τῇ ἀμαρτάνον μὲ τοῦ κατὰ σάρκα πειστοῦσον, ἀλλὰ κατὰ πνεῦμα. «Τὸ γὰρ πνεῦμα μετατρέπεται τῇ ἀμαρτίας καὶ παρέχει ἐνδυμάν τοῦ νόμου τοῦ νοὸς ἡμῶν κατὰ τοῦ νοὸς τοῦ ἐν τοῖς μέλεσιν ἡμῶν. Τὸ γὰρ «τί προσευξόμεθα, καθὼς δὲ, οὐκ ἐδοκάμεν, ἀλλ’ αὐτὸ τὸ πνεῦμα ἑνεχεῖ ἡμᾶς ἡμῶν στεναγμοὶ ἀλλῆλοι τοῖς, τούτῳ διδάσκει ἡμᾶς, τὶ προσευξόμεθα. Ὀστε ἐδοκάμον, εἰ μὴ δ’ ὑπομονὴς καὶ προσευχής τὰς ἐντολὰς τοῦ θεοῦ πληρωθ’ ἡμῶν στεναγμοὶ ἀλλῆλοι τοῖς, τούτῳ διδάσκει ἡμᾶς, τὶ προσευξόμεθα. Ὀστε ἐδοκάμον, εἰ μὴ δ’ ὑπομονὴς καὶ προσευχής τὰς ἐντολὰς τοῦ θεοῦ τὸ πνεῦμα ἑνεχεῖ ἡμᾶς ἡμῶν στεναγμοὶ ἀλλῆλοι τοῖς, τούτῳ διδάσκει ἡμᾶς, τὶ προσευξόμεθα. Ὀστε ἐδοκάμον, εἰ μὴ δ’ ὑπομονὴς καὶ προσευχής τὰς ἐντολὰς τοῦ θεοῦ
Certainly, the body plays an essential role in the law of sin, yet John’s clear affirmation is that the primary referent for “ὁ νόμος τῆς ἁμαρτίας” is not the body or its desires, but the devil’s suggestion, called the “ἡ προσβολή … τοῦ πονηροῦ.” The rest of the passage quoted above describes how Adam’s sin brought about this dominion of the devil in the human body. Whereas prior to the Fall, the devil’s suggestion was exterior, after the Fall, the devil’s suggestion “gains entrance” into our body [παραδέξαμεν ἐδώκαμεν αὐτῆ εἴσοδον] and becomes as if interior. This intimate relationship between the passions and the devil is completely overlooked in Gondreau’s assessment of the passions in John’s work.

It is worth noting, as a concluding note, that this passage is somewhat weakened in Burgundio’s translation. While Burgundio maintains the τοῦ διαβόλου προσβολῆς as diaboli immissionem, the strong overtones of personification in ἡ προσβολή τοῦ πονηροῦ are weakened to an immissio perniciosi, a “pernicious suggestion,” at the moment this suggestion is identified with the law of sin.30 Burgundio uses forms of “pernicious” to refer to the devil elsewhere, so the close reader would understand the demonic overtones of the phrase, but it would not be difficult to miss this nuance. Without a broader understanding of his use of “pernicious,” the reader could easily be misled by Burgundio’s weaker phrase to understand that this suggestion originates within the

30 Burgundio’s Version of DFO IV.22, in Fide, ed. Buytaert, 358-9: “Hoc autem per diaboli immissionem, et per nostram inviolentam et voluntariam susceptionem consistit. Dicitur autem et haec lex. … Superveniens igitur ‘Dei lex’ intellectui nostro, attrahit ad seipsam et pungit nostram conscientiam. Dicitur autem et nostra conscientia lex intellectus nostri. Sed et immissio ‘perniciosi,’ hoc est ‘lex peccati,’ superveniens membris carnis nostrae, per eam nobis se immitit. Semel enim praevaricantes mandatum et legem Dei voluntarie, et immissionem ‘perniciosi’ accipientes, dedimus ei ingressum venditi a nobis ipsis peccato. Unde parate ducitur corpori nostrum ad eam. Dicitur ergo et qui iniacet corpori nostro odoratus et sensus peccati, scilicet concupiscientia et voluptas corporis, lex in membris carnis nostrae.” The editors of Burgundio’s version place “perniciosi” in quotation marks to indicate a quotation of another source, but none of the Vulgate verses that are cited use this word. I have been unable to locate a clear reason why this word is identified as a quotation by the editors.
subject without any relationship to demonic activity, whereas John’s text is clear that the source of the suggestion is exterior. Thus, the law of sin in Burgundio’s translation is not as quickly or as easily identifiable with the suggestion of the devil as it is in John’s text. While this change is perhaps small in itself, it is indicative of how later Latin readers of John’s text will interpret this law of sin.

**B. John of Damascus on the Passions and the Devil in Christ’s temptation**

One sees above that John preserved many (if not all) important aspects of Maximus’s theory of demonic temptation. For John’s part, his summary of the moral act introduces some confusion about the nature of will and wish; for Burgundio’s part, some alterations weaken the connection that John sees between the passions and the devil. In the material below, I will consider in two major parts how John relates this theory of demonic temptation to Christ’s moral life. First, I will address John’s denial of choice in Christ; and second, I will consider John soteriological claims about Christ’s natural and blameless passions and their relationship with demonic activity. In this last portion, Burgundio of Pisa’s translation plays a crucial role in the way Christ’s passions will be understood by the later Latin tradition.

1. **John’s denial of choice in Christ.** Despite the fact discussed above that John recognizes choice as an essential characteristic of human nature, John’s Christological reflections on this subject flatly deny such choice in Christ. John precedes this denial with a reflection on the denial of choice in God:

   "while we speak of wishing in God, in the strict sense we do not speak of choice. For God does not deliberate, because deliberation is due to ignorance. No one deliberates about what he knows. But, if deliberation is due to ignorance, then"
choice, too, is most certainly so. Hence, since God knows all things absolutely, He does not deliberate.\footnote{DFO II.22, in \textit{Writings}, trans. Chase, 250. “Χρή δὲ γνώσεσθαι, ὅτι ἐπὶ θεοῦ βούλησαν μὲν λέγομεν, προαίρεσιν δὲ κυρίως ὀυ λέγομεν—οὐ γὰρ βουλεύεται ὁ θεός. Ἀγνοίας γὰρ ἐστὶ τὸ βουλεύεσθαι: περὶ γὰρ τοῦ γινομοκινήματος οὐδές βουλεύεται. Εἰ δὲ ἡ βουλὴ ἀγνοίας, πάντως καὶ ἡ προαιρέσις. Ὅ δὲ θεὸς πάντα εἰδώς ἀπλῶς ὀς βουλεύεται.” Burgundio’s version (\textit{Fide}, ed. Buytaert, 139) reads: “Oportet autem scire quomiam in Deo voluntatem quidem dici, motionem autem principali non dicimus. Non enim consiliatur Deus: ignorantiae enim est consiliari. De eo enim quod cognoscit, nullus consiliatur. Si autem consilium est ignorantiae, omnino et electio. Deus autem, omnia noscens simpliciter, non consiliatur.” Apart from the flattening of the difference between will and wish noted above, there is nothing objectionable here.}

John’s reasoning directly connects a lack of choice with a fullness of knowledge; one deliberates only about unknown things. For precisely this same reason, John denies choice in Christ:

Neither do we speak of deliberation or choice in the soul of the Lord, because He did not suffer from ignorance. Even though He did have such a nature as was ignorant of future events, nevertheless, in so far as this nature was hypostatically united to God the Word, it did have knowledge of all things—not by grace, but, as has been said, by virtue of the hypostatic union. Thus He was Himself both God and man, and therefore did not have a will based upon opinion. He did have a will that was natural and simple and such as is to be found in all human persons, but His sacred soul held no opinion, that is to say, willed nothing contrary to His divine will, nor did it have a will in opposition to His divine will. …\footnote{DFO II.22, in \textit{Writings}, trans. Chase, 250. “Οὔτε δὲ ἐπὶ τῆς τοῦ κυρίου ψυχῆς φαμεν βουλὴν ἢ προαιρέσιν—οὐ γὰρ ἔχειν ἔγνωσιν. Εἰ γὰρ καὶ τῆς ἀγνοίας τὰ μέλλοντα φύεσθαι ἦν, ἀλλ’ ὃς καθ’ υπόστασιν ἐνοθέτεσθαι τῷ θεῷ λόγῳ πάντων τὴν γνώσιν ἐχειν οὐ χάριτι, ἀλλ’, ὡς ἐβρηκα, διὰ τὴν καθ’ υπόστασιν ἐνοθέσθαι—ὁ αὐτὸς γὰρ ἦν καὶ θεὸς καὶ ἀνθρωπος. Διὸ οὐδὲ γνωμικὸν ἔχει θελήματα. Θελήσειν μὲν γὰρ ἔχει τὴν φυσικήν, τὴν ἀπλήν, τὴν ἐν πάσαις ταῖς ὑποστάσεις τῶν ἀνθρώπων ὄμοιοις θεορομένην, τὴν δὲ γνώμην ἦγουν τὸ θελητὸν οὐκ ἔχειν ἢ ἀγία αὐτοῦ ψυχὴ ἐναντίον τοῦ θεοῦ αὐτοῦ θελήματος οὐδὲ ἄλλο παρὰ τὸ θανὸν αὐτοῦ θέλημα.” Burgundio’s Version, in \textit{Fide}, ed. Buytaert, 139: “Neque vero in Domini anima iniquimus consilium vel electionem. Non enim habuit ignorantiam. Etsi enim ignorantia futura naturae erat, sed tamen secundum hypostasim unita Deo Verbo, omnium cognitionem habebat, non gratia, sed ut dictum est propter eam quae secundum hypostasim unionem. Idem enim erat et Deus et homo; ideo neque sententiam voluntatem habebat: voluntatem enim habebat naturalem, simplicem, eam quae in omnibus hypostasibus hominum similiter consideratur; sententiam autem, scilicet quod thelion (id est voluntabile), non habebat sancta eius anima contrarium divinae eius voluntati, neque aliu praeter divinam eius voluntatem.” One can also find this denial at DFO III.14, in \textit{Writings}, trans. Chase, 302: “And, should we wish to speak literally, it would be impossible to speak of γνώμη and προαιρέσεις in the Lord. For the opinion resulting from the inquiry and deliberation, or counsel and judgment, in respect to the unknown thing is a disposition toward the thing judged. After γνώμη comes προαιρέσεις which selects and chooses one thing rather than the other. Now, since the Lord was not a mere man, but was also God and knew all things, He stood in no need of reflection, inquiry, counsel, or judgment. He also had a natural affinity for good and antipathy for evil. Thus, it is in this sense that the Prophet Isaiah, too, says: “Before the child shall know to refuse the evil, he will choose the good. For before the child know to refuse the evil, and to
John’s account of choice in Christ flattens Maximus’s account to a certain extent.

Maximus, too, links his strong qualification of choice in Christ to Christ’s fullness of knowledge, but Maximus is still willing to speak of an “immutable choice” in Christ in the midst of this qualification. In this way, I spoke in Chapter 3 of a transformative assumption of choice that renders something intrinsically unstable into something absolutely immutable—that is, he institutes a new mode of choice. Most notably, such an account keeps Maximus’s λόγος/τρόπος distinction intact by affirming the essential “parts” of human nature in Christ while allowing for their inner transformation in the incarnation.

John’s denial of choice in Christ, however, does not respect this distinction. On the one hand, John recognizes in his anthropological material that choice is an intrinsic component of the human moral act; on the other hand, John feels compelled to deny this otherwise essential human capacity in Christ. John thus vacillates on whether choice belongs to the λόγος or the τρόπος of human nature—or fails to maintain Christ’s full humanity. Neither in his anthropological material nor in his Christological material does John attempt to address this apparent difference between the humanity of Christ and that of every other human being. His strict anthropological link between choice and ignorance

choose the good, he will reject the evil by choosing the good.” The ‘before’ shows that he made no inquiry or investigation in a human manner, but that, since He was God and divinely subsisted in the flesh—by the fact of His very being and His knowing all things He naturally possessed the good [Γνώμην δὲ καὶ προαίρεσιν ἐπὶ τοῦ κυρίου λέγειν ἀδόνατον, ἐπερ κυριολεκτεῖν βουλόμεθα. Η γνώμη γὰρ μετὰ τὴν περὶ τοῦ ἀνυγμομένου ζήτησιν καὶ βουλεύσαιν ἴτοι βουλῆν καὶ κρίσιν πρὸς τὸ κρίθην ἐστὶ διάθεσις. Μεθ’ ἡν ἡ προαίρεσις ἐκλεγομένη καὶ αἱρομένη πρὸ τοῦ ἐτέρου τὸ ἐτέρον. Ο δὲ κύριος οὐ φυλὸς ἢν ἀνθρώπος ἀλλὰ καὶ θεὸς καὶ πάντα εἰδῶς ἀνενδέχθης σκέψεως καὶ ζητήσεως καὶ βουλῆς ὑπῆρχε καὶ κρίσεως καὶ φυσικὸς τὴν τε πρὸς τὸ καλὸν ἠξένοικεστὶ καὶ τὴν πρὸς τὸ κακὸν ἐλλοτριώσθης. Οὕτω γοῦν καὶ Ἡσαῖας φησιν, ὅτι «πρὶν ἢ γνῶναι τὸ παιδίον ἢ προελέσθαι πονηρά, ἐκλέξεται τὸ ἁγαθὸν· διότι πρὶν ἢ γνῶναι τὸ παιδίον ἁγαθὸν ἢ κακὸν, ἀπειθεὶς πονηρῆς τοῦ ἐκλέξεσθαι τὸ ἁγαθὸν». Τὸ γὰρ «πρὶν» δηλοῖ, ὅτι οὐ καθ’ ἡμᾶς ζητήσας καὶ βουλευσάμενος ἀλλὰ θεὸς ὑπὸ καὶ θείως καὶ τὸ κατὰ σάρκα ὑποστάσας, τούτωτι καθ’ ὑπόστασιν ἡνομένος τῇ σαρκί, αὐτῷ τῷ εἶναι καὶ τὸ πάντα εἰδόναι τὸ ἐκ φύσεως ἠξένοικεν ἁγαθὸν].”
does not permit him to consider a new mode of choice brought about by Christ (as Maximus, not without some confusion, did consider). This contradictory denial by John will be cause for important further reflection in the medieval tradition, perhaps most notably in the work of Thomas Aquinas.

2. The natural and blameless passions, the devil, and Christ. Gondreau’s consideration of the Damascene’s Christology laudably portrays the extent to which John includes Christ in the weakened moral circumstances of other human beings after the Fall. As mentioned above, Gondreau uses the fact that Christ takes on the passions to argue that John sees the passions very positively; however, based on the reflections above, I would argue that it is more accurate to say that their assumption by Christ rather shows—and is intended by John to show—the depths of Christ’s condescension into our ambivalent moral circumstances precisely in order to liberate us from them. I will discuss three things about the central text from De Fide Orthodoxa (III.20) here: (a) the chiastic structure of John’s Christological reasoning; (b) the importance for John of Christ’s voluntary experience of the passions; and (c) a modification to John’s sense that occurs in the Latin translation by Burgundio.

a. The chiastic structure of John’s text. John’s reflections on Christ’s humanity in De Fide Orthodoxa III.20 embed a chiastic structure of fall and restoration that intertwines the passions and the action of the devil and of Christ. What Adam destroyed and weakened through sin, Christ, through an assumption of a humanity weakened by the suggestion of the devil, restores. While this descent/ascent structure can be seen clearly in DFO III.20, John is regrettably inconsistent about what constitutes the turning point or “bottom” of the chiasm. For the most part, John indicates that the turning point is Christ’s
identification with the *fallen* condition of humanity; but in one important way John
indicates that this point is found in Christ’s assumption of one of Adam’s prelapsarian
moral conditions. I will discuss the portions of III.20 that show Christ’s identity with our
fallen condition, then the passage that argues for Christ’s identity with Adam’s
prelapsarian condition.

As already established, John believes that the sin of Adam introduced a new state
of life, characterized both by the “law of sin” as well as the “natural and blameless
passions [Φυσικὰ ... καὶ ἀδιάβλητα πάθη]” through which the devil seeks to arouse sin.

When discussing the moral conditions of Christ’s life, John largely affirms these fallen
conditions to have been Christ’s own. The only thing that John denies as an aspect of
Christ’s moral life is sin, which arises from a combination of the “devil’s sowing” and
our consent to it:33

Moreover, we confess that He assumed all the natural and blameless passions of
man [Φυσικὰ δὲ καὶ ἀδιάβλητα πάθη]. This is because he assumed the whole man
and everything that is his, except sin—for this last is not natural and it was not
implanted in us by the Creator [οὐδὲ ὑπὸ τοῦ δημιουργοῦ ἡμῖν ἐνσαρκεῖσα], but
rather is from the sowing of the devil upon our free will, which freely allowed
[its] union, not constraining us through force.34

The image of ‘sowing’ that John uses is strikingly similar to that used by Gregory of
Nyssa to describe the origin of the passions.35 To refresh from Chapter 1, Gregory
understands that God sows natural “impulses” or “motions” in human nature that direct

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33 As earlier, sin arises (in our fallen state) from the devil’s suggestion and our free consent—such is the
“law of sin” discussed above. These two components also appear in John’s denial of sin in Christ, but it
should be noted that in order to deny sin in Christ, John need not (and does not) deny the devil’s
suggestion to Christ, but only the latter aspect of consent to the devil’s suggestion.

οὐκ ἐφ’ ἡμῖν, διὸ ἐκ τῆς ἐπὶ τῇ παραβάςει κατακρίσεως εἰς τὸν ἀνθρώπινον εἰσηλθείπερ ἐμὸν πείνα,
δίψα, κόπος, πόνος, τὸ δάκρυον, ἡ φθορά, τὴν πρόκειται παραίτησις, ἡ δείλα, ἡ ἄγωνια (ἐξ ἡς οἱ
ἰδρυτές, οἱ θρόμμοι τοῦ ἁμαρτο), ἢ διὰ τὸ ἀσθένειας τῆς φύσεως ὑπὸ τῶν ἀγγέλων βοήθεια καὶ τὰ
tοιοῦτα, ἢ τίνα πάσι τοῖς ἀνθρώποις φυσικῶς ἐνυπάρχουσι.”

35 See the discussion of Gregory in Chapter 1.
humanity to “union with the heavenly,” whereas the devil surreptitiously sows “judgment of the good” that, based on those impulses, can lead to passion. With some modification, a similar theory appears to be at work in the passage from the Damascene: both God and the devil “sow” in human nature, but the devil sows passion to our destruction. Further, one should note that John’s denial of sin in Christ need not exclude the devil’s “sowing” of passion in Christ because by John’s definition (discussed above), there is no sin as long as there is no consent to the suggestion. Thus, the case can be made that John also sees something of the demonic suggestion through passion at work in Christ. There is more to say about the relationship in John’s text between the devil and the passions in Christ, which I will discuss shortly. In this particular text, however, John at least affirms that Christ took those passions that “are not under our control and have come into man’s life as a result of the condemnation occasioned by his fall.” It is precisely this situation that Christ comes to rectify, and so it is into these fallen conditions that Christ enters. In this passage, then, John indicates that the bottom of the chiastic structure of salvation history is postlapsarian human nature.

Later in the same discussion, however, John’s judgment on this matter is significantly muddied. There, John argues that Christ identified with one of Adam’s unfallen moral conditions: an imperviousness to temptation through demonic thoughts. In

37 Gregory of Nyssa, in *On the Soul and the Resurrection*, did not have a place for “natural” passions; the passions were already an evil activation of the impulses planted in us by God. See ibid., and Chapter 1. Thus, John’s intervention is to add a category of natural and blameless passion that is the basis of the devil’s attack, but which, when activated properly, is the ground for one’s moral praise. These are equivalent to the “impulses” in Gregory of Nyssa’s account of the passions.
38 Though, John is quick to specify, this assumption must be understood as voluntary on Christ’s behalf—there is more to say on this subject below.
39 *DFO* III.20, in *Writings*, trans. Chase, 323: “Φυσικά δὲ καὶ ἀδιάβλητα πάθη εἰσὶ τὰ ὅκ ἐφ’ ἦμῖν, διὰ ἔκ τῆς ἐπὶ τῇ παραβάσει κατακρίσεως εἰς τὸν ἄνθρωπον εἰσήλθε βίον·”
this one important sense—that of Christ’s *thoughts*—the chiasm intersects for John before Adam’s fall. John states that Christ assumed all that He might sanctify all. He was put to the test and He conquered that He might gain for us the victory and give to our nature the power to conquer the Adversary, so that through the very assaults by which the nature had been conquered of old it might conquer its former victor.

Now, the Evil One attacked [Christ] from the outside, just as he had with Adam, and not through thoughts—for it was not through thoughts that he attacked Adam, but through the serpent. The Lord, however, repelled the attack and it vanished like smoke, so that the passions which had assailed Him and were conquered might become easy for us to conquer and the new Adam thus restore the old.40

In order to sort out how John believes Christ’s humanity to be unfallen, it is essential to consider the relationship between “thoughts [λογισμῶν]” and “passions [πάθη]” in this passage. John contrasts thoughts with “external” temptations and equally denies the demonic use of thoughts in Christ’s temptation.41 In this sense, Christ’s temptation was extrinsic (ἐξωθεν) for John and, insofar as thoughts are a foundation of the devil’s attack after the Fall, John argues that Christ’s temptation is decidedly *unlike* that of postlapsarian humanity. In this respect, Gondreau’s observation about the similarity of Christ and Adam is correct. In precisely (but only) this way, the chiastic structure of John’s soteriology meets in Adam’s prelapsarian condition.42 It must be emphasized that

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40 *DFO* III.20, in *Writings*, trans. Chase, 324, translation modified—importantly, Chase incorrectly translates the middle voice “ἀνασώσηται” as “be restored by” instead of as “restore,” inverting the meaning of John’s text. The Greek text: “Πάντα τοίνυν ἁνέλαβεν, ἵνα πάντα ἁγίαση. Ἐπεράσθη καὶ ἐνίκησεν, ἵνα ἡμῖν τὴν νίκην πρωτεταύσηται καὶ δώ τῇ φύσι τὸν ἀντίπαλον, ἵνα ἡ φύσις ἡ πάλαι νικηθείσα, δι’ ἑνὸς προσβολῶν ἐνίκηθη, διὰ τούτων νικήσαντα τὸν πάλαι νικήσαντα. Ὡ μὲν οὖν πονηρὸς ἐξωθηκεν προσέβαλεν ὡσπερ καὶ δώ λογισμῶν ἄσφερ καὶ τῆς λογισμοῦ γὰρ ό διὰ λογισμῶν, ἀλλὰ διὰ τοῦ ὀφείλον τῆς προσβολῆς ἀπεκρούσατο καὶ ός κατάν διέλυσεν, ἵνα προσβολῶντα αὐτῶ τὰ πάθη καὶ νικηθέντα καὶ ἡμῖν εὐκαταγώνιστα γένηται καὶ οὕτως ὁ νέος Ἀδám τὸν παλαιὸν ἀνασώσῃται.

41 It may be worth noting that John does not call thoughts “internal” explicitly, though that dichotomy may be the clearest sense of his contrast.

42 If one were to push this distinction, there could be significant negative soteriological consequences, but John’s point here is not clear enough to make a definitive judgment on the matter. When these
the way that John describes thoughts here is not Maximian; Maximus does not use the
distinction between “internal” and “external” in this way\textsuperscript{43} and Maximus does not make
any distinction of this nature when discussing the assault of the devil against Christ in \textit{QT} 21.

Yet, despite what may appear to be the case, John does not wholly reject here
Christ’s identification with fallen humanity. John’s discussion of Christ’s passions in this
passage still describes a decidedly postlapsarian view of Christ’s humanity. On close
investigation, John affirms that Christ was attacked both by the evil one \textit{and by the}
\textit{passions}: he first describes how the “the evil one attacked from without \([\text{Ὁ \ μὲν οὖν πονηρὸς ἔξωθεν προσβάλεν}],\)” that is, not through thoughts; he then describes how
Christ conquered the “passions that attacked him \([\text{προσβαλόντα αὐτῷ τὰ πάθη}].\)” Thus,
John believes that even without thoughts the devil’s exterior attack still included some
sort of attack in or through Christ’s passions. John therefore considers the passions to be
sufficiently extrinsic to the human moral life that they can blamelessly “attack” Christ as
instruments of the devil.\textsuperscript{44}

In this respect, Gondreau’s assessment that Christ’s “psychological strengths
precluded any kind of temptation arising from disordered interior movements” is

\textsuperscript{43} See Chapter 2.
\textsuperscript{44} Little of consequence is found in Burgundio’s translation here: “igitur perniciosus quidem extrorsum
immittebat, non per intelligentias, quemdmodum et Adae; etenim illi non per intelligentias, sed per
serpentem; dominus autem immissionem repercussit et ut fumum dissolvit, ut immittentes ei passiones
devictae et nobis facile expugnabiles fiant, et ita novus Adam veteran resalvet” (in \textit{Fide}, ed. Buytaert,
260). Instead of the “attack” of the devil, he has forms of \textit{immitto}, “to incite” or “to instigate,” which
conveys John’s sense. He also faithful follows the “passions that attacked him \([\text{προσβαλόντα αὐτῷ τὰ πάθη}].\)” with his \textit{immittentes ei passiones}. 
misleading.\textsuperscript{45} Most notably, it is unlikely that Gondreau’s analysis can account for John’s explicit affirmation that Christ was \textit{attacked} by the passions. John’s reasoning hinges on the proper arrangement of fall and restoration and not, per se, on an affirmation that “no such rebellious conflict assailed Jesus’ interior life.”\textsuperscript{46} The explicit question under consideration for John is which properties Christ should to take on in order to untie the knot of Adam’s disobedience. John’s confusion enters when he changes frames of reference between the reversal of our current, fallen condition that results from Adam’s disobedience (on the one hand) and the reversal of Adam’s prior fault that led to the fallen condition (on the other). In order to undo the former, John wants to affirm a similar, fallen experience of passion for Christ; in order to undo the latter, John wants to affirm Christ’s consubstantiality with Adam’s moral experience of temptation. The way John negotiates these different conditions is to argue that while Christ is unfallen with respect to his thoughts (like Adam), Christ shares in a fallen experience of passion (like Adam’s descendants).\textsuperscript{47}

Because of the distinction between passions and thoughts John introduces here, this passage significantly muddies the chiastic structure that otherwise grounds John’s Christological reasoning. Insofar as Christ’s passions are concerned, they are a sign of his identification with our fallen condition subsequent to Adam’s sin and even a means of the devil’s attack against Christ’s humanity. Insofar as Christ’s thoughts are concerned, they

\textsuperscript{45} Gondreau, \textit{Passions of Christ’s Soul}, 64. Since the language of “disordered interior movements” is not native to John’s thought, it is hard to say that Gondreau is \textit{wrong} to deny such movement from Christ. When John is clarified in conformity with the later scholastic tradition, it becomes necessary to make this sort of denial in Christ. Nevertheless, the claim is misleading insofar as it confuses John’s categories with Aquinas’s.

\textsuperscript{46} Gondreau, \textit{Passions of Christ’s Soul}, 64.

\textsuperscript{47} It is possible that John’s denial of Christ’s temptation by thought is related to his denial of ignorance in Christ. Since the latter could be an intellectual defect with negative ramifications for Christ’s mission, John may have felt the need to guard Christ’s cognitive faculty against demonic infiltration.
share in an unfallen Adamic condition that is decidedly unlike that experienced after the
Fall. With respect to the former, John, with Maximus, places the bottom of the chiasm in
Christ’s identification with fallen humanity; with respect to the latter, John, unlike
Maximus, delimits a demonic means of attack that marks the fallen condition of humanity
but that is not to be affirmed as a condition of Christ’s own moral life—here, the chiasm
intersects in Adam’s unfallen state. The role of this Christological reasoning—identifying
Christ with some aspects of fallen humanity and with some aspects of unfallen
humanity—is significant in later Western theology. John does not explain this reasoning
clearly but his later Latin commentators move quickly to discern the fittingness of this
arrangement. Significant medieval examples of this process of discernment, particularly
Peter the Lombard, are treated later in this chapter.

b. Christ’s voluntary assumption of the passions. On a second point, DFO III.20
introduces a point of particular importance both because of the impact it has on later
medieval reflection and for the way it demonstrates John’s own helpful innovations. John
takes care to clarify that Christ’s experience of passibility was not one forced on him as it
is with other human beings:

For with Him nothing is found to be done under compulsion [ἡναγκασμένον]; on
the contrary, everything was done freely [πάντα ἐκόσια]. Thus, it was by willing
that He hungered and by willing that He thirsted, by willing that He was afraid
and by willing that He died.48

Such a claim is important, for to deny Christ’s voluntary experience of human nature in
its entirety would simultaneously risk the absolute freedom of the divine will and the
perfect obedience of the human will in the incarnation. Now, in the two chapters of DFO

48 DFO III.20: “οὐδὲν γάρ ἡναγκασμένον ἐπ’ αὐτοῦ τεθεωρεῖται, ἀλλὰ πάντα ἐκόσια· θέλων γὰρ ἐπείνασε,
θέλων ἐδίψησε, θέλων ἐδειλίασε, θέλων ἀπέθανεν.” Gondreau is correct to insist on this aspect of the
Damascene’s thought; it is an important and original addition to later reflections on Christ.
preceding the one under investigation here, John had spent significant time elaborating the relationship between the human and divine will in Christ. It is surprising, in light of this previous context, that John does not provide greater clarity about what is proper to each will—human and divine—in this voluntary experience of passion. In DFO III.20, it makes the most sense that John would be speaking primarily of the human will of Christ, yet his earlier discussion of dyotheletism makes this interpretation less likely. One finds in John’s previous discussion of Christ’s wills that

since the same one was both God and man, He willed according to His divine and His human will. … For His divine will was without beginning and all-creating and having the corresponding power, and it was impassible. But his human will had a beginning in time and was itself subject to natural and blameless passions [αὕτη τὰ φυσικά καὶ ἀδιάβλητα πάθη ύπέμεινε].

Thus, while the divine and human wills cooperate in Christ and agree in all things, each has properties that are distinct to itself and each acts in its own way. Thus, John states that Christ’s human will experiences a sort of submission to the natural passions, which indicates that, even if the submission is still voluntary in a sense, the natural passions are logically prior to the command of the will. John again distinguishes between the two wills, saying:

when the flesh is acting, the divine nature is associated with it because the flesh is being permitted by the good pleasure of the divine will [διὰ τὸ εὐδοκία τῆς θείας θελήσεως παραχωρεῖσθαι] to suffer and do what is proper to it …

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49 DFO III.18, in Writings, trans. Chase, 321. “‘Ἤλλ’ ὁ αὐτός ἐὰς ὃν θεός τε καὶ ἀνθρωπός κατὰ τε τὴν θείαν καὶ τὴν ἀνθρωπίνην ἤθελε θέλησιν. … Ἡ μὲν γὰρ θεία αὐτοῦ θέλησις ἄναρχης τε ἢν καὶ παντουργής, ἐπομένην ἔχουσα τὴν δύναμιν καὶ ἀπαθής, ἢ δὲ ἀνθρωπίνη αὐτοῦ θέλησις ἀπὸ χρόνου τε ἢρέματο καὶ αὐτὴ τὰ φυσικά καὶ ἀδιάβλητα πάθη ύπέμεινε.”

50 John’s term “ὑπέμεινε” could also be “was patient under” or “submitted to.”

51 DFO III.19, in Writings, trans. Chase, 322. “Κοινονεῖ τοίνυν ἡ μὲν θεία φύσις τῇ σαρκὶ ἐνεργοῦση διὰ τὸ εὐδοκία τῆς θείας θελήσεως παραχωρεῖσθαι πάσχειν καὶ πράττειν τὰ ἴδια ….”
Here, indeed, it appears that absolute preeminence over the passions is reserved to the “good pleasure” of the divine will—not, in an absolute sense, to the human will of Christ. In light of these statements, what John says in DFO III.20 requires more precision: Does John mean to say that Jesus has an absolute authority as human over his passions? For instance, could Jesus, as human, simply ‘turn off’ the natural and blameless passions? Or is the absolute freedom over the passions more appropriately assigned primarily to the divine will, considered from the eternal decision to take on flesh and thus logically prior to the incarnation? Later scholastic reflection will continue to dwell on the voluntary quality of Christ’s human passions. They largely have John to thank for the introduction of this important theological reflection.

c. The natural and blameless passions in Burgundio of Pisa’s translation. In the final consideration of this section, Burgundio’s translation once again figures centrally in the transmission of John’s thought to the medieval tradition. As seen above, John goes to some lengths to explain what the passions are, where they come from, and how they are present in Christ. Particularly helpful is John’s list of both qualities and examples of the sorts of passions that Christ experienced:

Now, those passions are natural and blameless [Φυσικὰ … καὶ ἀδιάβλητα πάθη] which are not under our control [οὐκ ἔφ’ ἡμῖν] and have come into man’s life as a result of the condemnation occasioned by his fall. Such, for example, were hunger, thirst, fatigue, pain, the tears, the destruction, the shrinking from death, the fear, the agony from which came the sweating and drops of blood, the aid brought by the angels in deference to the weakness of His nature, and any other such things as are naturally inherent in all men.52

52 DFO III.20: “Φυσικὰ δὲ καὶ ἀδιάβλητα πάθη εἰσὶ τὰ οὐκ ἔφ’ ἡμῖν, δόσα ἐκ τῆς ἐπὶ τῇ παραβάσει κατακρίσεως εἰς τὸν ἀνθρώπινον εἰσήλθε βιον· ὦν παῖνα, δίψα, κόπος, πόνος, τὸ δάκρυον, ἡ φθορά, ἡ τοῦ θανάτου παράτισης, ἡ δειλία, ἡ ἀγωνία (ἐξ ἦς οἱ ἱδρώτες, οἱ θρόμβοι τοῦ αἵματος), ἡ διὰ τὸ ἀσθενεῖς τῆς φύσεως ὕπό τῶν ἀγγέλων βοήθεια καὶ τὰ τοιαῦτα, ἅτινα πᾶσι τοῖς ἀνθρώποις φυσικῶς ἐνυπάρχουσι.”

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The frequency and consistency with which John uses the opening phrase “natural and blameless passions [Φυσικὰ … καὶ ἀδιάβλητα πάθη]” makes it clear that the formula is technical for John, carrying a particular nuance that it would be dangerous to misunderstand. In particular, John’s term, αδιαβλήτων, has a specific philosophical nuance of meaning and is quite central to the point that John wishes to make. In the Greek, something of its sense can be gleaned from its context, which adds that these passions are “not under our control [οὐκ ἔφ’ ἡμῖν],” a term that goes at least as far back as Evagrius.

In Burgundio’s translation, both of these words and phrases are changed so as to significantly alter John’s meaning. In Burgundio’s text, one reads (in sharp contrast to John’s Greek—and to the translation provided by Gondreau) that

The natural and indetractible passions are those which are not in us whatsoever from that which came into human life by condemnation through the transgression.

53 The French translator avows this “metaphysical” nuance: “cet adjectif dans cette formule a un sens metaphysique très net” (Jean Damasène, La Foi Orthodoxe, v. 2, 133, n. 2). Out of context, the word has a basic meanings of “not listening to calumny” or “unexceptionable.”

54 See Chapter 1.  

55 DFO III.20, in Fide, ed. Buytaert, 259: “Naturales autem et indetractibiles passiones sunt, quae non in nobis quaecumque ex ea quae per transgressionem condemnatione in humanam devenere vitam.” Gondreau translates this sentence incorrectly: “The natural and indetractible passions are those that are in us by reason of their having entered into human life through the condemnation incurred by the transgression…” Gondreau, Passions of Christ’s Soul, 64). It is unclear how Gondreau could arrive at the translation he uses; either he made reference to a translation of the Greek (which has an irreconcilable meaning) or he missed the “non” in Burgundio’s Latin. Throughout Gondreau’s treatment of the Damascene, it is clear that Gondreau is more interested in how John was read by Thomas that by what John himself said or meant; Gondreau never cites John’s Greek, but only Burgundio’s Latin. It is curious and indeed quite troubling that in this instance Gondreau would side
First of all, Burgundio mistranslates ἀδιάβλητα as indetractibles, which means “not able to be taken away or removed” instead of “not culpable.” This error is not in passing; it is Burgundio’s habitual translation of the phrase and is equally reflected by his explanation in this passage of these passions’ characteristic feature: that they do not come from the Fall and thus cannot be removed (indetractible!) from any form of human nature. This translation inverts John’s meaning in the last part of the sentence, but it also ignores the helpful and explanatory “not up to us” that clarifies the sense in which these passions are “blameless” for John. What for John is an affirmation of Christ’s solidarity with the fallen moral conditions of humanity becomes in Burgundio an affirmation of Christ’s unfallen experience of emotion. While John is admittedly ambiguous about what aspects of the fallen condition are shared by Christ, Burgundio’s translation transforms this ambiguity into a nearly complete denial of Christ’s fallen moral circumstances. The fundamental purpose of Christ’s assumption of human nature is thereby inverted in Burgundio’s text, and the chiastic structure is “shallowed” to meet at an unfallen humanity shared by Adam and Christ.

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with the Greek text over Burgundio’s Latin. If one wants to understand how John influenced Thomas, one must take Burgundio’s version as one’s norm, warts and all. On a related note, Gondreau is able to glean from Burgundio’s translation of DFO II.23 that something about a lack of culpability is meant by the “naturales et indetractibles passiones,” but such cannot be discerned from Burgundio’s text in DFO II.20.

56 Hence, the PG translates it into Latin as “inculpatis” (PG 94:1081-2), meaning “blameless, without blame” (Charlton T. Lewis, A Latin Dictionary (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2002), 930), and the Latin translation of Maximus’s works in CCSG 7 translates it “inculpabile” (CCSG 7:284), carrying the same meaning. Burgundio’s word, on the other hand, has as its opposite the root “detraho,” meaning “to draw or take off, draw away, draw or take down; to pull down; to take away, remove, withdraw” (Charlton T. Lewis, A Latin Dictionary (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2002), 563). It thus has to do with taking something away from the object. Also included in its range are: “purge,” to remove, “with the accessory idea of depriving or diminishing,” “to withdraw, take away, take; to lower in estimation, disparage, detract from” (ibid.). Among all these senses, the basic idea is one of removal, and so the opposite is “unable to be removed.”

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The impact of this misunderstanding between John and Burgundio is significant; it colors medieval reading of John by figures as important as Peter the Lombard and Thomas Aquinas—though their respective reading must be treated at the appropriate time. For the moment, I will simply summarize the findings above. (1) John reproduces, almost to a fault, the structure of the moral act recounted by Maximus. This structure is, by and large, accurately conveyed by both John and Burgundio, though John misconstrues the natural quality of both will and wish, rendering them indifferent to humanity’s final end. (2) John faithfully hands on Maximus’s close association between the devil and the passions in his anthropological consideration of the “law of sin.” If the passions are added after the Fall, their true moral ambiguity is seen in the suggestion of the devil that occurs through them—and not without that suggestion. (3) John is somewhat mistaken in his reading of Maximus on the particular point of the exclusion of choice in Christ. Maximus, for his part, was highly ambivalent on this point and it comes as no surprise that John felt the need to resolve Maximus’s highly qualified affirmation of choice in Christ into a formal denial. (4) While John largely understands the chiastic structure that also governs Maximus’s reflection on the Fall and incarnation, John’s lack of clarity about the “bottom” of the chiasm is seriously misunderstood in Burgundio’s translation. What was for John an affirmation of Christ’s solidarity with the fallen human experience becomes in Burgundio a denial of this solidarity. Such an important translation error cannot help but have an effect on John’s Latin readers.

57 One can know with a fair degree of certainty that Thomas was dependent upon this version; where John has “αδιαβλήτων,” both Burgundio and Thomas have “indetractibiles.” See Fide, ed. Buytaert, 259 and ST III.15.4, response: “natural and indetractible passions [naturales et indetractibilies passiones].”
II. Human Passions prior to Aquinas

The subject of this section is tangential to Aquinas’s explicit treatment of Christ’s temptation; Aquinas, unlike Maximus, does not consider the passions as a source (even intermediately) of Christ’s temptation. Nevertheless, since the passions feature so prominently in Maximus’s thought on Christ’s temptation and victory over the devil, I wish to present, on the basis of Paul Gondreau’s analysis of Aquinas’s sources, those aspects of human anthropological investigation prior to Aquinas that led to the disparity between Maximus and Thomas’s accounts of Christ’s temptation. In particular, two concepts in the earlier Latin tradition ground the distinction between Christ’s experience of temptation and that of other human beings: the concept of propassion and the concept, closely related to concupiscence, of the fomes peccati, literally the “kindling of sin.” 58 I will consider each of these in turn, tracing their historical progression as presented by Gondreau. 59

In Chapter 1, I presented Gregory of Nyssa as a figure who defined “passion” in such a way that it indicated a sinful use of natural impulses; one finds figures in the Latin tradition who also tend to such a definition for passion. Gondreau traces the origin of such thinking about passion in Latin Christianity to Jerome, who is unwilling to ascribe the full expression of a passion in Christ but is also unwilling to deny the presence of

58 Gondreau translates fomes as “spark” (see Gondreau, Passions of Christ’s Soul, 130-1). This translation is, in my view, incorrect, though such a translation does serve to emphasize the negative overtone that the fomes carries in medieval discourse. Whereas the “kindling of sin” appears to have a passive role that may not itself be a sinful act, a “spark of sin” shows the inherent disorder the scholastics identified in the fomes. Since Gondreau is interested in a sympathetic explanation of the exclusion of the fomes from Christ, he plays up the way in which it should be considered sinful. I will offer more observations about the correct translation of fomes in Chapter 4.

59 See Chapters 1 and 2 of Gondreau’s text for a full discussion of these topics.
emotion in Christ completely.\textsuperscript{60} For this reason, it appears that Jerome coined the anthropological term “propassion” to describe the human emotionality of Christ. Gondreau defines this term for Jerome as “a specific type of human emotion or movement of affectivity which does not attain the status of a full-blown passion, i.e. a passion that remains within the strict bounds of reasoned control.”\textsuperscript{61} For Jerome, a Christological point provides clarity about an anthropological one; since Christ can only fittingly be described as experiencing the beginning of emotional responses, such beginnings must constitutionally precede one’s rational intervention and thus come before moral praise or blame. A propassion is thus a pre-moral anthropological datum, equivalent to the “impulse” of Gregory of Nyssa. Its morality or immorality depends upon the use to which it is put.

The next figure Gondreau identifies in the history of propassion is Peter the Lombard,\textsuperscript{62} who introduces a more formal distinction between a passion and a propassion. Whereas a passion “stirs and troubles the mind,” a propassion “does not disturb the intellectual faculties from rectitude or from contemplation of God.”\textsuperscript{63} Further clarity could be asked from Peter: does a propassion reach the mind at all? For instance, John of Damascus states that “a perceptible movement [of the passible part of the soul] comes under the definition of passion,” but that “the little imperceptible ones are not passions at all.”\textsuperscript{64} Thus, John would say that if one does not perceive the passible

\textsuperscript{60} As does Hilary; see the section below. Jerome, according to Gondreau’s account, received this notion from Didymus the Blind and Origen, so it may indeed have the same Greek (and perhaps Stoic) roots that Gregory of Nyssa’s negative definition of passion had. Gondreau argues that John of Damascus makes a similar argument about Christ’s passions, but his evidence from John is thin.

\textsuperscript{61} Ibid., 67-8.

\textsuperscript{62} Ibid., 84-5.


\textsuperscript{64} John of Damascus, DFO II.22, in \textit{Writings}, trans. Chase, 247.
movement, it can’t be called a passion—so does a propassion reach such perception? If not, John and Peter’s definitions are in contradiction; but if so, Peter would need to provide further clarity about what perception is possible without troubling the mind or removing it from contemplation of God. Surely Christ was aware of his sadness and so forth, but what kind or what degree of perception is compatible with moral rectitude?

Finally, Gondreau indicates that, most proximately to Aquinas’s writing, Bonaventure also specifies that Christ’s passions are “propassions.” For Bonaventure, this means that they are “incomplete passions [passio diminuta]” that does not perturb his “mental eye [oculi mentalis].” As Gondreau presents this teaching, Bonaventure means it to preserve Christ’s spiritual joy in the contemplation of the visio Dei. It appears, however, that the same concerns could be raised here as against Peter: in what sense can it be said to reach Christ’s intellectual powers at all?

In the conceptual tradition of propassion, one can specify an anthropological distinction that indicates a moral difference between Christ and (most other) fallen human beings. When a motion of the sensitive appetite is small enough, it does not interfere with one’s rational governance of one’s desires. It is unclear if fallen human beings proceed into a full passion by some sort of intellectual necessity, but the implication of the distinction is that fallen human beings regularly do so. Since Christ never experienced a

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65 Gondreau presents Peter and later medieval thinkers as engaged in a polemic against the Docetic-appearing Christology of Hilary of Poitiers (to be treated below). One of the key features of Hilary’s Christology is the fact that Christ does not experience pain in his soul. It is important, then, to understand how the distinction of propassion from passion does not result in precisely the same Christological problem. If there is no clear sense in which such passions affect Christ’s soul, the polemic leveled against Hilary by these medieval figures cannot be particularly strong.

66 The only further assumption here is that a propassion can still be a species under a broader genus of passion for Peter. It would be odd if Peter would be willing to say that a propassion is not a passion “at all,” as John’s definition includes.

67 The quotations are from Bonaventure, Sent. Comm. III.15.a2,q.3 and dub. 4, but I draw them from Gondreau, Passions of Christ’s Soul, 98.
full passion, the natural human experience of propassion in Christ never clouded his judgment or impeded his reason. If the devil is to be involved in Christ’s passions at all (which question will be taken up in the coming sections), the devil would in any case be unable to elicit them as full passions, which would imply some sinful rational disruption in Christ.

The second concept to be treated here is the *fomes peccati*, the kindling of sin. Gondreau discusses the origin of this phrase in particular connection with Peter the Lombard’s *Sentences*, though Peter did not invent the phrase himself. Following Gondreau, I will confine my comments on the *fomes* to Peter’s treatment, though one can find this term in a number of other medieval figures as well. This concept is closely linked to that of concupiscence, a disordering of desire that enter human existence after the Fall. The *fomes* constitutes a component of fallen human nature that one can describe as constitutional—it exists prior to any concrete sinful act and follows primarily from original (as opposed to actual) sin. Gondreau states that it “characterizes the affective life of all those born into original sin.” In relation to the Lombard, Gondreau defines the *fomes* as

> the inherent proclivity of the sensitive appetite to illicit goods, or to a kind of affective ignition switch … that places the lower appetitive powers on a constant “state of alert,” always ready to be prodded at an instant’s notice to lunge after some object of sense desire irrespective of the command of reason.

In the Lombard’s moral psychology, the *fomes* is still far enough into the grasp of rationality that the human subject is responsible for its inordinate movement—that is, any movement that is properly ascribed to the *fomes* is venially sinful. And yet, the Lombard

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68 See particularly Gondreau’s notes on ibid., 130-1.
69 Ibid., 131.
is adamant that the presence of the *fomes*—what he elsewhere refers to as “a difficulty to will and to do the good”\(^{70}\)—does not in itself constitute sin.

Despite the observation that difficulty in well-doing is not sin, Peter denies the *fomes* in Christ, concluding (in significant tension with Hebrews 4:15) that Christ “did not take on all the defects of our infirmity apart from sin.”\(^{71}\) The *fomes*—universal to the fallen condition, not sin, but yet not present in Christ—thus constitutes a Christological no-man’s-land in the Lombard’s thought that cause significant discussion throughout the medieval period.\(^{72}\) There are a number of ways to attempt to resolve this conflict: perhaps the *fomes* is not “natural”; perhaps the *fomes* should not be called “temptation”; perhaps the very presence of the *fomes* is in fact sin; or—just perhaps—the *fomes* should not be construed completely independently of other forms of temptation that can be affirmed in Christ. The Lombard himself does not adequately resolve this question.

These two anthropological concepts are important to Aquinas’s own understanding of temptation and the passions. While “passion” (as opposed to propassion) and the *fomes* will play no positive role in Thomas’s Christology, one must have a basic understanding of their meaning in the preceding tradition in order to understand why Thomas denies the sorts of temptations in Christ that he does. In the tradition spelled out here, Christ’s perfect moral rectitude precludes passion that interferes with Christ’s reason and it precludes any disordered movement of the sensitive

\(^{70}\) Peter the Lombard, *Sentences* III.15.1, in *Sentences*, v. 3, trans. Silano, 58.

\(^{71}\) Ibid. When viewed in light of the fact that the Lombard also refers to concupiscence as “temptation from the flesh,” one sees that the Lombard affirms a temptation that is universal to the fallen human condition and that is not sin—but that is not present in Christ.

appetite. Any temptation that impinges on either of these two Christological affirmations would almost certainly be dismissed out of hand as outright sin.

III. Western Patristic Thought on Christ’s Temptation by the Devil

In this section, I return to the central question of Christ’s demonic temptation by treating three Patristic figures who are important for Latin reflection of Christ’s passions and temptation by the devil. The first, (A) Hilary of Poitiers, is largely a background figure for Latin reflection on Christ’s humanity; the next two, (B) Augustine of Hippo and (C) Gregory the Great, are by far the two most commonly-cited sources in Aquinas’s theory of demonic temptation. I will treat these three figures in historical order and consider the relevant anthropological and Christological claims in each of them.

A. Hilary of Poitiers

With respect to this study, it is only necessary to consider Hilary of Poitiers’s Christological claims about the passions; in fact, his *On the Trinity* has little reflection on Christ’s temptation by the devil. In his *On the Trinity*, Hilary is primarily concerned with combating Arianism and is therefore quick to protect the divinity of Christ. Since one significant Arian concern was that the equality of the Son would appear to entrench God in changing, worldly realities—thereby contradicting God’s immutability and impassibility—Hilary was sensitive to attribution of change or passibility to Christ,

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73 In this section and the next, it is not necessary to consider non-Christian sources for Thomas’s demonology. While a number of minor sources treat demonology as an independent field of study (including, for instance, Dionysius), such sources do not consider temptation as a significant topic. As the subject of this study is demonic temptation, it would take me too far afield to treat Thomas’s demonology as a whole. Aspects of Thomas’s demonology that reflect a purely philosophical influence (i.e. one that is related primarily to cosmology and not to anthropology or Christology) will be considered ad hoc in the next two chapters.

whom Hilary wished to portray as fully divine and thus, fully impassible. In part because of this polemical nature, Hilary does little to defend Christ’s humanity and, indeed, makes significant moves that undermine it. His anti-Arian motivation also helps explain the fact that in the entirety of *On the Trinity* one does not find a single citation of the Gospel accounts of Christ’s temptation by the devil. Furthermore, passages from that work that treat Christ’s apparent human weakness are keyed to a refutation of its reality. In order to explain Hilary’s completely silence about Christ’s temptation, I will (1) summarize some key claims that Hilary makes about Christ’s human nature; (2) briefly investigate Hilary’s underpinning theological reasoning for these claims; and (3) consider the soteriological suppositions of Hilary’s reasoning.

In his effort to prevent or deny suffering in the divine nature, Hilary spends a great deal of time refuting claims that Jesus experienced fear in his soul. Hilary denies fear in Christ’s soul from the Passion, wounds, abandonment by God, the indignity of the cross, and the descent into hell. From this list, one can see that Hilary is particularly concerned with apparently painful experiences in Christ’s life; Hilary does not address Christ’s experience of pleasure in any significant detail, though one might safely say that his rejections here would be equally strident. Perhaps most troubling of all, Hilary argues that if Jesus expressed hunger, thirst, or fear, he did so only out of human custom [*consuetudine*] and not because he humanly needed such things:

For even when he drank or ate or cried, the Lord is not shown being thirsty or hungry or sad. Rather, the custom of the body is taken up for the demonstration of the reality of the body. Thus by custom of our nature, he satisfied the customs of

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76 Hilaire de Poitiers, *La Trinité*, 217-227. He also spends a significant amount of time reinterpreting biblical verses that seem to indicate the presence of fear in Jesus’ soul; see ibid., 227-257.
the body. When he accepted drink or food, it was not a concession to the needs of his body, but rather to custom [*non se necessitati corporis, sed consuetudini tribuit*].

This explanation of Christ’s eating and drinking stands in contrast to what is seen in John of Damascus above; for John, Christ became in a sense subject to these passions at the moment of the incarnation. For Hilary, though, there is absolutely no necessity to Christ’s eating and drinking even in the course of Christ’s human life; Christ could go on living without any of those things. Whether hunger, thirst, or fear, these things are demonstrated by Christ to show that his body is physical, not that he in any way suffered the human passion that would normally precede them.

Hilary grounds the unique perfections of Jesus’ humanity on two pieces of theological data: the Virgin birth and the divinity of Christ. First, the Virgin birth allows Jesus’ physical origin to be distinguished from that of other human beings. This difference in origin means that, while Jesus is truly corporeal, he is not subject to all the faults of human nature that follow from the Fall. Indeed, Hilary affirms that even Jesus’ *body* is primarily from God and only secondarily from the Virgin Mary, since what the woman contributes to human birth is secondary to what the man—or in this case, the Holy Spirit—contributes. Second, and most fundamentally, the divinity of Christ underpins the unique perfections of Jesus’ humanity. Christ’s divinity, for instance, is

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77 Ibid., X.24, in *Trinité*, t. 3, trans. Durand, Pelland, and Morel, 210; my translation): “Neque enim tum cum situuit aut esuruit aut fleuit, bibisse Dominus et maducasse aut doluisse monstratus est: sed ad demonstrandum corporis ueritatem corporis consuetudo suscepta est, ita ut naturae nostrae consuetudine consuetudini sit corporis satisfactum. Vel cum potum et cibum accipit, non se necessitati corporis, sed consuetudini tribuit.”

78 John obviously wrote much later than Hilary, so this comparison is not intended to indicate that Hilary should have known better than to speak of Christ in that way.

79 Ibid., X.25-26 in *Trinité*, t. 3, trans. Durand, Pelland, and Morel, 210-217. Such is also the case, of course, for Maximus, for whom the Virgin birth guarantees a new mode or τρόπος of birth for a restored human nature.

responsible for preventing the suffering of Christ’s body to proceed to an experience of pain in his soul.81 Indeed, through a strong (though implicit) doctrine of a *communicatio idiomatum*, Hilary states that the power of the Son’s divinity is “intermingled” [admiscuit] with Jesus’ humanity to preserve it from suffering.82

Finally, it is worth asking how an impassible conception of Christ is understood by Hilary to be *salvific*. A variety of reasons present themselves. On the one hand, and perhaps most theologically, Hilary believes that one who heals others of bodily infirmities and weaknesses must himself be free from them.83 Perhaps taking seriously the crowd’s complaint at Jesus’ crucifixion that “he saved others; he cannot save himself” (Matthew 27:42), Hilary responds by showing that he in fact could and did save himself; Jesus did not suffer the human situation in a way identical to other human beings—indeed, he may not have suffered at all. In this way, Jesus is able to remain distant enough from human beings to pull them from the sinful morass in which they have been trapped. One other strictly soteriological reason presents itself in Hilary’s helpful interpretation of a passage from the Gospels:

> Still, he [Jesus] wants to explain the mystery of this assumption of a body: thanks to this assumption, we may be as a branch in Christ the vine, incapable, like branches, of producing fruit if he had not made himself our vine. He also exhorts us to remain in him by our faith in his assumed body, so that “the Word having been made flesh,” we might be in the nature of his body as branches on a vine.84

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81 Ibid., in *Trinité*, t. 3, trans. Durand, Pelland, and Morel, 206-7. On a different note, the fact the Hilary affirms Christ’s human omniscience is neither surprising nor unique. Hilary’s discussion of it, however, is more forceful than in either Maximus or John (see Ibid., IX.59-75, in *Trinité*, t. 3, trans. Durand, Pelland, and Morel, 136-171).

82 X.44, in *Trinité*, t. 3, trans. Durand, Pelland, and Morel, 240-3. It appears likely that this formulation contradicts Chalcedon’s rejection of “confusion,” but this is not the place to discuss this problem at length.


84 Ibid., in *Trinité*, t. 3, trans. Durand, Pelland, and Morel, 130-1: “corporeae tamen adsumptionis statim mysterium pandens, per quam ei tamquam in vite modo palmitis inessemus, fructum nobis ut palmitibus, nisi ille visus esset effectus, utilem non daturis. Adque idcirco manere nos in se per fidem adsumpti corporis monet, ut quia *verbum caro factum est*, naturae carnis suae tamquam viti palmites inessemus ...”
Here, one glimpses something significant about Hilary’s conception of the incarnation. For Hilary, Christ’s difference from other human beings in his very humanity permits him to transmit these benefits to the branches grafted onto him. If Christ were simply another branch, the entire vine would shrivel and die, but since Christ is the vine, rooted in the life-giving divine nature, he transforms the branches into his own human likeness. Thus, Christ’s humanity must be “rooted” in his divinity if the branches united to it are to produce fruit.85

Such a soteriological vision stands in tension with the chiastic soteriological structure traced in John of Damascus above. In Hilary’s conception, fallen human nature is transformed by being engrafted into the already-transformed humanity of Christ; in John’s conception, the weakness of fallen humanity itself is taken on by Christ and transformed from within. A conception of Christ’s humanity such as Hilary’s would certainly have an impact on the way one would conceive of Christ’s temptation and, indeed, largely explains why Christ’s temptation does not figure into Hilary’s Christology at all. Later authors who encounter Hilary’s Christology—including Aquinas—will have to decide what aspects of Hilary’s Christology can and cannot be integrated into a proper understanding of Christ’s temptation.

B. Augustine of Hippo

No Christian source is more important for Aquinas’s account of demonic temptation than Augustine. Augustine far exceeds other such sources in the sheer number of Aquinas’s references in questions that treat the devil. Further, Aquinas’s discussion of

85 It is not hard to see how one might move from such an analogy to St. Augustine’s non posse non peccare. The emphasis much more easily falls on the necessary sinfulness of human beings apart from Christ than it does in the trajectory discussed above.
demons in *De Malo* is largely shaped by questions raised and answered in Augustine’s works. Many of those questions do not directly impact the subject of this study, yet some of them merit discussion here. In what follows, I will discuss how Augustine believes humankind fell into the power of the devil; what power the devil is understood to hold “within” the human subject; whether the elect are also subject to this internal temptation; and what Augustine held concerning Christ’s temptation by the devil in relation to the temptation experienced by other humans after the Fall.

First, Augustine understands that the sin of Adam entails certain consequences for the rest of humankind. Beyond Augustine’s well-known development and refinement of the concept of original sin, he also articulates consequences of Adam’s sin that lie strictly in the realm of demonology. Augustine most easily speaks of the postlapsarian dominion of the devil as a dominion of death, but in some passages, he considers new “methods” of demonic temptation that arise specifically after the Fall. With Adam’s sin, the devil had

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86 Augustine’s understanding of the Fall of Adam in relation to the Fall of the angels is discussed in J. Patout Burns, “Augustine on the Origin and Progress of Evil,” in *Journal of Religious Ethics* 16, n. 1 (1988), 9-27. Burns argues that Augustine’s conception of Adam’s sin evolves so that it stands in a very remote relationship with that of the devil. This development is significant insofar as it bears on the explanation of the difference between Adam’s sin and that of the devil—why Adam can repent and the devil cannot. Augustine’s later thought explains this difference by Adam’s bodiliness, whereas Augustine’s earlier explanation explained it by the fact that the devil had given Adam an occasion for sin. Repentability, in both cases, is dependent on some contingency in Adam’s choice, but whether that contingency is internal or external to Adam is quite important. Among early medieval, Hugh of St. Victor implicitly sides against the late Augustine, ascribing the difference to the occasion provided to Adam by the devil’s temptation.

as it were acquired full property rights over [man], and being himself liable to no
corruption of flesh and blood had held [man] in thrall in his weakness and poverty
and the frailness of this mortal body.87

In addition to the connection of demonic powers with mortality, the devil is also seen
here as responsible for humanity’s “weakness” and “poverty.”88 Thus, the devil’s
influence extends beyond the rule of death over humanity and extends in some way into
the inner moral workings of human nature.

Augustine specifies in various passages what that dominion is—and isn’t.

Concerning what demons are able to produce in the human mind, Augustine’s view of
demonic influence is quite like that which was encountered in the first chapter; spirits can
impress sensory data onto human minds that is intended to lead to sin:

But sometimes …. some interference by another spirit, whether a bad or a good
one, will impress the images of bodily realities on the spirit as strongly as if the
bodies themselves were being presented to the senses of the body, full
consciousness still remaining in these same senses; and then the images of bodies
being produced in the spirit are being seen just like the bodies themselves seen
through the body.89

88 This relationship is sometimes somewhat remote, meaning that the devil only brings about human
inclination toward evil by his original temptation of Adam. See the following from On Free Will: “The
flesh coming from a sinful stock causes this ignorance and toil to infect the souls sent to it. Only in this
sense are they [the forms of ignorance] to be called sins, and the blame for them is to be ascribed
neither to the souls nor to their Creator. … [God] has given them the insight which every soul
possesses … [namely] that it must persevere in burdensome duties and strive to overcome the difficulty
of well-doing, and implore the Creator’s aid in its efforts. By the law without and by direct address to
the heart within, he has commanded that effort be made, and he has prepared the glory of the Blessed
City for those who triumph over the devil, who with wicked persuasion overcame the first man and
reduced him to his state of misery. That misery these souls undergo in lively faith in order to overcome
the devil” (Augustine, Earlier Writings, trans. John H. S. Burleigh (Philadelphia: Westminster Press,
1953), 205, emphasis added). In a similar vein, one reads in De Trinitate IV.15 (in Trinity, trans. Hill,
163, that the devil “seems a great chief with his battalions of demons to help him exercise his dominion
of deceit. Thus he puffs man up with false philosophy or entangles him in sacrilegiously sacred rites,
using them also first to deceive and make fools of the prouder souls who are too curious about magical
tricks and then to ruin them; and thus he holds him in subjection by his swollen self-esteem and his
determined preference for power over justice.” Beyond mortality, then, the devil is, for Augustine,
remotely responsible for reducing humanity to a “state of misery” that is described as “burdensome
duties” and as “difficulty of well-doing.”
89 Augustine, Literal Commentary on Genesis XII.25, (Augustine, On Genesis, trans.Edmund Hill (Hyde
A pseudo-Augustinian text (in fact written by Gennadius) called the *Liber Ecclesiasticorum Dogmatum* pronounces on the ubiquity of demonic activity in the mind.

One finds that

Not all of our evil thoughts are [always] excited by the influence of the devil, but sometimes emerge from the movement of our free will: but good thoughts are always from God.\(^{90}\)

Gennadius does not otherwise influence Aquinas on the matter of demonic temptation and because it is cited in later scholastic literature as though it were Augustine’s, I include this text here. While this text cannot be relevant to Augustine’s own mind on the question, the practical consequences of this pseudo-Augustinian text for medieval

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This opinion on the origin of evil thoughts, if perhaps not formally in contradiction with Evagrius, certainly emphasizes a different understanding of thoughts than that seen in the early Greek ascetic literature. For Evagrius, evil thoughts come primarily from the devil; human thoughts were usually neutral, and angel thoughts were good. Evil thoughts occupied for Evagrius a moral space prior to the consent of the will, so that their morality (or immorality) derived from the use that one made of them in a process of discernment. Gennadius, on the other hand, certainly considers that evil thoughts can come from the devil, but he does not consider demons to have an exclusive role in their origin. For Gennadius, these thoughts are considered equivocally, sometimes prior to the consent of the will (as when they come from the devil), sometimes as the result of a free act of the will.
accounts of demonic temptation are significant. If evil thoughts only come from the devil (as for Evagrius, for instance), one’s proper response is resistance and struggle, but if they arise from the will, the appropriate response also includes repentance and contrition. Thus, the Augustinian tradition inherited by the medieval period implies a different spiritual pedagogy than the Eastern monastic traditions discussed in Chapter 1. While the devil’s ‘interior’ action is affirmed, this tradition also recognizes that an individual can be directly responsible for evil thoughts so that repentance—and not solely struggle—is an appropriate response to such thoughts.

A more characteristic interest in Augustine’s authentic works on demonic temptation is how demons become aware of humanity’s own inner states, as it is only by carefully assessing our own mental states that the devil is able to suggest the appropriate temptations. In his earlier writings, Augustine believes he understands this process quite well, but in his Retractions admits that the means of this knowledge are obscure and difficult for humans to know. Somewhere between his most confident and most reserved statements on the subject, Augustine says in his Literal Commentary on Genesis that

It is difficult to find out and explain how these spiritual likenesses of bodily realities in our spirits become known even to unclean spirits, or what kind of obstacle our souls experience from these earthly bodies, so that we are unable in our turn to see them in our own spirits. These [coming examples] have, all the same, been the most definite and certain indications to establish that what people have been thinking has been made public by demons …

91 In Chapter 1, Evagrius also showed interest in this question, but Augustine spends much more time on it. The relationship between demons and magicians (seen, for instance, in the Book of 83 Questions, LXXIX and in De Trinitate III.2) is a theme that Evagrius did not consider at all, and it is a theme that features prominently in Aquinas’s demonology, especially in the De Malo.

92 Book of 83 Questions, XII, in Augustine, Responses, trans. Boniface Ramsey, 35. He expresses a little more hesitancy on this question in another early work, his Literal Commentary on Genesis XII.34, in Augustine, On Genesis, trans. Hill, 482: “For the rest it should cause no surprise that they make public things already done somewhere a long way away, which are confirmed as being true a few days later. They are enabled to bring this off, you see, both by the acuteness of their perception even of bodies, which incomparably outclasses ours, and also by the remarkable swiftness of their bodies, which are of
His best guess in his earliest writings is that demons are able to extrapolate from very fine movements of our bodies what our mental state might be. The temperature of our skin and other body language that is imperceptible to human beings is within the grasp of the demons, and that information gives them a good indication of their victim’s mental state.\textsuperscript{93} While in the later Retractions Augustine remains confident that demons can learn of our interior states of mind, he becomes fairly agnostic about the means by which this knowledge is possible.\textsuperscript{94}

These sorts of temptation apply particularly to the conditions of humanity after the Fall—but in various passages Augustine also indicates that not everyone necessarily suffers these temptations. While God sometimes allows the devil to afflict the good or elect for a time,\textsuperscript{95} God prevents the devil from afflicting the elect from within:

The Omnipotent did not debar him [the Devil] altogether from putting the saints to the test; but he threw out the Devil from their inner man, the seat of belief in God, so that they might profit from his outward assault.\textsuperscript{96}

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For reasons mentioned above, it is also appropriate to cite here Gennadius’s Liber Ecclesiasticorum Dogmatum, §47 as an Augustinian influence on Aquinas. One reads: “We are certain that the devil cannot see the internal thoughts of the soul, but we have learned by collecting evidence that they see signs of these in the motion and affections of these bodies: but the secrets of the heart are known only by the one of whom it is said, ‘you alone know the hearts of the sons of man. … We do not believe that demons have the power to inhabit the soul, but only to unite themselves by inclination and oppression. It is only possible for the one who created to inhabit those minds … [Internas animae cogitationes diabolum non uidere certi sumus, sed motibus eas corporis ab illo et affectionum indiciis colligi experimento didicimus: secreta autem cordis solus ille nouit ad quem dicitur ‘tu solus nosti corda filiorum hominum.’ … Demones per energiam non credimus substantialiter inlabi animae, sed adplicatione et oppressione uniri. Inlabi autem menti illi tantum possibilie est qui creauit, qui natura subsistens incorporeus capabilis est suae facturae.]”


\textsuperscript{95}Augustine, Book of 83 Questions, LXXIX.5, in Augustine, Responses, trans. Boniface Ramsey, 147.

\textsuperscript{96}Augustine, City of God, XX.8, in Augustine, Concerning the City of God against the Pagans, trans. Henry Bettenson (St. Ives: Pinguin Books, 1972), 910-4.
Similarly, in the *De Trinitate*, Augustine speaks of Christ’s role in this prevention:

> the true mediator of life … has cast that dead spirit and mediator of death out of the spirits of those who believe in him, so now that one no longer reigns inside them, but only attacks them from the outside without being able to overthrow them.⁹⁷

Both of these passages indicate an exemption of the elect from a particular consequences of sin. The instances of demonic assault against the elect that *are* permitted are purely pedagogical and in no way punitive; only those who are not elect are punitively attacked by the devil. Thus, Augustine holds that if one is elect, the devil is withheld from his most “interior” forms of attack.

Augustine elsewhere considers the Christological and soteriological basis for the freedom of the elect from inner demonic temptation.⁹⁸ Immediately following the passage

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⁹⁷ Augustine, *De Trinitate*, IV.3.17, in *Trinity*, trans. Hill, 164. While the following passage may not concern temptation directly, it certainly bears relevance to the question: “It is only God who inwardly effects the creation of all visible things, while he applies to the nature in which he creates them the external activities of good and bad angels, of people and of animals, according to his decree and the capacities and appetites he has distributed to them all …” (*De Trinitate* III.14, in *Trinity*, trans. Hill, 136).

⁹⁸ Some recent scholars have emphasized the relative scarcity of Augustine’s explicitly Christological writings; Augustine was not himself embroiled in Christological controversy as were many of his Greek-speaking contemporaries. See Brian E. Daley, “A Humble Mediator: The Distinctive Elements in Saint Augustine’s Christology,” in *Word and Spirit: A Monastic Review* 9 (1987), 100-117. In another vein, Walter H. Principe, “Some Examples of Augustine’s Influence on Medieval Christology,” in *Collectanea Augustiniana* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1990), 955-974 shows four areas in which Augustine’s thought on Christ found its way into medieval Christology, with somewhat waning influence on Aquinas in the 13th century. There is also a lively and difficult discussion about how to characterize Augustine’s Christology in light of the council of Ephesus (held a year after Augustine’s death). Is Augustine Alexandrian or Antiochene? Some have noted that Augustine’s vocabulary—especially from the era of the Pelagian controversy—is open to a Nestorian reading—especially the ‘unmerited’ character of the grace of union granted to Christ’s humanity with the Word. See David R. Maxwell, “What Was ‘Wrong’ with Augustine: The Sixth-Century Reception (or Lack Thereof) of Augustine’s Christology,” in *In the Shadow of the incarnation: Essays on Jesus Christ in the Early Church in Honor of Brian E. Daley*, ed. Peter W. Martens (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2008), 212-227, though Maxwell argues that Antiochene and Alexandrian labels ultimately do not apply to Augustine. with Nestorius Others have argued for Augustine’s continuity with a Cyrillian emphasis on the unity of Christ’s subject. Rowan Douglass Williams, “Augustine’s Christology: Its Spirituality and Rhetoric,” in *In the Shadow of the incarnation: Essays on Jesus Christ in the Early Church in Honor of Brian E. Daley*, ed. Peter W. Martens (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2008), 176-189 and Lewis Ayres, “Christology as Contemplative Practice: Understanding the Union of Natures in Augustine’s Letter 137,” in *In the Shadow of the incarnation: Essays on Jesus Christ in the Early Church in Honor of*
just quoted, Augustine logically follows the Christological consequences of that
distinction in different forms of temptation: the “true one,” Christ,
also allowed himself to be tempted by him, in order to be a mediator for
overcoming his temptations by way of example as well as by way of assistance.
For when the devil was driven off after attempting to insinuate himself by every
entry into the inner citadel of Christ, after the one dead in spirit had completed
every seductive temptation in the desert after the baptism, and had failed to force
an entry into the living spirit, being avid for human death in any shape or form he
turned his attention to procuring the only death which he was able and permitted
to, the death of that mortal element which the living mediator had received from
us. And precisely there, where he was able really to do something, was he well
and truly routed; and by his receiving the exterior authority to strike down the
Lord’s flesh, the interior authority by which he held us captive was itself struck
down.99

The last line is soteriologically essential: in order to undo the sort of temptations from
within that constitute the “inner authority” of the devil over human beings after the Fall,
Christ needed only to submit to an “exterior authority” of the devil over his human
“flesh.” The particular sovereignty by which the devil had bound humanity did not bind
Christ.100 Christ’s temptation is not itself held to reverse the devil’s power; Augustine
treats only Christ’s death—wherein the devil is granted an ‘external’ authority over
Christ’s body—as destroying the devil’s dominion. Further, Christ’s temptation, while
certainly like that of Adam and the elect, did not take the particular interior and punitive
form that is does for those who are not elect. Thus, for Augustine, the affirmation of

100 This arrangement, whereby Christ undoes the consequences of sin without personally experiencing these
consequences, has been noted in recent studies of Augustine’s Christology. Two works appeared in
2012 that address the status of Christ’s soul in relation to the consequences of sin. Gert Partoens and
Anthony Dupont, “Sed de quo peccato? Augustine’s exegesis of Rom. 8:3 in sermo 152, 9-11,” in
Vigiliae Christianae 66 (2012), 190-212 considers the different meanings of “sin” that Augustine
considers when interpreting Romans 8:3. Most recently, Dominic Keech, The Anti-Pelagian
Christology of Augustine of Hippo 396-430 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), a work Keech
himself describes as “revisionary” (ibid., 3), argues that the tensions in Augustine’s Christology
between “fallenness” and “unfallenness” are never satisfactorily resolved. Keech’s work is very
important, but any discussion of his claims would be tangential to my present tasks.
Christ’s “being tempted like us in all things” depends on the identity of the “us” under consideration. Since some forms of demonic temptation are only punitively assigned to the reprobate, Christ did not need to experience them.  

C. Gregory the Great

Gregory the Great is also among Aquinas’s explicit citations in his questions on demonic temptation. While perhaps not as structurally significant for Aquinas as Augustine, Gregory’s thought on the devil’s attack merits some commentary. Gregory’s thought about demons, founds with greatest density in his *Morals on Job*, reflect themes from Augustine while differing concerning the details of the devil’s temptation of the elect. In the following, I will discuss (1) Gregory’s theory of the stages of sin, (2) demonic temptations of the elect and of the reprobate, (3) discuss the moral psychology implicit in Gregory’s account of demonic temptation, (4) and briefly indicate some soteriological aspects of his position.

Gregory’s theory of the “stages” of sin—inherited from Augustine—is highly influential on medieval moral psychology, as will be seen in the next section. Gregory

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101 Perhaps in this sense, the Synod of Dort correctly understood Augustine and his Calvinist interpreters: Christ’s life only shares in and atones for that form of life experienced by the elect. In this small corner of soteriology, Augustine’s theory of atonement is in fact limited.

102 For a close and sustained consideration of Gregory the Great’s demonology, see Charlotte Emily Kingston, *The Devil in the Writings and Thought of Pope Gregory the Great (590-604)* (Unpublished, University of York, Department of History, 2011), especially 79-89. I was able to contact Dr. Kingston for feedback on this material; her analysis is substantially in agreement with my own.

103 Augustine’s consideration of the temptation in the garden and its application to anthropology bear many similarities to the way in which Gregory considers the serpent, Eve, and Adam. That Gregory’s theory is indebted to Augustine is argued by Carole Straw, “Gregory’s Moral Theology,” in *A Companion to Gregory the Great*, Bronwen Neil and Matthew J. Dal Santo, eds. (Boston: Brill Publishers, 2013), 188, where she points especially to Augustine’s *On Free Will* 3.20. Both Alexander of Hales and Aquinas make reference to Gregory’s explanations. Gregory’s general theory takes two forms in his work, one involving three stages (suggestion, pleasure, and consent) and another that adds a fourth stage (self-defense of one’s sin). Since this final stage is not important for my purposes, this difference in his presentations can be ignored. More discussion of Gregory’s theory of temptation can be found in Andre Godin, “Tentation,” in *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité*, vol. XV, eds. A. Derville, P. Lamarche, and A. Solignac (Paris: Beauchesne, 1991), 235 and in ibid., vol. VI, 888-90.
explains this theory in a number of works, including the *Morals on Job*, his *Pastoral Rule*, and the *Gospel Homilies*. There are three constant components in his presentation of the progress of a sinful act: the suggestion, the pleasure, and the consent—occasionally a forth component called the “boldness to defend” is added. Gregory often couches this terminology in an exegesis of Genesis 3, where the serpent, Eve, and Adam respectively represent the first three “stages.”

The purpose of the theory, ostensibly, is to allow the reader to recognize and cut off sin as early as possible before it has the chance to gain power over the soul. Gregory, however, uses the term “sin” ambiguously so that every stage is also a “way” in which sin is committed: sin “is committed by the suggestion, the pleasure, the consent, and the boldness to defend.” But Gregory certainly never means to assign moral blame to the first stage. In the case of the first stage of suggestion, the “sin” is metaphorical, external, and in no sense culpable. The third stage is equally clear in the opposite direction; when Adam consented to eat, the spiritual sin is completed and is clearly culpable. However, an ambiguity enters in the middle stage—that of “pleasure”—because Gregory is unclear about where the conscious ability to prevent such pleasure enters and, equivalently, about when culpability becomes possible.

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105 See also Straw, “Gregory’s Moral Theology,” 198 for the pedagogical purpose of Gregory’s distinctions. Gregory, *Moralia IV.49*, in Gregory, *Morals*, v. 1, 215 and *Pastoral Rule* III.29, in Gregory, *Rule*, trans. Demacopoulos, 179-83. In the former, Gregory states that “sin is committed in the heart in four ways, and in four ways it is consummated in act. For in the heart it [sin!] is committed by the suggestion, the pleasure, the consent, and the boldness to defend. For the suggestion comes of the enemy; the pleasure, the consent, of the spirit; and boldness to uphold, of pride.”

107 F. Homes Dudden, *Gregory the Great: His Place in History and Thought* (New York: Russell & Russell, 1905), 385 is able to make a surprising universal claim in this regard, namely that “Sin is committed through the co-operation of the devil and man” as if no sin were committed without the devil’s suggestion. Dudden goes on to clarify that the first step toward sin is “the suggestion of sin, proceeding from the devil”; this suggestion “is not itself sin.” The third step of consent is where “the sin is brought to completion,” but Dudden likewise does not clarify the moral status of the desire: “Next [second]
Particularly important is the question of the devil’s relationship to the “pleasure” in the soul. While Gregory is clear that (after the Fall) pleasure resides in the flesh, does or can the devil cause it to be there? It is necessary to look closely at those places where Gregory considers the stages of sin in relationship with evil spirits—and in order to do that, a further distinction is needed between the way that the devil attacks the elect and the reprobate.

Augustine, as seen above, argues that the elect are providentially protected by God from certain forms of temptation by the devil, so that the devil is only permitted to attack them from without. Gregory modifies this arrangement, allowing some form of “inner” attack of the devil to take place against both the reprobate and the elect. Concerning the reprobate, Gregory’s moral interpretation of a certain “beast” (understood as the devil or Antichrist) reaches the conclusion that the devil “abides [possidet]” in the mind of the wicked, since they welcome his evil suggestions. The reprobate become the “den” of the devil because the attacks that are permitted lead the reprobate happily into the commission of sin:

For he doubtless abides in and occupies the minds of those, whom he possesses as his own den: because he first leads on their thoughts to wicked desires [prius in eis cogitationes usque ad iniqua desideria ... perducit], and afterwards leads their

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108 Dudden, *Gregory the Great*, 379 argues that for Gregory the devil’s power of humankind is a just result of Adam’s sin, and yet Dudden provides no place for or explanation of that enslavement to the devil in his list of consequences of the Fall (ibid., 380-4).
wicked desires even to the commission of most sinful deeds. For the reprobate do not endeavour to repel, with the upright hand of judgment, the suggestions of him, to whose wishes they desire to yield, by submissive delight. And when any evil thought arises in their hearts, it is cherished at once by the eagerness of delight; and when no resistance is made to him, he is strengthened immediately by consent, and consent is instantly carried into outward act, but outward act is also made worse by habit.\(^{109}\)

The three stages are fairly clearly present in this arrangement; Gregory here uses “thoughts” and “suggestions” from the devil interchangeably. But only so much can be learned of the power of the devil from the description of those who have in a sense given themselves to the devil.

Thus, the elect are important for Gregory’s conception of the devil’s power in relation to thoughts, suggestions, and desires. But here, too, Gregory’s language indicates that the elect are not immune from the devil’s inner attack. Unlike Augustine’s theory, Gregory argues that God does not categorically prevent the devil from attacking the good

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One might also note the preceding paragraph for the lot of the reprobate (Moralia XXVII.49, in Gregory, Morals, v. 3.1, 236-7): “[The devil] possesses even now the hearts of all reprobates, before he manifests himself openly; and occupies them by his secret wickedness, as though they were his own den; and conceals himself in their gloomy minds, in order to effect all the hurt he desires against the good. … For God in truth appoints darkness, when in inflicting judgment in requital for sins, He withdraws the light of His wisdom. And it is made night, because the mind of wicked men is blinded with the errors of their own ignorance. In which all the beasts of the field pass through, when malignant spirits, lurking under the gloom of deceit, pass through into the hearts of the reprobates, by fulfilling their evil purposes. In which also the young of lions roar, because spirits rise up with importunate temptations, as the ministers of most wicked, but yet preeminent, powers [Qui tamen omnium reproborum corda etiam nunc priusquam apertus appareat possidet, eaque per occultam malitiam quasi proprium antrum tenet, atque ad omne quod nocere bonis appetit in eorum se obscuris mentibus abscondit. … Tenbras quiqpe Dominus ponit, cum peccatis iudicia rependens, lumen suae intelligenetiae subtrahit. Et nox efficitur, quia prauorum mens ignorantiae suae erroribus caecatur. In qua omnes bestiae siluae pertranseunt, dum maligni spiritus sub opacitate fraudis latentes in reproborum corda pruatites suas explando percurrunt. In qua et catuli leonum regiunt, qua nequissimarum sed tamen eminentium potestatum ministri spiritus importunis temptationibus insurgunt]” (CCSL 143:1369).
as he does the wicked. Rather, the key difference between the elect and reprobate for Gregory is that the devil is not allowed to “abide” in the elect:

But I think it ought to be specially observed, that this beast is said, not only to enter his den, but to abide therein. For he sometimes enters even the minds of the good, he suggests unlawful thoughts, he wearies them with temptations, he endeavours to turn aside the uprightness of the spirit to the pleasure of the flesh; he also strives to carry out delight as far as to consent [*delectationem quoque ad consensum perducere nitetur*]: but yet he is kept from prevailing by the opposition of aid from on high. He can enter therefore into the minds of the good [*Intrare ergo in mentes bonorum postest*], but cannot abide therein, because the heart of the righteous is not the den of this beast.\(^{110}\)

Certainly, God (and perhaps the angelic hosts) comes to the aid of the elect in allowing them to succeed over these demonic attacks, but the fact remains that the devil can and does attack even the good by entering into their minds.\(^{111}\) The morally relevant difference between the elect and the reprobate has nothing to do with the *means* or “depth” of temptation that the devil uses against them. Rather, it is the response that they have to


\(^{111}\) Gregory’s views on this matter may be in continuity with Eastern Origenistic demonology, thanks to Cassian, the important student of Evagrius who “translated” much of this theory into Latin. See Vandenbroucke, “Demon” in *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité*, vol. III, 208-10. Straw affirms this view, as well: “*Demons can sneak into the soul uninvited; the devil can ambush the soul and invade it forcibly*” (Straw, “Gregory’s Moral Theology,” 199-200); explaining and defending this claim further, Straw adds: “*That demons enter the soul or heart is not heterodoxy, but a statement of fact about our weakened condition. To reject this is Pelagianism, a denial of humanity’s inborn sinfulness*” (ibid., 199, n. 139). In this second quotation, it is significant that Straw is willing to equate humanity’s “inborn sinfulness” with demonic entry into the human heart.
these various forms of temptation (whereby the devil either is cast out or remains) that redounds to their moral praise or blame.

Thus, Gregory does not always assign blame to the temporary internal attack of the devil when perpetrated against the elect. Much like what was seen in St. Maximus in Chapter 2, Gregory does not see the attack of the devil as morally culpable. But what exactly can the devil do in the elect? Gregory certainly assigns to the devil an ability to place evil thoughts there, but in the above citation there is some lack of clarity whether desires are also placed in the mind by the devil. Sometimes Gregory appears to argue that the devil cannot. Gregory, making a clear reference to the three stages, states that since sin is admitted in three ways, namely, when it is perpetrated by the suggestion of the serpent, with the pleasure of the flesh, with the consent of the spirit; [therefore] this Behemoth first puts forth his tongue suggesting unlawful thoughts, afterwards alluring to delight, he infixes his tooth, but lastly, gaining possession by consent, he clenches his tail.

112 Gregory is sometimes unclear about whether the movement of the flesh should be understood purely as an anthropological category or whether an objective “power” should be associated with it; Moralia VIII.8, in Gregory, Morals, v. 1, 418-9, discusses the warfare and trial against evil spirits that transitions in the paragraph into a discussion of interior struggle: “we as it were carry an enemy along with us, whom we get the better of with toilsome endeavours. And so the life of man is itself ‘a trial,’ in that it has that springing up to it from itself …” Is this a demon, or the medieval fomes peccati? Gregory simply is not clear. Gerard G Carluccio, The Seven Steps to Spiritual Perfection according to St. Gregory the Great (Ottawa, Canada: University of Ottawa Press, 1949), 116-118 and 128-134 discusses but does not resolve the relationship between objective forces of evil and subjective tendencies of the flesh. On the one hand, there is a “spiritual warfare” with the devil (ibid., 116), but on the other there is also spiritual weakness that Carluccio treats as completely distinct (ibid., 116-118). Similarly, Carluccio does not adequately address the relationship of the obstacles “from within” (ibid., 128-131) from the obstacles “from without” (ibid., 131-132). Even if Carluccio groups them under different headings, he does not explain his textual basis for distinguishing them so sharply. Similarly, Bernard Green, “The Theology of Gregory the Great: Christ, Salvation, and the Church,” in A Companion to Gregory the Great ed. Bronwen Neil and Matthew Dal Santo (Boston: Brill, 2013), 153 juxtaposes the devil’s “rights over sinful humanity” with the effects of the Fall, but does not make the relationship intrinsic; the “concupiscence, disordered desire” (ibid.) to which humankind is susceptible bears no clear relationship to the devil in Green’s presentation. These presentations are in notable contrast to the recognition by Straw, “Gregory’s Moral Theology, 199-200 that for Gregory the devil very much has an interior role to play in human temptation.

From the context, this second “delight” is only possible when the one attacked has “carelessly allowed” the first suggestion to gain strength—there is some minor fault involved.\textsuperscript{114} This vein of Gregory’s thought is what is taken up in many voices in the medieval tradition (such as Alexander of Hales), so that the devil can only independently suggest thoughts of evil, and not evil desires. In this reading, as soon as there is desire, one has begun to cooperate in the suggestion and is somewhat culpable for that cooperation.

But Gregory does not always speak of the devil’s suggestion in quite this way. In the following, for instance, the devil uses “sudden suggestions” to sneak past the “threshold” (the suggestion itself) and into the “first vestibule” (desire). But Gregory does not blame the one who is assailed in this way, either for the suggestion or for the desire:

For He does not blame for their [the thoughts/demons] coming, but for their remaining there. And unlawful thoughts come even unto good hearts, but they are forbidden to remain; because the righteous, in order to keep the house of conscience from being taken, drive away the enemy from the very threshold of the heart. And if he has ever secretly crept [\textit{subripiuerit}] by sudden suggestions to the first vestibule [desire], yet he does not reach to the gate of consent.\textsuperscript{115}

\textsuperscript{114} Ibid. Some of the context concerning this first suggestion: “The first suggestion of the serpent is soft indeed, and tender, and easily to be crushed by the foot of virtue. But if it is carelessly allowed to gain strength, and access is freely allowed it to the heart, it increases itself with such great power as to weigh down the enslaved mind, and to increase to intolerable strength. … his temptation when once received in the heart, in all subsequent assaults, rules as if by right.” A prior fault is fairly clearly implied by the separation between the first suggestion and the later assaults; the later assaults are a sort of punishment for letting the devil in in the first place.

\textsuperscript{115} Gregory, \textit{Moralia} XXVII.50, in Gregory, \textit{Morals}, v. 3.1, 237-9, translation modified. “Neque enim reprehendit cur ueniunt, sed cur morantur. Et in bonis enim candibus cogitationes illicitae ueniunt, sed tamen morari prohibentur, quia recti quiue ne captuandam domum conscientiae praebant, ad ipso cordis limine hostem fugant. Qui et si quando repentinis suggestionibus usque ad primum uestibulum subripiuerit, ad consensus tamen ianuam non pertingit” (CCSL 143:1370). One manuscript, instead of “subripiuerit” reads “subrepit,” but the meaning is not significantly changed. Gregory illuminates this theory with the example of Peter during Jesus’ trial, but the example is not altogether illuminating. He continues: “It was to this beast doubtless that Peter, overcome by the impulse of sudden fear, opened the gate of his heart, by denial, but he withstood it by a speedy discovery, he closed it by his tears.” Fear here is the desire that “sneaks by” into the first vestibule, but Peter appears to be a counter-
The “threshold” is the devil’s suggestion, and the first vestibule is the desire—both of which are clandestinely accomplished by the devil, even against the will of the one tempted. Gregory thereby indicates that in these circumstances only the consent to the first two is blameworthy.\footnote{When this text is taken up in the medieval tradition—by, for instance, Alexander of Hales in his treatment of Christ’s temptation—Gregory is read as saying that any movement of the devil within a moral subject is venially sinful, and so Christ cannot be tempted in this way.} What is essential in Gregory’s account here—and that upon which the consistency of his presentation hangs—is the length of time the devil’s suggestion is allowed to remain. In the previous examples, the person involved allowed the devil through carelessness to take up residence in the heart. Here, however, the example because he proceeds on to consent by his denial of Christ. Even so, Peter was able to cast the devil back out through the final two steps (discovery and tears), despite initially consenting to the second “stage,” the desire. Gregory’s use of the gate here is confusing, because in Peter’s denial Gregory is speaking of the third stage and not the second, which is treated in his previous knowledge as inside the threshold, beyond the gate. What opens the gate—the fear (the second stage) or the denial (the third stage)? The essential thing, as I note above, appears to be the speed with which the suggestion is repelled; Peter quickly recanted his decision and that is what spares him from being possessed by the devil. But since he consented, it seems that Gregory would still maintain that he sinned.

Other examples of demonic suggestion transitioning immediately into appetitive states can be found in the \textit{Moralia}. While these passages could easily be developed into a lengthy study, I will only address the most important ones briefly. \textit{Moralia} II.72-76, in Gregory, \textit{Morals}, v. 1, 113-9 (an exegesis of Job’s servants reporting the destruction of his herds and family) describes a wide variety of demonic attacks that translate into appetitive states, even against the will of the one so attacked (II.72: “the crafty enemy, spying out the serious thoughts of our heart, corrupts them under the cloak of that beguiling pleasure which he insinuates … though he has not the power to draw us to a deed of sin, nevertheless by secret theft he spoils the thoughts of good things through his temptations”; reason alone escapes the devil’s sword in II.73; II.74: evil spirits “inflame the pure thoughts of our minds with the fires of lust, … they disorder the chaste feelings of the mind with the temptations of sensuality”). In this passage, the devil is said to destroy and kill the safeguards of the soul that would keep the devil from proceeding to these appetitive attacks; for example, “because by a sudden onset [the evil spirits] sometimes overwhelm the very cautions of the mind, they slay with the sword as it were the servants that are their keepers” (ibid., II.74). The examples in \textit{Moralia} II.75-9, in Gregory, \textit{Morals}, v. 1, 116-23, are even more provocative; the devil can appear to destroy all the virtues of the soul, but even when they appear as dead, “they are kept alive in the sight of God, by perseverance in a right purpose of mind” (II.79). \textit{Moralia} II.32, in Gregory, \textit{Morals}, v. 1, 90-1, describes the devil’s “darts” as “woes”; \textit{Moralia} XIII.19 (in Gregory, \textit{Morals}, v. 1, 377), XIV.20 (in Gregory, \textit{Morals}, v. 2, 129), XV.19 (in Gregory, \textit{Morals}, v. 2, 183-4), XXI.7 (in Gregory, \textit{Morals}, v. 2, 519-20), and XXI.12 (in Gregory, \textit{Morals}, v. 2, 525) describe the devil sowing desires; \textit{Moralia} XXVIII.43 and .45 (in Gregory, \textit{Morals}, v. 3.1, 297-9) indicate that even the mind enkindled with demonic desires is kept “within bounds” as long as consent is withheld, with the help of God’s grace. Dr. Kingston has also indicated to me that Gregory’s \\textit{Life of St. Benedict}, dialogue 2 has instances of this phenomenon of immediate demonic instigation of desire, though I have not personally checked that text.
devil’s movement is sudden and even if the demon quickly proceeds into movements of desire, one who withholds consent would appear blameless—God “does not blame for their coming, but for their remaining.” Thus, the second stage of Gregory’s moral psychology is not always sinful, but only becomes so if it is met without resistance and allowed to take up residence in the soul.

If such inner demonic temptation is not intrinsically sinful, the sole evidence of Hebrews 4:15 would indicate that it should be present in Christ. However, Gregory follows Augustine in arguing that Christ would not have been tempted from within by the devil. In a general denial of illicit thoughts in Christ, Gregory states that Christ could only experience evil suggestions from without, and could never experience evil desires within or consent to them:

God, who became human in the womb of the Virgin, and came into the world without sin to take to himself a body, endured no inconsistency within himself. He could therefore be tempted by suggestion, but no delight in sin took hold of his heart. This whole diabolic temptation then took place from without, not from within.118

Of course, the lack of desire could simply indicate that Gregory denied that Christ ever cooperated with the devil’s suggestion, but Gregory gives other indications that the devil never independently aroused desire for sin in Christ.

117 Gregory, Moralia XXVII.50, in Gregory, Morals, v. 3.1, 237-9; see also Gregory, Moralia XXXIII.6, in Gregory, Morals, v. 3.2, 558-9, for the brevity of the devil’s penetration into the soul of the Elect.

118 Gregory, Gospel Homilies 16 (numbered according to PL 76:1135; in Gregory the Great, Forty Gospel Homilies, trans. Dom David Hurst (Kalamazoo, Michigan: Cistercian Publications, 1990), 102). Rodrigue Bélanger, “La dialectique Parole-Chair dans la christologie de Grégoire le Grand,” in Gregory the Great: A Symposium, ed. John Cavadini (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1995), 82-90 discusses Gregory’s use of “interiority” and “exteriority” in his soteriology. It is not clear how Gregory’s usage of “within” and “without” in Gospel Homilies 16 relates to his broader usage of “interior” and “exterior” presented by Belanger. Carluccio, The Seven Steps to Spiritual Perfection, 36-7 discusses the subjective “manipulation” of the human soul by Christ to bring about its sanctification, but Carluccio does not discuss an objective basis for this reconfiguration of the soul in the course of Christ’s human life on earth.
At least two passages from the *Morals on Job* provide further evidence of the purely external temptation of Christ. Gregory denies that the devil could “wound [Christ’s] mind”:

And because [the devil] could not reach so far in his temptation, as to wound the mind of our Redeemer [*ad lacerationem mentis*], he was eager for His death in the flesh.\(^{119}\)

This reasoning is almost identical to that in Augustine, who, as I demonstrated above, also saw a connection between Christ’s insusceptibility to internal attack and the devil’s attempt to seek Christ’s bodily death. In another passage, the soteriological significance of Christ’s immunity to interior demonic attack is clarified:

Never … was the soul of your Redeemer disordered by [temptation’s] urgency. … [The devil] has no power to shake by temptation the mind of the Mediator betwixt God and man. For He so condescended to take all this upon Himself externally, that His mind, being still inwardly established in His Divine Nature, should remain unshaken. … while Satan is let loose to smite the Redeemer’s flesh, he is debarred the soul, forasmuch as at the same time that he obtains His Body to inflict upon it the Passion, he loses the Elect from the claims of his power. And while That One’s flesh suffers death by the Cross, the mind of these is established against assaults.\(^{120}\)

Thus, Gregory believes that Christ did not need to accept or assume inner demonic temptation in order to free humankind from these torments. For Gregory, Christ’s external death suffices for driving the devil out of the hearts of the elect and protecting them from future attack.\(^{121}\) Formally, one must admit that this position puts Gregory (as it

\(^{119}\) *Moralia* XXVII.49, in Gregory, *Morals*, v. 3.1, 236-7: “Et quia ad lacerationem mentis pertingere temptando non potuit in Redemptore nostro, ad mortem carnis anhelauit” (*CCSL* 143:1369).

\(^{120}\) *Moralia* III.30, in Gregory, *Morals*, v. 1, 151-2. Green, “The Theology of Gregory the Great,” 144-5, commenting on this passage, also admits that Gregory is attempting to strike a “difficult balance” between Nestorianism (that would deny Christ’s suffering altogether) and a sort of Docetism (in which Christ’s human life is not an example for others). See also *Moralia* XVII.46-7, in Gregory, *Morals*, v. 2, 308-10.

\(^{121}\) See also *Moralia* XXVII.49, in Gregory, *Morals*, v. 1, 236-7: “This beast doubtless possessed the hearts of many of the Elect, but the Lamb has, by his death, expelled him from them. … Because when
did Augustine) in some tension with Hebrews 4:15, though not without recognition that Christ can and does accomplish human liberation from such attacks by means of his death. Christ’s temptation in and of itself is not considered soteriologically by Gregory; he does not discuss it when he considers how other human beings are freed from their own temptations by the devil.

Considering Augustine and Gregory together, an important Christological distinction develops in the West that, through them, passes into Latin reflection on Christ’s temptation: in order to free other human beings from the tyranny of the devil both without and within, Christ does not need to experience every kind of demonic temptation to which other human beings are susceptible after the Fall. Certainly, Augustine and Gregory are not the only sources of this idea; for his own reasons, John of Damascus, as has been seen, also makes some distinction between Christ’s temptation and that of fallen humanity. By the influence of these figures in the Greek-speaking and Latin-speaking world, an end comes to serious ascetic and theological reflection on the redemptive potential of an *interior* temptation of Christ by the devil.

**IV. Medieval Sources on Christ’s Temptation by the Devil**

In this final section of this chapter, I will consider three central medieval figures who each contribute in their own way to theological reflection on Christ’s temptation by the devil. Peter the Lombard (A), Alexander of Hales (B), and Bonaventure (C) are each expelled from the minds of the faithful, by the Light of the Truth manifested in the flesh, [the demons] returned, as it were, to their dens, when they held the hearts of unbelievers only [Haec nimirum bestia multa et electorum corda tenuit, sed hanc abillis moriens Agnus excussit. ... Quia veritatis lumine per carnem apparente, a fidelium mentibus excussi, quasi ad cubilia sua reversi sunt, dum sola infidelium corda tenuerunt]” (CCSL 143:1369-70). On Christ’s rule in the hearts of the elect, see *Moralia* XX.11-12, in Gregory, *Morals*, v. 2, 453-4.
towering figures in the medieval theological tradition and each discusses Christ’s
temptation by the devil in significant detail. These three figures constitute some of the
most immediate background upon which Thomas Aquinas himself wrote on this subject.
I will consider significant anthropological and Christological claims in each of these three
figures in their historical order.

A. Peter the Lombard

Peter the Lombard’s influence on Thomas Aquinas, as a bare fact, needs no
demonstration; Aquinas’s first major work is a commentary on Peter’s Sentences. In what
follows, I will briefly indicate the Lombard’s thought on temptation in general and
demonic temptation in particular, followed by some reference to his understanding of
Christ in relation to these two things. Even though Peter does not speak of Christ’s
temptation at all, there are other ways of gleaning what he has to say on the subject—not
least of which is the substantive work already performed by Paul Gondreau in his chapter
on Thomas’s sources. I will at points connect Peter back to sources that preceded him,
but my goal is mostly to explain some of the fundamental points that will pave the ground
of the later commentatorial tradition on the Sentences. In this capacity, I will discuss the
forms of temptation that Peter recognizes, try to discern something of the source or origin
of concupiscence as Peter understands it, and finally look at Peter’s Christological
reflections.

Concerning Peter’s thought on human temptation, he follows Augustine, Gregory,
the Damascene, and Hugh of St. Victor in a basic distinction between two general kinds
of temptation: inner and outer.122 Peter’s account, while textually quite similar to Hugh of

122 Marcia L. Colish, Peter Lombard, 2 vols. (New York: E.J. Brill, 1994) provides a summary of other
notable positions in the 12th century on the question of temptation, particularly in Adam and Eve’s fall.
St. Victor’s thought on the subject varies in substantive ways from Hugh’s distinction between interior and exterior temptation. While Peter formally categorizes temptation in

Many of these authors assign the origin of the Fall to the exterior temptation by the devil, while others, such as Honorius and Roland of Bologna, treat interior and exterior temptation as simultaneous (Colish, Lombard, v. 1, 372). As for the Lombard himself, he explains the devil’s temptation of Eve as external, but cooperating with internal temptations to vainglory, gluttony, and avarice. Those inner temptations, Colish argues, do not arise from the devil but instead were from within (ibid., 377-8).

Colish does not provide a detailed account of the Lombard’s definition or explanation of human temptation in general; she takes for granted the easy separability of inner and outer temptation that is precisely under investigation here.

Hugh of St. Victor stands at an important juncture in western Christian theology. Much like John of Damascus, Hugh’s doctrinal texts, such as De Sacramentis, take on that note of technicality and structural precision that becomes the hallmark of scholastic thought. Because of this fact—and because of his language—it makes the most sense to treat Hugh within the medieval context. In my attempt to trace the distinction between interior and exterior temptation through the tradition, Hugh is an important step. Earlier Latin thought, as seen in Augustine and Gregory, had certainly considered this distinction, but its precise scholastic form can be attributed in many ways to Hugh, who becomes an important authority for later Latin thinkers, particularly Peter the Lombard. I have not, however, found an indication that Aquinas himself cites Hugh explicitly; hence his place in a footnote.

Hugh’s version of the distinction between different forms of temptation is without any Christological reflection; it is a mere anthropological note that serves no clear purpose even in the discussion underway at that point in the text. However, the distinction he introduces there passes through him into the most significant Latin scholastics, including Peter the Lombard, Alexander of Hales, and Bonaventure. Hugh states: “Furthermore, we must know that there are two kinds of temptations, one exterior, the other interior. There is exterior temptation, when externally an evil is suggested to us, either visibly or invisibly, to be done. There is interior temptation when through the movement of depraved delight the mind within is urged to sin. Now this temptation is overcome with greater difficulty, because opposing within it is strengthened against us from our own” (Hugh of St. Victor, De Sacramentis 1.7.9, in Hugh of St. Victor, On the Sacraments of the Christian Faith, trans. Roy J. Deferrari (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 1951), 124).


The rest of Hugh’s discussion in that section explains why temptation mitigates sin (“Yet the more serious the violence of the temptation that we suffer in sinning, the lighter the expiation by which we are restored to lost grace”) and why human beings, because they were tempted by the devil, should be allowed to repent, whereas since demons were in no way tempted from without, they should not be permitted this repentance. There is no further explanation of the many questions that might arise with regard to the “movement of depraved delight [motu praue delectationis]”: whether it is essentially Augustinian “concupiscence,” whether it bears any connection to the devil’s temptation, or whether it is properly called temptation or, on the other hand, sin. Such is left to the figures who are explicit sources for Aquinas’s theory of demonic temptation.

Two other features are also worth mentioning. First, Hugh does not explicitly mention the devil when he speaks of exterior temptation; that kind of temptation arises when something outside us suggests an evil as something to be performed. It may be obvious that the devil is responsible for such suggestion, but Hugh does not attribute any central or explicit role to the devil in the progress of such temptation. Second, Hugh indicates that there are two different kinds of exterior temptation, one “visible” and one “invisible.” As will be seen with Peter in a moment, this distinction is later rearranged so that “invisible” temptation becomes a species of interior temptation performed by the
two different headings, there are three morally distinct forms of temptation: exterior, demonic interior, and fleshly interior.\textsuperscript{124} Prior to Peter, Hugh’s two-fold division of temptation, as discussed in a note above, stated that exterior temptation could be both visible and invisible, but Peter defines exterior temptation as when

an evil extrinsic to us is visibly suggested to us by some word or sign \textit{(verbo vel signo aliquo)}, so that the one to whom the suggestion is made may bend to consent to sin. And such a temptation is done only by the adversary.\textsuperscript{125}

Two comments should be made about this definition. First, Peter is explicit that the adversary—the devil—is the sole source of exterior temptation. Peter does not discuss whether God can be said to tempt or whether human beings incline each other to evil (as the later scholastic tradition will), but he at least makes clear what Hugh had not, namely, the \textit{demonic} origin of exterior temptation. Second, Peter’s limitation of exterior temptation to temptation that is visible through “some word or sign” exteriorizes (further than Hugh’s text) what qualifies as an “external” temptation. Whereas for Hugh it was perhaps possible to call an invisible demonic temptation “exterior,” the only way in which the devil can tempt from without in Peter’s categorization is through explicit suggestion. Peter’s redistribution renders invisible forms of demonic attack categorically “internal.”

On the other hand, internal temptation, broadly speaking, occurs when “an evil intrinsic to us is suggested invisibly.”\textsuperscript{126} Such temptation comes in two forms, one

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\textsuperscript{124} Lombard, \textit{Sentences} II.21.6: On the Double Kind of Temptation
\textsuperscript{125} Ibid. Latin: “Exterior tentatio est, quando nobis extrinsecus malum visibiliter suggeritur, verbo vel signo aliquo, ut ille cui fit ad peccati consensum declinet. Et talis tentatio tantum fit ab adversario” (Peter the Lombard, \textit{Sententiae in IV Libris Distinctae}, v. 1.2 (3 vols.), (Grottaferrata: Editiones Collegii S. Bonaventurae Ad Claras Aquas, 1971), 437).
\textsuperscript{126} Ibid.: “Interior vero tentatio est, quando invisibiliter malum nobis intrinsecus suggeritur.”
demonic and the other from the “corruption of the flesh.” Now, Peter elsewhere argues that the first movement of the sensible faculty is venially sinful, but here Peter qualifies that claim so that such movement is only sinful when it comes from within:

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127 Peter’s exposition of the sensitive appetite is presented in Sentences II.24. In this Distinction, Peter borrows a tripartite understanding of human nature from St. Augustine’s De Trinitate which is itself based out of a reading of Genesis 3 (see Augustine, On the Trinity: Books 8-15, ed. Gareth B. Matthews, trans. Stephen McKenna (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 2002), XII.12). Augustine, for his part, draws an analogy between two sets of concepts: on the one hand, the serpent, Eve, and Adam; on the other hand, the sensitive appetite, the lower rational power, and the higher rational power.

Peter’s passage adopts this analogy wholesale, but he draws moral conclusions from the analogy that are uniquely his own. As Lottin points out (Psychologie et Morale II.1, 494-495), for Augustine, it appears that there is only a question of sin if the woman consents to the temptation of the snake: “Whenever the carnal or animal sense, therefore, forces upon the intention of the mind … some inducement to enjoy itself, … then the serpent, as it were, addresses the woman. But to consent to this inducement is to eat of the forbidden tree” (Augustine, On the Trinity, trans. McKenna, XII.12, emphasis added). The sense of the rest of Augustine’s passage is that Augustine saw no morally relevant behavior in these movements of the sensitive appetite prior to consent. Peter uses this Augustinian analogy as follows. The sense appetite of a human being perceives an apparent good external to the body, then passes on that perception to the judgment of the “lower” power of reason, the power that is concerned with temporal affairs. If the apparent good is contrary to the true good of the individual (a temptation to sin), and the lower power of reason rejects it as such, Peter states that a sin is imputed to the individual, but as he describes it, it is “venial and very light” (Peter the Lombard, Sentences II.24.9; Latin: “Si ergo in motu sensuali tantum peccati illecebra teneatur, veniale ac levissimum est peccatum” (Lombard, Sententiae, v. 1.2, 457)). If, however, the lower rational power consents to this temptation, the individual takes delight in pondering the apparent good in thought, upon which the lower rational faculty passes the thought on to the higher reasoning faculty, that which is concerned directly with the contemplation of universals. If the higher faculty of reason correctly rejects the temptation, the resulting sin can be either venial or mortal depending on how long the thought is entertained (Sentences II.24.12). And finally, if the higher power consents, then the temptation is pursued in act (ibid., II.23.6-11). Such a sin, Peter argues, is “grave and damnable” (ibid., II.24.11).

One might question the appropriateness of the particularities of Peter’s analogy. For instance, Peter argues that the sensible appetite incurs a “venial and very light” sin when it alone is moved toward the sinful attraction. But if Peter is in fact basing this argument out of the analogy, this conclusion implies that in the original Eden, the serpent’s temptation of Adam and Eve was itself sufficient to bring about the Fall. Sin, albeit a light and venial one, would have entered the world the moment the serpent tempted Eve with the fruit—even if Eve had said No to the serpent. While perhaps absurd, the analogy as Peter draws it seems to require that the temptation alone be co-terminal with a sin in Adam and Eve. This objection probably pushes Peter’s analogy too far. It is, after all, merely an analogy, and one that is not necessarily reversible. Just because the mental mechanism of temptation is like the temptation in the garden does not necessarily mean that the temptation in the garden needs to be just like the mental mechanism of temptation. As a secondary objection, one might also ask whether the three (sensuality, lower reason, and higher reason) were present in Adam and Eve according to the very typology they were in the process of living out when they were tempted. If so, complications would then abound; when the serpent tempted Eve, was her sensual appetite necessarily driven to contemplate the fruit? And what if it consented along with her lower reasoning faculties, but her higher reasoning faculties intervened? Would such a situation still have brought about the Fall? But if this progression of temptation is only applicable to human reasoning after the Fall, by what mechanism did Adam and Eve consent to the serpent’s temptation?
Indeed, both the devil invisibly suggests evil, and an unlawful motion and depraved titillation arises from the corruption of the flesh [*ex carnis corruptione*]. And for that reason the temptation which is from the flesh does not occur without sin [*non fit sine peccato*]; however, the one which is from the enemy, unless consent is extended to it, does not cause sin but is matter for the practice of virtue [*non habet peccatum, sed est materia exercendae virtutis*].

The moral difference is stark: when inner temptation has its origin from within, it is sinful; when it has its origin from without, it is *materia exercendae virtutis*. Three comments should be made about this explanation of interior temptation: one about the way Peter’s definition of temptation is somewhat inconsistent, a second about the origin of concupiscence, and a third about the blamelessness of interior temptation.

First, this distinction argues for a category of inner temptation that is sinful. For Augustine and Gregory, this category was explained by the fact that such temptation was largely inflicted on the reprobate for their punishment. Peter, for his part, elsewhere explains this category by arguing that the rational faculty has the ability to prevent the movement of the sensible faculty in any given instance, but it seems inappropriate for Peter to categorize such an event as “temptation,” as he does here. One might expect temptation and sin to be related as necessary but not sufficient cause and effect, but in this instance they are one and the same. What does it mean for a moral lapse, sinful in itself, to be a “temptation”? The clarification of the precise definition of temptation, then, is left to the later commentatorial tradition to resolve; Aquinas himself will provide a distinctive solution in the coming chapter.

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128 Ibid. (translation modified): “Name et diabolus invisibiliter mala suggerit, et ex carnis corruptione suboritur motus illicitus et titillatio prava. Ideoque tentatio quae est ex carne, non fit sine peccato; quae autem est ab hoste, nisi ei consentiatur, non habet peccatum, sed est materia exercendae virtutis.”

129 See the footnote above.
Second, Peter’s categorization of concupiscence as “interior” is not maintained with perfect consistency. Remember that John of Damascus, for instance, did not see the clear distinction between temptation *ex carne corruptione* and temptation from devil that Peter here argues for; they were interrelated realities in the *De Fide Orthodoxa*. In fact, this same ambiguity arises in Peter’s text as well. Even if concupiscence is experienced as coming from within, Peter argues that concupiscence itself has exterior causes. Peter considers the origin of concupiscence in Distinction XXXII.3 where he argues that concupiscence has two origins according to its two major defining characteristics: *poena* and *culpa*, punishment and fault. He explains:

> insofar as it is a punishment, it has God as its author, but insofar as it is a fault, it has the devil or man as its author.\(^{130}\)

Now, as just stated, the concupiscence or “fleshly corruption” discussed in Distinction XXI has this second character, that of fault. But note: in Distinction XXXII, when concupiscence is considered as sin, its origin is at least in part the devil, but in Distinction XXI, if an interior temptation has the devil as its origin, it is not intrinsically sin. An uncomfortable arrangement, at best. I only wish to suggest, however, that even in Peter’s own account, fleshly and demonic temptation are not as easy to separate as he indicates in Distinction XXI. Later attempts to resolve this tension in the Lombard will be discussed in the next two medieval figures.

Third and last, this distinction also makes clear that there are kinds of inner temptation that are *not* intrinsically sinful. Such a category could have positive

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\(^{130}\) Ibid., d. XXXII, c. 3. “Praeterea quaeri solet utrum concupiscentia quae post baptismum remanet et tantum poenalitas est, ante baptismum vero poena erat et culpa, ex Deo auctore sit vel ex alio. Ad quod breviter respondentes, dicimus quia in quantum poena est, Deum habet auctorem; in quantum vero culpa est, diabolum sive hominem habet auctorem” (Latin, 514-5). In other passages, Peter speaks of concupiscence without any reference to the devil; see Sentences II.31.3 and 5, where the “law of sin” has to do with concupiscence—but nothing is said of any role the devil might take in its origin.
Christological ramifications (i.e. that would not necessarily be automatically excluded from an account of Christ’s humanity), but Peter nowhere discusses the application of this distinction to Christ. In the final portion, then, I will clarify the relevant Christological affirmations in the Sentences in order to exposit the material with which the later scholastic tradition, including St. Thomas, will have to grapple.

The relevant aspects of Peter’s Christology on this subject can be gleaned from Book III where he discusses the defects of Christ’s humanity. These are worth considering at some length, as his consideration of this topic relates in important ways back to Burgundio’s translation of De Fide Orthodoxa, which differed in a crucial passage on Christ’s passions from John’s text. In Distinction XVI.2, Peter gives a soteriological account of why Christ only took on some defects of fallen humanity. He argues that

Christ, who came to save all, took something from each of the states of man. There are four states of man: first before sin, second after sin and before grace, third under grace, forth in glory. From the first state, he took immunity from sin. … But he took the punishment and other defects from the second state; from the third, he took the fullness of grace; from the forth, he took the inability to sin and the perfect contemplation of God. Indeed, he took simultaneously some of the goods of the wayfarer and some of the goods of the fatherland, as he took also some of the evils of the wayfarer.131

The soteriological principle of this arrangement is related to a Nazianzen “that which he has not assumed,” but Peter uses it to different ends than Gregory of Nazianzus himself put it. As shown in Chapter 1, this soteriological principle in the early Greek Fathers

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131 Sentences III.16.2: “Et est hic notandum Christum de omni statu hominis aliquid accepisse, qui omnes venit salvare. Sunt enim quatuor status hominis: primus ante peccatum, secundus post peccatum et ante gratiam, tertius sub gratia, quartus in gloria. De primo statu accepit immunitatem peccati … Sed poenam assumpsit de statu secundo et alios defectus; de tertio vero gratiae plenitudinem; de quarto non posse peccare et Dei perfectam contemplationem. Habuit enim simul bona viae quaedam et bona patriae, sicut et quaedam mala viae.”
indicated that Christ took on precisely what was broken in order to put it back together; earlier in this chapter, I argued that John of Damascus may be responsible in important ways in modifying this chiastic structure for the incarnation by including both fallen and unfallen characteristics in Christ’s humanity. Peter, perhaps on the basis of John’s confused chiastic structure, uses the Nazianzen principle to argue that Christ, in order to heal each condition of human nature, had to take something from each of them—not everything, just something. The parts assumed work by synecdoche, making the whole present through just a part. The result is something of a Christological chimera, where the parts are amalgamated so that Christ might heal the “whole” of humanity in its various stages. Of course, referring back to the Nazianzen, Christ did not come, first and foremost, to save unfallen or glorified humanity, but to seek and to save the lost (as indeed the texts of Peter’s reference, Matthew 18:11 and Luke 19:10, state)—and for that reason he identified primarily with their fallen lot. In this Nazianzen logic, there is no prima facia reason for Christ to assume, as a human, aspects of the other states of human nature. Nevertheless, this soteriological reasoning in the Lombard has a significant effect on the later scholastic tradition, including St. Thomas.

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132 One also sees this synecdoche in Sentences III.15.1: “He took on a single ancientness, that is, the one of punishment, in order to destroy our two-fold one, that is, of punishment and of fault [Simplam accepit ille vetustatem, id est poenae, ut nostram duplam consumeret, id est poenae et culpae]” (Silano, 57). Here, of course, the part that Christ does not assume is sin, so this articulation is, in itself, compatible with Hebrews 4:15, which also excludes sin from Christ. As Maximus would argue, however, that sin is not “nature,” but a falsification of nature. Maximus is adamant that everything that is truly natural to (even fallen!) humanity is present in Christ—and that claim is not compatible with the four-fold elaboration of Christ’s humanity in the Lombard’s thought. Peter is explicit, as I will show in a moment, that there are moral defects of human nature that are not sin and yet are not present in Christ. One should not infer from this statement that Christ would not have come were it not for Adam’s sin; Christ may well have identified himself even with glorified or unfallen humanity, and in fact does so in the “upswing” of the chiastic structure of the incarnation, carrying all of humanity’s states with him up into the deified state.

133 In the structure of Philippians 2, if some quality refers to Christ’s status glorificationis, it should refer back to Christ’s divinity, not some part of his humanity. Christ’s status exinanitionis is his human nature—with all its defects.
Elsewhere, in Distinction XV.1, Peter considers with more precision why Christ took on certain non-sinful defects of human nature but not others. Opening with a distinction, he states that Christ took

the defects of punishment, but not those of fault; and yet not all the defects of punishment, but all those which it was suitable for him as man to assume [eos omnes quos homini eum assumere expediebat] and which did not derogate from his dignity. For just as he was made man for the sake of man, so also for his sake he took on man’s defects. He took of what was ours to confer on us what was his and so as to take away what was ours. For he took the ancientness [of our nature] in order to infuse his newness in us.\(^{135}\)

Of course, this answer in itself simply begs the question on the crucial point under investigation here, for what is “expedient [expediebat]” in Christ’s temptation is precisely what is unclear. Peter, however, gives examples of both unsuitable and suitable defects with some explanation as to why they are categorized that way.

Among those that Peter denies in Christ are ignorance, even of an invincible, and thus blameless, kind, as well as a “difficulty to will and do the good [difficultatem volendi vel faciendi bonum].” Both of these, as the Lombard explains, are not sin, yet are not to be considered in Christ.\(^{136}\) This latter defect, a “weakness by which one cannot restrain oneself from evil” that I equated with the fomes above, pertains “to our misery” and for that reason, Peter states, Christ “did not take on all the defects of our infirmity apart from

\(^{135}\) Sentences III., d. XV.1.3: “Suscepit autem Christus sicut veram naturam hominis, ita et veros defectus hominis, sed non omnes. Assumpsit enim defectus poenae, sed non culpae; nec tamen omnes defectus poenae, sed eos omnes quos homini eum assumere expediébat et suae dignitati non derogabat. Sicuit enim propter hominem homo factus est, ita propter eum hominis defectus suscepit. Suscepit enim de nostro ut de suo nobis tribueret, ut nostrum tolleret. Suscepit enim nostram vetustatem, ut suam nobis infunderet novitatem” (in Lombard, Sententiae, v. 2, 94).

\(^{136}\) Ibid., 6: “ignorantia talis et difficilas non sit peccatum” (in Lombard, Sententiae, v. 2, 94). It must be acknowledged that Maximus also excluded ignorance from Christ, though his reasoning was explicitly related to Christ’s soteriological and revelatory mission. The Lombard’s reasons for excluding them are only negative, relating to the “misery” they cause in us.
sin.”137 For this reason, one might expect Peter to deny an “inner” temptation of Christ by the devil. But later in this same question Peter provides some soteriological reflection that could indicate otherwise. Peter explains that Christ took human defects

either to demonstrate his true humanity: such as fear and sadness; or to fulfill the work for which he had come \textit{[ad impletionem operis ad quod venerat]}: such as the capacity to suffer and die; or to raise our hope from our despair of immortality: such as death.138

Surely, when understood generally, demonic temptation fits in the second category of things that “fulfill the work for which he had come,” but it does not resolve the question of the devil’s inner movement in Christ. Indeed, no explicit soteriological statement about Christ’s temptation by the devil is to be found in Book III; the chapters that Peter devotes to Christ’s defeat of the devil treat only Christ’s death as the means of humanity’s liberation from the devil.139 One can only conclude that Peter did not consider Christ’s temptation soteriologically and this fact must be considered a Christological defect.

One final aspect of Peter’s Christology appears to reflect the newly translated \textit{De Fide Orthodoxa} of John of Damascus. Peter clearly affirms that Christ \textit{willingly} accepted the appropriate defects of human nature—that is, that Christ did not take them by natural necessity as one under the rule of original sin.140 The purpose of this qualification, as it

\begin{itemize}
  \item[137] Ibid., .5: “Ecce evidenter dicit hic Augustanus ignorantiam qua quisque invitus falsa prro veris approbat, et difficultatem qua non potest se temperare a malo, ad miseriam nostram pertinere et poenam esse hominis. Haec autem Christus non habuit; non igitur accepit omnes defectus nostrae infirmitatis praeter peccatum” (in Lombard, \textit{Sententiae}, v. 2, 94).
  \item[138] \textit{Sentences} III.15.1.7: “Quos enim defectus habuit, vel ad ostensionem verae humanitatis: ut timorem et tristitiam, vel ad impletionem operis ad quod venerat: ut passibilitatem et mortalitatem, vel ab immortalitatis desperatione spem nostram erigendam: ut mortem, suscepit.”
  \item[139] \textit{Sentences} III.19.1; also III.20.3 and II.20.4. In these chapters, Peter follows Augustine and Gregory before him and does not associate this victory with Christ’s temptation. These three chapters argue that, though humankind was justly held, the Devil had earned no \textit{personal} right to hold humanity in captivity. The injustice was not against humanity, but rather in the fact that the Devil claimed something that he didn’t earn. Christ undoes this tyranny by tricking the Devil into unjustly killing him, thereby revealing the injustice for what it is.
  \item[140] This fact is discussed explicitly in \textit{Sentences} III.15.1.8.
\end{itemize}
was for John, is to safeguard the liberty and sovereignty of God by avoiding God’s entanglement in sin; Peter states that “he could have taken it without any infirmity” but did not do so “from the will of his compassion.”\textsuperscript{141} However, as is also the case with John, Peter does not specify how each of Christ’s wills—human and divine—cooperate in the object of that will.\textsuperscript{142} It is certainly appropriate to argue that Christ freely accepted the consequences of fallen human nature, but a proper dyothelite Christology would seem to require that one explain in more detail what kind of freedom was appropriate to Christ as God and as human in this freely chosen act. Indeed, the tense and verb that Peter uses here may indicate that he is speaking primarily of the \textit{divine} will: he “[\textit{could have assumed} assumere potuit]” human nature without those defects. Christ’s humanity could not be responsible for that aspect of this choice, since it logically precedes the incarnation and thus the very existence of Christ’s human will. To say that Christ, as human, had this same human freedom during the incarnation would lead to somewhat strange questions. Could Christ have chosen, as human and during the incarnation, to “switch off” his passible faculty? Was Christ, as human, absolutely sovereign over, for instance, his basic human digestive and circulatory functions? Questions such as this are left for Thomas to solve.

\textsuperscript{141} Ibid.: “Sed ex sola miserationis voluntate de nostro in se transtulit veram infirmitatem, sicut accepit veram carnem; quam sine omni infirmitate assumere potuit, sicut absque culpa eandem suscepit.”

\textsuperscript{142} \textit{Sentences} III.16.1: “Christ took on these defects as he did the others willingly, and not by the necessity of his nature, namely the necessity of suffering in his soul together with that of suffering and dying in the flesh. Truly, he did not have this fate from the necessity of his condition, since he was immune from sin, but took of our infirmity by his will alone, placing his tabernacle in the sun, that is, under [the rule of] temporal mutability and labor. … [These are] called a natural defect because, shared by all, it has almost become our nature [Christum voluntate, non necessitate suae naturae, hos defectus sicut alios accepiisse, scilicet necessitatem patiendi in anima, simul autem patiendi et moriendi in carne. Verum hanc necessitatem non habuit ex necessitate suae conditionis, quia a peccato immunis, sed ex sola voluntate accepit de nostra infirmitate, ponens \textit{tabernaculum suum in sole, scilicet sub temporali mutabilitate et labore. … Et ideo dicitur hic defectus naturalis, quia quasi pro natura inolevit in omnibus diffusus.]” Here again, temptation (properly understood) could surely be groups with these other natural defects.
In his Christological material, Peter does not provide answers to the matter of Christ’s inner temptation by the devil. Such, however, is the legacy that he left for the later scholastic tradition to resolve. In the following, I will consider Alexander of Hales and St. Bonaventure in some detail.

**B. Alexander of Hales**

Among medieval scholastic authors, Alexander de Hales may have spoken at greatest length and detail about the Christ’s temptation by the devil. As seen above, Peter the Lombard left many questions unanswered and, indeed, some important ones unasked. Alexander dedicates significant space in his *Summa Theologia* to questions on temptation in general, and devotes articles and questions to the temptation performed by the devil and the temptation experienced by Christ. Alexander is still a *Sentences* commentator and in most substantive ways he agrees with the explicit affirmations of Peter. The depth of his investigation of controversial aspects of Peter’s teaching, however, makes its place among Thomas’s sources particularly significant. In the following, I will (1) consider some of Alexander’s distinctions about temptation in his general anthropological section; (2) explore how Alexander applies these distinctions in his consideration of Christ’s temptation.

1. **Anthropology, temptation, and the devil in Alexander of Hales.** Following Peter the Lombard, Alexander divides temptation into three categories: an external demonic temptation, an internal fleshly temptation, and an internal demonic temptation.\(^{143}\) The first of these is only tangentially related to the subject under investigation here but one observation will help introduce what Alexander means by the distinction between internal

and external temptation. Alexander follows the Lombard in arguing that external temptation occurs by some “word or sign.” He further clarifies that while hearing and sight play a privileged role in one’s temptation, words and signs are not limited to hearing and sight; rather “sign” is understood as any sensible object that appeals to one of the senses.\textsuperscript{144} In what follows, then, internal temptation will be distinguished in part by the fact that no sensible object is necessarily presented to the one tempted.

\textit{a. The sinfulness of internal temptation from the devil and the flesh.} Both the internal temptation from the flesh and that from the devil are species of “internal” temptation. What makes them distinct from exterior temptation is the fact that these forms act on an interior power of the soul. Who or what is responsible for these actions will be discussed in a moment; right now, I will focus on the internal powers that are susceptible to this attack. Alexander discusses two internal powers that are susceptible to interior attack: the intellectual powers and the affective power.\textsuperscript{145} The attack against the affects is also referred to as “from the motive rational part, which draws near to sensuality [\textit{ex parte motivae rationis, quae appropinuat sensualitati}].”\textsuperscript{146} Thus,

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\item \textsuperscript{144} Ibid., II.II.1.1.Cap.6.4, in Alexander, \textit{Summa}, v. 3, ed. Marrani, 168-9: “Signum autem accipitur communiiter non tantum pro eo quod visible est, sed etiam quod sensibile est in tactu vel in alis sensibus. Per omnum enim sensum contingit esse tentationem exteriorem, maxime tamen per visum mediante signo et per auditum mediante verbo.”
\item \textsuperscript{145} Ibid., c.6.4, in Alexander, \textit{Summa}, v. 3, ed. Marrani, 168-9: “Ad alium vero quod obicitur de tentatione interiori, dicendum quod non propter hoc dicitur tentation interior quia sit per essentiam in eo qui tenatur, sed quia mediante virtute interiori immediate tentatur per ea quae immediate movent ipsam vel cognitivam vel affectivam.”
\item \textsuperscript{146} Ibid., c.6.4, in Alexander, \textit{Summa}, v. 3, ed. Marrani, 168-9, my translations throughout: “Ad primum dicendum quod tentatio ad probationem non continetur sub altera istarum differentiarum, cum ex tentatione intenditur probatio: nam hae duae differentiae tentationis ad hoc tendunt ut declinet homo ad consensum peccati. Nihilominus tamen tentatio, quae est ad probationem, potest esse exterior vel interior. Hae enim differentiae possunt esse communes tentationi quae est ad bonum et quae est ad malum; secundum autem quod hic accipiuntur, dividunt tentationem quae est ad malum. -Si vero obiciatur quod omnis tentatio debeat dici exterior, quae non pervenit ad consensum peccati—dicendum quod non: potest enim et interior et exterior non pervenire ad consensum peccati. Sed exterior dicitur, cum fit tentatio virtuti exteriori; cum autem fit tentatio immediate virtuti interiori, dicitur interior: sicut cum fit tentatio ex parte ipsius imaginatis ad intellectus vel ex parte motivae rationis, quae appropinquat sensualitati.”
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Alexander will sometimes refer to this attack as against the motive part or as against sensuality. As a final distinction, the intellectual temptation, sometimes called temptation against the cognitive part, is subdivided into that which is against the imagination and that which is through thoughts. The distinction between attack against the cognitive part and that against the motive part is essential to the moral distinctions that Alexander draws between demonic and fleshly temptations.

Corresponding with each of these kinds of internal attack, there are also two forces responsible for internal temptation: the devil and the flesh. Like the Lombard, Alexander acknowledges that in a sense, fleshly temptation comes from demonic temptation. Insofar as one is concerned with the proximate cause of a particular temptation, however, he maintains that it is appropriate to distinguish between the two forms:

… For when this division is given, something about the proximate cause of temptation is understood. But it may happen that the flesh, that is carnal concupiscence, is the principle of temptation of reason itself. And thus nothing prevents (although all evil is originally from the devil) that a certain one is from the devil as from the proximate cause, but another from carnal concupiscence.147

Nothing here strays significantly from the Lombard’s presentation, though Alexander is somewhat clearer about the relationship between the two sources of temptation.

By far the most significant anthropological innovation that Alexander introduces is an explanation of the moral distinction between demonic and fleshly temptation. Recall that for Peter, interior demonic temptation was not intrinsically sinful, yet fleshly

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temptation was. By correlating two parts of the soul (the cognitive and appetitive) with the two kinds of temptation (demonic temptation and fleshly temptation), Alexander gives the first systematic explanation of this moral difference. That is, Alexander argues that the devil is solely responsible for intellectual attacks and the flesh is solely responsible for affective attacks. One sees the moral relevance of this distinction in Alexander’s questions on the sinfulness of each form. In his explanation of the culpable sinfulness of fleshly temptation, Alexander argues that

the case of this [fleshly] temptation is not similar to that of the others. For the other two [internal and external demonic attacks] are from the part of cognitive power, but this is from the part of the motive power, in which there is sin by reason of affection.\textsuperscript{148}

He explains further in his treatment of internal demonic temptation of the imaginative power:

…This temptation is not necessarily with sin. For this temptation has its origin in the cognitive part, but that [other has it] in the motive part, which is from the flesh; and thus that [fleshly temptation] is necessarily said [to be] with venial sin because of the corruption of motion from the fomes. But if the corruption is in itself cognitive, it is only said to be a certain obscurity \textit{obscuratio quaedam}, and this corruption is not called sin.\textsuperscript{149}

Throughout his treatment of the different internal temptations, the only reason Alexander puts forward to distinguish the two forms morally is the different faculty that they

\textsuperscript{148} Ibid., c7.2, in Alexander, \textit{Summa}, v. 3, ed. Marrani, 178: “Ad quod dicendum quod non est simile de hac tentatione et de alia. Nam aliae duae sunt ex parte virtutis cognitivae, haec autem est ex parte virtutis motivae, in qua est peccatum ratione affectiosis.”

\textsuperscript{149} Ibid., c7.3, in Alexander, \textit{Summa}, v. 3, ed. Marrani, 179-80: “… haec tentatio non est necessario cum peccato. Haec enim tentation est habens initium ex parte cognitivae, illa vero ex parte motivae, quae est ex carne; et ideo illa dicitur necessario cum peccato veniali propter corruptionem motivae ex fomite. Si vero corruptio est in ipsa cognitiva, non dicitur esse nisi obscuratio quaedam, et haec corruptio non dicitur peccatum.”
As he explains it, if the devil were able to tempt the motive power of sensation, it would be sinful.

It must be acknowledged that Alexander is not perfectly consistent in keeping these two faculties and temptations (respectively) separate. In at least two places, Alexander argues that demonic temptation, like fleshly temptation, can be against the sensitive or animal part of humanity. He concedes in one place that inner demonic temptation “is similarly from the movement of sensuality [licet communiter fiat ex motibus in sensualitate],” but he attempts to maintain that it “is not in itself a cause of sin [non tamen est per se causa peccati].” His explanation is that fleshly temptation is sinful because its movement of sensuality is “illicit” or unlawful. It is unclear whether

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150 This use of the distinction between cognitive and affective temptation is particularly significant in light of the fact that Thomas will not make use of it; in Thomas’s own Summa, he will affirm that the devil does in fact have the power to move the affective aspects of the human being. However Thomas distinguishes the different sources of temptation and their various moral standing, he will not do so on the grounds that they attack different faculties. See Chapter 5 below.

151 The two clear instances are explained in the text. In a third location, Alexander grants the devil a significant role in the intellectual aspect of the tinder of sin. See ibid., 7.3, prob. 2, in Alexander, Summa, v. 3, ed. Marrani, 180-4: “But to what is asked about the tinder of the fire, it must be said that the tinder of the fire is drawn both from what is apparently desirable in the sensible object, and from what is apparently desirable in the intelligible object. But [it] is drawn from what is desirable in the sensible object, as the sensible object comes to the mind through its species; but [it is drawn] from the intelligible object through some hidden way, according to which the demons are able to excite our intellect, inspiring minds by a secret poison, as Augustine says. But the way in which this is done surpasses our intellect [Ad id vero quod quaeritur de fomentis incendii, dicendum est quod fomenta incendii trahuntur tum ex apparentibus delectabilibus, quae sunt in rebus sensibilibus, tum ex apparentibus delectabilibus, quae sunt in rebus intelligibilibus. Ex delectabilibus autem in rebus sensibilibus trahuntur, cum res sensibiles per species suas veniunt ad intellectum; ex intelligibilibus vero per quendam modum occultum, secundum quem daemones excitare possunt nostrum intellectum inspirando mentibus virus occultum, sicut dicit Augustinus. Quo autem modo hoc fiat, nostrum excedit intellectum].” Here, too, Alexander indicates that there is a deep relationship between the fomes peccati and the activity of the devil, but he is unwilling or unable to speculate about what that relationship might be. It is telling that these words are the very last in his investigation of the devil’s internal temptation—he ends on a very apophatic note.

152 Ibid., c6.3, in Alexander, Summa, v. 3, ed. Marrani, 166-8: “Ad id vero quod tertio loco obicitur de tentatione ex carne, quod ‘non fiat cum peccato, eo quod sensualitas communis sit nobis et brutis’: dicendum quod licet vis sensibilis sit communis nobis et brutis, non tamen sensualitas sub ista ratione: sensualitas enim dicit quodam ordinationem respectu rationis. Sic ergo tentatio quae est ab hoste, licet communiter fiat ex motibus in sensualitate, non tamen est per se causa peccati, ‘tentatio tamen quae est ex carne, eo quod ponit motum sensualum illicitum, non fit sine peccato.’ …”

153 Ibid. Alexander defines illicit desire in opposition to a “natural” desire: “For there is some natural desire for sensible things, and this is good; there is another illicit [desire] that exceeds the natural, when...
the demonic temptation of sensuality would, on the contrary, be called “licit” or lawful, but such may be the implication. In the other instance, Alexander grapples with Augustine’s claim that the devil tempted us only through our animal part, which Alexander interprets as sensibility. There, Alexander also concedes that the devil tempts not only “though the sensible part, but [also] by the intelligible part; nevertheless the greater aptitude is through temptation from the sensible part.” Both of these instances contradict his explanation of the sinlessness of inner demonic temptation; I will return once more to this question in the next subsection.

In another instance, Alexander conversely wavers on the venial sinfulness of fleshly temptation. When discussing the positive spiritual value of temptation from the flesh, he argues that “the one who guards himself from venial sin [Qui enim custodit se a peccato veniali], directs himself to the use of power and consequently to salvation, and it is desired more than [it] should or when it should not be or whose end should not be, and is not fitting, and similarly with other circumstances [Est enim quaedam delectatio naturalis in rebus sensibilibus, et illa bona est; est alia illicita, quae excedit naturalem, cum delectatur plus quam oportet vel quando non oportet vel quo fine non oportet, et ita de aliis circumstantiis]” (ibid., 7.1, in Alexander, Summa, v. 3, ed. Marrani, 173-5). It seems likely that any movement the devil would stir up would meet one of these criteria for an “illicit” desire as well, but Alexander generally tries to avoid the conclusion that the devil could perform this sort of movement; see the treatment of the devil’s movement of the imagination below.

One can sense his hesitancy to ascribe sensible temptation to the devil, and in his reply to the first objection he does everything he can to mitigate that sense of Augustine’s words: “And in this last way it is said that we cannot be tempted by the devil except by the animal part, that is, we are disposed and prone through that part. But the animal part can be called the rational part that is turned back on the body, and in this way, it is true that temptation is only through the animal part [Et hoc ultimo modo dicitur quod non possimus tentari a diabolo nisi per partem animalem, id est per illam partem sumus dispositi et proni. Vel animalis pars potest dici pars rationalis, quae convertitur ad corpus, et secundum hunc modum verum est quod non est tentatio nisi per partem animalem]” (ibid.). This last sentence aligns closely with his interpretation of the devil’s temptation elsewhere, but moves significantly beyond Augustine’s claim that he is grappling with.

Structurally, Alexander avoids this problem in the most important questions on internal demonic temptation by only addressing demonic temptations against the cognitive powers, but this misstep indicates the difficulty Alexander faced in keeping the two forms separate.
thus temptation in this way [i.e. from the flesh] is material for the exercise of virtue.”\textsuperscript{156}

Very strongly implied in this reasoning is that fleshly temptation provides an opportunity to protect against venial sin, but I have already shown that Alexander generally does not believe this to be possible.\textsuperscript{157} Each of these instances shows the difficulties Alexander faced in maintaining the sinfulness of internal fleshly temptation and the sinlessness of internal demonic temptation. These points of hesitation are only that; his overall position is clear: fleshly temptation is venially sinful from the movement of the \textit{fomes} and internal demonic temptation, being only cognitive, is not sinful in itself.

\textit{b. The devil’s temptation of imagination and intellect.} I turn now to the two forms of internal demonic temptation that Alexander considers. The first, against the imaginative powers of cognition, requires further consideration in its relationship to fleshly temptation and of how the two are not in fact identical. Concerning the second, I will spend significant time on Alexander’s statements about how demons cooperate in evil thoughts in the intellective power, as this theory is in substantive ways at odds with the Evagrian (and thus Maximian) tradition.

Even though Alexander considers the devil’s internal temptation to be only cognitive, Alexander risks contradicting the devil’s separation from temptation of

\textsuperscript{156} Ibid., c6.3, in Alexander, \textit{Summa}, v. 3, ed. Marrani, 166–8: “Ad id vero quod quarto obicitur dicendum quod, licet tentatio, quae est ab hoste, sit materia exercendae virtutis, hoc tamen non removetur a tentatione, quae est a carne, sed differenter inest. Qui enim custodit se a peccato veniali, ordinat se ad usum virtutis et per consequens ad salutem, et ita tenatio huuiusmodi materia est exercendae virtutis, sed non ita propinqua sicut est in tentazione ab hoste, ubi nullum ponitur medium.”

\textsuperscript{157} Much more consonant with his broader position is what he says about Paul’s temptation by the flesh, where he argues for the positive spiritual value of fleshly temptation, saying that “man is proven when a venial sin arises and is not led to the consent of mortal sin. [\textit{Ad aliud vero dicendum quod, licet Apostolus tentatus esset ad probationem, nihilominus potuit ibi esse veniale peccatum. Probatur enim homo, cum subortitur veniale peccatum et non deductur ad consensum mortalis peccati}]” (Ibid., c7.2, in Alexander, \textit{Summa}, v. 3, ed. Marrani, 178). While Paul might be blamed for allowing the venial sin to arise, he should still be praised for preventing it from being carried into consent and act. It is odd, in any case, to say that since a particular sin is also a temptation to a greater sin, it is “material for the exercise of virtue”: how can sin increase virtue? Nevertheless, this idea reverberates in subsequent treatments of this question. See, at least, Bonaventure below.
sensation by permitting the devil to approach the power of imagination. To return to the
temptation from the flesh for just a moment, Alexander argues that “When temptation is
said to be from the flesh, ‘flesh’ is not understood there as only the body itself, but as the
sensual part united to the flesh…” The “flesh” is not the body and neither is it the soul:

the flesh, that is the fleshly sense or concupiscence, can stimulate that soul
according to the inferior rational part, although [the flesh] itself is inferior.

Fleshly temptation, then, is placed liminally between the body and the lower rational
faculty; indeed, the “flesh” properly so called resides only in the conjunction of the body
and the lower rational faculty. Recall, however, that the sinfulness of fleshly temptation
was attributed particularly to its influence on the sensual part of the soul. In this respect,
the devil’s temptation of the imagination can appears quite similar. Responding to the
criticism that evil angels should not have power over any faculty of the soul, whether that
part be intellectual or “sensual [partem sensuale],” Alexander responds:

nothing prevents the devil from having power over the sensitive part, although it
does not have such over the intelligible [part]. But if the substance that can
understand and feel is one, nevertheless one power is inferior to the other;
because of which an evil spirit is able to have some power over the inferior power
that it does not have over the superior power, in which the image of God shines
naturally.

sumitur ibi tantum pro ipso corpore, sed pro parte sensuali unita carnii...”}\]

obicitur quod ‘caro non potest in animam agere’: respondendum quod caro id est carnalis sensus sive
concupiscentia, potest stimulare animam secundum partem rationis inferiorem licet ipsa sit inferior.
Infierius enim potest tentare superius, si forte inclinetur ad ipsum, sed non potest inducere in
tentationem: inducit enim in tenationem non fit sine consensu, consensus autem rationis est. Sic ergo
potest inferius tentare superius, id est tentationis initium dare.”}\]

[partem sensuale]” and “sensible [partem sensibiliem]” parts in this objection and response; whether
such is consonant with his broader anthropology cannot be addressed here. I take their
interchangeability for granted, since Alexander does so here. “Ad objectum autem primum in
contrarium, dicendum quod, licet sit una anima in homine, non oportet quod eadem sit substantia
intelligibilis et sensibilis, et ita nihil prohibet habere diabolum posse super partem sensibiliem, etsi sic
non habeat super intelligibilium. Si vero una est substantia quae potest intelligere et sentire, nihilominus
inferior est una potentia altera; propter quod potest etiam spiritus malignus aliquod posse habere super}\]
Both the devil and the flesh, then, are said to have some power over the sensual part of the soul that results in temptation. While this fact does raise questions about his explanation of their varying degrees of sinfulness, Alexander provides further information that may distinguish the devil’s temptation from its fleshly counterpart.

While both demonic and fleshly temptation approach the sensual, or lower rational, part of the soul, they do so in different ways. As just described, the fleshly temptation comes from the conjunction of the sensual part with the body. The demonic temptation, however, arises from the insertion of “likenesses [similitudines]” into the mind of the one tempted:

the devil, as Augustine says, represents likenesses by way of prosperity [and] by way of adversity, from which representation the soul negotiates according to the imaginative part, and consequently inclines or disposes the intellect itself to that inclination.\(^\text{161}\)

As stated at the outset, this likeness is not a sensible object itself, but merely an image placed in the imagination. In this respect, the inner demonic temptation may be somewhat more “exterior” than fleshly temptation. Whereas the latter implies the presence of a desire, the former only implies an image that is “determined to one [way], as to the apparently desirable or to the apparently sad.”\(^\text{162}\) The devil does not force the one tempted to desire the thing, but merely represents a thing that is apparently attractive or apparently to be avoided and leaves it to the mind to decide whether to pursue or avoid it.

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\(^{161}\) Ibid., 7.3, in Alexander, *Summa*, v. 3, ed. Marrani, 178-84. The full response is as follows: “Ad quod dicendum quod diabolus, sicut dicit Augustinus, repraesentat similitudines modo prosperorum, modo adversorum, ex qua repraesentatione anima secundum partem imaginativam negotiatur, et per consequens inclinat ipsam intellectivam vel disponit ad inclinationem. Unde Gregorius: ‘Diabolus modo cupidis prospera, modo timidis adversa per somnia inerit, ut magis afficiat.’”

\(^{162}\) Maximus would even say that Christ provokes this attack through his deceptive ploy against the devil. et ad apparentes delectabile vel ad apparentes triste, et ex istis potest sequi inclinatio ad malum, et per huiusmodi fit tentatio.”
There are certainly unanswered questions in this Alexandrian distinction. First and foremost is the source of motion in the soul. When considering the sinfulness of these inner forms of temptation, any temptation that touches sensation moves the soul and results in venial sin. Here, however, the devil touches the sensual part but, arguably, does not move the soul by necessity. The mechanism of the insertion of these likenesses into the imagination is unclear, and much hangs on a proper explanation of this insertion: for instance, whether the devil can, by a mechanical intellectual process, provoke desires on the basis of these likenesses; whether and how the mind is able to avoid being led into incorrect conclusions by these likenesses; and ultimately whether and how the devil’s temptation is not intrinsically sinful, which is tantamount to asking whether and how there is a moral difference between concupiscence and demonic temptation of the imagination. As I have already said, Alexander argues on the basis of a distinction between the cognitive and motive parts of the soul that the devil’s temptation is not necessarily sinful, but one might ask for further clarity concerning how the cognitive temptation by the devil does not lead immediately to motion, but the temptation from the flesh does.

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163 In his questions on fleshly temptation, Alexander addresses a potential mechanism whereby the rational part might be led into desire; see ibid., 7.2, problem 3, in Alexander, *Summa*, v. 3, ed. Marrani, 177: “But to the second it must be said that, although the desirable according to sense is one thing and [the desirable] according to reason another, nevertheless, because the same thing can be desirable according to sense and according to incorrect reason, therefore it pertains to rational temptation to be concerning the desirable in this way, as incorrect reason rests in the desirable, as now that which is desirable according to sense [Ad secundum vero dicendum quod, licet aliud sit delectabile secundum sensum, aliud secundum rationem, nihilominus tamen, quia idem potest esse delectabile secundum sensum et secundum rationem non rectam, ideo contingit tentationem rationis esse circa huiusmodi delectabile, ut ratio non recta quiescat in delectabili ut nunc, quod est delectabile secundum sensum].” Here too, it appears that the insertion of an imaginative likeness of an apparent good or evil would leads to an incorrect judgment of reason that rests in the apparently desirable—in which case, there would be a mechanistic way for the devil to provoke sin in the human subject.

In his questions on the temptation of imagination, Alexander indicates that he wants to protect the innermost part of the human soul—the intellect—from the devil’s attack because in that highest part “the image of God shines naturally.”\(^ {165} \) When he turns to the way in which the devil tempts the intellect, he continues this defense by denying to a great extent the devil’s power over thoughts. Such was certainly a concern for Alexander; he invokes the words of Bede and Augustine as voices argue that the devil does have such power. On this subject, many other voices from the ascetic tradition (as discussed in Chapter 1 and 2) could be added to theirs. It is something of a mainstay of this other tradition that the devil puts evil thoughts in our minds (even if how this is accomplished is obscure), but Alexander, in defending that imago Dei, mitigates this power to a great extent.

First, he denies a substantive affirmation that the devil can be called a “sender of evil thoughts [immissor malarum cogitationum].”\(^ {166} \) The primary sense of this term is as one who makes such thoughts—and in this way, the devil cannot be their sender. In fact, Alexander affirms that “evil thoughts, insofar as they are evil, are from man himself;”\(^ {167} \)

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\(^ {166} \) Ibid., in Alexander, *Summa*, v. 3, ed. Marrani, 181-2. His full response on this question reads as follows: “To which it must be said that the devil is not properly the sender of evil thoughts; nevertheless, “to send” is said in two ways: in one way “to dispose to that which is made,” but in another way “to make.” Insofar as “to send” is to dispose as if from outside, the saints who say that the devil sends thoughts are to be understood in this way: for he offers semblances to the soul, but in itself the soul is what follows this offering or makes it flee. But he is not said to be the sender of thoughts, as [their] maker: for evil thoughts, insofar as they are evil, are from man himself; but as thoughts, [are] from God. And through this distinction that which is objected can be solved. [Ad quod dicendum quod diabolus non est proprie immissor malarum cogitationum; immittere tamen dicitur dupliciter: uno modo disponere ad hoc quod fiat, alio vero modo facere. Secundum quod immittere est disponere quasi ab extrinseco, secundum hunc modum inveniuntur Sancti qui dicant quod diabolus immittit cogitaciones: offert enim animae similitudinem, in ipsa vero anima est quod prosequatur vel fugiat ipsum oblatum. Non autem dicitur immissor cogitationum, id est factor: quod enim sint cogitationes mala, in quantum mala, est ab ipso homine; quod autem cogitationes, a Deo. Et per hanc distinctionem possunt solvi ea quae obiciuntur].”

\(^ {167} \) Ibid. Alexander does not adequately distinguish in this instance between an “objectively” evil thought (insofar as it is evil because the devil intends evil by it) and a “subjectively” evil thought (which would require the human being’s consent). But when this claim is construed objectively, it would be difficult
and it should be noted that this affirmation in particular stands in significant tension with the monastic tradition traced in the first half of this dissertation.\textsuperscript{168} For Alexander, though, the devil cannot make or place a thought in the higher faculties of the human subject. Only in a lesser sense of one who disposes “to that which is made \textit{[disponere ad hoc quod fiat]}” “as if from outside \textit{[disponere quasi ab extrinseco]}” can the devil be called the sender of evil thoughts.\textsuperscript{169} Even in the internal temptation of the devil, his action is decidedly exterior for Alexander.

Since the devil is not properly the “sender” of evil thoughts, Alexander asks next whether the devil can be called their “inflamer.” He argues that, for the devil, “to inflame is to move so as to choose what should not be chosen, and consequently to desire,”\textsuperscript{170} but his explanation of that movement toward desire mitigates a strong interpretation of the “inflaming” the devil performs. Alexander states that “man is said to inflame as the one who provides kindling for the fire \textit{[ut qui praebet pabulum igni]}, but the devil as assistant \textit{[ut coadiutor]}.” He explains his analogy:

to construct a sentence that was more explicitly at odds with Evagrius than this one. Maximus, as seen in Chapter 2, is also significantly at odds with this claim.

\textsuperscript{168} Indeed, as will be seen in the coming chapters, Thomas Aquinas also believes the devil to be capable of inner movement that closely resembles what Alexander here excludes.

\textsuperscript{169} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{170} Ibid., in Alexander, \textit{Summa}, v. 3, ed. Marrani, 182-3. The full response is as follows: “‘to inflame’ an evil thought is one thing and ‘to obscure’ a thought is another. For to obscure a thought is not to see what should be done or chosen, but to inflame is to move so as to choose what should not be chosen, and consequently to desire. --But to what is asked ‘what are those clouds which fill the paths of understanding,’ it must be said that those clouds are a certain penalty from contracted sin \textit{[ex peccato contractae]}, to which sin the devil inclines human beings. And these clouds are left both from original sin and from actual sin. And these clouds are as if put between, lest the light, which illuminates all human beings, illuminate our minds. Nevertheless, these clouds cannot induce [to sin] except by preceding the consent of free will \textit{[Ad quod dicendum quod aliud est incendere cogitationem malam et aliud est obscurare cogitationem. Obscurare enim cogitationem est ne videat quid agendum est vel eligendum, incendere vero est movere ut eligat quod eligendum non est, et per consequens appetat. --Ad id vero quod quae sin illae nebulae, quibus replet meatus intelligentiae, dicendum quod nebulae illae sunt quaedam poenalitates ex peccato contractae, ad quod peccatum inclinavit diabolus hominem. Et nebulae istae relinquentur tum ex peccato originali, tum ex peccato actuali; et sunt hae nebulae quasi mediae, ne lumen, quod illuminat omnem hominem, mentem nostram illuminet. Has tamen nebulas non potest inducere nisi praecedente consensu liberi arbitrii].’” The role of obscuring thought is even more passive than the “inflaming” under consideration here.
For when he [the devil] sees that we are prone to some kind of sin, he manages to place those desirable things before [us], so that from those the intellect [might be] led to thought of those in an illicit manner, and in this way he is an assistant.\footnote{Ibid. , in Alexander, Summa, v. 3, ed. Marrani, 183-4 The full text of this response reads as follows: “Ad id vero quod obicitur in contrarium, dicendum est quod aliter dicitur ipse homo incendere cogitationem malam et aliter diabolus. Homo enim dicitur incendere ut qui praebet pabulum igni, diabolus vero ut coadiutor. Per hoc enim quod videt nos pronos ad aliqua genera peccatorum, illa delectabilia procurat ante poni, ut ex illis inducatur intellectus ad cogitandum de illis illicito modo, et per hunc modum est coadiutor.”}

The role of the devil here is remote and material at best; he adds nothing that is not already present in the one tempted. Before the devil tempts in this way, the one tempted is already “prone [pronos]” to the sin that the devil assists in committing.\footnote{Ibid. In the same question, Alexander also denies two other senses in which the devil is the inflamer of evil thoughts: that the devil provides fuel for concupiscence or that he can be said to “blow” on that fire. The objection (which is an overly literal reading of the analogy) and response are an interesting read: “Also, to light a fire is either to offer material itself for burning or to blow; therefore, the devil, if he is an inflamer, inflames in one of these ways. But he does not offer material, as the material is desire itself: for the fire of concupiscence is nourished in evil desire itself. Neither does he blow: for blowing is accepted from some extrinsic material, and it makes fire glow as if by extinguishing: for blowing can be a cause of extinguishing; but if the fire can resist, it is a cause of augmentation. But the suggestion of the devil does not have this mainly to extinguish the fire of concupiscence, but to make it boil. Therefore he does not have it by way of blowing: for the fire of concupiscence does not grow by resistance to the suggestion, but by giving in to the suggestion itself [Item incendere ignem vel est praebere materiam ipsi igni vel flatum; diabolus ergo, si est incentor, altero illorum modorum incendit. Sed non praebet materiam, cum materia sint ipsa desideria: in ipsis enim desideriis malis nutritur ignis concupiscientiae. Nec facit flatum: flatus enim ex aliqua materia extrinseca accipitur, et ignem fervere facit quasi extingoendo: flatus enim potest esse causa extinctionis; si vero resistere potest ignis, causa est augmenti; suggestio vero diaboli non habet hoc principaliter ut extinguat ignem concupiscientiae, sed ut fervere faciat; ergo non se habet per modum flatus: ignis enim concupiscientiae non augetur resistendo suggestioni, sed cedendo ipsi suggestioni].” The response does not shed much light on how the devil is said to be the inflamer of evil thoughts: “Neither is he said properly to offer material of the fire of concupiscence itself or to blow in every way, but to excite according to the interior or exterior way already said in order that evil thoughts be drawn into action [Nec dicitur proprie praebere materiam ipsi igni concupiscientiae vel flatum omni modo, sed excitare secundum iam dictum modum interius vel exterius ad hoc quod cogitationes mala in effectum educantur].”} When I address Thomas on this question in the next chapter, it will be clear that his understanding grants significantly more to the devil in his role of providing “kindling” to the fire. For now, I note that the analogy of a fire and kindling is an important one, both for Alexander and for Thomas, and that in this analogy, it matters a great deal who exactly is responsible for what. For Alexander, the answer is that the devil is responsible
for the mere trappings—the human subject is far and away the most responsible for evil thoughts.

2. Christ, temptation, and the devil in Alexander of Hales. Alexander provides an intricate and well-structured explanation of the different kinds of temptation human beings experience in this world. He provides the first deep exploration of the difference between internal demonic temptation and fleshly temptation, elaborating a relatively consistent theory of how the latter is intrinsically sinful but the former is not, and cataloging in great detail the ways in which the devil can tempt from within. Given this sophisticated investigation of temptation, it is alarming how flat and contradictory his Christological reflections on the matter are. Certainly, it is significant that Alexander goes beyond Peter’s text by including a discussion of Christ’s temptation at all; nevertheless, it is lacking in significant depth and in any relation to his anthropological reflections on temptation.

His consideration of this question is in a single article relatively early in the treatise on temptation. Even though it is brief, it includes two important details worth discussion: whether Christ was tempted in the Garden of Gethsemane and whether Christ was tempted from within. I will consider each question in order.

When Alexander considers the scene of Christ in the Garden, he considers two ways in which the flesh might be said to have tempted Christ. In the first way, Christ experienced a natural fear, “not desiring the dividing of the soul from the body according to nature,” and in this way, Christ was not said to be tempted by fear (or, consequently, by the flesh). Alexander allows, however, that there may have been something of
temptation in the propassion of fear that Christ took on in his condescension, and that the
devil may have had something to do with it:

There is another fear, which is called a propassion. I do not mean a passion that is
a disturbance of the mind. For this kind [a passion] could not be applied to Christ, but [only] a propassion, and in this way he assumed our infirmities that were
appropriate for our redemption. And a sudden motion on the part of his sensuality
is said to exist, but not on the part of his deiform rationality, to which nothing was
sudden. And in this way there could be a temptation from fear, [though] not
because the devil had power to stir up this kind of fear, except in so far as the Son
of God himself was willing both according to his Divinity and according to his humanity.\(^{173}\)

Despite Alexander’s qualifications about the omnipotence and freedom of Christ,
Alexander admits that the devil may have had a hand in Christ’s fear at the end of his life.
This interpretation is amenable in important ways to Maximus’s reading of the Garden
scene in \(QT\) 21: it admits that the devil’s temptations did not end in the desert; and it
affirms that Christ’s fear is both real and in a sense amenable to the devil’s plot to defeat
Christ.

While Alexander mentions the devil with respect to Christ’s fear, one should not
read this inclusion as an indication that Christ was tempted by the devil from within. In
light of what Alexander affirms in his anthropological questions on temptation, such a
reading may indeed be possible—but Alexander’s Christological reflections explicitly
contradict this reading. First of all, Alexander denies outright that Christ was tempted

dicatur, sicut habetur in Evangelio, quod tentavit eum tentatione timoris, de timore quidem legitur in
Evangelio, de tentatione autem non legitur. Quod si fuit ibi tentation, sicut dicitur in Glossa supra dicta:
dicendum est ad praesens quod duples est timor. “Est enim timor naturalis, nolente dividi anima a
corpore secundum naturam,” et iste timor fuit in Christo: ratione huius timoris non dicitur proprie
Christus tentatus. Est alius timor, qui dicitur propassio, non dico passio, quae est perturbatae mentis:
talis enim non poterat convenire Christo, sed propassio, et hoc modo assumpsit ipse nostram
infirmitatem quae nostrae redemptioni competebat. Et dicitur esse motus subitus ex parte ipsius
sensualitatis, non ex parte rationis deiformis, cui nihil erat subitum. Et per hunc modum poterat esse
tentatio timoris, non quia diabolus haberet potestatem incutiendi huiusmodi timorem, nisi quatenus ipse
Filius Dei voluit et secundum quod Deus et secundum quod homo.’’
from within by fleshly temptation, as Christ was free from the fomes peccati that bind humanity after the Fall. In this respect, Christ must be said to have been tempted exteriorly because “the temptation that is from the enemy is called exterior.” But then, anticipating the three-fold division of temptation discussed above, Alexander concede that “there is nevertheless something interior from the enemy,” but immediately concludes that

Christ was not tempted by that temptation. For temptation is in three gradations—just as B. Gregory says that the devil strikes on the exterior, touches the interior, and draws to consent: the strike is without sin, the touching with venial [sin], and the drawing with mortal [sin]—the first gradation alone concerned Christ, namely the knocking, the other two truly were not fitting nor could they be fitting.

Here, all the subtlety and nuance of Alexander’s distinctions about the interior temptation of the devil disappear. In his anthropological distinctions, no form of demonic temptation is intrinsically sinful—but here only the external temptation of the devil is without sin. In explicit contradiction to his anthropology, any demonic “touching” of Christ’s interior or drawing on toward consent is sinful.

As soon as Alexander is clear that something that is not considered sin in other human beings must be considered sin in Christ’s case, he has failed to adequately apply

174 Ibid., in Alexander, Summa, v. 3, ed. Marrani, 154. The full text of the response is as follows. “Ad illud vero quod obicitur consequenter cuiusmodi tenatione tentatus fuisset: dicendum quod tentatus fuit tenatione exteriori secundum quod ad invicem dividuntur tentation quae est a carne et tentation quae est ab hoste; tentation enim quae est ab hos dicitur exterior; quae vero interior, a carne. Est tamen quaedam ab hoste interior et illa tenatione non fuit tentatus Christus. Cum enim sint tres gradus tenationis—sicut dicit B. Gregorius quod diabolus pulsat exerius, palpat interius, trahit ad consensum: pulsat sine peccato, palpat cum veniali, trahit cum mortali—primus gradus tantum erat circa Christum, scilicet pulsare, alii vero duo non conveniebant nec convenire poterant.”

175 Ibid.

176 I have already discussed Gregory above, and it is clear here that Alexander flattens Gregory’s understanding of “striking” and “touching.” At least as Gregory presents the devil’s actions in the Moralia on Job, the devil sometimes sneaks past the porch and find his way inside. Even there, however, Gregory does not assign blame—he rather says that even when this happens, the elect resist and do not consent to the devil’s suggestion. Alexander, in his suddenly strict distinction between exterior and interior, errs on the side of caution in the case of Christ even when his source material does not seem to require this reading.
his anthropology to his Christology. Certainly, Alexander’s purpose is laudable; he is eager (and right!) to affirm that Christ was free from sin in all his actions and sufferings. But at this crucial moment, he lets this caution interfere with Christ’s full, consubstantial experience of our current human condition. This caution continues to reverberate through later interpreters of the Lombard, with equally unfortunate Christological consequences.

**C. Bonaventure**

Bonaventure’s commentary on the *Sentences* was completed in Thomas’s own life and, as argued by Paul Gondreau, certainly affected Thomas as a significant addition to the commentatorial tradition. I have summarized Bonaventure’s contribution to Thomas’s theory of the passions above. Here, I will only consider Bonaventure’s questions on demonic temptation. Bonaventure asks different questions than Thomas will—this fact in itself is significant—but I will focus here on three things: Bonaventure’s formal definition of *tentare*, the separability of demonic and fleshly temptation in his account, and some remarks on Bonaventure’s Christology in these claims.\(^{177}\)

\(^{177}\) For further discussion of Bonaventure’s Christology, there are two studies to note. First, Zachary Hayes, *The Hidden Center: Spirituality and Speculative Christology in St. Bonaventure* (New York: Paulist Press, 1981) provides an overview of important voices in 20th century discussion of Bonaventure’s Christology (ibid., 152-155) and proposes a new “redemptive completion” model that he believes holds together Bonaventure’s various soteriological claims (ibid., 155-187). Hayes gives some attention to the question of sin and its consequences (ibid., 21-23; 126-7), but since Bonaventure does not conceive of the incarnation as solely a response to sin, these discussions are not central to Hayes’ exposition. The subsequent relation of those consequences to Christ is also rather brief (ibid., 126-7; 142). Despite the heavy dependence on Christological exemplarity in Bonaventure’s thought, Hayes does not present Christ’s temptation as exemplary (ibid., 146-151). The devil also makes only short appearances and his sin is presented there only as a loose model upon which Bonaventure’s treatment of Adam’s sin is based (ibid., 165-6).

Christopher M Cullen, *Bonaventure* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006) makes scarce reference to the devil and the demonic in Bonaventure’s thought. The most prominent discussion is in his summary of Bonaventure’s doctrine of the fall, in the course of which Cullen argues that the “Genesis story of the temptation and the Fall” is “an illuminating paradigm of all subsequent sins” (ibid., 135). However, Cullen never indicates how it acts as a paradigm for subsequent sins—at least not in relation to the role of the devil in sin. The devil makes no appearance in the chapter on moral
Bonaventure opens his remarks on human temptation with a question about the definition of temptation, asking whether the flesh is properly said to tempt. Clarifying a problem in the Lombard’s text discussed above, Bonaventure first establishes a general definition of *tentare*:

> to try is to test: whence trial can be spoken of as some touch that proves something about what is touched, as a blind man is said to try when by touch he wants to have some certainty about some thing that he touches. In this way trial in spiritual things is spoken of when some touch is ordered to proof.\(^{178}\)

He then distinguishes different kinds of “trials” that are proper to God and to the devil. God tries because he “intends to prove and approve or demonstrate the proof.”\(^{179}\) The devil, on the other hand, tries because he “intends to prove and reprove, or make reproof.”\(^{180}\) These two temptations are active, having a rational agent that carries them out with a clear purpose.

Alongside divine and demonic trial, Bonaventure treats the temptation of the flesh as a distinct, but still proper, form of temptation. The flesh, however, does not “try” in philosophy (ibid., 91-112), and no further appearance in the discussion of original sin (ibid., 134-140). The only other mention of the devil in the text is in a summary of Bonaventure’s disinclination to speak systematically of a ransom theory of atonement: “It elevates Satan too much. It implies that Satan is the near equal of God in that he can gain some right over man. In addition, God has to trick the devil into killing a sinless man in order for him to lose his power over human nature. The satisfaction theory removes the devil from the picture. … Bonaventure has clearly appropriated Anselm’s satisfaction theory of the atonement; it is this that has shaped his thinking” (ibid., 147-8). Cullen acknowledges that the ransom theory does not disappear in Bonaventure’s thought, but he indicates that it is only presented “with rhetorical flourish in his devotional work” (ibid., 148), implying that the theory would not pass muster in his more systematic writings.


\(^{179}\) Ibid., in Bonaventure, *Opera Omnia*, v. 3, ed. Peltier, 100: “aut quia ille, qui pulsat, intendit probare, et approbare, sive probatum ostendere: et hoc modo tentat Deus, secundum quod dicitur in Sapientia: *Deus tentavit illos, et invenit illos dignos se.*”

either of the ways that God and the devil tempt, for the trial of the flesh is, so to speak, passive, “intending nothing by striking.” But because “the approval or reproof of man follows from this striking,” Bonaventure concludes that “the flesh or carnal concupiscence tempts.” For Bonaventure, then, the subject of a trial need not be a rational agent that has intentions; in order to cause trial, all that is necessary is that something about the object of the trial be demonstrated through it:

For by the flesh or by carnal concupiscence, man is struck and sort of touched \([\textit{quasi tangitur}]\). The one touched either is proved and reproved, if he consents to the knock; or is proved and approved if he refuses. And thus the impulse of the flesh \([\textit{carnis impulsio}]\) can rightly and properly \([\textit{recte et proprie}]\) be called temptation.  

Bonaventure recognizes that there is something slightly analogous about this use of “\textit{tentare,}” as the human being is only “sort of touched \([\textit{quasi tangitur}]\)” in this sort of trial. This \textit{quasi} would seem to rise especially from the fact that there is nothing outside the subject performing this “touching.” Despite the \textit{quasi}, though, Bonaventure concludes that the \textit{carnis impulsio} is “rightly and properly” called temptation.

If the flesh is rightly said to tempt, how does this temptation relate to that of the devil? Can the two sorts of temptation be separated? It is significant that Bonaventure addresses an entire question explicitly to this matter. Bonaventure answers with a distinction: temptation can be understood “either as by first mover or as by proximate and

\[181\] Ibid., in Bonaventure, \textit{Opera Omnia}, v. 3, ed. Peltier, 100: “etsi pulsans nihil intendat…”  
\[182\] Ibid., in Bonaventure, \textit{Opera Omnia}, v. 3, ed. Peltier, 100: “…ad ejus tamen pulsationem sequitur approbatio, vel reprobatio hominis: et sic tentat caro, vel carnalis concupiscentia…”  
immediate mover.”184 When temptation is considered with respect to its first origin, no fleshly temptation exists without the temptation of the devil. Bonaventure explains:

fleshly temptation can never be without temptation from the enemy, because all fleshly temptation is from its corruption, which had its origin in the first temptation from the enemy.185

Such an argument is merely to say there would be no such thing as carnal concupiscence if the devil had not tempted (and vanquished) Adam in the Garden; it does not mean that fleshly temptation is completely dependent on the devil or that the flesh only tempts at the devil’s explicit command.

Bonaventure explains the independence of fleshly temptation in the second half of his distinction. When considering the “proximate and proper mover,” the two temptations are

separated in formal distance and temporal distance: formal distance, because the flesh tempts in some way, but the devil [does] in another way; and the former impels to some vice, and the latter to some [other], and the principle of movement is one and another. Also, they are separated by temporal distance, because at one time the devil harasses and urges on toward some vice toward which the flesh does not incline; and sometimes it can be the converse.186

This way of understanding temptation—considering the means, goals, and principles of each temptation—is to Bonaventure the most correct, and for this reason, he argues that temptation from the flesh is separable from that by the devil. He does not explain

184 Ibid., q. 2, response, in Bonaventure, Opera Omnia, v. 3, ed. Peltier, 103: “aut sicut a movente primo, aut sicut a movente proximo et immediate.”
185 Ibid. q. 2, response, in Bonaventure, Opera Omnia, v. 3, ed. Peltier, 103: “tentatio carnis nunquam potest esse absque tentationis hostis, quia omnis carnis tentatio est ex ejus corruption, quae ortum habuit a prima hostis tentatione.”
186 Ibid. q. 2, response, in Bonaventure, Opera Omnia, v. 3, ed. Peltier, 103: “Si autem sic dicatur esse sicut a movente proximo et proprie, sicut accipit Magister in littera, sic sequestrantur in distantia formali, et distantia temporali: distantia formali, quia alio modo tentat caro, at alio modo diabolus; et ad aliu vitium impellit haec, et ad alio ille, et principium movens est aliiud, et aliiud. Sequestrantur etiam distantia temporali, quia aliquo tempore vexat diabolus, et instigat ad aliquod vitium, ad quod non inclinat caro; et aliando potest esse e converso.”
precisely how the means or goals of these two forms of temptation differ, but his sense is that the devil does not always tempt one to something toward which the one tempted feels an inner impulse from the flesh, and vice versa.

This formal separation of demonic and fleshly temptation serves an anthropological or moral purpose in Bonaventure’s thought, as it did in the Lombard’s. Bonaventure follows Peter in arguing that carnal concupiscence is venially sinful since it arises from faculties which reason has the ability to control. But the devil’s temptation is, from this moral theological perspective, quite different:

temptation from the enemy is material for the exercise of virtue; but fleshly temptation is always from fault or with fault, as the Master says… 187

Since one “touches on merit” and the “other on demerit,”188 demonic temptation and fleshly temptation fall in different moral categories. The former can be undergone blamelessly and when successfully resisted is in fact the basis of one’s moral praise. The latter, though, cannot be without some blame. While there can still be merit in the way that one responds to fleshly temptation,189 the only way it arises in the first place is one for which human beings are morally responsible and, indeed, of which they are guilty. So demonic temptation is related to fleshly temptation as first mover is to some remote effect, but in one’s concrete and lived experience, they need not correspond on a regular basis nor need the devil immediately interfere in one’s ‘inner workings’ in order for the flesh to tempt.

187 Ibid., q. 2, fund., in Bonaventure, Opera Omnia, v. 3, ed. Peltier, 102: “Item, quaecumque duo sic se habent quod in uno contingit mereri, et in alio demereri, illa contingit ab invicem separari: sed tentation hostis est materia exercendae virtutis; tentatio vero carnis semper est a culpa, vel cum culpa, sicut dicit Magister: ergo una istorum sequestrari habet ab altera.”
189 Ibid., q. 1, in Bonaventure, Opera Omnia, v. 3, ed. Peltier, 100.
In these preceding remarks, Bonaventure’s distinction between fleshly and demonic temptation seems clear. In his objections and replies to this question, however, this distinction between fleshly and demonic temptation requires further modification and even certain concessions. Three of his objections and responses in particular require some attention for the light that they shine on the difference between the two kinds of temptation. In all three, Bonaventure attempts to come to terms with the fact that in some sense, the devil needs the flesh in order to tempt and that demonic temptation can at times be “as if interior, just as fleshly temptation.”

To explain this demonic use of the flesh, Bonaventure admits that _caro_, the flesh, is an equivocal term. Sometimes _caro_ refers to the corruption of fleshly concupiscence after the Fall; at other times it refers to human bodiliness, wherein the flesh is simply “all desire that inheres in the soul from its conjunction with flesh.” Indeed, without this broader sense of _caro_, Bonaventure concedes that the devil cannot tempt at all; the flesh in this way is a _sine qua non_ of temptation. Without _caro_, understood as desire as such, “the devil does not bring about any sin in us.” Further, the devil cannot tempt anyone except when he [the one tempted] has variability of free will [ _vertibilitatem liberi arbitrii_], and is in a state of merit or demerit, and can be led

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190 Ibid. q. 2, fund., in Bonaventure, _Opera Omnia_, v. 3, ed. Peltier, 102: “tentatio quae est ab hoste, est ita interior, sicut tentatio quae est a carne.”

191 Ibid., q. 2, ad. 4, in Bonaventure, _Opera Omnia_, v. 3, ed. Peltier, 103: “Ad illud quod objicitur, quod omnia peccata sunt a carne; dicendum quod caro sumitur ibi large pro omni concupiscentia, quae inhaesit animae ex conjunctione sui ad carnem: et sic nomine carnis intelligitur concupiscentia, quae est mater omnium malorum...” It is perhaps possible that Bonaventure is still referring to a “fallen” sense of desire in this objection, but that does not make sense in light of his qualification “caro sumitur ibi large pro omni concupiscentia, quae inhaesit animae ex conjunctione sui ad carnem.” The straightforward meaning of this qualification would be that this desire is a direct consequence of bodiliness, not of the Fall. The sixth objection, below, also certainly has this broad sense of bodiliness and nothing to do with falleness.

192 Ibid., q. 2, ad. 6, in Bonaventure, _Opera Omnia_, v. 3, ed. Peltier, 103-4.

193 Ibid., q. 2, ad. 4, in Bonaventure, _Opera Omnia_, v. 3, ed. Peltier, 103: “sine hac diabolus non generat in nobis aliquod peccatum.”
astray into something [in quo potest seduci]: and that is only when a rational spirit is joined to mortal flesh.\(^{194}\)

It seems that there is something “fallen” about the flesh of which he speaks here. It is, at least, mortal flesh that is a condition of the devil’s temptation, but it is unclear whether he intends this to refer to a post-lapsarian state, since clearly Adam was in some sense tempted without being “mortal” in the sense of human beings after the Fall. The rest of his conditions for temptation by the devil, however, are not limited to any particular earthly state of human nature.\(^{195}\) Finally and most significantly, Bonaventure concedes that “the flesh is an instrument with respect to demonic temptation”:\(^{196}\)

\[
\text{this is true when the devil harasses the flesh, and harassing the flesh, harasses the spirit: and then fleshly and demonic temptation are not placed separately [non ponunt in numerum].}^{197}\]

This concession is quite significant, for it admits that even if they can stand apart at times,\(^{198}\) a temptation that is first and foremost from the explicit prodding of the devil can use the flesh to impel the one tempted to sin. Taken together, these concessions blur the

\(^{194}\) Ibid. q. 2, ad. 6, in Bonaventure, Opera Omnia, v. 3, ed. Peltier, 103-4: “non potest aliquem tentare, nisi quando habet vertibilitatem liberi arbitrii, et est in statu merendi, vel demerendi, et in quo potest seduci: et hoc solum est, quando spiritus rationalis est conjunctus carni mortali.”

\(^{195}\) Variability of free will, at least, would most likely not apply to humanity’s glorified state, but on this side of the grave none of these conditions would ever seem to be lacking. Note, however, the “vertibilitatem liberi arbitrii”: as I will discuss in a moment, this phrase could have some negative Christological consequences.

\(^{196}\) Ibid., q. 2, obj. 2, in Bonaventure, Opera Omnia, v. 3, ed. Peltier, 102: “Item motus instrumenti non est sine motu principalis motoris: sed caro est sicut instrumentum in tentando respectu diaboli, sicut dicitur super illud Job: Terra data est in manus impii; ‘id est caro in manus diaboli’: ergo titillatio carnis non est absque impulsione diaboli: si igitur haec est tentation, patet, etc.”

\(^{197}\) Ibid., q. 2, ad. 2, in Bonaventure, Opera Omnia, v. 3, ed. Peltier, 103: “Ad illud quod objicitur, quod caro movet sicut instrumentum; dicendum quod hoc verum est, quando diabolus vexat carmem, et vexando carmem vexat spiritum: et tunc tentation carnis, et diaboli, non ponunt in numerum. Contingit tamen carmem, mediante sensualitate sibi conjuncta, spiritum nostrum ad malum inclinare, etiam diabolo non movente: et tunc non movet sicut instrumentum, sed sicut movens primum: et hoc modo habet sequestrari a tentatione diaboli.”

\(^{198}\) Perhaps even more problematic is his explanation of the way in which they stand apart in this reply, as just cited in the footnote above. He states that, when the devil does not directly cause the movement of the flesh, the flesh acts as movens primum—moving first. If however, movens primum is to be taken as meaning the movente primo, it would be unclear how Bonaventure does not thereby contradict himself, for the movente primo of temptation is, he argues, the devil.
distinction between demonic and fleshly temptation in important ways. In none of these reflections does Bonaventure explain the means available to the devil in his manipulation of the flesh, nor does he explain the extent of this use or its moral significance. Would such temptation be cause for praise or for blame? Can it be undertaken without fault? Is this sort of temptation purely a consequence of bodiliness—meaning that the devil can tempt the flesh even of someone who is unfallen? What of Christ?

Bonaventure gives some indications in this question about the Christological ramifications of his distinctions, but does not systematically apply this question to Christ’s moral life. There is only a categorical denial of fleshly temptation, first in the opening argument and then in his reply:

the devil tempted the first man and he tempted Christ: but neither the flesh of Christ nor the flesh of the first man urged to evil: therefore neither was tempted by the flesh.\textsuperscript{199}

He concludes from this fact that in Adam and Christ, there was demonic temptation without fleshly temptation because in them, “there is no fleshly corruption [\textit{non est carnis corruptio}].”\textsuperscript{200} This explanation, however, does not address the cases he brings up in the objections discussed above. When there is an “overlap” between the two kinds of temptation, such that the devil uses the flesh instrumentally or such that the devil acts somehow interiorly, would or could Christ have undergone this sort of temptation? There are some indications that it might be possible, but one cannot make a strong claim based


\textsuperscript{200} Ibid, q. 2, response, q. 2, fund., in Bonaventure, \textit{Opera Omnia}, v. 3, ed. Peltier, 103: “tentatio tamen hostis potest esse absque tentatione carnis, tunc potissime quando is tentatur, in quo non est carnis corruptio, sicut fuit in Adam et in Christo…”
on what Bonaventure says here. I will review one explanation of how it would be possible in Bonaventure’s account.

Bonaventure states that “mortal flesh” is a necessary condition for temptation, as is a certain “variability of free will [*vertibilitatem liberi arbitrii*].” The first of these would be affirmed to be in Christ by Bonaventure and, despite any objections that Maximus might raise to the idea of Christ having a “vaccillating” (read: gnomic?) will, Bonaventure does not seem to have a negative connotation to his use of the phrase *vertibilitatem liberi arbitrii*. Certainly Christ had *caro* and, consequently, he would have the “desire that inheres in the soul from its conjunction with flesh” of which Bonaventure speaks in connection with the devil’s use of the flesh for temptation, insofar as the desire spoken of does not indicate the “fleshly corruption” that Bonaventure denies in Christ. Fundamentally, Bonaventure’s account of the devil’s temptation through the flesh does not speak of the corruption of the flesh, but rather of bodiliness alone. Since this bodiliness entails certain basic desires, it would be possible for Bonaventure to affirm that the devil could tempt Christ in and through his flesh. One need not assume that Christ’s flesh had “fleshly corruption” to say that Christ was tempted in this way.

But would this argument not be tantamount to saying that Christ’s flesh tempted him? In his most precise statements, Bonaventure argues that the flesh itself properly tempts when there is no rational agency moving to learn something about the one being tested. Without that condition—that is, with the introduction of some rational agent into the proof of a temptation—Bonaventure could (though does not explicitly) argue that such a temptation would remain exterior enough to maintain Christ’s perfect moral rectitude.
While the final two paragraphs above move beyond Bonaventure’s explicit affirmations on the question of Christ’s temptation by the devil, the reflections in this section represent some of the most recent developments on this question at the time of Aquinas’s writing. The question of human temptation was a distinct locus of scholastic inquiry that, while perhaps not perfect, had developed a formidable framework for the consideration of Christ’s humanity at the depths of its contact with the fallen human condition. In the following two chapters, I will consider St. Thomas Aquinas’s contributions to this conversation.

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In this overview of material that bridges the historical period between St. Thomas and St. Maximus the Confessor, I hope to have shown the major trends that characterize Christian thought about Christ’s temptation in that period. While this material evades quick or easy summary, two comments are in order.

First, one can see a developing tradition that distances in some ways Christ’s experience of the moral life from that of fallen human beings. For John of Damascus, this distance appeared when he attempted to account chiastically for Christ’s identity both with our fallen experience of passion and temptation and with Adam’s original experience of temptation that got us here in the first place. In the West, Hilary’s denial of Christ’s experience of pain in his soul functioned so as to protect Christ’s divinity, though at significant expense to a realistic portrayal of Christ’s humanity. Later responses to Hilary, as that of the Lombard, introduce distinctions between Christ’s moral life and that of fallen humanity so as to protect Christ’s perfect human moral rectitude. Since certain
aspects of our fallen moral life entrap us deeply in cycles of sin, Christ’s redemptive mission could not accommodate those aspects, even if they are not themselves sin, such as the *fomes*. Indeed, when it comes to Christ’s temptation, the desire to protect Christ from disordered movement brought the later scholastics to deny even demonic forms of temptation that *looked like* fleshly temptation but that were said to be without fault in other human beings. In the medieval figures investigated, no effort was spent trying to reconcile the minimization of Christ’s temptation with scriptural or Patristic claims about the soteriological significance of this temptation. They acknowledge that such temptation is not sin in other human beings, yet because it appears to function similarly to the temptation from the flesh, they deny that it can be spoken of in Christ.

Second, in this period there are anthropological “tectonic plates” that shift and subsume beneath one another, changing in significant ways the “geography” of the Western Christian understanding of human nature. Looking back to Evagrius and Maximus, the goodness of human nature was conditioned by the very real and present danger of the devil in and through one’s thoughts and feelings. There are real dangers in such a conception; I have considered some of these at the end of the last chapter. There are, however, real advantages as well. Most significantly among these is the fact, explicitly and adamantly argued by Maximus, everything that is natural to humanity directs us toward our final end in God. In the period that follows Maximus, the goodness of human nature is conditioned more and more by other forces, with less and less reference to the devil. Primary among the disadvantages in this position is that these non-personified forces introduce a principle into fallen human nature that renders our lower appetitive faculty indifferent (at best) to humanity’s final end. Rather than an ancient
struggle coordinated against humanity by our primordial Enemy, the scholastic tradition comes to see our greatest temptation to sin within our very nature: humanity now finds itself fighting itself. On the other hand, this gradual shifting of the plates has apparent advantages that should also not be ignored. First, the minimization of the devil’s role in the Fall appears less cosmically dualistic because it assigns less disordering activity to the devil in the (mis)shaping and later (mis)activation of fallen human nature. Second, it appears less anthropologically “superstitious” since it refuses to let the moral agent shift the blame for one’s “inner demons” onto real ones. Further evaluation of these advantages and disadvantages will have to wait until Thomas has had his say in the matter; I turn in the next chapter to his anthropology and theory of temptation.
CHAPTER 5

THOMAS’S ANTHROPOLOGY OF TEMPTATION

Thomas was a teacher. This fact has a significant impact on the way that he approaches and answers questions about demonic temptation. On the one hand, his status means that his exposition, whether in scriptural commentaries or in systematic treatises, is much more rigidly structured and, indeed, more easily understood than was St. Maximus’s. While Maximus did not explicitly adhere to a particular philosophical school, Thomas writes with a broad understanding of Aristotelian philosophy that translates to a precision in his exposition of demonic temptation that is unrivaled even by Maximus. On the other hand, his status and training affects both his audience and the content of his thought about the devil. Couched in Aristotelian language concerning angelic movement of matter, Thomas’s theory of demonic temptation is only one component of a larger theory of temptation that Thomas inherited from the preceding medieval tradition, perhaps most importantly from Peter the Lombard.

My purpose in this chapter is to present the anthropological background against which I will discuss Thomas’s theory of Christ’s demonic temptation in the final chapter. In order to understand how Christ saves humanity from temptation and from the devil, one must first understand the concrete situation into which humankind has fallen, how we got there, and how we might rise from that situation. As I will discuss, St. Thomas
considers sources of temptation that did not factor into St. Maximus’s account, and so I will take particular care to consider whether and how other temptations bear relevance to the central *demonic* component of this study. Only in this way can I adequately address how Thomas views the relationship between Christ’s temptation and that of other fallen human beings.

To accomplish these goals, I will proceed in three broad sections. First, I will consider in order the created and fallen states of Adam and his progeny (I). Concerning Adam’s created state (A), I will treat the constitutional advantages he enjoyed and consider how temptation was possible for him in that condition. Concerning the fallen state (B), I will pay particularly close attention to the way in which Thomas portrays the punishment for Adam’s sin and the slavery to Satan that comes with that sin. On the one hand, Thomas argues that God’s punishment of Adam involves no positive “infliction” on human nature. On the other hand, Thomas recognizes something that *positively* separates humanity from God after the Fall: a disordered concupiscence that other human beings inherit from Adam. I will show here that while Adam is most properly understood as the author of this disorder, it is understood most completely in St. Thomas when one recognizes the intentional, malevolent activity of the devil, so that the devil can be said to *intend* and in an indirect sense *bring about* this habitual disorder.

In the second section, I will consider the two temptations that pertain specifically to the fallen state (II). By way of introduction, I will first discuss Thomas’s typology of temptations as displayed in various periods of his thought (A). Thomas’s typology is not absolutely constant, so I wish to draw some attention to the way in which this typology changes with time. After laying out this typology, I will spend the rest of the section
considering the details of those two forms of temptation that persistently separate human beings from their final end: fleshly temptation or the *fomes peccati* (B) and inner demonic temptation (C). Thomas rarely considers the relationship between these two kinds of temptation, so it will be my task in that section to focus on the concrete similarities and differences between these temptations. Since there are two forms of fallen temptation for Thomas, it will be indispensible to understand how one of them—the *fomes peccati*—is most characteristic of the fallen condition and a necessary condition for the strongest experience of the other form, inner demonic temptation. In light of the Christological task coming in the next chapter, I will take some care to show how Thomas conceives of the fundamentally disordered characteristic of the first, fleshly form of temptation. This character is central to the way in which Thomas applies his theory of fallen temptation to Christ. In the analysis of inner demonic temptation, I will argue that St. Thomas recognizes a fallen form of temptation that is, in its subjective experience, similar to fleshly temptation but that remains distinct in precise moral theological terms, even if it is still somewhat subordinate to or dependent upon the corruption of the *fomes*.

In the final—and shortest—section (III), I will address two broader questions: first, the compatibility of inner demonic temptation and virtue (A); and second, the way Thomas conceives of God’s permission of temptation as both leading human beings to and hindering them from their final end (B). The first of these questions relates to the somewhat subordinated place that demonic temptation takes in Thomas’s understanding of the fallen condition; can one who is virtuous be tempted *from within*, either from the flesh or the devil? The results here are especially important for the Christological material in the next chapter. The second of these will consider how Thomas is able to
provide an adequate understanding of these two forms of temptation in relation to God’s positive guidance of human beings into a final, beatific union. There, I will argue that because Thomas explicitly wishes to emphasize that the devil’s activity is subordinate to God’s providential and salvific care for humankind, Thomas’s account of demonic temptation is from the beginning positioned in terms of God’s positive ordination of human salvation in a way that fleshly temptation, which first arises as a punishment for human sin, is not.

I. The Created and Fallen States according to Thomas

For Thomas as much as for Maximus, one cannot avoid an account of the genesis of the human race if one hopes to adequately address the reasons for Christ’s coming into human nature. In my consideration of Thomas’s protology, I will address those topics that bear a significant relationship to the qualities of Christ’s human nature and to his overcoming of the devil in and through that nature. I will first address the original state of Adam (A): his passionate faculties, his graced state, the order of his soul, and his immunity from deception (ST I.94). Secondly, I will address two areas in which Adam’s sin brought about altered conditions in his experience of human nature (B): the withdrawal of original justice and his enslavement to demonic powers.¹ These two loci are almost completely separated in Thomas’s presentation in the Summa, but there are moments both in the Summa and in other works (such as the De Malo and in his biblical commentaries), where Thomas recognizes an important overlap between the devil’s

¹ A characterization of the nature of Adam’s first sin in itself or its cause is beyond the purview of this study. As was the case with my presentation of Maximus in Chapter 2, some of the philosophical questions about the relationship of will and intellect would take me too far from the central subject matter of Christ’s temptation.
intentions and the origins of disordered concupiscence. In this section, I will not yet consider how these two altered conditions act as forces of temptation (at least not in detail); I only want to establish the origin of these forces, give some of their basic characteristics, and extrapolate their formal relation to one another.

A. The unfallen Adamic state

The unfallen state, as conceived by St. Thomas, is the original, graced state of humankind. Though Adam enjoyed certain privileges (including immortality and incorruptibility\(^2\)) in this state, this condition was not one of perfect beatitude or absolutely perfected grace. At the least, Adam had not yet received certain graces of perfection, such as the beatific vision, and possessed other virtues that indicate for Thomas a certain imperfection, such as faith.\(^3\) From this original condition, Thomas concludes that Adam awaited a certain “confirmation in righteousness,” a term used to denote the final perfections that did not exist in the beginning. Thomas states that

the rational creature is confirmed in righteousness \(\textit{in iustitia confirmati}\) through the beatitude given by the clear vision of God … as soon as Adam had attained to that happy state of seeing God in His Essence, he would have become spiritual in soul and body; and his animal life would have ceased.\(^4\)

The nature of this being “confirmed in righteousness” is not made perfectly clear. Since Adam is immortal in the original condition, this transition to a state of perfect beatitude would not be accomplished through death. However it would have taken place, the nature of this transition is not significant at present; I only wish to emphasize that with regard to God’s grace the created state rests somewhere between the fallen and glorified state,

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\(^2\) \textit{ST} I.97.1 (unless otherwise noted, English translations are from Thomas Aquinas, \textit{Summa Theologica}, 3 vols., trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province (Cincinnati: Benziger Brothers, 1947)) and \textit{ST} I.102.4.

\(^3\) \textit{ST} I.94.1 and \textit{ST} I.95.3.

\(^4\) \textit{ST} I.100.2.
enjoying certain supernatural graces but not yet perfected according to God’s ultimate plan for humankind. Essentially, the Garden of Eden is not heaven and God’s plan for humanity from the very beginning included an eventual movement into a state of absolute perfection.

Particularly significant among the characteristics of the unfallen state is the existence of a certain sort of passibility in Adam. Thomas argues that the sensitive appetite, being constitutive of human nature from the very beginning, was a faculty that was activated in the beginning only at the command of Adam’s reason and will:

in the state of innocence the inferior appetite was wholly subject to reason: so that in that state the passions of the soul existed only as consequent upon the judgment of reason.\(^5\)

In other words, there was in Adam absolutely no involuntary or irrational movement of his sensitive nature prior to the Fall.\(^6\)

Since there was no corporeal evil to fear in that condition, the movement of the irascible portion of his sensitive appetite was limited but not absent. Most notably, the irascible passion of hope was present in the original Adamic state.\(^7\) There were, on the other hand, many spiritual goods that Adam voluntarily and rationally recognized as desirable in and through his concupiscible appetite:

\(^5\) *ST* I.95.2: “In statu vero innocentiae inferior appetitus erat rationi totaliter subiectus, unde non erant in eo passiones animae, nisi ex rationis iudicio consequentes” (throughout, Latin versions of the *ST* accessed via http://www.corpusthomisticum.org/iopera.html).

\(^6\) This state, as will be discussed shortly, stands in clear contrast to Adam’s fallen state, wherein the passionate faculties move inordinately and (in a certain sense) involuntarily; see below. This presentation of Adam’s created state also stands in notable parallel with Thomas’s presentation of Christ’s sensitive faculty, which also obeys perfectly the command of his reason; see Chapter 6.

\(^7\) See *ST* I-II.25.3. While Thomas will argue that Adam did not have passions with regard to evil at *ST* I.95.2, he qualifies this claim in *ST* I.95.3, ad 2, where he acknowledges that Adam could have hated the devil in the original state. Thus, even if Thomas were to mean by irascibility and concupiscibility the exact same realities that Maximus indicates by repulsion and attraction (which he does not), there would have been repulsion even in the original Adamic state.
But those passions which regard present good, as joy and love; or which regard future good to be had at the proper time, as desire and hope that casteth not down, existed in the state of innocence.\(^8\)

The goods that Thomas lists here are primarily spiritual in nature—that is, they do not appear primarily with regard to worldly goods. Insofar as desires were directed toward worldly things, they existed in view of and in perfect subjection to Adam’s rational and volitional self-direction toward his final end.\(^9\)

Thomas is clear that the reason for this rectitude of body and soul in Adam’s original condition is a privileged state of supernatural grace. Thomas states:

Now it is clear that such a subjection of the body to the soul and of the lower powers to reason, was not from nature; otherwise it would have remained after sin [\textit{non erat naturalis, alioquin post peccatum mansisset}]; … Hence it is clear that also the primitive subjection by virtue of which reason was subject to God, was not a merely natural gift, but a supernatural endowment of grace [\textit{secundum supernatura donum gratiae}]; for it is not possible that the effect should be of greater efficiency than the cause.\(^10\)

For this reason, Adam’s condition at the beginning can certainly be called the \textit{original} state of human nature, but it would be somewhat misleading to describe it as the \textit{natural} state; Adam was provided supernatural gifts that Thomas describes as a state of original justice and sanctifying grace. Especially through original justice, there is a twofold ordering, both of the soul to God and of the body to the soul. This arrangement and

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\(^8\) \textit{ST} I.95.2: “Illae vero passiones quae possunt esse boni praesentis, ut gaudium et amor; vel quae sunt futuri boni ut suo tempore habendi, ut desiderium et spes non affligens; fuerunt in statu innocentiae.”

\(^9\) Thus, while Thomas’s affirmation of passibility may at first appear to be in tension with Maximus’s claim that passibility is a consequence of the Fall (along with corruptibility and mortality), Thomas’s view in fact coincides quite closely with Maximus’s presentation, wherein a primarily spiritual object of attraction and repulsion was envisioned in the unfallen state. See Chapter 2 above.

\(^10\) \textit{ST} I.95.1: “Manifestum est autem quod illa subiectio corporis ad animam, et inferiorum virium ad rationem, non erat naturalis, alioquin post peccatum mansisset … Unde manifestum est quod et illa prima subiectio, qua ratio Deo subdebatur, non erat solum secundum naturam, sed secundum supernaturale donum gratiae, non enim potest esse quod effectus sit potior quam causa.”
explanation of Adam’s original state has significant ramifications for his explanation of the consequences of Adam’s sin, which I will discuss in a moment.

The final feature of Adam’s original condition that needs to be noted here is an immunity to intellectual “deception [deceptio]”\(^{11}\) and to temptation “by inward suggestion [interiori suggestione],”\(^{12}\) each of which I will treat in turn. Regarding the first, Thomas does not discuss the identity of the deceiver, but based on his replies, one can surmise that he intends to include both human and demonic sources in this treatment. While Thomas entertains certain distinctions that would permit a certain, imperfect form of deception before sin, he ultimately rejects them, clarifying that even Eve’s being deceived was only possible after an interior act of pride.\(^{13}\) Thomas concludes that “the rectitude of the primitive state was incompatible with deception of the intellect.”\(^{14}\) From these considerations, one can say with confidence that Thomas equates the unfallen state of humanity with a basic freedom from evil influence. Just as Thomas denies that the devil could convince Adam of any “false opinion [existimatio falsi]”\(^{15}\) in his intellect, he similarly denies that any evil could enter Adam’s body, answering in a reply that: “Were anything presented to the imagination or sense of the first man, not in accordance with the nature of things, he would not have been deceived, for his reason would have enabled him to judge the truth.”\(^{16}\)

\(^{11}\) *ST* I.94.4.
\(^{12}\) *ST* II-II.165.2.
\(^{13}\) *ST* I.94.4., ad. 1. In the response to this question, Thomas argues that “whatever deception occurs must be ascribed to some lower faculty, such as the imagination or the like.” Because of the clarification about Eve, however, one should take the deception through imagination as descriptive of the postlapsarian state; no deception seems possible prior to any sort of sinful consent. Thomas confirms this immunity again at *ST* II-II.165.2.
\(^{14}\) *ST* I.94.4, response.
\(^{15}\) Ibid.
\(^{16}\) Ibid., ad. 3: “Ad tertium dicendum quod, si aliquid representa tum fuisset sensui vel phantasiae primi hominis aliter quam sit in rerum natura, non tamen deciperetur, quia per rationem veritatem
Regarding the second, Thomas considers the means of prelapsarian demonic attack in a question on temperance in the *Secunda Secundae*. Thomas argues there that “the devil had a minimum of power against man before sin, wherefore he was unable to tempt him by inward suggestion [*interiori suggestione*], but only by outward suggestion.” 17 Moreover, Thomas argues that this immunity to temptation comes as a result of “a special favor of grace”, 18 thus, this immunity was a distinct aspect of Adam’s unfallen condition, related to original justice. It is crucial to note that the internal suggestion of the devil is not present in the Adamic state and that freedom from it constitutes an element of the prelapsarian condition. Before the Fall, there was thus an immunity in Adam from both intellectual attack and inward suggestion from the devil.

**B. The Fall**

Thomas’s account of the Fall shows how many of the perfections that Adam enjoyed in his created state are lost as a consequence of sin. For my purposes, I need to address carefully two of these consequences: humanity’s subservience to demonic powers (1) and the internal disorder that entered human existence following Adam’s sin (2). I will treat each of these in turn and end with a discussion of the relationship between these two effects of sin in Thomas’s corpus (3).

1. *Slavery to the devil.* Thomas understand that when Adam sinned, this offense put him in a justly deserved servitude to demonic power. The theme of slavery to the devil is not strongly emphasized in St. Thomas’s account of the Fall, but it does make

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17 *ST* II-II.165.2, ad. 2. Latin: “Diabolus autem minimum potestatis habebat in homine ante peccatum et ideo non potuit eum interiori suggestione, sed solum exteriori tentare.”

18 *ST* II-II.165.1, response. Latin: “Ex speciali autem beneficio gratiae.” I will consider this special grace again in the detailed analysis of inner demonic temptation in the second part below.
some notable appearances. The theme is discussed in perhaps the most depth in Thomas’s early Commentary on Job, but it can be seen with varying degrees of detail in significant portions of the Summa Theologiae as well.19 The content of this slavery will be considered at length in my later analysis of demonic temptation; for now it suffices to note that it takes the form of a susceptibility to deception and inner attack. At the moment, I wish to consider primarily the justice and force of this bondage to the devil.

The nature of humanity’s slavery or bondage to the devil, as presented by Thomas, is somewhat complex. On the one hand, Thomas argues that, consequent to Adam’s sin, it is just for God to punish humanity, and so any punishment that follows is, from humanity’s perspective, unexceptionable. Moreover, it is within the bounds of justice for God to dispense this punishment through whatever vessels God sees fit. Thus, God can rightly assign demons to plague humanity; he describes this arrangement in terms of a sovereign judge (God) and a torturer (the devil).20 There is, then, a double-debt to God and the devil that is incurred through sin. Indeed, Thomas can even speak of humanity as the devil’s “bondsman” and state that “since the Devil had overcome man by inducing him to sin, man was subject to the devil’s bondage.”21 However, Thomas maintains that the power exercised by the devil over humanity is, from another perspective, manifestly unjust, as the devil did not earn the right to enslave humanity.

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19 It is found in passing at ST I-II.80.4, but then later in more detail at ST III.48.4. While the Commentary on Job is particularly extensive on this point, one should not think that his lack of attention to this point in the early parts of the Summa means that Thomas changed his mind; indeed, his most significant discussion of it in the Summa Theologica appears in the Tertia Pars, where it is precisely a discussion of Christ’s saving work. It remains curious (and perhaps even something of an oversight) that Thomas does not discuss the qualities of the human enslavement to the devil in either the Prima Pars or the Prima Secundae. This slavery is taken for granted in the Tertia Pars, where he has to provide a basic summary of this enslavement in his response since he had not done so earlier. In what follows, I presume a basic continuity in his thought on this subject. For the dating of Thomas’s works, see Jean-Pierre Torrell, Saint Thomas Aquinas: The Person and His Work Revised Edition, trans. Robert Royal (Washington, D.C., Catholic University of America Press, 2005), 330-361.

20 ST III.48.4, ad. 2.

21 Ibid., ad. 2 and response, respectively.
Thus, from the perspective of the devil, Thomas argues that the punishment the devil inflicts on human beings is not just. There is some tension here, insofar as Thomas does not explain the authority by which the devil can be said to hold humanity in bondage in the passage quoted above. Nevertheless, this distinction is important for Thomas because he wishes to avoid the implication that God could owe a debt to the devil, or that Christ (by his passion and death) would in any way be paying the devil for humankind. In short, while humanity is justly held, the devil holds unjustly.

In order to explain in more detail the significance of this servitude, Thomas’s early Commentary on Job is helpful. There, Thomas ascribes a great deal of power to the devil over humankind, though I leave some of the details of this power for the next section that will cover the minutiae of Thomas’s theory of inner temptation. Because of the superiority of angelic natures over human nature, Thomas concludes two sections of an extended metaphorical reading of Leviathan with these lines:

No human power is able to wound the devil or resist him, but all human power is considered by the devil as nothing. … as much as strength and effort of humankind is exerted, it is disdained by the devil.

Thus, if one were to construe the primary spiritual battle as between the devil and human beings left to their own power, there is no question who the victor would be. Divine aid is

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22 God is described as not merely permitting but even ordaining the penalty of demonic slavery (ibid., ad. 2). If God ordains the devil to inflict punishment on humanity, there seems to be something just, even from the perspective of the devil. Fundamentally, however, Thomas attempts to resolve the tension by arguing that the debt owed by humanity is to God alone and not to the devil, and insofar as the devil attempts to collect this debt, his holding of humanity is unjust.

23 See ibid., ad. 3.

24 Thomas Aquinas, Commentary on Job 41 (also found in Thomas Aquinas, The Literal Exposition on Job: A Scriptural Commentary Concerning Providence, trans. Anthony Damico (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1989), 466), translation modified: “Per hoc autem significatur quod nulla virtus humana efficax est ad Diabolum laedendum vel ad resistendum ei, sed omnis virtus humana pro nihilo a Diabolo reputatur. … quantumcumque intendatur hominis fortitudo et conatus, a Diabo contemnitur” (throughout, Latin versions accessed via http://www.corpusthomisticum.org/iopera.html). Later in the same discussion, Thomas continues the analogy, explaining that “Leviathan has the ability to perform great and powerful actions [Leviathan habet facultatem ad magnas et fortes operationes exercendas],” though the nature of that power, again, will be left to the next section.
humanity’s only recourse, and that aid determines the bounds of the battle waged against humankind.

Crucially, Thomas argues that Adam’s sin changed the *quality* and *means* of the devil’s temptation. I discussed above that in the state of innocence Adam was incapable of deception and inward suggestion; after the Fall, this condition no longer attains.

Considering Adam’s changed moral circumstances after sin, Thomas writes that

> A suggestion whereby the devil suggests something to man spiritually, shows the devil to have more power against man than outward suggestion has, since by an inward suggestion, at least, man’s imagination is changed by the devil; whereas by an outward suggestion a change is wrought merely on an outward creature.\(^{25}\)

These changed moral circumstances for Adam’s descendants are a concrete and palpable element of the devil’s enslavement of humankind. Whereas prior to the Fall, Adam was largely immune to the devil’s attack, Adam’s sin results in new means of suggestion and temptation that were previously impossible. Adam’s first consent to temptation resulted in the introduction of new means of that very temptation. One can thus say that for Thomas, Adam’s deliberate sin resulted in an unintended interior slavery to the devil. Thomas indicates that this slavery and susceptibility is the result of the withdrawal of grace that follows from Adam’s sin, and so it becomes an intrinsic component of his condition after sin.\(^{26}\) Adam’s sin caused a susceptibility to inward demonic suggestion just as it caused other unsavory consequences, which follow below.

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\(^{25}\) *ST II-II.165.2*, ad. 2: “suggestio qua spiritualiter Diabolus aliquid homini suggerit, ostendit Diabolus plus habere potestatis in homine quam suggestio exterior, quia per suggestionem interiorem immutatur a Diabolo saltem hominis phantasia, sed per suggestionem exterioriorem immutatur sola exterior creatura.”

\(^{26}\) *ST II-II.165.1*, response. Thomas only addresses, counterfactually, Adam’s original immunity from temptation as a result of a special grace, but the implication is that after Adam consents to the temptation, that grace is removed.
2. *Disordered appetites.* As discussed above, Adam’s original condition was one that enjoyed a variety of supernatural graces. These graces (especially original justice) maintained the order between the soul and God, as well as between the body and the soul. As Thomas explains the Fall, when Adam sinned, these graces were withdrawn, and human nature began to experience inordinate desires. Two categorical changes occur: first, the various forms of both positive and negative emotional states rush in. No longer does Adam experience only spiritual joy, love, and faith; for the first time, passions that regard or flee from evil occur. Second, these desires are no longer perfectly voluntary, being subject to a disordered political governance whereby they sometimes resist rational governance.

Because of the way that Thomas describes Adam’s original state, Adam was left after sin in what Thomas calls a “natural” state of disorder. As just quoted above, Thomas says of this original rectitude that “such a subjection of the body to the soul and of the lower powers to reason, was not from nature; otherwise it would have remained after sin [non erat naturalis, alioquin post peccatum mansisset].” Thus, with the withdrawal of the supernatural grace of the Adamic state, the various powers of the soul revert to their natural objects, resulting in moral disorder:

Accordingly the privation of original justice, whereby the will was made subject to God, is the formal element in original sin; while every other disorder of the soul’s powers, is a kind of material element in respect of original sin. Now the inordinateness of the other powers of the soul consists chiefly in their turning inordinately to mutable good; which inordinateness may be called by the general

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27 For an account of the Fall that largely accords with that provided here, see Lombardo, *The Logic of Desire*, 118-124. Thomas also discusses the natural consequences of the Fall in *ST* II-II.164.1.

28 One should note that Adam’s prelapsarian condition can also be described as one of “political governance,” but one in which all the “members” support the rule of reason, whereas after sin, they do not. See the contrast that Thomas draws between Adam’s state and our own at *ST* I.95.2, response. I will provide a more detailed analysis of the fallen human experience of the *fomes peccati* in the next section as a prelude to a discussion of fallen demonic temptation.

29 *ST* I.95.1.
name of concupiscence. Hence original sin is concupiscence, materially, but privation of original justice, formally.\textsuperscript{30}

The removal of God’s supernatural aid, then, results in the material consequence of a natural inordinateness and “concupiscence,” which term, in this sense, Thomas uses interchangeably with the \textit{fomes peccati}, the kindling of sin.\textsuperscript{31}

It is important to consider why Thomas addresses this problem the way he does. By arguing that God provided supernatural aid to Adam in his original state, Thomas simultaneously anticipates two objections. First, he adequately staves off the objection that God, from the beginning, did not provide Adam the necessary resources to successfully strive toward and attain absolute perfection insofar as this is possible within the confines of human nature. A trajectory of pure ascent toward God is conceivable from Adam’s original condition; the Fall was by no means necessary.

Second and most importantly, though, Thomas argues that the punishment of original sin is not, as it were, divinely-inflicted corporal punishment or corruption—it is not carried out through God’s agency, but instead flows from his withdrawal of grace. This concern is seen especially strongly in Thomas’s commentary on the Sentences, where he addresses whether original sin can be said to be “from God.”\textsuperscript{32} Following a distinction from Peter the Lombard, Thomas says that one must distinguish between

\textsuperscript{30} \textit{ST} I-II.82.1.
\textsuperscript{31} There is some lack of consistency in the translation of this phrase in modern secondary literature. Some modern scholars have taken to translating \textit{fomes} as “spark,” probably on the basis of Roy J. Deferrari, \textit{A Latin-English Dictionary of St. Thomas Aquinas} (Boston: St. Paul Editions, 1960), 408, where the entry for \textit{fomes} offers “kindling, tinder, spark” in the general sense of the word” as the main meanings. On the other hand, “spark” is not found in Lewis and Short’s heading on \textit{fomes} (Lewis and Short, \textit{A Latin Dictionary}, 766: “kindling-wood, touch-wood, tinder”). Nicholas E. Lombardo, \textit{The Logic of Desire: Aquinas on Emotion} (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2011) translates the phrase as “tinder of sin” (ibid., 211), which I take (on the basis of Lewis and Short’s definition) to be most etymologically accurate. As I will argue below in this section, Thomas’s native analogies present the devil as taking an intentional role in the production of “dry wood” for burning, so my preference for “kindling” or “tinder” stems from this aspect of Thomas’s usage.
original sin as fault and as punishment: insofar as original sin arises from Adam’s willful transgression of God’s commandment, it is not from God; insofar as it is a punishment, it is. But Thomas distinguishes even further so as to protect against the charge that God inflicts this punishment on humanity as a whole, i.e. to make clear that this punishment flows from God’s withdrawal of grace rather than from new punitive action on God’s part.

But if it is considered insofar as it is a defect from some perfection, it is a punishment; and in this way, indeed, God is the cause of punishment. But it must be known that [God] is not the cause of all punishment in this way. For some punishment is through the infliction of some contrary torment or corruption; and these latter punishments are by God’s agency [a Deo agente], from whom all actions (insofar as they are orderly) and consequent sufferings take their principle. But all punishment, when it is just, is orderly. There is, however, some punishment which consists simply in a removal or a lack, as with the withdrawal of grace, and other things of this kind; and these kinds of punishments are from God, not indeed as from any agent [non quidem sicut ab agente aliquid], but rather as from the lack of influx of a certain perfection; because [to cause] to flow and not to flow are his [God’s]; and his will is the cause of both.33

Thomas is careful to argue that while both kinds of punishment come from God’s will, the kind of punishment involved in original sin is not inflicted by God, but merely a passive withdrawal of something beyond nature. Indeed, because he distinguishes the punishment of original sin from a just and orderly active infliction, Thomas implies that it would not be just for God to will some active punishment of original sin in Adam’s descendants. Thomas is quite eager to explain the punishment of original sin in this way:

33 Ibid., response, my translation: “Si autem consideretur secundum quod defectit ab aliqua perfectione, sic poena est; et hujusmodi poenae quidem Deus causa est. Sed sciendum est, quod non eodem modo est causa omnis poenae. Quaedam enim poena est per inflictionem alicujus contrarii affligentis vel corruptantis; et talis quidem poena est a Deo agente, a quo omnis actio, secundum quod ordinata est, et passio per consequens, principium sumit. Omnis autem poena, cum justa sit, ordinata est. Quaedam vero poena est quae simpliciter in ablatione vel defectu consistit, sicut est subtractio gratiae, et aliquid hujusmodi; et hae quidem poenae a Deo sunt, non quidem sicut ab agente aliquid, sed potius sicut a non influente talem perfectionem; quia in ipso est influere et non influere; et utriusque sua voluntas causa est.”
if the *fomes* is considered insofar as it is a punishment, it cannot be said that some punishment is inflicted (because a supernatural principle is not subjected to anything positive in man) but pertains to the same genus of punishment as that which consists only in defect [*in solo defectu*].

To reiterate, it is important in this line of reasoning that God’s punishment in original be passive—that is, a withdrawal of something supernatural—and not the active infliction of some other punishment that would drive the creature from God. Even though God’s will is the cause of both punishments, the punishment of original sin does not come from God’s will in the same way as does the latter kind of punishment.

The negative and formal aspect of concupiscence is only half of Thomas’s thought on the matter, however. Thomas also considers a positive, material element that is more active in its separation of the human being from its proper end. Thomas lays the blame for the positive proclivity or tendency that separates humanity from God at Adam’s feet, through whom it is passed on to the rest of the species. Since the origin of the *fomes* is only negatively and formally ascribed to the agency of God, Thomas provides a parallel explanation of the material component, which can be described as “something positive” in concupiscence. Thomas explains this material component in a variety of ways. It can be called a “corrupt habit” and a sickness that is “as if in nature [*quasi in naturam*].” Neither of these explanations—calling the *fomes* a habit and

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34 Ibid., my translation: “Si ergo consideretur fomes secundum quod est poena, non dicit aliquam poenam inflictam (quia supernaturalia principia non supponunt aliquid positive in homine) sed pertinet ad illud genus poenarum quod in solo defectu consistit.” One can also see here quite clearly how the nature/grace debate cannot be completely ignored in this study.

35 *ST* I-II.82.2. The “quasi” is important; in the *De Malo*, Thomas states that this habit is neither natural nor infused by God (*De Malo* IV.2, in Thomas Aquinas, *The De Malo of Thomas Aquinas*, trans. Richard Regan (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001); text includes Thomas’s Latin). Additionally, according to the reasoning of the *Sentences Commentary*, if God does anything positive in the punishment of original sin, Thomas’s own reasoning indicates that this would be tantamount to God habitually driving the creature farther from the Creator—something that Thomas believes would be unjust. Even if the positive element of original sin (concupiscence) can be traced back only to the nature that God covered from the beginning with his supernatural grace, one must still see that
calling it quasi-natural—should be taken too literally because the phenomenon that Thomas describes here is *sui generis*. Even though it passes to other human beings as to the members of the body (in a way parallel to an acquired habit), in this context he speaks of habit analogously and not in the full sense of an acquired habit. Similarly, Thomas does not think that this disorder is fully natural—the *quasi* in the above affirmation is essential. Instead, the material component of concupiscence is what Thomas most accurately describes as a “sickness” brought about by Adam’s fault. This sickness is primarily and formally the lack of supernatural aid, but the establishment of any positive, semi-natural component in it is attributed by Thomas to Adam.

In Thomas’s estimation, however, Adam did not act alone in this transgression—he had the devil to help him. The nature of this demonic aid is not addressed (or even broached) in his questions on concupiscence, but his statements in questions on the devil make his position on this matter clear. In his questions on concupiscence and original sin, Thomas only considers the ways in which these realities relate to human and divine

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36 Thomas claims in *ST* I-II.82.1, ad. 3 that original sin is an acquired habit “by the act of our first parent, but not by our own act.” But since that is not how habits are normally acquired, Thomas prefers to call this habit “inborn due to our corrupt origin” (ibid). See the following note, as well.

37 *ST* I-II.82.2, ad. 1: “As bodily sickness is partly a privation, in so far as it denotes the destruction of the equilibrium of health, and partly something positive, viz. the very humors that are inordinately disposed, so too original sin denotes the privation of original justice, and besides this, the inordinate disposition of the parts of the soul. Consequently it is not a pure privation, but a corrupt habit.” Thomas can speak of this habit as quite literally an acquired habit: “habitual concupiscence … has been acquired by the voluntary act [*uoluntario actu*] of our first parent [*habitualis concupiscientia … est acquisita ex *uoluntario actu primi parentis*]” (*De Malo* IV.2, ad. 5). But there is in any case something analogous here because this explanation is not formally consistent with his explanation of acquired habits in *ST* I-II.51.3, response. There, Thomas’s theory of habit in the *Summa* contradicts such an explanation of an acquired habit. In that argument, he states that any acquired habit concerning the lower appetitive powers “cannot be caused by one act, but only by many [*Et ideo habitus virtutis non potest causari per unum actum, sed per multos*]” (*ST* I-II.51.3, response). Although Thomas here specifies that he is speaking of a “habit of virtue,” his sed contra is broader, stating that “habitus virtutis, et eadem ratione alius habitus, non causatur per unum actum” (ibid., sed contra).
agency, but following at least implicitly both Augustine and Peter the Lombard, an evil intentional force is elsewhere considered in relation to the origin of the *fomes peccati*. In the final subsection, then, I will address how Thomas sees the devil to be active alongside Adam in the material disordering of human nature that Thomas called the *fomes*.

3. *The devil and concupiscence*. The strongest textual evidence in St. Thomas linking the devil to concupiscence arises from the passages based on Genesis 3 where Thomas treats whether the devil can be said to be the cause of all sin: one article in the *Summa Theologica* and another in the *De Malo*. In both of these passages, Thomas draws on the analogy of kindling and fire to explain the way in which the devil can legitimately be called the cause of all sin. Since concupiscence (in the sense of disordered desire) is equivalent to the kindling of sin, Thomas’s analogy of firewood prepared by the devil takes on important overtones. I will quote both passages before discussing them in detail. First, in the *Summa*, Thomas states that

> the devil is the occasional and indirect cause of all our sins, in so far as he induced the first man to sin, by reason of whose sin human nature is so infected, that we are all prone to sin: even as the burning of wood might be imputed to the man who dried the wood so as to make it easily inflammable [*sicut diceretur esse*

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38 Timo Nisula, *Augustine and the Functions of Concupiscence* (Boston: Brill, 2012), 310-11 shows that Augustine recognizes fleshly concupiscence as “not an original plan of God’s creation” and, indeed, that “*concupiscentia* has its origin not in God but in the Devil, who is the ‘source and author of all sin’” (ibid., 311). Peter the Lombard also ascribes to the devil an agency in the origin of concupiscence when it is understood as fault. See *Sentences* II.32.3. Neither of these authors explains in great detail what kind of “creative” power the devil would have in the origin of this reality. Rather than creation, it is probably more appropriate to describe it in terms of disorder. See also the discussion of Peter in Chapter 4 above.

39 The theological reality that the *fomes* attempts to describe is inherently analogical and evocative. From the beginning of this tradition, the very use of the term *fomes* requires a close analysis of the analogy of fire, wood, burning, sparks, and of the different kinds of agency involved with those objects. What follows is an attempt to trace some of the Thomistic strains of this analogy. Indeed, the way in which one translates *fomes* becomes incredibly important, as well; Gondreau (and others!), preferring variants of “spark of sin,” emphasizes the disordered and sinful nature of the *fomes*, but as discussed in a note above, this translation changes the metaphor invoked in this tradition.
causa combustionis lignorum qui ligna siccaret, ex quo sequeretur quod facile incenderentur.].

Second, in the De Malo, Thomas says that

We can speak in two ways of something causing something else: in one way directly; in the second way indirectly. Something indeed causes indirectly, as we say that a cause causing a disposition to an effect causes the effect as the occasion for the effect and indirectly [sicut cum aliquod agens causat aliquam dispositionem ad aliquem effectum, dicitur esse occasionaliter et indirecte causa illius effectus]. For example, such would be the case if we should say that one who dries out pieces of wood provides the occasion for burning the very wood [sicut si dicatur quod ille qui siccat ligna est occasio combustionis ipsorum]. And we need to say in this way that the devil causes all our sins, since he himself incited the first man to sin, from whose sin a proneness to every kind of sin resulted in the whole human race.

Two major issues need to be addressed in these analogies: first, the intention of the devil and second, the agency of the devil. Considering the analogy first, the one who dries wood has a goal in mind; they do not do so indiscriminately, but precisely so that the wood might be burnt more easily. This agent does not directly cause the wood to be burnt, but he alters the composition or qualities of the wood for his purposes. Similarly, the devil’s actions would function with such subsequent burning as his intent. That is,

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40 ST I-II.80.4.Response: “Respondeo dicendum quod occasionaliter quidem et indirecte Diabolus est causa omnium peccatorum nostrorum, inquantum induxit primum hominem ad peccandum, ex cuius peccato intantum vitiata est humana natura, ut omnes simus ad peccandum proclives, sicut diceretur esse causa combustionis lignorum qui ligna siccaret, ex quo sequeretur quod facile incenderentur.”

41 De Malo, III.5.Response: “Dicendum, quod causa alicuius potest aliquid dici dupliciter: uno modo directe, alio modo indirecte. Indirecte quidem, sicut cum aliquod agens causat aliquam dispositionem ad aliquem effectum, dicitur esse occasionaliter et indirecte causa illius effectus: sicut si dicatur quod ille dui siccat ligna est occasio combustionis ipsorum. Et hoc modo dictendum est quod diabolus est causa omnium peccatorum nostrorum, quia ipse instigavit primum hominem ad peccandum, ex cuius peccato consequa est in toto humano genere quedam pronitas ad omnia peccata...”

42 In some passages in the Sentences Commentary, Thomas appears to deny that the devil has such a ‘long-term’ goal in mind when he tempts Adam to sin. I will discuss those passages in the section on temptation, but the reason for this denial has to do with Thomas’s early classification of the devil’s temptation as a species of temptation “from the world.”
by tempting Adam, the devil intends not only to bring Adam to sin, but also to make it 
more difficult for all Adam’s progeny to do well.\footnote{One can note a similar account 
of a long-term demonic action in the Commentary on Job 41, though the 
reference there does not clearly relate to any action that might be described as kindling: “This indicates 
that the effect of the disturbance which the devil excites in the world does not immediately pass away, 
but sometimes endures for a long time” (in Exposition on Job, trans. Damico, 467, translation 
modified).}

On the second question of agency, one must be careful not to take Thomas’s 
analogy too literally. The analogy indicates a direct agency in the drying of the wood, but 
the situation is different in the case of the devil’s temptation of Adam—a fact that is 
obscured in the analogy itself.

In the passage from De Malo, the components of the analogy align as follows:

\[
\begin{align*}
(1) & \quad (2) & \quad (3) & \quad (4) \\
(a) \text{ the dryer:} & \text{ act of drying:} & \text{ dried wood:} & \text{ burning of wood:} \\
(b) \text{ the devil:} & \text{ temping Adam:} & \text{ “proneness to … sin”:} & \text{ sinful desires}
\end{align*}
\]

In (a), the agent (1) performs an action (2) with a material object as the intentional goal 
(3) that results in or tends to an action carried out by another agent (4). In (b), however, 
quite a bit more intervenes between (2) and (3) than in line (a). That is, the wood dries in 
(a) as a direct consequence of the act of drying;\footnote{Thomas does not say explicitly that the “wood [ligna]” from (a) is equivalent to the fomes from (b), but 
his closing of the analogy refers to the wood as the “proneness to every kind of sin [pronitas ad omnia 
peccata],” which is unmistakably the language of concupiscence and the fomes.} the proneness to sin in (b) does not 
follow directly and necessarily from the act of tempting Adam—one must qualify that 
this temptation must be successful, and this quality only attains when Adam’s agency 
cooperates with the devil’s temptation. For this reason and beyond the grasp of Thomas’s 
analogy, the devil’s agency in the origination of the fomes remains indirect in the sense 
that the devil cannot act alone in bringing it about, whereas Adam in theory could have 
acted alone in doing so. Much like the position of Bonaventure outlined in Chapter 4.
Adam’s agency is the most important cause of the *fomes*.\(^{45}\) Nevertheless, the fact remains that in these passages Thomas ascribes to the devil an indirect and intentional agency in the origin of humanity’s general inclination toward sin.

Thomas’s *Commentary on Job* also uses similar images that are worth noting at the present moment, though there will be opportunity to discuss this passage later in a more detailed consideration of the means of demonic temptation. The context of Thomas’s meaning is different in the *Commentary on Job*, since he describes there the experience of Adam’s fallen progeny and no longer the experience of Adam that led to our fallen condition. Thomas allows himself to explore the description of Leviathan in the book of Job as a figure of the devil who tempts human beings after Adam’s sin. In the course of this description, Thomas interprets certain “flaming pine logs” related to Leviathan’s mouth as originating from demonic attack against Adam’s fallen progeny:

> They are compared to a lit pine-pitch torch because of their redolence, as was said. Now by this verse is designated that the devil enkindles men to an eager desire for sin [{\textit{Diabolus ad concupiscentiam peccati homines incendit}}] through a showing of some good as if through a kind of redolence.\(^{46}\)

He later describes the devil’s breath in similar metaphors:

> Since an animal breathes not only through his nostrils but also through his mouth, He adds fifth the operation of the mouth, saying {\textit{His breath}}, that is, the exhalation proceeding from his mouth, {\textit{makes live coals glow}}, that is, it is so hot and strong that it would be sufficient to light coals. For He speaks in a metaphor of those who light coals by blowing under them. Hence, He adds {\textit{and flame comes out of his mouth}}, namely, since the vapor coming from his mouth is so hot and fiery that it can deservedly be compared to flame. Now by all these verses is designated the fact that the devil, by his concealed or manifest suggestions, kindles in man the

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\(^{45}\) Bonaventure’s question, properly speaking, was whether the devil is the cause of all temptation and not of all sin, but the two questions function in much the same way for these two authors.

\(^{46}\) Thomas Aquinas, *Commentary on Job* 41, in *Exposition on Job*, trans. Damico, 463. Latin: “taedae autem accensae comparantur propter redolentiam, ut dictum est; per hoc autem designatur quod Diabolus ad concupiscentiam peccati homines incendit per ostentationem alicuius boni quasi per redolentiam quandam.”
fire of perverse desire [Diabolus sua occulta vel manifesta suggestione perversae cupiditatis ignem in homine accendit].

The image Thomas uses here is not identical to that from his more systematic writings; in fact, he appears to ascribe here even more to the devil’s power than in the texts quoted above. Most importantly, in both of these passages Thomas uses a verb indicating the lighting of a fire (incendere and accendere, respectively) to describe the devil’s activity. Thus, while in the passage above the devil was only said to prepare wood for burning (which human beings must themselves light), Thomas can describe the devil at other times as himself lighting the fire of desire in human beings who live in weakened moral circumstances after Adam’s fall. Of course, since fallen human beings share in the separate defect of the fomes, Thomas may not conceive of this demonic “lighting” as completely independent of the fomes. However, since this image likely pertains more directly to demonic temptation than to the fomes, further consideration of this image will be left for that section in the second part.

A final example of the symbolic overlap between Thomas’s demonology and theory of the fomes is seen in his Commentary on Romans. There, a personified interpretation of the flesh and of sin is not out of the question for St. Thomas. In his

47 Ibid., in Exposition on Job, trans. Damico, 463. Latin: “halitus eius, idest exhalatio de ore procedens, prunas ardere facit, idest tam calidus et vehemens est quod sufficeret ad prunas accendendas: loquitur enim ad similitudinem eorum qui sufflando prunas accendunt, unde subdit et flamma de ore eius egreditur, quia scilicet tam calidus et ignitus est vapor de ore eius egrediens quod merito potest flammæ comparari. Per haec autem omnia designatur quod Diabolus sua occulta vel manifesta suggestione perversae cupiditatis ignem in homine accendi.”

48 See Bernhard Blankenhorn, “Aquinas on Paul’s Flesh/Spirit Anthropology in Romans,” in Reading Romans with St. Thomas Aquinas, ed. Matthew Levering and Michael Dauphinais (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2012), 3. As exposited by Blankenhorn in his own exploration of Thomas’s interpretation of Romans 7, Paul’s cosmology in discussing the spirit and the flesh presupposes that the flesh is “opposed to God’s plan” as an “active influence … that can move in and out of bodies” (ibid., 3). The basis of that opposition is a realm of sin, which is personified in a constructive way by Paul. This sin acts, has intentions, and enters into warfare with the spirit (ibid., 3-4). Paul never explicitly speaks of the devil in this context, but as I have shown in Chapter 4, Christian interpreters such as John of Damascus have seen in the Pauline law of sin the action of the devil.
treatment of chapter 7:7-13 and again in 14-20, three distinct references to the devil or his suggestion appear in the symbolic structure of flesh and sin. For the moment, I will only discuss one of these references. While a demonic interpretation of “sin” is not Thomas’s preferred reading, Thomas finds it convenient to include this interpretation when Paul describes sin in highly personified and intentional categories. The most relevant example is Thomas’s interpretation of Romans 7:8:

Thus, he first says that sin, taking occasion through the law (namely the law prohibiting sin) worked in me all concupiscence. But by sin here may be understood the Devil according to an emphatic locution, because he himself is the beginning of sin. And according to this, he works in human beings all desire for sin: “The one who sins is from the Devil, because the Devil sinned from the beginning” (Job 3:8).

The intentional malice of sin in this passage is so prominent that Thomas’s first reaction is to refer this malice to a positive intentional agent, the devil. He decides that this reading is not to be preferred, however, “because the Apostle had not mentioned the devil here,” and moves on to the more likely interpretations of sin as actual or original sin.

These interpretations downplay the intentional characteristics ascribed to sin by Paul;

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49 I will have the opportunity to discuss the other significant reference to the devil from the Romans commentary below; these references appear in Aquinas’s Commentary on Romans 7.2 (on Romans 7:9b, §563).
50 Commentary on Romans 7.2 (on Romans 7:8, §541, Latin text accessed via http://www.corpusthomisticum.org/cro05.html), my translation. His other exegetical options are actual and original sin. Latin: “Dicit ergo primo, quod peccatum occasione accepta per mandatum, scilicet legis prohibentis peccatum, operatum est in me omnem concupiscientiam. Per peccatum autem potest hic intelligi Diabolus secundum emphaticam locutionem, quia ipse est peccati initium. Et secundum hoc in homine operatur omnem concupiscientiam peccati. I Io. III, 8: qui facit peccatum, ex Diabolo est, quia ab initio Diabolus peccavit. Sed quia apostolus hic de Diabolo mentionem non fecerat, potest dici quod peccatum actuare quodcumque, prout est cogitatione apprehensum, operatur in homine sui concupiscientiam, secundum illud lac. I, 14: unusquisque tentatur a concupiscientia sua: deinde concupiscientia parit peccatum. Sed melius est quod hoc referamus ad peccatum, quod supra dixerat c. V, v. 12 per unum hominem in hunc mundum ingressum, scilicet ad peccatum originale, quod scilicet ante gratiam Christi est in homine secundum culpam et poenam, sed, veniente gratia, transit reatu et remanet actu quantum ad fomitem peccati; vel concupiscientiam habitualem, quae operatur in homine omnem concupiscientiam actuallem, sive hoc referatur ad concupiscientias diversorum peccatorum: alia enim est concupiscientia furti, alia adulterii, et sic de aliis; sive referatur ad diversos concupiscientiae gradus, prout consistit in cogitatione, delectatione, consensu et opere.”
51 Ibid. Latin: “quia apostolus hic de Diabolo mentionem non fecerat.”
Thomas is explicit that original sin and the *fomes* do not have intentions and thus cannot be said to tempt in the intentional way that the devil can. When such intentions come to the fore, Thomas feels justified in emphasizing the devil’s role in the activation of these anthropological forces opposed to God. However, by preferring to interpret Paul’s “sin” as *original sin*, Thomas somewhat mutes the *personified* nature of Paul’s discourse on sin in this passage.

The central point in the examples above is that outside of Thomas’s systematic questions that explicitly focus on original sin and concupiscence, Thomas recognizes that there can be significant overlap between the influence of the devil and the influence of the “flesh.” In reading the questions on concupiscence alone, one might have the impression that concupiscence can be entirely explained by reference to divine and human agency. But the questions on the devil discussed above show that Thomas does not restrict his account of concupiscence in this way because of the devil’s role as the tempter of Adam and Eve. There, Thomas attributes the devil with an indirect agency in the origin of the *fomes*; the *fomes* serves the devil’s purpose and is brought about indirectly through his intervention in Adam in the Garden. In Thomas’s scriptural commentaries, the devil can be seen as one who enkindles desire in Adam’s postlapsarian condition and in his fallen progeny. Further, the devil provides, when needed, a personified evil to supplement Thomas’s preferred, non-personified interpretation of Paul’s theory of the flesh and sin. From these passages (and many others in the following section), one can see that the questions on concupiscence do not tell the whole story of the origin of humanity’s characteristic disordered desires.
One should note, finally, that the accounts of the *fomes* as privation (as in Thomas’s questions on concupiscence) and as partially demonically inspired (as in Thomas’s questions on the devil) do not contradict one another; in fact they can be read as compatible and mutually reinforcing. As explained in section (2) above, Thomas’s main concern in his questions on original sin is to preserve the passivity of Adam’s punishment by God, and by the time of the *Summa* the positive and more active aspect of original sin—concupiscence—is ascribed to the agency of Adam *as well as* the devil (albeit in a subordinate way). That is, Thomas argues that there is a malicious, intentional agent attempting to provide humanity with enduring tendencies toward evil as if they were from *within* fallen human nature. In any case, Thomas takes care to distinguish that any such positive inclination away from humanity’s final end is not actively inflicted on humankind by God’s agency. In short, since the devil can be seen as the one who plays a unique role in “drying the kindling wood” of the *fomes*, God’s role in original sin is restricted to the formal withdrawal of original justice. God’s agency is never involved in the movement of the creature from its final end; such movement comes directly from Adam’s agency alone, with the indirect, intentional aid of the devil.

II. Fleshly and Internal Demonic Temptation in Thomas’s Anthropology

Having traced Thomas’s conception of the Adamic state and the basic contours of the consequences that came from Adam’s sin, I will consider in detail Thomas’s theory of fallen temptation. In order to prepare for the particular question at the heart of this study, it is important to trace Thomas’s account of two different kinds of temptation: that arising from the flesh and that from the devil—and both of these in their distinctive postlapsarian
state. When I considered Maximus’s account of demonic temptation in Chapter 2, I was particularly concerned to trace the question of human culpability for inner dispositions that were brought about by external, malicious forces. In much the same way, my treatment of Thomas’s theory of temptation will be concerned to address precisely what makes the human subject culpable for certain affective responses but not culpable for certain others. I will proceed in three steps here. First, I will offer an analysis of Thomas’s typology of temptations (A). There is development throughout Thomas’s corpus on this subject; Thomas provides substantially different typologies in the Sentences Commentary, his scriptural interpretation, the Summa, and his Commentary on the Our Father. After this basic task is complete, I will discuss in detail the two forms of temptation that relate most directly to the current subject matter: temptation from the flesh (B) and temptation by the devil (C). A careful analysis of these two temptations is crucial since their characteristics will determine how Thomas will treat their relationship with Christ (as discussed in the next chapter).

A. Typologies of Temptation in St. Thomas Aquinas

As shown in Chapter 4 above, the medieval tradition that preceded St. Thomas had developed an elaborate typology of temptation that accounted for a variety of sources, means, and moral characteristics. Following an initial articulation by Hugh of St. Victor, the most common way of speaking about temptation pursued three main avenues:

52 Since demonic temptation cuts to the heart of Maximus’s understanding of the moral act, I had to trace the progression of that act in detail. In Thomas’s case, however, this same “culpability” line is traced precisely in considering the sinfulness of the fomes peccati, the first of Thomas’s forms of temptation.

53 These two forms, as the forms that articulate an inclination toward evil, are the most in need of close attention, as I will show in my analysis of Thomas’s typology below. Other things that Thomas categorizes as temptation do not tempt directly in this way. Human beings who tempt others to sin, for instance, are only instruments of the devil’s temptation. God’s ‘temptation’ on the other hand is only in order to prove or approve the one tested; God does not seek the failure of the one tested. I will discuss God’s testing in the later section on providence.
inner temptation from the flesh, exterior temptation by the devil, and interior temptation by the devil. Generally, the first of these was considered the most severe and, from Peter the Lombard forward, was considered to be sinful in the one who experiences it. The theological challenge presented by these categories, then, was to explain why the third of these temptations was not sinful, given its apparent similarity to the first. Alexander of Hales, by drawing a sharp line between apprehension and appetition, articulated the clearest reasoning concerning why the two temptations were morally distinct. Demons, he argued, could only work with what was already in the human subject; they could not bring about new desires that were not previously present in some form. For Alexander, then, temptation from the flesh was sinful precisely because it transgressed the boundary between sense perception and appetite, beginning to reach out (from within) toward the tempting object. In the following, I will trace Thomas’s own appropriation of this tradition through the works in which he addresses different kinds of temptation at some length: The Sentences Commentary (1); the Summa Theologica, Commentary on 1 Thessalonians, and the De Malo (2); and the Commentary on the Lord’s Prayer (3).

1. Thomas’s Commentary on the Sentences. From the very beginning of Thomas’s consideration of temptation, he shows a willingness to modify the typology provided in Peter the Lombard’s Sentences. At this early stage, Thomas’s classification of demonic temptation is buried deep among the distinctions in his typology of temptations. While Thomas acknowledges temptations coming from each of the different sources Peter notes, Thomas’s arrangement and classification of these temptations uses criteria that are distinct from Peter’s:

three things come together in the perfect nature of temptation [ad perfectam rationem tentationis]. First, that through temptation some doubtful thing can be
By assigning three criteria to the proper nature of temptation, Thomas limits the sense in which the term temptation can be applied to scenarios that do not meet all these criteria. Thomas continues by considering different sources of temptation and their relationship to these criteria. His three main headings are: human beings, God, and the flesh and the world (these last two considered together). As Thomas explains in his response, only temptation from other human beings meets all three of his criteria. God’s temptation meets the first two criteria, but fails the third, since it is not God who learns something by the trial.

The third kind of temptation (from the flesh and the world) only meets the first criterion: the thing tempting does not learn anything about the thing tempted; and the thing tempting does not intend the trial. This latter criterion is particularly important. As Thomas illustrates,

the flesh or the world is said to tempt, because in this, the virtue or infirmity of the mind is manifestly made known, as in war the virtue of a soldier is made known, even though the enemy did not attack so as to know, but so as to conquer, whence the attack of virtue itself is called temptation.

54 Sent. Comm. II.21.1.1, my translation. Latin: “Respondeo dicendum, quod ad perfectam rationem tentationis tria concurrunt. Primo ut per tentationem alicujus dubii cognitio accipiat; secundo ut hoc sit intentum ab eo qui tentat; tertio ut ipsum qui tentat, cognitionem illius rei accipere velit.” Some aspects of these distinctions can be seen, at least, in Bonaventure’s treatment, but Thomas’s arrangement here appears to be unique.

55 Thomas reiterates this point in one of his responses to ibid.: “the flesh does not intend this, but rather to enjoy knowledge of pleasure [caro non intendit [occidendi hominem per peccatum], sed delectabili cognito perfrui].” Despite only meeting one criteria of temptation, Thomas does not indicate that such temptations should not be considered as proper temptations. Such a diminished sense of temptation seems to be implicit, however.

56 Ibid.: “Alia vero tentatio est in qua salvator unum tantum dictorum, scilicet manifestatio tentati: et sic dicitur caro tentare, vel mundus: quia in his cognoscitur manifeste virtus vel infirmitas mentis, sicut in bello cognoscitur virtus militis; quamvis hostes non impugnet ut cognoscant, sed ut vincant; unde ipsa impugnatio virtutis tentatio dicitur.”

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Thus, for sources of temptation in this third category, the trial is *incidental* to the purposes of the thing that tempts. That is, neither the flesh nor the world *intend* to try the one tempted. Next, Thomas introduces a second distinction between such temptations that come from an internal principle and those that come from an external one, corresponding to the distinction between the flesh and the world. This distinction between “inner” and “outer” is important in Thomas’s later Christological reflections on temptation, so it is important to note that this distinction is present from Thomas’s earliest typology temptation. At this point, Thomas does not dwell on the moral characteristics of these two different kinds of temptation, but as I will discuss below, there certainly is such a difference. Finally, the latter category (the world) is subdivided into two final categories:

> Because that which is exterior is either an attack by way of object, and this is temptation from the world, by which things the heart of the human being is enticed to sin; or it is an attack by way of agency, which draws to sin by persuasion, by frightening, by flattering, and so with others, and this is said to be temptation from the enemy, namely the devil, and from those who are his members.  

It is only here, at the very “bottom” of Thomas’s typology, that the devil makes an appearance. In so doing, Thomas has made a very significant restriction on the devil’s temptation, ruling out that the devil *intends* to tempt. He justifies this placement in the

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57 Ibid. In his *Commentary on Job*, Thomas also uses the interior/exterior distinction that will appear in his later Christological reasoning about temptation. Thomas does not appear to expound a full typology of temptation in this work, so I leave its brief discussion to this note. First, interior temptation is as follows: “just as a garment is consumed by a worm which is born of it, so the justice of man is consumed by those things which are in man like inflamed tinder [*corruption fomitis*]—evil thoughts and other such things [*sicut enim vestimentum consumitur a tinea quae ex eo nascitur, ita iustitia hominis consumitur ex his quae in homine sunt sicut est corruption fomitis, malae cogitationes et alia huiusmodi*]” (Thomas, *Literal Exposition of Job 4*, in *Exposition on Job*, trans. Damico, 124). The exterior temptation receives no lengthy description in this passage, however.

58 *Sent. Comm. II.21.1.1.* Latin Text: “quia illud quod exterius est, vel impugnat per modum objecti, et sic est tentatio a mundo, cujus rebus corda hominum alliciuntur ad peccandum: vel per modum agentis, qui trahit ad peccatum persuadendo, terrendo, blandiendo, et sic de aliis; et sic dicitur esse tentatio ab hoste, scilicet Diabolo, et ab his qui sunt membra ejus.”
typology by arguing that, technically, the ultimate end of the devil is to deceive [fallere] and to lead into sin [inducere ad peccatum]; the trial is only incidental to this ultimate goal. At the time of the writing of the Sentences Commentary, this is the primary sense in which Thomas understands the devil to tempt—in basically the same way that the flesh and inanimate objects tempt. This categorization may not give a wide or high understanding of the devil’s intentions. To summarize, the typology present in this work is as follows:

![Diagram of temptation typology]

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59 Ibid., obj. 2: “Item, videtur quod nec Daemoni. Intentio enim Daemonis est ad fallendum. Sed tentatoris, inquantum hujusmodi, non est fallere, sed experiri. Ergo Daemonis proprie officium non est tentare.” And the response: “Ad secundum dicendum, quod in tentatione Daemonis est duplex finis. Unus ultimus, scilicet inducere ad peccatum; et quantum ad hoc habet rationem tentationis, secundum quod quaelibet impugnatio dicitur tentatio.”

60 Thomas recognizes in the replies to the objections that the devil has a smaller, more proximate end in temptation as well. Ibid.: “The other [end] is the proximate end, namely to determine the vice toward which one is most prone, so as to draw on to that attack; and there is preserved there the nature of temptation as to the first mode [i.e. that by which one man tempts another]. Whence Hugh of Saint Victor, defining the Devil’s temptation, says thus: ‘to tempt is to try cunningly, and before a violent impulse, to prove as if by certain charming efforts’ [Alius est finis proximus, scilicet experiri ad quod vitium quisque maxime pronus est, ut ad illud impugnando trahat; et sic salvatur ibi ratio tentationis quantum ad primum modum. Unde Hugo de sancto Victore definiens Diaboli tentationem, dicit sic: tentare est callide experiri, et ante violentam impulsionem quasi quibusdam blandis conatibus probare].” This trial, however, is instrumental to the real attack. The devil, at that stage, only wants to figure out what sins a person is likely to commit. Once that has been determined, the real attempt to drive on toward that sin begins.
2. *Temptation in the Summa, Commentary on 1 Thessalonians, and the De Malo.*

In these works, Thomas’s definition of temptation shifts significantly and, consequently, his typology shifts as well. Instead of the three criteria for a temptation expounded above, one finds in these two works a simple, concise definition of temptation: “‘to tempt’ means to make a test of something”;⁶¹ and “to tempt is, properly speaking, to make trial of something.”⁶² This more compact definition gives Thomas the ability to assign a proper definition of temptation to a broader array of phenomena than he could in the *Sentences Commentary.* His definition does, however, impose certain limitations; since he defines temptation as making a test, he implies a specific intention on the part of the thing tempting. This fact is born out in the examples he gives of the full sense of temptation, each of which is a personified, intentional being: God, human beings, and demons.

For each of these three subjects of temptation, Thomas considers two questions that enable him to distinguish how each is distinct. First, Thomas considers who gains knowledge through the test; second, he considers what ends the tester seeks through the trial. He considers each case individually, in different orders in each work.⁶³ These three works, containing perhaps the most comprehensive typology offered by St. Thomas, can be summarized as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Tester:</th>
<th>Whose Knowledge:</th>
<th>For what end:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>God</td>
<td>So that others might know</td>
<td>In order to approve</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human beings</td>
<td>Tempter’s own knowledge</td>
<td>To approve or reprove</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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⁶² *ST* I.114.2: “tentare est proprie experimentum sumere de aliquo.”

⁶³ In the *Summa,* he considers the three in this order: human beings; the devil; and God. In the Thessalonians commentary, the order is: God; human beings; and the devil. Human beings receive a very brief treatment in the Thessalonians commentary.
That is, according to the first distinction, Thomas argues that God’s testing can be
differentiated from that of human beings and the devil, since God tests only so that others
might know the quality of the person tested. The other two types of testers do so in order
to find out for themselves. According to the second distinction, the testing of human
beings can be differentiated from that of demons. Whereas human beings can test either
to approve or reprove, demons only test for the latter reason. Although left implicit,
Thomas’s reasoning suggests that God tests only in order to approve—God’s intention is
never that the one tested would fail and indeed the one tested in this way never does fail.

While these three subjects—God, human beings, and the devil—are the main and
proper tempters in Thomas’s later typology, Thomas also includes two subordinate
sources of temptation that do so “instrumentally or materially [instrumentaliter, seu
materialiter]”: the flesh and the world. The way in which these temptations are
instrumental will be left for the next sections; for now, I simply want to acknowledge the
inversion that has taken place here since Thomas’s early Sentences Commentary.
Whereas before, demonic temptation was a small subspecies of “temptation from the
flesh and the world,” now fleshly temptation has taken a subordinate and inferior role to
temptation from the devil.

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64 In the Summa alone (ST I.114.2), Thomas argues that when human beings test in order to reprove, they
do so “as minister of the devil [hoc agit inquantum est minister Diaboli].” The sort of agency that the
devil has in these circumstances is not close enough to my current subject matter to warrant
investigation, but suffice to say that it appears quite substantial—much like the way that Christ and the
devil are described by Origen as “riding” their servants.

65 I include this detail in the chart above despite the fact that it is implicit in these texts. As seen
immediately below, Thomas later explicitly affirms that God tests only to the good; see quotation from
the commentary on the Lord’s Prayer.

66 Ibid.; see also the 1 Thessalonians commentary, 3.1, where their temptation is described as material
[materialiter].
As a final complication during this period, Thomas indicates in important passages in both the *Summa* and the *De Malo* that the internal/external distinction used to differentiate between fleshly and demonic temptation is not clean. In both texts, Thomas argues that the devil can tempt human beings internally by the manipulation of one’s imagination, senses, and any other faculty that makes use of a bodily organ. As discussed in the first section of this chapter, Thomas believes that this mode of temptation is unique to the *fallen* condition of humankind; it was not possible for the devil to attack in this way prior to Adam’s sin. Such *inner* demonic temptation, then, is a distinctively postlapsarian moral condition. Thomas’s reasons for including this category, and the details of how this temptation is accomplished, will be left for the substantive discussion in the next section. This category of temptation, while left out of Thomas’s explicit typologies of temptation, is essential to this investigation.

3. *The Commentary on the Lord’s Prayer.* Finally, Thomas addresses a categorization of temptations in a somewhat more modest fashion in his late *Commentary on the Our Father.* In the sixth petition of this text (“lead us not into temptation”), Thomas treats in detail the question of temptation toward evil. Thomas’s definition of temptation here is slightly different than in the previous two texts, but retains most of its meaning: “To tempt someone is to prove his virtue.” But virtue requires two things: to do good and avoid evil. In explaining this distinction, Thomas offers his only explicit statement that God tries only for the good:

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67 Aquinas, *Commentary on the Our Father*, pet. 6 (throughout, Latin versions accessed via http://www.corpuschristi.org/iopera.html): “tentare hominem est probare virtutem eius.” Prior to this, Thomas has his more common definition: “to tempt is nothing other than to test or to prove [tentare nihil aliud est quam experiri seu probare].”
therefore God often sends tribulations to the just, so that, while he patiently upholds them, their virtue may be made clear and [so that] they may grow in virtue.  

He adds, to be perfectly clear, that God has no part in the other temptation toward evil: “God tempts no one in this way.”

Echoing the observations of the first part of this chapter, then, Thomas is insistent that God’s role in evil must be purely passive or permissive, offering nothing that intentionally would lead one away from God.

Instead, this latter temptation is accomplished in three ways: by the flesh, by the devil, and by the world. The first of these is described by Thomas as “extremely severe [valde gravis]” because “our enemy, the flesh, is united to us.” One should not read too much into Thomas’s use of “enemy [inimicus]” to describe the flesh here; it certainly does not mean a facile negativity toward the body. This fact is made clear by Thomas’s description of the next temptation, which appears to be even stronger than the first:

Even after the flesh is treated with contempt, another [enemy] arises, namely the Devil, against whom we have a great struggle. Our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the world of this darkness” (Ephesians, 6:12).

Taken alone, one might debate the sense of Thomas’s chronological comparative here (“even when” … “another arises”), but the invocation of Ephesians 4:12 in that context is significant. Thomas’s invocation—along with his chronological comparative—implies that any internal struggle in human beings is in some sense subordinate to the struggle human beings must have with angelic powers. Thus, if the flesh is the “enemy,” it is only so in a relative sense—only the devil is the real Enemy of humankind.

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68 Ibid.: “Et ideo Deus saepe immittit tribulationes iustis, ut dum patienter sustinent, appareat virtus eorum, et in virtute proficiant.”

69 Ibid.: “Hoc autem modo nullus tentatur a Deo.”

70 Ibid.

71 Ibid.: “Nam postquam conculcatur caro, insurgit alius, scilicet Diabolus, contra quem est nobis magna colluctatio. Apostolus, Ephes. VI, 12: non est nobis colluctatio adversus carnem et sanguinem, sed adversus principes et potestates, adversus mundi rectores tenebrarum harum.”
To summarize, Thomas consistently recognizes throughout his career that temptation arises from a variety of sources, both internal and external. When it comes to temptation toward evil, the flesh and the devil take the most prominent locations. Thomas’s affirmation of temptation from the flesh is so consistent throughout his career (even in his late Christological writings in the *Summa*) that it would do significant violence to his work to argue otherwise. Much in Thomas’s anthropology hinges on an *inner* principle leading toward evil, and his thought on the *fomes peccati* is the essence of this principle. The flesh is a permanent fixture in Thomas’s typology of temptation and cannot be removed without damage to his thought as a whole. Nevertheless, Thomas gives demonic temptation a more prominent place in later works such as the *De Malo* and the *Summa* than he did in the early *Sentences Commentary*. Whereas the “flesh and the world” was the main category of temptation toward evil in the *Sentences Commentary*, the flesh is called an instrumental and material tempter in Thomas’s later works since it does not have an *intention* to tempt as the devil does. Both forces, in the end, constitute an important and enduring aspect of the human struggle to overcome moral evil in their own lives.

Thomas stands in continuity with the earlier medieval tradition in his dependence on a distinction between internal and external temptation, corresponding to the distinction between fleshly and demonic temptation. Thomas’s formal typologies of temptation do not address the *internal* temptation of the devil, but this kind of temptation constitutes an important aspect of his developed thought concerning the devil and humankind. What kinds of power does this internal demonic temptation entail? How does Thomas conceive
of this demonic attack? Should such temptation be categorized as possession? As internal or external? I turn next to these considerations.

**B. Temptation from the flesh in Aquinas’s thought**

In order to understand how Christ is tempted by the devil (since this question remains the final goal), it is essential to understand with precision how Thomas believes that Christ was *not* tempted, as well. This negative task is accomplished most effectively by an investigation of that temptation that Thomas explicitly denies in the case of Christ, but which he acknowledges as universal to the fallen human experience: the *fomes peccati* or concupiscence. In reviewing this kind of temptation, I will introduce the anthropological distinctions necessary for this task. I have taken care in Chapter 2 and 4 to consider the anthropological structures that lay beneath temptation for Maximus and for John of Damascus. For Maximus, at least, the devil’s sharpest temptation arose from natural appetites which were incited or inflamed by demons and thereby encouraged to develop in sinful ways. These appetites, for Maximus, were deeply embedded in the natural faculties of will and wish, which rise immediately out of the natural, rational, and volitional nature of humankind.

For Thomas, however, the anthropological bases of passionate temptation are different, pertaining essentially to a faculty that belongs to humanity as an animal—the sensitive appetite.\(^{72}\) That Thomas describes the functioning of the sensitive appetite as

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\(^{72}\) For St. Maximus, the objects of desire and repulsion are somewhat altered by the Fall, but the source of those appetites is the deeply human and natural desire for union with God. Thus, while they pertain to the “animal” side of humanity in their current form, they are more deeply rooted in humanity’s spiritual and rational capacities. For Thomas, the relationship of these faculties to the governance of reason and natural will (the *voluntas* of I-II.8) is much more tenuous.

As discussed to an extent in Chapter 4, Thomas’s theory of the moral act derives in significant ways from Maximus the Confessor. There are changes that occur along the way and I want to indicate briefly the final aspects of that change when Thomas articulates a modified Maximian structure of the moral act. When Thomas read Burgundio’s version of *De Fide Orthodoxa*, some of Maximus’s
“tempting” is a direct corollary of the *fallenness* of the faculty; as discussed above, the sensitive appetite in no way tempted Adam prior to the Fall. Only the *fallen* human being is tempted from the sensitive appetite and this temptation is what Thomas habitually labels concupiscence or the *fomes*. Given that Maximus’s anthropology (in Chapters 2
and 3) proceeds from different anthropological assumptions, my goal here is to explain how Thomas conceives of this species of temptation, including its place in his anthropology and its object (1), its action as a conjoined activity of body and soul (2), why it is called temptation and how it tempts (3), and what theological ends this category serves in Thomas’s thought (4). As already mentioned, I will not describe the operation of the sensible appetite in the prelapsarian condition, since that state of the appetite is not understood by Thomas to tempt any human subject.

1. Anthropological place and object of the sensitive appetite. Following basic Aristotelian categories that coincide with those of Maximus, Thomas considers the human soul to be composed of three components: nutritive, animal, and rational. These three components are distinct in their powers but are still conceived as a totality, a single soul. The sensitive appetite, whose role in temptation is central, takes its object primarily from the apprehension of a perceived or apparent bodily good. This action is itself passive, receiving the “data” of its act from outside, from the powers of apprehension. The three sources that Thomas recognizes for this passive component are the imagination, the senses, and the estimative power (which in rational beings—humans—is called the cogitative power). The sensitive appetite, in turn, uses the data provided from these sources to form an appropriate appetitive reaction.

These reactions are categorized by Thomas into two basic forms: the desirable and the difficult, which are ascribed to two sub-faculties within the concupiscible faculty: the concupiscible and the irascible.73 This distinction is not absolute; Thomas argues that all irascible movement is reducible to concupiscible movement. One should note that these two categories do not map perfectly onto Maximus’s, even though this difference

does not significantly affect the arguments of the current project. For Maximus, it is more appropriate to distinguish the two appetitive faculties as *attraction* and *repulsion* so that the former deal with apparent goods and the latter with apparent evils. For Thomas, however, both concupiscibility and irascibility concern the apparent good but the irascible does so over and against adversity, while the concupiscible does so with easily attainable, bodily attractive goods. Thus, for Thomas, anger and hope (for example) seek after a difficult good and pertain to irascibility; desire and joy arise in response to an apparent good that is easily attained.\(^{74}\)

Through the cogitative power, the sensitive appetite is understood to be conjoined to reason and will. By means of this conjunction, the sensitive appetite is made rational by participation in human beings; it is not a merely “animal” instinct as it is in non-rational beings. Most importantly, because of the conjunction of the sensitive appetite with reason and will, the sensitive appetite is capable of formation (or malformation) by the human subject’s highest faculties and can therefore be the indirect subject of sin when it is not formed correctly.\(^{75}\) That is, when reason fails to resist, restrain, and even foresee the irrational or immoderate movement of the sensitive appetite, the appetite, insofar as it is conjoined to reason, is said to have a sinful movement, though there will be more to say about this prevention in a moment.\(^{76}\)

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\(^{74}\) See *ST* I-II.22-25 for Thomas’s introduction to the passions; *ST* I-II.23.4 presents Thomas’s full list of passions. There is often a good deal of overlap between Thomas and Maximus’s distinctions within the passionate faculty, but there are differences between them as well.

\(^{75}\) *ST* I-II.74.3 and 4 and *ST* I-II.77.

\(^{76}\) Many scholars have noted a good deal of intellectual determinism in Thomas’s account of the moral act. That is, since reason itself is responsible for presenting universal objects to the will for consent and action, it is not clear what substantive role, if any, remains for the will to play. Many scholars argue, for instance, that the will cannot simply disregard the judgment of reason; so-called “open-eyed” *akrasia* is not possible for Aquinas (See Denis J. M. Bradley, “Aquinas on Weakness of the Will” in *Weakness of Will from Plato to the Present*, ed. Tobias Hoffmann (Washington, D.C.: Catholic
Such irrational movement is possible, as discussed above, because of the disordered inclination of the fomes peccati, a disorder that is understood by St. Thomas to be *intrinsic*, meaning that the *fomes* is not an external force acting on the sensitive appetite but instead *is* the appetite itself in a habitually disordered state. Thomas defines this disordering role in the following terms:

> The fomes is nothing but a certain inordinate, but habitual, concupiscence of the sensitive appetite … Now sensual concupiscence is said to be inordinate, insofar as it rebels against reason; and this it does by inclining to evil, or making the good difficult. Consequently, it is essential to the fomes to incline to evil or make it difficult to do good.\(^{77}\)

When this habit moves forward into act, it is called actual concupiscence, the experience of which is unavoidable in the fallen state.\(^{78}\) In fact, Thomas explicitly argues that while reason is capable of restraining and anticipating any particular irrational movement of the sensitive appetite, reason is incapable of foreseeing and forestalling every such movement—reason is overwhelmed by the variety of irrational movements of the sensitive appetite that assail it.\(^{79}\) Thomas states this with equal candor in his question on sin in the sensitive appetite: “a man cannot avoid all such movements [*non potest homo vitare omnes huiusmodi motus*].” One’s culpability for such unavoidable movements is complicated\(^{80}\) and I will return to the moral imputability of these movements in the third subsection below.

\(\text{University of America Press, 2008), 100-105). It is at least in part an intellectual mistake that results in evil acts. Any discussion or resolution of this problem is far beyond my current purposes.}\(^{77}\) *ST* III.27.3, response. Latin: “fomes nihil aliud est quam inordinata concupiscencia sensibilis appetitus … Dicitur autem concupiscencia sensualitatis esse inordinata, inquantum repugnat rationi, quod quidem fit inquantum inclinat ad malum, vel difficultatem facit ad bonum. Et ideo ad ipsam rationem fomitis pertinet quod inclinet ad malum, vel difficultatem facit in bono.”\(^{78}\) Ibid.\(^{79}\) *ST* I-II.74.3, ad. 2.\(^{80}\) Ibid., ad. 2 and 3. I will also have reason to make reference below to Odon Lottin’s analysis in *Psychologie et Morale* II.1, 579-584.
2. *Its formal act as an active faculty.* A passion resides in a conjoined activity of both the body and soul. That is, there is both a psychic and a physical component to every passion. The precise nature of these two aspects is particularly important for the way in which one should conceive of demonic temptation, so I will focus on this question here. In particular, there is a lively debate in recent scholarship about how one should conceive of the bodily nature of the passions. Robert Pasnau offers an argument that the passions of the sensitive appetite should be conceived in a materialistic fashion.\(^81\) Pasnau argues that at least part of the unruly aspect of the passions is a direct consequence of bodiliness; we do not have absolute control over our bodily states, so we do not have absolute control over our passions. Pasnau argues that “[i]t is the very materiality of the sensory appetites that explains, most fundamentally, why we cannot entirely control them.”\(^82\) Similarly, since the sensitive appetite also takes its movement from other non-rational capacities in human nature (such as sense and imagination), we cannot govern our sensitive appetite perfectly.\(^83\)

In response, Robert Miner has proposed that the movement of the sensitive appetite and the bodily change should be related as *form* and *matter*.\(^84\) Miner believes that Pasnau and others are guilty of a crude reading of Thomas’s view of movement here, equating “movement” with locomotion.\(^85\) Miner points out that Aristotle and

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82 Ibid., 257. Pasnau fails to account for the unfallen Adamic state in this account; Adam had such perfect control and yet his sensitive appetite was certainly *material*.
83 Pasnau argues that “since the mind cannot control what we perceive, it cannot entirely control the sensory appetite” (ibid., 258). As I will mention in the demonology section below, even the fallen person’s control of imagination is apparently incomplete, as it is capable of movement by or through demonic forces.
85 Miner attributes this mistaken position to D’Arcy as well; ibid., 40.
subsequently Aquinas have three senses of movement: motion in respect of quality, motion in respect of quantity, and motion in respect of place (locomotion).\textsuperscript{86} The first two forms of movement, Miner argues, can be ascribed to the formal cause as such and thus the “movement” of the sensitive appetite need not be considered to be the very bodily motion in the sense organ.\textsuperscript{87} Miner’s counter-proposal is that Thomas describes these two movements of the passions as “conjoined” but not as identical. Thus in any passion, the psychic movement is the formal cause and the bodily movement is the material cause. Miner is careful to note that the formal cause does not imply \textit{efficient} causality; the fact that the movement “begins” in the formal cause does not mean that the material cause follows as the movement of a pool ball follows from the impact of a cue.\textsuperscript{88}

This debate about the bodily and psychic components of the passions matters a great deal with regard to fallen human beings’ affectivity when the problem is related to inner demonic temptation. Concretely, it matters whether the material cause of the movement of the sensitive appetite (the bodily motion of the conjoined organ) necessarily brings about the formal cause as well (the psychic movement of the sensitive appetite). If form and matter are not related as efficient cause and effect (as Miner argues), the material movement is coterminous with some movement of the soul. Indeed, Thomas’s questions on the devil’s inner temptation equally demonstrate how intimately conjoined the material and formal causes of the passions are.

\textsuperscript{86} Ibid., 39–40. Aristotle’s different forms of movement can be found at \textit{Physics} 3.1 and 8.7.
\textsuperscript{87} I will argue below that Thomas’s conception of this motion is at least partly local. The kind of motion in the devil’s power is local motion, and he argues that such local motion can cause the movement of the sensitive appetite. See below.
\textsuperscript{88} Ibid., 45. Miner states that “For Aquinas, events within the soul produce distinct bodily events” and he points out that Thomas treats these events in a question on the “effects” of the passions. In Thomas’s treatment of the devil’s temptation, however, I will have reason to argue that the cause/effect relation can go the other way as well—that the devil can cause the bodily movement and thereby produce a psychic effect.
3. How the fomes tempts. Thomas consistently categorizes the irrational or immoderate movement of the sensitive appetite as a form of temptation, but Thomas indicates that it is technically often sin as well. How do these two facts stand together?

The primary reason why the fomes is considered by Thomas (especially by the time of the Summa) to be venially sinful is that human subjects are capable of foreseeing and preventing individual irrational movements of this appetite when encountered individually; a failure to do so is a venial sin of omission. Such inordinate desires that precede the judgment of reason are what Thomas calls the “antecedent” passions, which, as Gondreau argues, are solely the activity of the fomes. While these movements are often disordered, Thomas specifies that the ability to foresee these irrational antecedent movements is essential to its culpability. Citing Augustine, Thomas states that “no man sins in what he cannot avoid” and clarifies in his response that “the fomes does not hinder man from using his rational will to check individual inordinate movements, if he be presentient of them.”

Conversely, however, lacking this presentience and especially if no presentience were possible, Thomas implies that there is no culpability on the part of the one who experiences the movement. It is thus possible for antecedent passions to be morally

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89 ST I-II.74.3, ad. 2. As Odon Lottin, Psychologie et Morale II.1, 579-584 argues, Thomas’s early Sentences Commentary may differ on this question—meaning that he would have followed Peter and Alexander in arguing that any irrational movement of the sensitive appetite would have been venially sinful. But as I argue here, Thomas’s mature position is distinct.

90 Gondreau, Passions of Christ’s Soul, 337-349.

91 ST I-II.74.3, obj. 2 and ad. 2, emphasis added.

92 Lottin, Psychologie et Morale II.1, 579-584 disagrees with this assessment, arguing that Thomas’s constant teaching is that any irrational movement arising from the sensitive appetite (what, at the time of the Sentences Commentary is called the secundo primi movement) is venial sin: “Dès le Commentaire des Sentences, la doctrine de saint Thomas est fixée” (ibid., 579). Lottin cites ST I-II.74.3, ad. 3 for his claim, but he ignores the significant caveat to this position in the second objection and reply. Thus, while Lottin emphasizes the continuity of Thomas’s teaching, he overlooks the importance of the component of unpreventability that Thomas later recognizes in certain situations. Even if Lottin’s analysis of the Sentences Commentary is sound, Lottin glosses over the details of
blameless. This commonly occurs when disordered movements work in close proximity or even in conjunction with one another. Thomas gives an example of such a situation: an individual first successfully foresees and prevents a movement of lust, but (perhaps even because of this prevention) the individual experiences an unforeseen movement of vainglory. Thomas concludes from this example that “man cannot avoid all such movements,” which, taken in light of his Augustinian objection that “no man sins in what he cannot avoid,” implies that those unavoidable movements are not even venially sinful—though they are still disordered movements that arise from the corruption of the fomes.\(^93\) In such a case, in order to remain morally blameless, one would have to resist the movement and keep it from overwhelming one’s reason—a spiritual pedagogy that Thomas explicitly endorses in his questions on internal demonic temptation.\(^94\)

By describing the experience of the fomes in this way, Thomas indicates that there are two distinct ways in which the disorder becomes morally reprehensible or culpable. Most commonly, the experience of moral lapse is found in a failure of reason and will to anticipate, prevent, and cut off the irrational motion before it begins.\(^95\) In this

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\(^{93}\) Thomas’s presentation in the Summa.

\(^{94}\) Thomas is admittedly less than clear on this point. He appears to reiterate this position when he discusses the movement of the sensitive appetite caused by the devil (ST I-II.80.3, ad. 3: “the lusting of the flesh against the spirit, when the reason actually resists it, is not a sin”), but offers a not-easily reconciled exposition in other places, such as in his question on the Virgin Mary’s relation to the fomes: “the motion of the fomes, even if it precede the act of the reason, is a venial sin” (ST III.27.4, obj. 1; but see also the reply). Thomas clarifies in that instance that the motion that precedes is one that would surprise her, antecedently to reason’s intervention, thus indicating much the same situation as in ST I-II.74.3, ad. 2. However, it may be that in this case, Thomas is restricting the “act of reason” here to a fully elicited response, whereas the case considered at ST I-II.74.3, ad. 2 is speaking of an imperfect act of reason, the failure of which is a small sin of omission. A similar difficult passage is found at ST I-II.17.7, where even sudden movements are treated as if they were preventable: “it happens sometimes that the movement of the sensitive appetite is aroused suddenly in consequence of an apprehension of the imagination of sense. And then such movement occurs without the command of reason: although reason could have prevented it, had it foreseen.” The final clause seems to imply that reason could have foreseen, but this is by no means necessarily the case.

\(^{95}\) Again, Thomas’s examples in ST I-II.74.3, ad. 2 bear out the fact that the sinfulness is strictly a matter of foresight and prevention.
form, the sinful aspect of the fomes is chronologically the first component of the disorder and the tempting aspect is subsequent, since the venial sin of omission pushes one on toward a fully elicited, rationally chosen sin.\footnote{Pasnau, \textit{Thomas Aquinas on Human Nature}, 252-264 gives one of the only direct considerations of concupiscence as a force of temptation. His analysis is much more in depth that what I present here, since disordered concupiscence is in the end somewhat tangential to the center of this project.} On the other hand, if one has done everything in one’s power to foresee and prevent irrational movement of the sensitive appetite, some irrational movements will still “get by” one’s first line of defense since, as Thomas argues, the fallen human being is constitutionally incapable of avoiding all such movements. In such an instance (as in Thomas’s example of unpremeditated vainglory), moral blamelessness could be preserved by resisting the movement to the extent that one’s reason is not enraptured by the passion.

There are thus two distinct paths by which the fomes can lead to an irrational experience of passion, one venially sinful and one morally blameless. In both cases, the desire that arises proceeds to distort and confuse the rational faculty, inclining reason to pursue a merely apparent good. While reason was at first unaffected by passion, these irrational movements make it difficult to pursue the true good—a more serious and more difficult moral quandary since the individual’s reason and will then become inordinately drawn by passion to an object that cannot be pursued licitly. But, unless the human subject is so “possessed” by the passion that reason and will are completely fettered, there is still a moral battle to be fought. To explain this battle, I must briefly explain how passion affects the decision of the will for St. Thomas.

Thomas argues that this influence of passion on the will is indirect, and in two ways: by distraction and by way of object.\footnote{\textit{ST} I-II.77.1, response.} The first of these is simply a matter of focus
and intentionality. Human beings can only hold so much in their mind at once and if a passion enters into one’s consideration, it takes the place of some other consideration. The second of these means, however, is more important because much is at stake in the way in which the will is moved by its object—perhaps most prominently a precise definition of incontinence and intemperance. That particular question does not directly concern the present project, but it is important to note that Thomas does not consider the will to be necessarily moved by its object. Thomas argues that

the judgment of the estimative power follow[s] the passion of the sensitive appetite … for which reason we observe that those who are in some kind of passion, do not easily turn [non facile .... avertunt] their imagination away from the object of their emotion, the result being that the judgment of the reason often [plerumque] follows the passion of the sensitive appetite, and consequently the will’s movement follows it also, since it has a natural inclination always to follow the judgment of the reason.98

In the context of this quotation, Thomas invokes these considerations to draw attention to the distorting and disordering quality of the passions that arise from the fomes.

Nevertheless, Thomas notes that there is some freedom of reason and will even in the grips of these antecedent passions, which he maintains in order to preserve the moral responsibility of the one who experiences this movement to resist it. In other words, in order for there to be a real temptation, there has to be the ability to do otherwise. Without this qualification, every instance of passion would involve a determinism leading without exception from an initial (and sometimes morally blameless!) irrational motion to the final completion of the desire in action.

For this reason, one cannot say that the fomes peccati strictly binds the fallen human being to sin. Instead, it is perhaps best to say that the overall effect is a downward

98 ST I-II.77.1, response.
or evil inclination. Some antecedent movements are both sinful and tempting (when they could be prevented) and all such movements tend to divert reason and will from the true good. Because of this strong propensity toward sinful thoughts and deeds, these movements are an essential point of fragility in human nature in Thomas’s anthropology; they constitute the deepest natural brokenness and disorder of fallen humanity.

4. The purpose of the fomes in Thomas’s thought. The most obvious reason Thomas places so much emphasis on the fomes in his moral psychology is a broadly Augustinian conception of the human subject, a conception that affirms the human being in the fallen and unredeemed state to be somehow non posse non peccare—not able not to sin. However, Thomas, like Augustine, wants to avoid any perfectly strict necessity of sin, especially for the baptized individual. Indeed, if one is constitutionally incapable of not performing an objectively sinful act, then one cannot in fact be morally culpable for such an act since, as pointed out by Augustine and acknowledged by St. Thomas, one is only morally praised or blamed for something that is in one’s power.

Although both Thomas and Augustine see concupiscence as a fairly stable aspect of human existence in this world, Thomas for his part accounts for human culpability by providing for the

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99 For an excellent study of the Augustinian conception of concupiscence, see Timo Nisula, *Augustine and the Functions of Concupiscence* (Boston: Brill, 2012). Timo Nisula has done important work tracing the roots of the Augustinian use of concupiscence and some of his results are worth mentioning, particularly for the meaning that baptism carries for Augustine’s view of concupiscence. Augustine’s developed view of concupiscence is very careful to avoid moral fatalism in the case of the regenerated Christian; baptism effects a real change in the believer that removes the strict necessity of sinning. Indeed, the later Augustine can be quite optimistic about the Christian’s prospects regarding concupiscence. Nisula’s summary of this position repeatedly describes the Christian as capable of overcoming concupiscence in a morally blameless manner (Ibid., 311; 315-6; 324 (the Christian can “hold back their movements”); 326 (concupiscence “should and can be conquered by God’s grace” and “there can be no necessity of sinning in a Christian person”); 337 (the Christian can “overcome” concupiscence); 343 (concupiscence “can be resisted and conquered by God’s help”); and 351). Indeed, Augustine does not see the Christian’s “basic” concupiscence as sinful; instead the Christian is “fighting against temptations, but explicitly not committing actual sins” (Ibid., 344). For Augustine, this situation arises from the fact that the movement of concupiscence after baptism, when no consent to it occurs, is not imputed to the individual as sin.

100 Augustine states this in *On Free Will* III.18; Thomas cites this at *ST* I-II.74.3, obj. 2.
possibility of morally blameless prevention and resistance and by entirely excusing cases of strict constitutional necessity from moral culpability. Thus, any sense of a Thomistic affirmation of the fallen human subject as \textit{non posse non peccare} must be qualified by these caveats. Thomas’s thought in the \textit{Summa} recognizes that in order for something to be sin, it must be in some way chosen.

In the end, much hangs upon Thomas’s distinction about the precise nature of what is in the human subject’s power. On the one hand, Thomas argues that each particular movement of the sensitive appetite is capable of rational control and prevention; on the other, he argues that all these movements, taken together, are not in the power of reason to control perfectly: “a man cannot avoid all such movements.”

Although Thomas is at times unclear about the sinfulness or moral imputability of these unavoidable movements, Thomas is best understood in the \textit{Summa} as arguing that culpable sensitive sin only appears when reason and will were capable of foreseeing and forestalling the irrational movement of the sensitive appetite or when reason and will fail to resist it when such movement falls on one by constitutional necessity.

Even then, culpable sin from the \textit{fomes} is still ubiquitous; failure on the basis of this disorder is all too common. If nothing else, one must acknowledge with 1 John that “If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us” (1:8). The \textit{fomes} is for Thomas a way of expressing that that all are in need of divine aid and nearly constantly confronted with opportunity for and in fact with an inclination toward sin.

\begin{footnotes}
\footnote{ST I-II.74.3, ad. 2.}
\footnote{Odon Lottin point to these ambiguities in \textit{Psychologie et Morale} II.1, 579-584. As mentioned above, Thomas’s earliest writings may in fact indicate a differing position; Lottin may be right about the \textit{Sentences Commentary}. But the caveat about presentience is essential for the analysis of first movements provided by the \textit{Summa}.}
\footnote{Such an affirmation reconciles rather nicely with Augustine, who believes that there can be “no necessity of sinning in a Christian person” (Nisula, \textit{Augustine and the Functions of Concupiscence}, 326).}
\end{footnotes}
Significantly, however, Thomas avoids a perfectly strict moral fatalism; it is theoretically possible (even if never carried out in practice by fallen humanity) that one could avoid any culpable disordered movement of the sensitive appetite. In making such an affirmation, Thomas makes some modification to the schema of the medieval tradition that preceded him since, as mentioned in Chapter 4, both Peter the Lombard and Alexander of Hales affirm that the irrational movement of the sensitive appetite is always venially sinful. Thomas makes this modification, however, precisely in order to maintain its central claim. If an act cannot be called voluntary, it cannot be called sin; thus in order for there to be sin in the sensitive appetite, its act must satisfy in some way the condition of being voluntary.

C. Demonic temptation in Aquinas’s thought

In order to address demonic temptation in Thomas’s thought at all, I must begin with some justification of its place in Thomas’s thought, as this place has been contested in some recent literature. In Thomas, the corruption of the *fomes peccati* is seen as a corruption of the sense appetite itself that results from the withdrawal of original justice. As I have shown above, a susceptibility to interior demonic temptation is also, for

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104 The importance of Thomas’s theory of demonic temptation is sometimes dismissed in recent Thomistic accounts of the passions. As a significant example of this position, Nicholas Lombardo has argued that an account of human action after the Fall can completely ignore St. Thomas’s theory of demonic temptation. He states: “Demonic temptation … does not constitute its own category of subjective human experience. It can only exaggerate the preexisting inclinations of nature. Demons manipulate matter; they do not occupy a permanent niche in our psyche. … there is nothing mysterious about diabolic temptation in Aquinas’s account: preternatural agents are involved, but they act through natural causes. Consequently, even when temptation involves more than natural causes, its demonic origin is largely irrelevant to practical questions about virtue and vice, because human nature operates according to its own principles even when demonic activity is involved” (Lombardo, *Logic of Desire*, 123). I will have reason to return to Lombardo’s first claim above; I largely concur that demons do not cause a distinct category of subjective human experience.
Thomas, a result of the withdrawal of a “special favor of grace” when Adam sinned.\textsuperscript{105} Thus, if both forms of temptation can be described as consequences of the Fall, a question presents itself: is one of these forms more basic than the other or does each temptation work independently of the other? In the first section of this chapter, I showed how the devil can be seen as an indirect agent in bringing about the corruption of the fomes; nevertheless, after the initial temptation and sin of Adam, the fomes no longer required the devil’s intervention to perform its corrupting influence. At the least, then, the fomes peccati, in its individual movements in the present, does not depend on the devil in order to tempt fallen humanity.

What of the converse? Does the devil need the corruption of the fomes peccati in order to tempt by inward suggestion? Equivalently, is the fomes a “deeper” corruption and consequence of sin than inner demonic temptation? Thomas at times indicates that this may be the case.\textsuperscript{106} However, even if the fomes is a necessary condition for inner demonic temptation, it is not a sufficient condition. There are two substantive reasons to argue that Thomas sees them as distinct phenomena. First, the fact that the preceding medieval tradition (discussed in Chapter 4) distinguished clearly between the intrinsic sinfulness of the fomes and the possible sinlessness of internal demonic temptation should

\textsuperscript{105} ST II-II.165.1, response; also ST II-II.165.2.

\textsuperscript{106} In Thomas’s early articulation of the fomes, he believes that the temptation it causes is unique. He argues categorically in the Sentences Commentary that there is no other conflict with the flesh than that which arises from the fomes. Speaking of Mary, Thomas states that “it is wicked to suppose that there was in her any conflict with the flesh, since such like conflict is only from the inclination of the fomes, … although she had no conflict by reason of the temptation which is of the flesh, she had the temptation which is of the enemy, who feared not even Christ [non est pium ponere aliquam pugnam a carne fuisse in ea: cum talis pugna non sit nisi a fomitis inclinatione … Et quamvis non habuit pugnam per tentationem quae est a carne, habuit tamen pugnam per tentationem ab hoste: qui nec etiam ipsum Christum reveritus fuit…]” (ST Supplement, 96.5, ad. 2). At the time of the Sentences Commentary, then, Thomas implicitly denies that the devil can tempt by way of passion outside of the corruption of the fomes peccati. Thomas’s mature explanation of the relationship is more complex.
dispose one to think that Thomas would have conceived of them as different phenomena with somewhat different moral characteristics.

Second, Thomas’s account of the withdrawal of original justice provides for a variety of negative consequences for humankind, of which the *fomes peccati* is the most prominent but by no means only example. Notably, Thomas argues that there are four consequences resulting from the withdrawal of Adam’s sanctifying grace, corresponding to a lack of the four cardinal virtues (justice, prudence, fortitude, and temperance). The four consequences are weakness, ignorance, malice, and concupiscence.\(^ {107}\) These four defects correspond to the four faculties in which virtue resides for St. Thomas: the will, the reason, irascibility, and the concupiscible faculty (respectively). But when Thomas describes Adam’s original immunity to interior demonic temptation as the product of a “special favor of grace [Ex speciali ... *beneficio gratiae*]”\(^ {108}\) that prevents the movement of Adam’s *imagination* by the devil, Thomas describes a benefit of grace that cannot be categorized within the four sanctifying graces of virtue in his main account of Adam’s privileges. Essentially, the faculty of imagination has no corresponding virtue,\(^ {109}\) and yet by some original grace Adam’s imagination was immune from internal demonic attack. Though Thomas does not include the loss of this grace in his list concerning the consequences of Adam’s sin, Thomas’s reasoning elsewhere no less forcefully shows it to be a distinct gift of grace in the Adamic state that was consequently lost. One must therefore acknowledge this grace as a component of Adam’s original supernatural privileges that protected Adam in a unique way. The grace that prevents interior demonic

\(^{107}\) *ST* I-II.85.3.

\(^{108}\) *ST* II-II.165.1, response.

\(^{109}\) Thomas affirms that there is no virtue in the powers of apprehension at *ST* I-II.56.5; he likewise affirms that imagination is a power of apprehension at *ST* I.78.4, response.
attack is of a different sort than that infused sanctifying grace of temperance and original justice which, when absent, lead to the *fomes peccati*. In theory, then, Thomas affirms that one without the *fomes* could still be susceptible to interior demonic attack, at least through the imagination.

The question is thus specifically whether the sensitive appetite in particular should be considered *doubly* corrupted by the withdrawal of original grace—and the answer for Thomas must be affirmative. Firstly, this withdrawal leads to a lack of perfect temperance and of original justice and, thereby, to the *fomes peccati* in the sensitive appetite. In this respect, Thomas speaks of the concupiscence listed among the effects of Adam’s sin. Secondly, the withdrawal of original grace leads to a distinct ability of the devil to move faculties of the body attached to sense organs such as imagination and the sensitive appetite. In no actual fallen human being are these two effects separated, but neither should the two consequences be considered interchangeable. The grace that prevents the devil from directly moving the sensitive appetite is distinct from and acts by a different mechanism than the grace of original justice that holds the sensitive appetite inside the bounds of reason. Even if the devil never interiorly tempts an individual who does not have the *fomes peccati*, their coincidence does not make interior temptation absolutely subordinate to the *fomes peccati*—they are distinct disorders of the sensitive appetite.

That the devil is capable of tempting human beings interiorly, then, is understood by Thomas properly to be a consequence of the withdrawal of original justice but not completely reducible to a demonic ability to act from within the *fomes peccati*. At the very least, Thomas clearly envisions demonic movement of the imagination as a distinct
phenomenon outside the corruption of the *fomes*. Since the mechanism acknowledged by Thomas by which the devil moves the imagination is the same as that by which the devil moves the sensitive appetite, the phenomenon of interior demonic movement of the sensitive appetite remains distinct from the movements of the *fomes peccati*.\(^{110}\) The situation can be schematized as follows:

\[\text{The devil} \quad \downarrow \quad \text{Original grace of protection from interior demonic temptation} \quad \text{Original temperance} \]

- Imagination
- Sensitive Appetite

The two intermediate text boxes indicate the obstacles to inner demonic temptation encountered by the devil in the Adamic state that are removed by his sin; the arrows indicate how the removal of those obstacles grants the devil access to the two faculties listed. Since the imagination is not governed by one of the four cardinal virtues, there are fewer obstacles that must be overcome by the devil to tempt humanity through it. Both these obstacles in the box texts were removed simultaneously with Adam’s fall, but the grace (or collection of graces) for each effect is distinct.

\(^{110}\) As I will discuss later, however, an absolute perfection of temperance (and thus a lack of the *fomes peccati*) is sufficient to hold the sensitive appetite within the bounds of reason. Thus, in a definitive sense, Thomas considers the devil’s movement of the sensitive appetite to be secondary and subordinate to the presence of the *fomes peccati* in that individual and that appetite. Without the corruption of the *fomes* (and thus, with an absolute perfection of grace in the sensitive appetite), the devil cannot not move sensibility.
For these reasons, interior demonic temptation remains a significant component of Thomas’s theory of the human act and cannot be dismissed as in recent literature. To more adequately address this aspect of Thomas’s moral psychology, I will proceed in five parts. First, I will explore Thomas’s general affirmations about interior demonic attack. Second, I will explain Thomas’s technical mechanism by which this temptation takes place. Third, I will lay out the two forms that this temptation takes in Thomas’s deepest, mature accounts. Forth, I will briefly consider whether Thomas’s portrayal of this attack is in fact a description of a case of possession and not, in fact, temptation. Fifth, and finally, I will address the moral classification of the sorts of appetitive attacks that the devil can affect.

1. Thomas’s general affirmations concerning internal demonic attack. Thomas believes, in both his early writings and in his later, mature writings, that the relationship between demonic and fleshly temptation can be quite complex. I have discussed this fact above, but I begin here with a general restatement of relevant aspects of Thomas’s thought, as Thomas’s general descriptions of the phenomenon set the tone for how he approaches the minutiae of inner demonic temptation. I will begin with relevant passages from the Commentary on Job and then turn to Thomas’s more systematic works.

In the Commentary on Job, Thomas’s reflections on the devil are found in a metaphorical description of Leviathan. In at least three places, Thomas’s allegorical commentary on this passage indicates that the devil’s temptation is a combined attack against both intellect and passion. Emphasizing the imaginative aspect of temptation, Thomas states that “the devil enkindles men to an eager desire for sin through a showing
of some good.” There is thus a demonstrative or cognitive component to the devil’s temptation, by which the devil indicates an aspect of the good to the one tempted. But the devil’s goals are also with regard to human passion, for “through the disturbance of the devil’s head, that is, through his temptations, a flash of fire, namely, of anger or of eager desire or even of vainglory, leaps forth.” In this passage, the devil’s activity is somewhat remote from the passion itself; desire arises through [per] the devil’s attack.

An additional passage again shows how direct this activity is:

Since an animal breathes not only through his nostrils but also through his mouth, He adds fifth the operation of the mouth, saying His breath, that is, the exhalation proceeding from his mouth, makes live coals glow; that is, it is so hot and strong that it would be sufficient to light coals. For He speaks in a metaphor of those who light coals by blowing under them. Hence, He adds and flame comes out of his mouth, namely, since the vapor coming from his mouth is so hot and fiery that it can deservedly be compared to flame. Now by all these verses is designated the fact that the devil, by his concealed or manifest suggestions, kindles in man the fire of perverse desire [Diabolus sua occulta vel manifesta suggestione perversae cupiditatis ignem in homine accendit].

Here Thomas is willing to use the ablative that he did not use above; the devil’s suggestion is the direct means or agent of the “fire of perverse desire” in the human victim. There is thus for Thomas a direct demonic agency in the origin of particular irrational movements of the sensitive appetite.

111 Commentary on Job 41, in Exposition on Job, trans. Damico, 463. Latin: “per hoc autem designatur quod Diabolus ad concupiscientiam peccati homines incendit per ostentationem alicuius boni quasi per redolentiam quandam.”

112 Commentary on Job 41, in Exposition on Job, trans. Damico, 462. Latin: “Significatur autem per hoc quod per commotionem capitis Diaboli, idest per tentationes ipsius, emicat splendor ignis, scilicet irae aut concupiscientiae aut etiam inanis gloriae.”

113 Ibid., 463. Latin: “halitus eius, idest exhalatio de ore procedens, prunas ardere facit, idest tam calidus et vehemens est quod sufficeret ad prunas accendendas: loquitur enim ad similitudinem eorum qui sufflingo prunas accendunt, unde subdit et flamma de ore eius egreditur, quia scilicet tam calidus et ignitus est vapor de ore eius egrediens quod merito potest flammae comparari. Per haec autem omnia designatur quod Diabolus sua occulta vel manifesta suggestione perversae cupiditatis ignem in homine accendit.”
Thomas’s more systematic writings also contain general statements with the same force and intent. Speaking in generalities, Thomas is clear throughout his career that the devil is capable of using our imagination and sense appetite against us; in the *Sentences Commentary*, Thomas argues that “the Devil alone is said to tempt [*Diabolus solus dicitur tentare*] … because he himself uses the things of the world and of the flesh as instruments for the temptation of human beings.”

114 This same general affirmation is found in the *Summa*:

> the flesh and the world are said to tempt instrumentally or materially, that is in so far as one can know what kind of a person someone is, by seeing whether he follows or spurns fleshly desires and despises worldly prosperity and adversity. Also, such things are used by the devil for the purpose of tempting.  

115 Significantly, Thomas gives an indication in this passage of *whose* instrument the flesh is: first and foremost, the devil uses the flesh to tempt. Even if other human beings can also use the flesh as a means to tempt other people, Thomas argues that they do so as servants of the devil.  

116 In both his exegetical and systematic works, then, Thomas recognizes that the devil brings about individual irrational movements of the sensitive appetite and movements of the imagination. How does Thomas explain this power of the devil over human beings?

2. *The Thomistic and Aristotelian mechanism of inner demonic temptation.* While Thomas’s Aristotelian cosmology is not the direct object of my investigation here, it is important to understand certain aspects of it that are related to the action of angels and
demons on human beings. First in *ST* I.110.3 and later in *ST* I.111 and 114, Thomas’s Aristotelian cosmology leads him to the conclusion that angelic natures are capable of moving material bodies by local motion. He states that “the corporeal nature has a natural aptitude to be moved immediately by the spiritual nature as regards place.” Thomas draws further concrete conclusions from this fact in his questions on angels and demons. This causal mechanism translates to an angelic ability to move any faculty or power of the human being which is attached to a corporeal body. Regarding angels (*ST* I.111), Thomas recognizes an ability to enlighten the human mind (art. 1), change the imagination (art. 3), and change human senses (art. 4). Regarding demons, Thomas recognizes similar capabilities (*ST* I-II.80.2), though excluding enlightening the mind on a technicality. He states there that “the corporeal nature has a natural aptitude to be moved locally by the spiritual nature: so that the devil can produce all those effects which can result from the local movement of bodies here below.”

Through this local motion, Thomas further argues that angels and demons are able to cause indirectly the other two kinds of Aristotelian movement, those of quantity (magnitude) and quality (affection). In response to an objection that concerns precisely those three different kinds of movement, Thomas states that “angels, by causing local motion, as the first motion, can thereby cause other movements [of quantity and quality]; that is, by employing corporeal agents to produce these effects, as a workman employs fire to soften iron.” Thus, while the devil’s action in creating these other kinds of

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117 *ST* I.110.3, response. Since this kind of motion is the “most perfect” kind of motion, Thomas argues that other kinds of inferior motion are also in the power of angels and demons; see ibid., obj. 2 and ad. 2. This fact is particularly important in light of certain objections raised by Miner—see the note below.

118 *ST* I-II.80.2, response.

119 Thomas denies that demons can alter the substantial forms of creatures, which he sometimes classifies as a fourth kind of movement. See *De Malo* XVI.10, obj. 6, response, and ad. 6.

120 *ST* I.110.3, ad. 2.
movement is indirect, it is no less intentional, purposeful, or capable than a craftsman’s ironwork in the forge. ¹²¹ This fact is important with respect to the movement of the sensitive appetite. As noted above in my discussion of concupiscence, there is a disagreement in recent literature about how that movement should be conceived, but Thomas’s statements here make the details of that argument moot. Since the movement of the sensitive appetite is certainly one of the three kinds of movement considered by Aristotle (no one has suggested a clear alternative to these three), and since the devil can cause all three kinds of movement, the devil is able to cause the movement of the sensitive appetite—apparently in both its bodily and psychic forms. ¹²²

One need not work on supposition to reach this conclusion; Thomas’s late systematic works bear explicit witness to this fact. For the moment I will simply cite Thomas’s statements from the Summa to this effect; I will return to their difficulties in the fourth subsection below. Thomas states in ST I-II.80.2 that

the operation of the devil seems to be confined to the imagination and sensitive appetite, by moving either of which he can induce man to sin [inducere ad peccatum]. For his operation may result in presenting certain forms to the imagination; and he is able to make it that the sensitive appetite is incited to some passion [potest etiam facere quod appetitus sensitivus concitetur ad aliquam passionem]. ¹²³

Thus, whatever the proper act of the sensible appetite may be—either bodily or psychic passion or some combination of the two—it is attributed to the devil’s action. Thomas

¹²¹ Thomas seems to deny this power in De Malo XVI.10, response, but he only denies a direct power over those other movements. His statements in the Summa thus specify how the devil has indirect power over them.

¹²² These three kinds of motion are the only three recognized in his Aristotelian cosmology, and demons are capable of causing (either directly or indirectly) all three. Even if, as Miner argues, there is something analogous to the sense in which Thomas means “motion” when applied to passions (Miner, Thomas Aquinas on the Passions, 45-6), Thomas’s explicit affirmation (seen below) is that whatever kind of motion the passions are, the devil can cause them.

¹²³ ST I-II.80.2, response.
does not restrict this activity to the bodily form of passion, but later clarifies in that question that, while the devil’s action begins in the bodily form, it results in “certain passions being aroused in the sensitive appetite.” Elsewhere, one finds the similar affirmation that “by the interior movement of the spirits and humors an angel can do something towards changing the act … of the appetitive and sensitive power, and of any other power using a corporeal organ.” The moral problems in this affirmation will be dealt with below. The general affirmation, however, is clear: the devil is able, through the manipulation of the conjoined organs, to stir up both images in the imagination and passions in the sensitive appetite. I turn now to a close investigation of this two-pronged demonic temptation as presented in Thomas’s mature work.

124 Ibid. Note that he does not say certain movements, but rather, certain passions. “Movements” could be explained as bodily; passions pertain to the act of the appetite as such. In any case, the further effects that he lists for these passions make it clear that he is describing a fully psychic event.

125 ST I.111.4, ad. 2. Latin: “per commotionem interiorem spirituum et humorum, potest Angelus aliquid operari ad immutandum actum … potentiae appetitivae, et sensitivae, et cuissumque potentiae corporali organo utentis.” In passages where Thomas is treating the angels, who have a good intention with regard to human acts, Thomas is less circumspect about this affirmation; any hesitancy that he expresses is likely a discomfort with the wicked intentions these demonic agents have. See, for instance, ST I.111.2, where Thomas affirms simultaneously that the will is free and that angels can move the will from without: “the human will can be moved from without in another way; namely, by the passion residing in the sensitive appetite: thus by concupiscence or anger the will is inclined to will something. In this manner the angels, insofar as they are able to rouse these passions [inquantum possunt concitare huiusmodi passiones], can move the will, not however by necessity, for the will ever remains free to consent to, or to resist, the passion [quia voluntas semper remanet libera ad consentiendum vel resistendum passioni]” (ibid., response).

126 There are other related activities that could be cataloged alongside these two kinds of temptation. These activities tend to be sexual in nature: either causing or impeding (apparently male) sexual arousal. Even if they are not distinct categories of temptation, though, they are at least representative of the kind of power the devil has over powers conjoined to bodily organs.

Regarding impediments to sexual arousal, in the Sent. Comm. IV.34.1.3, one reads that the devil has the ability to impede the generative power in males, either for a time or perpetually: “others say that an impediment to carnal copulation can be provided through sorcery, but nothing of this sort is perpetual; whence it does not dissolve a marriage contract, and they say that laws that say this are to be revoked. But this is contrary to experience and against the new law, which is in harmony with the old [Et ideo dixerunt alii, quod per maleficia praestari potest impedimentum carnali copulae; sed nullum tale est perpetuum; unde non dirimit matrimonium contractum; et dicunt, jura quae hoc dicebant, esse revocata. Sed hoc est contra experimentum, et contra nova jura, quae antiquis concordant].” In his first response, Thomas argues that “because the corruption of the first sin, through which human beings are made servants of the Devil, came into use through an act of generation, therefore the power of cursing is permitted to the Devil by God in this act more than in other [acts] [quia corruptio peccati prima, per quam homo servus est factus Diaboli, in nos per actum generantem devenit, ideo maleficia
3. The devil’s in the details: apprehensive and passionate attack from the devil.\footnote{Torrell correctly notes that within this temptation from the Enemy there is, for Thomas, an “invisible” temptation: “It is in this way that there can be a proposition to the intellect or interior senses. … [A demon] can very well act on one’s imagination, whether one be awake or asleep, and that leaves a vast field open to the tempter [c’est alors qu’il y a proposition possible à l’intelligence ou aux sense intérieurs. … [le démon] peut fort bien agir sur son imagination, soit à l’état de veille soit en songe, et cela laisse un vaste champ accessible au tentateur]” (Torrell, \emph{Le Christ}, 239). Torrell’s analysis of Thomas is correct, as far as it goes. However, Thomas’s most elaborate explanation of the devil’s \emph{internal} power over human beings goes still farther than Torrell admits. On the other hand, Gondreau only avows the “mode of persuasion” and ignores entirely the “mode of disposition” from the \emph{De Malo} (Gondreau, \emph{Passions of Christ’s Soul}, 355). Gondreau uses the “only by persuasion” quotation from Thomas out of context, as if it excluded other modes of temptation that were not in themselves sin, but Thomas clearly has another mode (passionate temptation) that meets these criteria.} In recent literature, the first of these two forms of attack has received some attention, but the latter form has been neglected.\footnote{In distinguishing these two kinds of attack in these terms (apprehensive and passionate), I move beyond Thomas’s explicit terminology; in the \emph{De Malo} Thomas uses the terms “persuasion” and “disposition” to designate these two attacks and in the \emph{Summa} he simply discusses attacks against the imagination and against the sense appetite.} In the following, I will consider both these forms of attack and trace certain developments between the \emph{Sentences Commentary} and Thomas’s mature writings, focusing here on the subjective effects of these attacks.

\textit{a. The devil’s apprehensive attack.} Thomas treats the devil’s apprehensive attack as related to an attempt to “darken” the human intellect. On the basis of angelic nature itself, this effect can only be produced indirectly—since Thomas denies that demons have

\textit{potestas permittitur Diabolo a Deo in hoc actu magis quam in aliis}” (ibid., ad. 1) It is particularly significant that Thomas associates the devil’s power with those faculties that are responsible for transmitting original sin since concupiscence is primary among those faculties responsible for this transmission in the \emph{Summa} (I-II.83.4: “the infection of original sin regards these three chiefly, viz. The generative power, the concupiscible faculty and the sense of touch”). Thomas also argues in that question that a merely \textit{imaginative} demonic attack can have the effect of removing desire (if such suits the devil’s purposes): “the impediment of the curse can be from the impression of the demons in the imagination of the human being, from which the movement of a man’s concupiscence can be taken away \textit{[Et praeterea impedimentum maleficii potest esse ex impressione Daemonis in imaginatione hominis, ex qua tollitur vro concupiscientia movens]}” (ibid., ad. 4). For an overview of the importance of this question in medieval canon law and marriage law, see Catherine Rider, \emph{Magic and Impotence in the Middle Ages} (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006).

Conversely, regarding the arousal of sexual desire, Thomas believes demons can interfere with one’s imagination while asleep to produce nocturnal emissions: “the third cause is … when by the work of the devil the sleeper’s phantasms are disturbed so as to induce the aforesaid result. … this may occur without any fault on man’s part, and through the wickedness of the devil alone” (\emph{ST} II-II.154.5, response). This example gives some reason to wonder if the devil’s power to arouse passion is inversely related to one’s command of their reason, but Thomas gives much more direct discussion of this question elsewhere; see the discussion of sin and demonic temptation below. In both these cases, the devil proves more than capable of using intellectual attacks to result in the movement (or lack thereof) of the lower sensitive powers.
a strictly *intellectual* form of attack. This restriction follows from the fact that angels have only the natural power to *illuminate* the human mind with knowledge; since true knowledge is contrary to the devil’s purposes, the devil does not produce the intellectual effects in humankind of which he is capable.\(^{129}\) The only way that this darkening effect can be accomplished through the natural powers of angels is by changes to the imaginative power and sensitive appetite.\(^{130}\)

Thomas argues that through the movement of the bodily components of the imagination, the devil is able to cause that “certain forms are presented to the imagination” that can be used by the devil to deceive.\(^{131}\) Thomas elsewhere explains how this effect serves the devil’s purposes:

> as to a person’s imagination or apprehension, that when it is strong, the senses or sensitive appetite is moved: which change is not without bodily alteration and the spirits of the body, as we see that with the apprehension of something pleasant the sensitive appetite is moved to desire [*concupiscentiam*], and from this the body is warmed.\(^{132}\)

Similarly, one reads in the *De Malo* that good and bad angels somehow internally dispose and arrange forms of the imagination insofar as such dispositions and arrangements are appropriate for apprehending intelligible things. And good angels indeed arrange forms of the imagination for human beings’ good. And devils do likewise for their evil. Devils arrange forms of the imagination whether to desire sin, namely, as the things human beings apprehend induce them to pride or some other sin, or to prevent true understanding itself, as

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\(^{129}\) See *ST* I-II.80.2 and *De Malo* XVI.12.

\(^{130}\) *ST* I-II.80.2 and *De Malo* XVI.11.

\(^{131}\) *ST* I-II.80.2: “*aliaque formae repraesententur imaginationi.*”

\(^{132}\) *Commentary on Galatians* 3.1, (throughout, Latin versions accessed via http://www.corpusthomisticum.org/iopera.html), my translation. Latin: “ad imaginationem seu apprehensionem hominis, quando fortis est, immutatur sensus, seu appetitus sensitivus: quae quidem immutatio non est sine alteratione corporis et spirituum corporis, sicut nos videmus quod ad apprehensionem delectabilis movetur appetitus sensitivus ad concupiscentiam, et exinde corpus calefit.” This same argument is found in *De Malo* III.4, where an apprehended object is used by demons to try to elicit passion.
things apprehended lead human beings into doubts that they do not know how to resolve, and then into error.\textsuperscript{133}

In these passages, there are two goals that Thomas indicates in this apprehensive attack: a goal of deception and an appetitive goal. For the first, there is simply a sort of confusion that the devil hopes to encourage. By presenting things to the mind that it cannot or does not understand, the devil leads into intellectual error—and presumably, thereby, eventually into moral error as well. Thomas does not explain this mechanism at great length, but the attacked individual presumably retains some freedom not to fall into the intellectual errors the devil suggests.

For the second goal, the intended effect is to move the one tempted from apprehension to appetition.\textsuperscript{134} In this form, Thomas’s consideration of an imaginative attack adheres fairly strictly to Alexander of Hales in his argument that demons present objects to the imagination in order to learn about the passions toward which humans are already inclined.\textsuperscript{135} This is the moral distinction between apprehension and appetition.

\textsuperscript{133} De Malo XVI.12. Response: good and bad angels “possunt interius quadammodo disponere et ordinare species imaginarias secundum quod competit ad aliquid intelligibile apprehendendum: quod quidem boni angeli ordinant ad hominis bonum, demones autem ad hominis malum: uel quantum ad affectum peccati, prout scilicet homo ex his que apprehendit mouetur ad superbiam uel ad aliquud aliud peccatum, uel ad impediendum ipsam intelligentiam uteritatis secundum quod per aliqua apprehensa inducitur homo in dubitationem quam soluere nescit, et sit trahitur in errorem …” De Malo XVI.11 also contains extensive discussion of demonic attack against the imagination.

\textsuperscript{134} In the first quotation above, this passionate attack is ultimately instrumental. The darkening of intellect (the ultimate goal) takes place through the attempt to elicit sinful passion. The passion, then, is an instrumental detour that returns to an ultimately intellectual attack. In the second quotation, the two goals are presented as separable.

\textsuperscript{135} One sees this same explanation in De Malo III.4, response: “we call the devils tempters since they learn through the actions of human beings to which emotions the human beings are more subject, so that the devils may thereby more effectively impress on the imagination of those individuals what they intend [ideo demone temptatores dicuntur, quia experientur per actus hominum quibus passionibus magis subduntur, ut secundum hoc in eorum imaginationem efficacius imprimant quod intendent].”
that was essential to Alexander’s case for keeping the devil’s internal temptation sinless.\textsuperscript{136}

For Thomas, the spiritual pedagogy implied by this reasoning is one of \textit{resistance} to images placed in the imagination. Thomas states that this particular action of resistance is proper to reason alone and cannot be produced by the devil. Thus, were one not to resist the image, such an omission would be morally reprehensible in the human subject experiencing such temptation. It would be this lack of resistance that constitutes for Thomas the first sinful movement toward the apprehended object.\textsuperscript{137} In the devil’s movement of the imagination, the demonic powers seek to deceive and to elicit antecedent passion; these two goals are the substance of the temptation Thomas envisions here.

\textit{b. The devil’s passionate attack.} In this component of the devil’s ploys, Thomas moves beyond the apprehensive/appetitive distinction invoked in the attack against the imagination and thus indicates that the line maintained by Alexander of Hales between demonic and fleshly temptation does not hold. Since the passions are elicited by a faculty

\textsuperscript{136} This same distinction between apprehension and appetite is found in the Sent. Comm. II.21.1.2, ad. 4: “the demon has power to imprint on the imagination, or represent some exterior sensible object, or also disturb the interior imagination … and therefore what he imprints in us according to these means is called temptation. But that impression which is from these means does not have the character of sin, as it is not in appetite, but in apprehension alone [\textit{Daemon potestatem habet imprimendi in imaginationem vel repraesentando aliqua sensibilia exterius, vel etiam turbando imaginationem interius: ... et ideo secundum quod hoc modo imprimit in nos, tentare dicitur. Haec autem impressio ex hoc non habet rationem peccati, cum non sit in appetitu, sed in apprehensione tantum}].” Thus, for Alexander, the devil could not be called an “inflamer” of human passion, but could only work with those desires that were already in some sense present in the one tempted. If Thomas adhered strictly to this Alexandrian line, he would have to deny that the devil can produce passions, and then there could be no strictly appetitive attack. Thomas does not do so, however; the distinction between apprehension and appetite is not, strictly speaking, how Thomas maintains the sinlessness of inner demonic temptation.

\textsuperscript{137} If this interpretation is accurate, it can be understood to resemble Maximus’s spiritual pedagogy of separating images from passions discussed in Chapter 2. Thomas only describes this pedagogy as “resistance” without explaining what that resistance looks like. For Maximus, it is a process of separating images and passions—something central to Maximus’s ascetic practice. Even if not identical to Thomas’s theory, however, it is important to note that there may be a Thomistic corollary to this ascetic discipline.
conjoined to a bodily organ, Thomas argues that demons can bring them about without any image presented to the imagination \([\text{sine aliqua imagine}]\).\(^{138}\) What does the devil hope to accomplish in this attack? Thomas only considers this situation with precision in three short passages, one each in the Sentences Commentary, the Summa, and De Malo.

In the Summa, Thomas states that

> through certain passions being aroused in the sensitive appetite, the result is that man more easily perceives the movement or sensible image which is brought in the manner explained, before the apprehensive principle … It also happens \([\text{Contingit etiam}]\), through the rousing of a passion, that what is put before the imagination, is judged, as being something to be pursued, because, to him who is held by a passion, whatever the passion inclines him to, seems good.\(^{139}\)

The first goal Thomas describes here is precisely the obverse side of the goal described in the imaginative attack above: the devil hopes to cause the one tempted to relate a passionate disposition to images presented to the imagination (either from real external objects or from implanted demonic images). As early as the Sentences Commentary,

\(^{138}\) This phrase comes from the Sent. Comm. II.21.1.2, ad. 5. In that response, Thomas considers the mode of demonic instigation of desire, but his explanation does not easily cohere with his later explanation in the De Malo and Summa. In the Sentences Commentary, he describes a “purely natural” movement of the sensitive appetite in which there is no sin, alongside another in which there is.

\(^{139}\) ST I-II.80.2. Latin: “Et ex hoc quod passiones aliquae concitaturn in appetitu sensitivo, sequitur quod et motum sive intentionem sensibilem praedicto modo reductam ad principium apprehensivum, magis homo percipiat, quia, ut philosophus in eodem libro dicit, amantes modica similitudine in apprehensionem rei amatae moventur. Contingit etiam ex hoc quod passio est concitata, ut id quod proponitur imaginationi, iudicetur prosequendum, quia ei qui a passione detinetur, videtur esse bonum id ad quod per passionem inclinatur.” Thomas’s description in the De Malo does not provide much information about the devil’s intentions and goals: the devil “induces human beings to sin … both as persuader and as disposer. … the devil can cause sin as a disposer insofar as he by a like movement of vapors and fluids causes some to be more disposed to irascibility or concupiscibility or some such thing. For it is obvious that human beings are more prone to concupiscence and anger and like passions by a certain quality of the body’s disposition, by the rising up of which man is disposed to consent \([\text{Et ideo dicendum est quod etiam inuisiviliter instigat hominem ad peccandum. Quot quidem fit et per modum persuasiosis et per modum dispositionis. Per modum autem disponentis potest esse causa peccati in quantum per similium commotionem spirituum et humorum facit aliquos magis dispositos ad irascendum uel ad concupiscendum uel ad aliquod huiusmodi. Manifestum est enim quod corpore aliquilateral disposto est homo magis pronus ad concupiscientiam et iram et huiusmodi passiones, quibus insurgentibus homo disponitur ad consensum. Sic igitur patet quod diabolus interius instiget ad peccatum persuadendo et disponendo, non autem perficendo peccatum].\)” (De Malo III.4, response).

This is a mere description of the mechanism; it does not describe what further ends this disposition serves for the devil.
Thomas recognizes that “the devil is unable to extort this motion” whereby a concupiscible movement is connected to the apprehension of some desirable thing.\textsuperscript{140} Again, since Thomas conceives this movement that associates images with irrational movements of passion to be proper to reason and will alone, this activity is the first sinful or culpable movement toward the object presented and passion elicited.

The second goal from the Summa quotation above, however, is concerned with another matter: the judgment of a desirable thing as something to be pursued. Clearly this act of judgment is proper to the reason and will of the one tempted, thereby showing that there must be freedom to resist. But Thomas also describes the one tempted by such a demonic passion as being “held by a passion \textit{(a passione detinetur)},” which certainly indicates that the temptation puts significant pressure upon one’s free will. Because of this pressure, the relationship of such temptation with the distinct phenomenon of \textit{possession} should be further clarified.

4. \textit{Inner demonic temptation and possession.} For the medieval tradition leading up to St. Thomas, it is largely assumed that irrational movements of the sensitive appetite are venially sinful. For these thinkers, it was impossible to affirm that the devil could cause this movement, since that would be to say that the devil could \textit{cause} a human subject to sin. At best, one whose appetite was thus inflamed would be described as possessed—and thus not culpable for the irrational movement that is, properly speaking, in the genus of sin. As shown above, however, Thomas does not believe \textit{every} irrational movement of the sensitive appetite to be sinful; there are movements based on the corruption of the \textit{fomes peccati} that are constitutionally unpreventable and therefore cannot be even venially sinful. For this reason, Thomas is able to describe inner demonic temptation of a

\textsuperscript{140} Sent. Comm. II.21.1.2, ad. 5. Latin: “hunc motum Diabolus extorquere non potest.”
human’s concupiscible power without the implication that the devil causes an act in the

It is true that Thomas’s own analysis of this phenomenon in both the Summa and De Malo explicitly draws this temptation into close relationship with possession, but he is equally clear in distinguishing possession from the cases he calls temptation. Thomas states that the distinguishing feature of a true possession (arrepticiis) is that “the use of reason is completely fettered.” In such a case, the devil “can compel anyone to do an act which, in its genus, is a sin,” but such an act is not imputed to the one who performed it because they retained no rational or volitional freedom in its performance. True compulsion to acts in the genus is sin is strictly tied to the complete binding of reason and thereby will—and this state is what Thomas calls possession. A similar situation was seen above regarding the fomes peccati in the case of an individual who was “possessed” by a passion that completely fettered reason and will. In a sense, then, the devil could cause such an indirect “possession” by passion, were he to inflame a passion so strong that the human being were completely unable to resist it. Such a case would in all likelihood cause an act in the genus of sin, but the human victim would not be culpable for it.

It turns out, then, that “lesser” movements of the sensitive appetite caused by the devil are the most morally significant for the one experiencing them. Thomas maintains that such cases where reason is not completely bound should be considered temptation instead of possession, precisely because “devils can sometimes move internal vapors and

141 De Malo III.4, response: “totaliter usus rationis ligetur.” The same is seen in the relevant Summa question: “man does not resist that which moves him to sin, except by his reason; the use of which the devil is able to impede altogether … as is the case with the one who is possessed [homo motivo ad peccandum non resistit nisi per rationem, cuius usum totaliter impedire potest … sicut in arreptitiis patet]” (ST I-II.80.3).
142 ST I-II.80.3, response. Latin: “Diabolus propria virtute, nisi refranetur a Deo, potest aliquem inducere ex necessitate ad faciendum aliquem actum qui de suo genere peccatum est, non autem potest inducere necessitatem peccandi.”
fluids without fettering reason” in individuals who “are awake and enjoy the use of reason.”

In such cases, Thomas argues that “insofar as [reason] is free, it can resist sin.”

Most significantly, in one of his responses to this question in the Summa, Thomas argues that in the case of demonically incited passion

The lusting of the flesh against the spirit, when the reason actually resists it, is *not a sin*, but is matter for the exercise of virtue. That reason does not resist, is not in the devil’s power; wherefore he cannot bring about the necessity of sinning.”

Thus, in the case of a demonically incited passion, Thomas argues that *virtue is exercised* in the resistance of reason to that which is proposed by passion. “*Non est peccatum*”:

there is no sin here—and in fact there is an opportunity for its opposite.

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143 De Malo III.4, response.
144 ST I-II.80.3, response.
145 Ibid., ad. 3, emphasis added. Latin: “Ad tertium dicendum quod concupiscetia carnis contra spiritum, quando ratio ei actualiter resistit, non est peccatum, sed materia exercendae virtutis. Quod autem ratio ei non resistat, non est in potestate Diaboli. Et ideo non potest inducere necessitatem peccati.” One find a parallel passage in the De Malo III.3, ad. 8: “The lusting of the flesh against the spirit is an act of sensuality, which can involve sin insofar as reason can prevent or restrain its movement. And so there is no sin in the act if the movement of sensuality arises from a bodily change, and reason resists the movement. And resistance is within the will’s power of choice. And so it is clear that every sin rests in the will’s power of choice [concupiscetia carnis contra spiritum est actus sensualitatis, in qua potest esse peccatum secundum quod motus eius potest impediiri uel refrenari ratione; unde si motus sensualitatis insurget ex aliqua transmutatione corporali ratione actualiter resistente, quod est in arbitrio uoluntatis, nullum est ibi peccatum. Unde patet quod in arbitrio uoluntatis positum est omne peccatum].” Thomas exhibits development on the particular matter of whether temptation is material for the exercise of virtue. In the early Sent. Comm. II.21.1.3, ad. 3, he argues that temptation is in itself “not material for virtue [non sunt materia virtutis].” This shift has repercussions for the way that Thomas conceives of the providential nature of temptation, which I treat in the third section of this chapter below.

As for the question of what constitutes the sinfulness of the movement of the sensitive appetite, Thomas also demonstrates some movement from the early Sentences Commentary. There, Thomas indicates that it is the mere *bodiliness* of demonically inspired passions that safeguards their blamelessness. That is, in the Sentences Commentary, the essential moral distinction is between a movement that originates in the body and a movement that originates in the soul; he treats them almost as if they are separable events, as if the bodily movement could take place without the psychic. But, as the recent discussion of the passions has concluded, this distinction does not hold in Thomas’s mature thought. Even if the psychic passions are distinct from their bodily counterparts, they always arise together. There is something psychic even in bodily passion. Most likely because of this problem, Thomas’s later thought in the Summa abandons this precise distinction between bodily and psychic passions in explaining the blamelessness of demonic manipulation of the sensitive appetite. In the De Malo and the Summa, Thomas admits that the devil can cause a psychic passion (albeit only “from below”), but that the sinlessness of such a passion rests precisely in reason’s consistent and persistent resistance to it, along the lines outlined above (i.e. keeping passions separate from mental images).
Thomas is able to maintain this position because such demonically inspired movements are unpreventable; as seen above, what cannot be prevented cannot be sin. Thomas consistently and only speaks of resisting inner demonic temptation and not of preventing it.\textsuperscript{146} In short, the natural “data” (from the apprehensive power) that inform the sensitive appetite in irrational antecedent movements of passibility are not present in the case of demonic temptation. Since it is those data that provide reason and will the necessary information to cut off irrational movement before it begins, the absence of that information results in an inability to predict, foresee, or prevent its movement. Equivalently, since the agent acting on the sensitive appetite in this case is greater than the human subject, there is a constitutional inability on the part of the human subject to understand or foresee the occult movement of the devil.\textsuperscript{147}

Again in the \textit{De Malo}, the devil’s “disposition” of a human subject to sin (by which disposition human passions are elicited) is explicitly distinguished from a case wherein the devil causes an act in the genus of sin.\textsuperscript{148} After describing the mechanism of demonically inspired passion, Thomas concludes that “it is evident that the devil internally incites to sin by persuading and disposing but \textit{not by bringing about sin}.”\textsuperscript{149} The distinction that he draws is between “inciting \textit{[instiget]}” and “bringing about \textit{[perficiendo]}” sin or, in the terms used in the \textit{Summa}, between “inducing to sin” and inducing by necessity.\textsuperscript{150} Both of the former terms (inciting and inducing) presume that the tempted human has not sinned; only the latter terms (\textit{perficiendo} and \textit{necessitatem}...

\textsuperscript{146} \textit{ST} I-II.80.3, ad. 2 and 3.
\textsuperscript{147} Thomas recognizes the superiority and inscrutability of demonic activity in \textit{De Malo} XVI.7 and 8.
\textsuperscript{148} The fact that these movements are not culpable corresponds with the narrow exceptions that Thomas includes in his questions on the \textit{fomes} that exclude unforeseeable antecedent movements from the genus of sin, though they remain disordered.
\textsuperscript{149} \textit{De Malo}, III.4, response. Latin: “Sic igitur patet quod diabolus interius instiget ad peccatum persuadendo et disponendo, non autem perficendo peccatum.”
\textsuperscript{150} \textit{ST} I-II.80.2 and 3, respectively.
inducere) indicate that something in the genus of sin had occurred. But Thomas consistently denies that the devil does these latter two in proper cases of inner demonic temptation.

In light of these considerations, these proper cases of inner demonic temptation are truly and only that; Thomas argues that they do not cause acts in the genus of sin and do not bind reason or will. While Thomas believes the devil to be capable of “possessing” someone with a passion, the smaller demonically inspired movements categorized as “temptation” require closer attention since they can be and must be resisted. But if such temptation is not simply possession, how should such passion be categorized?

5. What kind of passion is incited by a demon? In moral theological terms, it is important to ask whether the sort of passion elicited by demonic powers should be considered a full passion or a propassion, an antecedent or consequent passion. I will deal with each of these pairs in order. As discussed in Chapter 4, the difference between full passions and propassions is whether they disturb or cloud the mind; as Peter the Lombard explains, a propassion “does not disturb the intellectual faculties from rectitude or from contemplation of God” but a full passion does. I flagged at that point that it was unclear whether propassions reach the mind or soul at all—and that question is relevant again here. As explained above, the way that Thomas describes demonically inspired passion places it along a spectrum in which the reason and will retain some

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151 Roger A. Couture, L’Imputabilité Morale des Premiers Mouvements de Sensualité (Rome: Presses de l’Université Grégorienne, 1962) discusses this and other cases of sensitive movement that the author believes should be excluded from sinful imputation in the scholastic tradition. See his list on ibid., 229-30. I have no wish to make a judgment about the other cases Couture discusses, but the only examples on his list that would include an intentional inclination toward sin and evil are those that involve demonic influence. The rest simply incline here or there without intention in the proper sense of the word.

152 For Thomas’s distinction between antecedent and consequent passion, see De Malo, XII.1. For further discussion of these categories, see Gondreau’s discussion in Passions of Christ’s Soul, 337ff.

153 Peter the Lombard, Sentences III.15.2.
freedom to perform their proper acts, but the purpose and indeed effect of the devil in this
temptation is to cause some movement in the soul as a distraction from one’s final end.
Does this mean that in inner temptation the devil clouds the mind and binds reason to a
full passion?

The key affirmation for Thomas is that inner demonic temptation (when it is
properly so called and not possession) does not fetter or cloud the mind in the way that a
full passion does. Thomas’s claims in the De Malo are particularly significant here. Since
“devils can sometimes move internal vapors and fluids without fettering reason” in
individuals who “are awake and enjoy the use of reason,” it follows that proper
instances of inner demonic temptation are not full passions, but somewhere in the range
of those affective movements that are called propassions.

What, then, of the antecedent/consequent classification? It is rather easy to
dismiss the categorization of inner demonic temptation as a consequent passion; such
passions are subsequent to the judgment of reason and clearly demons are not consulting
human rationality before eliciting these movements. Is inner demonic temptation
therefore an antecedent passion?

Not perfectly; demonically inspired passions do not perfectly align with Thomas’s
category of antecedent passions either. Crucially, Thomas argues that antecedent passions
have the characteristic feature that they “always prevent judgments of reason” but
Thomas is equally clear that in proper cases of inner demonic temptation, reason and will
retain some freedom to perform their proper acts. Additionally, Thomas’s treatment of
antecedent passions indicates that they arise directly and exclusively from the fomes

154 De Malo III.4, response.
155 De Malo XII.1. Latin: “semper … iudicium rationis impediat.”
peccati.\textsuperscript{156} But the origin or root source of demonically inspired passion cannot be attributed to the \textit{fomes} in this way; as shown above, the \textit{fomes} is a necessary but not sufficient condition to such demonic movement. The devil exploits the constitutional lack of governance that comes with the \textit{fomes} and defective forms of temperance, but the movement should not be said to come \textit{from} that corruption per se. Indeed, the circumstances in which the movement of the \textit{fomes peccati} is not venially sinful are relatively limited, whereas \textit{any} movement caused by the devil is inculpable for the one experiencing the passion. Insofar as antecedent passions bind reason and have their root cause in the \textit{fomes}, demonic passions should not be considered interchangeably with them.

On the other hand, inner demonic passions do share important characteristics of antecedent passions. They are intended by their author to incite sin and certainly have the net effect of making it difficult to do good. These two features are also necessary (though not sufficient) for Thomas’s definition of the \textit{fomes} and thereby of antecedent passion.\textsuperscript{157} Based on these considerations, inner demonic temptation of the sensitive appetite should be thought of as a propassion as opposed to a full passion and as similar but not identical to antecedent passion. Demonic passion shares with antecedent passion the vehemence

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{156} Such in any case is Gondreau’s explanation of antecedent passion; Gondreau argues that “at the root source of the antecedent passion … is what Aquinas … identifies as the \textit{fomes peccati}” (Gondreau, \textit{Passions of Christ’s Soul}, 342). If this is intended as a definition of antecedent passions, the demonic movement of the sensitive appetite must be categorized in a different way, since this movement is not identical with the \textit{fomes} in Thomas’s treatment. If, on the other hand, Gondreau’s statement isn’t intended strictly as a definition of antecedent passions, Gondreau never considers any other source of such antecedent passion and consequently does not provide a framework broad enough to adequately consider their moral status. Either way, the particular moral location of the passions caused by demons needs separate investigation.

\textsuperscript{157} \textit{ST} III.27.3, response. “It is essential to the \textit{fomes} to incline to evil or make it difficult to do good.” Latin: “\textit{fomes} nihil aliud est quam inordinata concupiscentia sensibilis appetitus … Dicitur autem concupiscentia sensualitatis esse inordinata, inquantum repugnat rationi, quod quidem fit inquantum inclinant ad malum, vel difficultatem facit ad bonum. Et ideo ad ipsam rationem fomitis pertinet quod inclinet ad malum, vel difficultatem facit in bono.”
\end{footnotesize}
and “difficulty in doing good” that are characteristic of those passions that come directly from the *fomes*. But by definition they do not prevent the judgment of reason as do antecedent passions.\(^{158}\) Consequently, they may stand as a different species of passion alongside antecedent and consequent passions.

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As a closing remark about internal demonic temptation, I want to point out the cumulative effect of Thomas’s arguments. By means of apprehensive and appetitive attacks, the devil is capable of producing images in the mind and can simultaneously pair these images with a passion that would often accompany that image. Such conjunction of movement of both the imagination and sensitive appetite would appear to be the most difficult form of demonic temptation to resist. Notably, this combined attack is, subjectively speaking, nearly indistinguishable from the sorts of appetitive movements that come from the *fomes*; Lombardo is correct in this component of his analysis of demonic temptation.\(^{159}\) An antecedent passion from the *fomes*, like demonic passion, also occurs as the conjunction of an image in the imagination with an accompanying passion in the sensitive appetite. What is formally lacking in demonic passion, however, is a *direct* connection of the imagination with the appetite: the apprehensive movement is not the immediate *cause* of the appetitive movement, as it would be in the case of a movement from the *fomes peccati*. Resistance to demonic passion associated with images, then, would often take the shape of resisting the association of images with

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\(^{158}\) I will consider this question at more length below in the section on demonic temptation and virtue. 

\(^{159}\) Lombardo, *Logic of Desire*, 123.
In doing so, one might turn one’s thoughts to something else in order to drive away the image and distract from the passion; or one might think about the image in a contemplative manner, thereby stirring up contrary passions that remain in the bounds of reason. In the case of an internal demonic attack, this resistance to images and passions remains in the power of reason and will, which can either resist or concede to their movement. Formally speaking for Thomas, then, only a failure at this level would be considered actual sin in internal demonic temptation—a lack of resistance to the passion and its associated image.

III. Demonic Temptation, Virtue, and Providence according to Thomas

In this final section, I wish to consider some of the broader implications of St. Thomas’s theory of interior demonic temptation. First of all (A), the foregoing presentation of interior demonic temptation entails a corollary in Thomistic virtue theory, namely, that fallen human beings—even ones with the infused virtue of temperance—are not always able to maintain their sensitive appetite perfectly under the ordination of reason. I must therefore address the various forms of temperance recognized by St. Thomas and ask whether and how they might be compatible with inner demonic temptation. Secondly (B), I will consider the ways that Thomas views temptation as oriented (or not) toward the final good of humanity from the perspective of divine providence.

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160 If this suggestion is accurate, it opens a significant point of contact to Maximus’s spiritual pedagogy.
A. Internal demonic temptation and virtue, especially temperance

Thomas’s account of the virtue of temperance is multifaceted, allowing for a variety of distinctions and forms. The virtuous pagan has an acquired form of temperance, whereas the baptized Christian in a state of grace has an infused (and perhaps also an acquired) form of it; in the resurrected state, those who come into the beatific vision enjoy such a perfected form of temperance that it is no longer capable of defect. Here, I wish to consider briefly how and to what extent Thomas believes temperance to be possible for graced human beings in this life. For the fallen human being, what kind of compatibility does Thomas envision between inner demonic temptation and virtue? I will first consider the relationship between demonic and human power over a fallen human being’s corporeal organs and then briefly treat the unfallen Adamic form of temperance as present in St. Thomas’s work. This latter, conditionally perfect form of temperance will be most relevant to the discussion of Thomas’s Christological reflections in the next chapter.

In the confrontation of inner demonic temptation with temperance in the fallen condition, there is a tension between the power of two rational agents. On the part of the demonic agent, Thomas argues that demons have a natural power over any and all corporeal objects, including conjoined organs of human faculties—once, of course, the original grace that prevented this movement was removed. In this way, demons have a “natural” power over the movement of bodily organs. On the part of the human agent,

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161 In considering the relationship between inner demonic temptation and virtue, two parallel arguments could be made regarding fortitude and temperance. Since Thomas considers all passions to be reducible to those of the concupiscible appetite (which is governed by temperance), I will only examine temperance here. Temperance concerns the act of the concupiscible appetite as distinct from the irascible appetite, which is governed by fortitude; see Thomas Aquinas, *Disputed Questions on Virtue*, trans. Ralph McInerny (South Bend: St. Augustine’s Press, 1999), 22-9.
Thomas considers temperance to be the rational moderation of the sensitive appetite with regard to natural pleasures such as the desire for food, drink, and sex.\textsuperscript{162} Since the movement of the sensitive appetite is the movement of the bodily organ (as discussed above), temperance consists in the moderation and governance of this corporeal organ. In the Adamic condition, the subordination of sense to reason was the natural ordering of human nature (with the aid of original justice), but human beings after Adam’s sin only imperfectly realize this ordering because of the \textit{fomes peccati}.\textsuperscript{163} Which wins out: the fallen individual in a state of grace who possesses infused (and perhaps also acquired) temperance, and who has a virtuous habitual inclination to govern his or her movements of the sensitive appetite, or the devil who has the power to move any corporeal body and thus the organs of the sense appetite?

Thomas repeatedly indicates that the devil’s power wins in such circumstances; the organ moves whether the human subject likes it or not, since the fallen human’s governance of his or her sense passions—despite the possession of temperance—is not complete. This fact is expressed in a general way in Thomas’s \textit{Commentary on Job}, where he expresses quite clearly the relationship between demonic and human power. Thomas states that

\begin{quote}
no human power is capable of wounding the devil or resisting him, but every human power is reckoned by the devil as naught. … however much the strength and effort of man is extended, it is held in contempt by the devil.\textsuperscript{164}
\end{quote}  

\begin{footnotes}
\item[162] \textit{ST} II-II.141.4, response.
\item[163] I have noted above, of course, that this usage of “natural” is somewhat problematic, since it is a natural good that is only possible of fulfillment with the aid of supernatural grace.
\item[164] \textit{Commentary on Job} 41, in \textit{Exposition on Job}, trans. Damico, 466. Latin: “nulla virtus humana efficax est ad Diabolum laedendum vel ad resistendum ei, sed omnis virtus humana pro nihilo a Diabolo reputatur. … quantumcumque intendatur hominis fortitudo et conatus, a Diabo contemptitur.”
\end{footnotes}
If it is merely a contest of strength between the devil’s power to move and the fallen soul’s power to control the movement of the sense appetite, Thomas indicates that the devil, as a being with greater natural power, wins. Beyond his exegetical work, Thomas’s systematic cosmological reflections in the Summa bear similar fruit. Thomas argues that, considered in themselves, angelic natures are superior and more powerful than fallen human nature. Thomas places some restrictions on this power over fallen humanity, but those restrictions are quite limited and do not pertain to the sensitive appetite or imagination. Thomas assigns angels (and demons) a great deal of authority: angels have an “immediate presidency” over corporeal bodies since “corporeal nature is below the spiritual nature.” In an absolute sense, then, angels have a greater power over matter than do human souls. Thomas argues that to be tried by these internal instigations is “material for the exercise of virtue.” One should note, however, that the basis of this demonic power lies in the fact that fallen human beings cannot perfectly conquer the fomes peccati in this world; the virtue of temperance always remains imperfect on this side of the grave. Nevertheless, whatever temperance is possible in the fallen state is, according to Thomas, compatible with this sort of demonic temptation.

However, these moral circumstances must be carefully distinguished from what attains in an unfallen human nature. As explained above, unfallen human beings—

165 Only those actions that are not conjoined to corporeal organs are outside of the power of demons; hence the will, for instance, is completely beyond their direct grasp. See ST I.111.2 and ST I-II.80.2. There is at least one Thomistic reason to place limits on the demonic power even over fallen human beings; Thomas himself argues that such power remains under God’s providential rule. Thomas consistently qualifies this demonic activity with the phrase “unless he be restrained by God” (ST I-II.80.3, response. See also ST I-II.80.2, response and De Malo III.4, response: “unless they are by divine intervention prevented from doing so [ nisi diuinitus impediantur]”), thus indicating that the strict boundary on demonic action within fallen human beings is God’s permission.

166 ST I.110.1, ad. 2 and ST I.110.3, response, respectively.
167 ST I-II.80.3, ad. 3.
168 That temperance and the fomes are inversely related is seen in ST III.15.2, ad.. There remains some
Adam and Eve—were free from interior demonic temptation due to the grace of original justice. As such, Adam and Eve could not be presented by the devil with false images in their imagination or with irrational passions in their sensitive appetite. For Thomas, furthermore, the unfallen individual’s intellectual faculties thoroughly penetrate into the entirety of the sensitive appetite, resulting (both by sanctifying grace and by nature upheld by original justice) in perfect temperance. In the Adamic state, the soul enjoyed supreme rational governance, so that sensitive movements were completely rationally governed. Thomas thereby shows that the virtue and grace enjoyed in the Adamic state

difficulty on this point; when discussing the effects of baptism, Thomas argues that the baptized receives “the fulness of virtues” (ST III.69.4, response) and that the fomes is not the negation of virtue: “difficulty in doing good and proneness to evil [of which the fomes peccati consists] are in the baptized, not through their lacking the habits of the virtue, but through concupiscence which is not taken away in Baptism.” (ST III.69.4, ad. 3). The habit of temperance is thus present in the baptized in conjunction with concupiscence.

The work of Roger A. Couture, L’Imputabilité Morale des Premiers Mouvements de Sensualité (Rome: Presses de l’Université Grégorienne, 1962) considers a number of cases of “first movements” of the sensitive appetite that he argues should not be considered morally culpable. He ends his text with a list of seven such movements, of which two concern demonic action. The third in his list is precisely what I have outlined above: “les mouvements causés par l’action du démon sur les facultés sensibles” (ibid., 229-30). Of the movements he lists, no other movement has an intentional evil motivating it. This particular movement is thus the most morally problematic because of the insistance with which it work inside the individual’s soul. His arguments may be acceptable insofar as they are a description of the fallen state. Insofar as Thomas considers other sensitive movements that can occur without fault (as, for instance, is certainly the case with nocturnal emission in ST II-II.154.5), there may be need to carve out space in Thomas’s theory of temperance for such constitutionally ungovernable cases. But Couture’s concerns do not immediately describe the unfallen Adamic state in which conditionally perfect virtue casts out the devil.

Thomas, at moments, seems to indicate a certain compatibility between perfect temperance and inner temptation. If taken too seriously such instances would contradict Thomas’s overall theory of virtue and so should likely be understood in light of that theory. There are two passages in particular that should be mentioned in this regard, one from his commentary on Romans and one in his Disputed Questions on Virtue.

First, Thomas’s Commentary on Romans provides an indication that demonically instigated passion should not be considered a case of incontinence or intemperance. Listing the reasons why a sinner might not follow the judgment of reason, Thomas distinguishes demonic suggestion from two other causes: passion and “the inclination of a bad disposition” (Rom. 7.3.563). Now, Robert Pasnau has argued that these latter two reasons correspond to instances of incontinence and intemperance, respectively (Pasnau, Thomas Aquinas on Human Nature, 248-9). Pasnau’s analysis ignores the first case of demonic suggestion. Pasnau suggests that the strongest form of sinning against knowledge is the middle case of incontinence (the weakest being intemperance where there is still a remote knowledge), but it seems that one might be able to say that the demonic example would be an even stronger case, wherein not only knowledge but even a virtuous habitual disposition is overcome in bringing about a sinful act. This criticism is admittedly tangential to his overall goals, but a fully
unfailingly prevents demonically inspired passion and imaginative deception. For this reason, Thomas’s account of unfallen temperance holds demonic temptation through the sensitive appetite to be incompatible with his conditionally perfect virtue.

In light of the foregoing, it is worth noting a corollary with regard to culpable sin. According to St. Thomas’s analysis, temperance and its relatively imperfect potential part, continence (which curbs strong passions), are theoretically compatible with sinlessness. As discussed above, even one with certain unpreventable irrational appetitive account of demonology could affect Thomas’s overall consideration of the virtue of temperance). That is, one who sins out of passion corresponds in Thomas’s moral theology to the incontinent individual. Similarly, one who sins out of a bad disposition does so as an intemperate individual. Since these two categories represent the only two vices that are opposed to the virtue of temperance, the possibility that one might sin out of demonic suggestion appears to allow for a situation where one with an otherwise virtuous disposition might succumb from an ultimately external prodding. If Thomas considers a possibility that one with an otherwise virtuous habit might sin from demonic suggestion, then these two categories—virtue and demonic suggestion—are not mutually opposed. Even though his example considers someone who gives into that suggestion, this passage indicates that an internal demonic suggestion, when resisted, need not constitute an instance of intemperance, incontinence, or moral lapse in any way. But, again, Thomas’s consideration of the perfections proper to the unfallen Adamic state precede this analysis; the Romans commentary is certainly not describing Adam’s prelapsarian conditions.

Thomas’s Disputed Questions on Virtue, when applied to this precise matter, also might be construed as indicating a limitation on the dominion of reason over the sensitive appetite. Thomas admits, for instance, that there are some actions that occur within human beings that are not human acts, saying: “Any act over which a man has dominion is properly called a human act, but not those over which he does not have dominion, even though they occur in him, e.g., digesting and growing and the like. Therefore, there can be virtue in that which is a principle of an act over which man has dominion” (Disputed Questions on Virtue, I.4). The actions that Thomas here places outside the range of human acts pertain to the vegetative soul, but the demonic manipulation of the sensitive soul could appear to be precisely another case of this lack of perfect dominion in the sensitive or animal soul. Further, Thomas specifies that temperance is not only a virtue of the sensitive appetite: “the act of virtue cannot be of the irascible and concupiscible alone, apart from reason. Choice, the chief thing in the act of virtue, comes from reason, and, as in any activity, the action of the agent is prior to the passion of the patient. But reason commands the irascible and concupiscible as if the whole act of virtue or even its chief part were accomplished by them … [Non ergo pro tanto dicitur esse virtus in irascibili vel concupiscibili, quasi per eas totus actus virtutis vel principali or pars expleatur…]” (ibid). These passage could indicate that, much like Bonaventure who locates temperance primarily in the will, Thomas might be willing to place a great deal of the proper act of temperance in the intellectual faculties.

However, Romanus Cessario, The Moral Virtues and Theological Ethics (2nd edition) (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2009), 65-6 explains this highly intellectual approach in relation to a Thomistic approach. He argues against a Thomistic placement of temperance in the will, arguing of the position articulated by Bonaventure that “the exercise of despotic control by the will over unruly passions can only fail to accomplish its purpose. Indeed, such an exercise of the will too closely resembles the process of repression wherein, even though the ideational representation of some object of desire is withheld from consciousness, the object is no less an object of desire for that reason” (ibid.). Such a view is overly Stoic in Cessario’s estimation, requiring too much of sheer will power.
movement from the *fomes* or from the devil does not necessarily sin in such movements, yet since such an individual experiences (potentially strong) appetitive movements against reason, that person is continent and, though possessed of the virtue of temperance, does not possess absolutely perfect temperance.\(^{171}\) If irrational movements of the sensitive appetite are the sign of a virtue that is not absolutely perfect in every way, does that mean that the devil, simply by moving the sensitive appetite, *causes* a weakening of temperance in a fallen temperate person? Thomas must say no; the individual irrational movements caused by the devil are a sign of a virtue that is not absolutely perfect, but such movements do not further corrode the virtue. Fallen human beings find themselves in only imperfect control over their passions; they rule over this appetite with a “political” rule that is not totally due to their fallen state.\(^{172}\) Any demonically caused movement that takes place only points to their lack of absolutely perfect temperance; a demonically caused movement does not of itself undermine temperance further.

**B. Providence and temptation in St. Thomas**

In this section, I wish to address how Thomas views God’s providential action at work in and through fallen temptation, both from the flesh and from the devil. Essentially, I wish to ask: Why, in Thomas’s estimation, does God allow human beings to be tempted? Thomas addresses this question substantively in both the *Sentences* *Commentary* and in the *Summa*. In both works, Thomas acknowledges temptation as enduring throughout this life and in some sense unavoidable; accordingly, Thomas balances an affirmation of the bad qualities of temptation (inclining to sin) against its

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\(^{171}\) *ST* II-II.155.1-3.  
\(^{172}\) See for instance, *ST* I-II.17.7, response.
positive qualities (leading one to salvation). I will consider first Thomas’s portrayal of the
fomes peccati and then turn to demonic temptation.

1. Temptation from the fomes and providence. In his commentary on the
Sentences, Thomas gives evidence that he conceived of temptation in general as at least
partly punitively permitted by God for the punishment of humankind; it is essentially
tangential to the goal of the spiritual and virtuous life. Thomas addresses this question in
the Sentences Commentary by asking whether temptation is something that a human
being should seek. His answer is that

   temptation in itself is ordained to the perdition of the human being \(\text{tentatio per se ordinata est ad hominis perditionem}\); but it is only ordained to salvation
   accidentally, namely from that which is conquered through the help of divine
   grace: and thus simply to be tempted is not to be sought; but to be tempted and to
   conquer when taken together is to be sought. But the victory is exceedingly
doubtful \(\text{nimis dubia}\) because of our fragility, therefore it is safer to flee than to
search out.\(^{173}\)

Thomas’s judgment on the matter is prudential in nature. Given fallen human weakness,
the Christian has no guarantee of victory over temptation—and, in fact, since victory is
“exceedingly doubtful” because of the fomes, Thomas encourages human beings to flee
from temptation.\(^{174}\) This interpretation indicates that the end of temptation in itself is evil
and thus that God’s permission of it is punitive or negative; nevertheless, it can be part of
God’s plan to save humankind, when it is successfully conquered.

A similar balance is found in Thomas’s formal answer in one of the objections to
this same question. There, Thomas’s objector invokes 2 Timothy 2:5 to support a certain

   perditionem; ad salutem vero non ordinatur nisi per accidens, scilicet ex hoc quod vincitur per auxilium
   gratiae divinae: et ideo tentari simpliciter non est appetendum; sed tentari et vincere simul acceptum
   appetendum est. Sed quia propter nostram fragilitatem victoria nimis dubia est, ideo securius fugitur
   quam quaeratur.”

\(^{174}\) Thomas even compares the one who seeks temptation to one who eats poison; seeking temptation for
   itself is basically asking for spiritual death.
view of temptation, wherein temptation is a necessary step toward salvation. The objector notes that

that without which [sine quo non] one cannot enter the kingdom is to be greatly sought. But temptation is of this kind; because one will not be crowned unless they have fought according to the rules (2 Tim 2:5). But there is no spiritual combat without temptation. Therefore temptation is to be sought.\footnote{Ibid., obj. 4. Latin: “Praeterea, illud sine quo non potest perveniri ad regnum, est studio appetendum. Sed tentatio est hujusmodi: quia non coronabitur nisi qui legitime certaverit: 2 Tim., 2. Certamen autem spirituale sine tentatione non est. Ergo tentatio est appetenda.”}

That is, temptation, in the eyes of the objector, is literally a “sine qua non” of salvation.

Thomas’s answer to this objection works toward the same balance as in his response above. He answers on the one hand that temptation is not strictly necessary to enter the kingdom but concedes, on the other, that one cannot get through life without temptation:

temptations are not necessary to enter the kingdom, unless by conditional necessity; thus, namely, so that if temptations come, one does not enter the kingdom unless they are conquered. But for temptations to come is not absolutely necessary, unless according to the corruption of our present state [nisi secundum corruptionem status praesentis], from which follows the battle of flesh against the spirit, which is called temptation.\footnote{Ibid., ad. 4, emphasis added. Latin: “Ad quartum dicendum, quod tentationes non sunt necessariae ut perveniatur ad regnum, nisi necessitate conditionata; sic scilicet ut si tentationes adveniant, non veniatur ad regnum, nisi vincantur. Sed tentationes advenire non est necessarium absolute, nisi secundum corruptionem status praesentis, ex qua sequitur pugna carnis adversus spiritum, quae tentatio dicitur.”}

His formal answer is that there is no absolute necessity for temptation in this life; it is in this way that Thomas maintain that temptation is not a sine qua non of salvation. But Thomas immediately admits with perfect candor that fleshly temptation is unavoidable and thus “absolutely necessary” in our corrupt state.\footnote{The construction of his response avoids explicitly stating that temptation is absolutely necessary, but such a conclusion is the direct implication of the nisi clause; there is an absolute necessity in our current, corrupt state.} This implies, against his formal response to the objection, that temptation (at least from the flesh) is in fact a sine qua non of salvation. Is temptation necessary to enter heaven? No and yes: yes, in insofar as fallen
human existence is characteristically marked by fleshly temptation; no, insofar as it is possible to envision a form of human life (perhaps an Adamic scenario) wherein one would not necessarily encounter temptation. On the one hand, it is permitted by God as punishment; on the other, it is an intrinsic and unavoidable aspect of the spiritual journey and in some sense a more “positive” component within God’s plan of salvation, something that, as the object acknowledges, allows the victor to be crowned (2 Tim 2:5). In the Sentences Commentary, Thomas attempts to acknowledge the truth of both components.

Later, in the Summa, Thomas reflects further on God’s drawing good out of evil (in this case, the evil of disordered concupiscence) through his providence. Thomas asks whether baptism should remove all the consequences of sin, including disordered concupiscence. In his reply, Thomas states that it is fitting that baptism not remove concupiscence because “this is suitable for our spiritual training: namely, in order that, by fighting [pugnans] against concupiscence … man may receive the crown of victory [victoriae coronam].” Thomas’s first reaction in the Summa, then, is to affirm God’s

178 As I will discuss below, Thomas may modify this claim by the time of the Summa; there, he admits that even in the original Adamic state, God arranged for the devil to tempt humanity for non-punitive reasons.

179 ST III.69.3, response. Latin: “Secundo, hoc est conveniens propter spiritualem exercitium, ut videlicet contra concupiscentiam et alias passibilitates pugnans homo victoriae coronam acciperet.” There is some ambiguity in Thomas’s thought about which wins the crown: the struggle or the victory? Both before and after the composition of this passage, Thomas argues that it is the victory that earns the crown: “the crown is due, not to the battle but to the victory gained by the battle [Corona autem non debetur pugnae, sed victoriae de pugna]” (Sent. Comm. IV.49.5.3, quae 1); again, “if someone conquers temptation, he will merit the crown [si homo vincit tentationem, meretur coronam]” (Commentary on the Our Father, pet. 6). Indeed, the authority that Thomas cites in corroboration of his opinion in this question states the prospects of human victory more strongly than Thomas allows in his own comments. For that authority, the baptized “has concupiscence to fight against, and to conquer by God’s help [habet concupiscientiam cum qua pugnet, eamque, adiuvante Deo, superet]” (ST III.69.3, response) but Thomas does not explicitly endorse this option in his own text. While Thomas’s word choice here indicates that one wins the crown of victory merely by struggling against disordered concupiscence, Thomas concedes this point here in light of the enduring and originally punitive place.
way of working through our disordered concupiscence to enable us to achieve good: the one who fights against concupiscence will be rewarded for doing so. Yet the negative aspect does not disappear here; throughout the article, this concupiscence (along with the other defects from Adam’s sin) is described as the “debt of punishment” for Adam’s sin. And while the fomes remains before the final resurrection, Christ’s victory over them is none the less real; Thomas argues that even now, this victory is seen in that Christians “should no longer be in fear” of such consequences.180

Thomas’s view of the temptation from the fomes thus holds at once to the punitive and pedagogical role it plays in the spiritual life. Thomas believes that a complete and perfect victory will be possible in the end, but he defers the complete destruction of the fomes until the final resurrection.181 While Thomas affirms that God brings about positive consequences from the struggle with the flesh—to the extent that he can say that the Christian should no longer fear the struggle—this affirmation should, in the end, be understood in terms of God’s ability to extract a good from a humanly-caused evil. Fleshly temptation is not part of God’s original plan for Adam and Eve in the garden, and the fact that it became a part of their moral life must be seen as a departure from that original plan.

2. Moral demonic temptation and providence. If fleshly temptation rests in a balance between punishment and the procurement of salvation, how does Thomas treat of the fomes peccati in this world. Since this disorder will not and cannot be perfectly subdued in this life, Thomas acknowledges that the one who struggles against earns a reward that Thomas usually withholds for the one he describes as a victor. In order to maintain God’s justice in allowing the fomes to endure after baptism, Thomas argues that, although it still constitutes an obstacle that cannot be perfectly overcome, one is rewarded by God for fighting against it.

180 ST III.69.3, ad. 3.
181 ST III.69.3, response. See also, for instance, Thomas’s Commentary on Romans 7.4 (§593): “Sed ad hoc iam iustus liberatus est, unde ei competit dicere, quantum ad secundum, gratia Dei liberavit me de corpore mortis huius, ut scilicet in corpore meo non sit corruptio peccati, aut mortis; quod erit in resurrectione.” This “corruptio peccati” refers, in context, to the defect of the fomes.
demonic temptation? What counts as struggling against demonic temptation in the first place? In Thomas’s early treatment of the defeat of the devil through Christian practice, the emphasis falls heavily on the role of the teacher as the devil’s adversary in the same way that one who spreads the truth is opposed to a sower of lies.\textsuperscript{182} While this opposition between the teacher and the devil may have significant consequences for the way Thomas

\textsuperscript{182} In the Sentences Commentary, Thomas considers 2 Timothy 2:5 at considerable length the way in which some are said to gain a perfect victory over the devil in this world, thereby earning the crown mentioned in 2 Timothy. Although the interpretation of this verse features significantly in Thomas’s account of the end of the world, the ascetic monk or spiritual combatant finds no explicit place in Thomas’s early analysis. Instead, Thomas considers teachers to deserve the crown of victory referred to in 2 Timothy. Thomas thereby indicates that the most powerful temptation that the devil levels against humankind is heresy (Sent. Comm. IV.49.5 (English quotations, and the accompanying citations hereafter, are taken from the Summa Supplement 96.5). Thomas explains: “Just as by virginity and martyrdom a person wins a most perfect victory over the flesh and the world, so is a most perfect victory gained over the devil, when a person not only refuses to yield to the devil’s assaults, but also drives him out, not from himself alone, but from others also. Now this is done by preaching and teaching. … when it is stated that an aureole [a small crown] is due to teaching, this is to be understood of the teaching of things pertaining to salvation, by which teaching the devil is expelled from men’s hearts, as by a kind of spiritual weapon [\textit{sicut per martyrium et virginitatem aliquis perfectissimam victoriam obtinet de carne et mundo; ita et perfectissima victoria contra Diabolum obtinetur, quando aliquis non solum Diabolo impugnanti non cedit, sed etiam eum expellit, et non solum a se, sed etiam ab aliis. Hoc autem fit per praedicationem et doctrinan.]” (ibid., ad. 3: “Cum enim dicitur quod doctrinae debetur aureola, intelligendum est doctrinae quae est de pertinentibus ad salutem, per quam Diabolus a cordibus hominum expugnatur, sicut quibusdam spiritualibus armis” (ibid., 5.7, response)).”

For Maximus, as discussed in Chapter 2, the defeat of the devil in one’s own life comes about by attaching one’s life to Christ’s through various forms of askesis and liturgical participation. For Thomas, the defeat of the devil is accomplished by the proclamation of the truth. Demonic temptation is thereby associated primarily with doctrinal errors and the social phenomena that spread them. To fight the devil is to proclaim the truth of the faith. It is possible that Thomas’s interpretation of this crown signals a broad contemporary shift in medieval Christianity: the devil was by then combated less in the desert and more in and among heretics. As argued by Jeffrey Burton Russell, for instance, there is a fairly constant tradition in Christianity that equates a lack of orthodoxy with demonic influence or even with intentional service to the devil. See Russell, 100, 103, 190: “The ancient tradition that heretics were at least unwitting servants of the Devil and part of his mystical body encouraged such illusions [of widespread Satanism]. The elements of demonization of heretics had long existed in the theory that those opposed to the church were followers of Satan…” Also, ibid., 299: “Heretics … were deemed to be in Satan’s service.” Russell provides examples from the 11th and 12th centuries. To be sure, the demonic interpretation of heresy was certainly prevalent in early Christianity as well, but there is a shift in St. Thomas’s early thought at least away from the value of monastic spiritual combat as the means \textit{par excellence} for fighting and overcoming the devil. In some respects, this aspect of demonology came to overshadow that of spiritual combat, with the result that those who corrected error and taught the truth came to be the preeminent demon-fighters.
conceives of the spiritual journey, the communal role of the teacher in the defeat of the
devil should not be understood as opposed to the personal role of the spiritual
combatant. While Thomas may not initially consider the place of spiritual combat in
the defeat of the devil, Thomas’s reflections in the Summa explicitly address the moral
(as opposed to doctrinal) struggle against personified evil.

When Thomas focuses on the moral struggle of demonic temptation, one
important difference from the treatment of fleshly temptation should be noted from the
outset. Since some form of demonic temptation existed even before Adam’s sin, the
phenomenon is not generally conceived by Thomas as punitive. Thomas must therefore
address why the devil—a fallen angel who deserved eternal punishment—was in the
garden with Adam and Eve in the first place. Thomas’s thought in the Summa addresses
this question carefully so as to avoid any sort of cosmological dualism wherein the
devil’s temptations would not be directed by God’s plan for human salvation. In this
way, Thomas indicates that demonic temptation in general is not fundamentally punitive
in the way that fleshly temptation is. However, in notable contrast, the specific

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183 As discussed in Chapter 1 and 2, for the Origenistic tradition of spiritual combat, 2 Timothy 2:5 was one
of the most important verses used to justify the monastic lifestyle. For Origen and in turn Maximus,
this verse meant that near-constant temptation was an essential component of spiritual progress, and the
monk, more than any other sort of person, was the one who underwent such temptation in order to
defeat the devil in his own life. The monk, then, was in a privileged place to earn the crown promised
in 2 Timothy.

184 In fact, Thomas explicitly denies that the devil’s presence on earth to tempt Adam was punitive. See ST
II-II.165.2, obj. 3 and ad. 3.

185 As early as his Commentary on Job, Thomas emphasizes that all demonic action against human beings
can take place only under God’s authority. Commentary on Job 41, in Exposition on Job, trans.
Damico, 464: “cum Deus fulgura contra Leviathan sive quamcumque aliam creaturam quasi sagittas
quasdam emittere vult, non ad alium locum pergunt nisi quo ipse emittit, [omitted above:] secundum
illud Sap. V 22 ibunt directe emissiones fulgurum. Per quod designantur divina flagella, quae Deus
immittit contra Diabolum et membra eius ita quod contra alios non feruntur: nam] si quandoque boni
per temporales adversitates flagellantur a Deo, hoc tamen cedit in glorificationem sanctorum et in
maiorum damnationem Diaboli et impiorum.” The main context here is not the idea that something is
actively inflicted by God on the just, but rather that this infliction further condemns the wicked.
Nevertheless, there is a purposefulness of the trial of the just: “for the glory of the saints [in
glorificationem sanctorum].”
phenomenon of internal demonic temptation is punitive in much the same way as fleshly temptation.

In a *Summa* question on the devil’s temptation of human beings, Thomas explores God’s providential permission of demonic temptation as a whole—both before and after Adam’s sin.¹⁸⁶ The question is generated by the fact that not all demons are in hell, but some are instead permitted to remain ‘in the air,’ tempting human beings to sin. The broad cosmological nature of this question makes it understandable why Thomas moves so easily into a consideration of providence and justice. If demons are supposed to be *punished* for their sin, why are they allowed to do what apparently would *please* them? Thomas answers with his deepest and most profound consideration of the purposes of demonic temptation in his later corpus. Thomas first reflects that God providentially arranges that superior creatures are used by God to procure the welfare of inferior creatures directly and indirectly. The direct procurement is that by which good angels are sent to protect humanity from evil and bring them to good. Indirectly, however, God providentially procures human welfare as when anyone assailed is exercised by fighting against opposition. It was fitting for this procuring of man’s welfare [*boni humani*] to be brought about through the wicked spirits, lest they should cease to be of service in the natural order [*ab utilitate naturalis ordinis*]. Consequently a twofold place of punishment is due to the demons: one, by reason of their sin, and this is hell; and another, in order that they may tempt men, and thus the darksome atmosphere is their due place of punishment. Now the procuring of men’s salvation is prolonged even to the judgment day: consequently, the ministry of the angels and wrestling with demons endure until then. Hence until then the good angels are sent to us here; and the demons are in this dark atmosphere for our trial.¹⁸⁷

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¹⁸⁶ *ST* I.64.4.
¹⁸⁷ *ST* I.64.4. Latin: “Alio modo indirecte, dum scilicet aliquis exercetur, impugnatus, per impugnationem contrarii. Et hanc procurationem boni humani conveniens fuit per malos Angelos fieri, ne totaliter post peccatum ab utilitate naturalis ordinis exicerent. Sic ergo Daemonibus duplex locus poenalis debetur. Unus quidem ratione saue culpae, et hic est Infernus. Alius autem ratione exerctionis humanae, et sic debetur eis caliginosus aer. Procuratio autem salutis humanae protenditur usque ad diem iudicii, unde
As in Thomas’s reflections on fleshly temptation in the *Sentences Commentary*, Thomas argues that it is good and fitting for the human subject to struggle against temptation, as the indirect means for God’s procurement of human welfare. Human beings will continue to be saved until the end of time and precisely in view of that goal of salvation, demons are used by God to bring about that end in a fitting way. Thomas thus gives a providential fittingness to temptation—even from sources other than the flesh—in a way that perhaps even surpasses the *Sentences Commentary*.188

Notably, however, there is also a point of contrast with regard to the *Sentences Commentary*. In temptation from the *fomes peccati*, God extracts salvation from temptation precisely as God brings a human good from a humanly-originated evil. But in demonic temptation, God brings human salvation about from a broader cosmological situation for which human beings are not responsible—a world in which there are angels who have rebelled against their creator. Originally, God permitted humans to be tempted by the devil when they were innocent; they had the ability to resist this temptation, and through this resistance they would have merited. After the Fall, humans suffer from the *fomes peccati* and God also permits them to be tempted by demons, in this case as part of the human beings’ punishment—and also as a path of merit.
For this reason, Thomas’s primary distinction in this question concerns two ways in which God seeks human welfare: on the one hand, directly by bringing humans good things and withholding them from evil; on the other hand, indirectly by the strengthening that occurs through a permitted attack. The second of these involves a real evil, for opposition and attack only occur where beings are not united in love and worship. The proportionality of this punishment rests for Thomas in the fact that demons have nothing else to do, and so God puts them to the best use possible. Thus, by the writing of the first part of the Summa, demonic temptation in general is understood primarily as a means of human welfare and salvation that is subservient to God’s will to save humankind in whatever way God deems to be most fitting.

A related point about this Summa text is in order. How does Thomas maintain that demons are punished by doing something they are pleased to do? On the one hand, Thomas explicitly argues that the air is a place of punishment for demons because even in the air, demons know that they will end up in hell. There is thus an anticipatory punishment for the devil in the air. On the other hand, Thomas’s answer in the response gives another potential reason. This answer appears in the ironic way that God uses demons to procure God’s own ends so that they would remain useful to God and humanity in the natural order. Demons are perhaps most acutely punished in this air because the very thing they hope to accomplish by tempting humanity (human damnation) becomes the means of its opposite (human salvation). There is an ultimate frustration of the demons’ ends; even when they think they are getting what they want, God is in fact doing something more sublime that undermines their evil desires.\(^\text{189}\)

\(^{189}\) Thomas accepts that a large number of human beings will ultimately be damned, but the justice of this judgment would likely be contingent on the human’s full and personal rejection of God. As such, the
One can note, finally, that there is still a negative component in the specific phenomenon of internal demonic temptation. Thomas elsewhere carefully defines what makes a temptation punitive: “an assault is penal if it be difficult to resist it: but, in the state of innocence, man was able, without any difficulty, to resist temptation.”\textsuperscript{190} In this sense, the internal demonic temptation that follows from Adam’s sin is most certainly punitive, since it is altogether more difficult to resist than was the first temptation in the garden.

While both the pedagogical and punitive roles are present in the fallen human’s experience of demonic temptation, its first and original \textit{sine qua non} is God’s desire to save humankind and not to punish. Indeed, that original desire penetrates through even the post-lapsarian forms of temptation since “the procuring of men’s salvation is prolonged even to the judgment day.”\textsuperscript{191} In light of these considerations, Thomas’s mature thought finds a place for the monk’s personal spiritual warfare against the devil alongside the teacher’s duty to proclaim the truths of the faith.\textsuperscript{192} It is a place marked by a confidence in God’s providential arrangement of the cosmos both before and after sin, but tempered with an acknowledgement that human sin has made even that struggle more difficult that God originally intended. Thus, though one should not be over-confident of one’s defeat of the devil, since God permits some humans to fail by their own volition, Thomas would recognize that the defeat and frustration of the demons, along with the

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\textsuperscript{190} ST II-II.165.1, ad. 3.
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\textsuperscript{191} ST I.64.4, response.
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\textsuperscript{192} It must be admitted that temptation in general remains somewhat ambivalent in the \textit{Commentary on the Our Father}. Thomas leaves room there for a temptation that is punitive and not pedagogical: God sometimes withdraws grace, resulting indirectly in human sin.
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graced triumph of humans, is God’s fundamental and original intent for the struggle of human beings with angelic powers.

As a related closing remark, I would like to recognize the different ways in which fleshly and demonic temptation relate to God’s providential ordering of the universe in St. Thomas’s thought. Fleshly temptation exists only after Adam’s sin and is primarily brought about through Adam’s own agency. God permits it to arise as a humanly-caused evil that can be used accidentally by God for human salvation. As such, fleshly temptation both punishes and provides an opportunity for strengthening—in that order. Demonic temptation inverts this order, at least with respect to God’s providential arrangement. Since this temptation exists (albeit in different forms) both before and after sin, God’s permission is different and, at the beginning, non-punitive. It originally existed as a means of procuring human salvation—that is the first and foremost justification of its existence in Thomas’s thought. When Adam sinned, the temptation became more internal, more difficult to resist, and consequently punitive—but still belonging within the overarching framework of God’s salvific plan. Consequently, demonic temptation both provides an opportunity for strengthening, and punishes—in that order.

In the end, Thomas has a mixed view of both fallen forms of temptation. Both forms are a sign of one’s wayfarer state, in which one’s virtue remains at least somewhat imperfect. Even so, the fact that one experiences these temptations is not for Thomas a strict moral fatalism; through a combination of prevention and resistance to individual irrational movements of the sensitive appetite, one can constantly strive toward moral perfection. Both internal demonic temptation and the fomes peccati are permitted by God for human punishment. However, God uses both forms of temptation to strengthen the
individual’s virtue and lead one to salvation. In this respect, temptation can have a positive role in God’s salvific plan, though always an indirectly positive role. In the final resurrection state, grace will be perfected and all temptation—from the flesh and from the devil—will cease.

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Thomas understands fallen human beings to be uniquely susceptible to two forms of temptation: that from the flesh and interior demonic temptation. In the next chapter, I will address how Thomas treats these two forms of temptation in relation to Christ. In this respect, nothing in the preceding is more important than the fact that both fleshly temptation and inner demonic temptation are each treated by Thomas in their own way as symptomatic of a woundedness that consists in a defect of grace and virtue. Thomas’s ultimate rejection of these forms of temptation in Christ must be founded on a clear articulation of these defects and what they mean for the moral life of the one who experiences them; such has been my goal in the preceding chapter. Upon this foundation, I will next consider how Thomas treats Christ’s temptation by the devil.
In this final chapter, I turn to Thomas Aquinas’s treatment of Christ’s temptation by the devil. I have outlined in Chapter 4 some of the anthropological and Christological problems that had become associated with that matter in the Latin Patristic and medieval period, as well as in John of Damascus, the figure that acts as a historical and theological connection between Maximus and Thomas. In Chapter 5, Thomas’s own general anthropological treatment of temptation was considered as a prelude to understanding the claim that Christ was tempted like other human beings, yet without sin (Hebrews 4:15). Through this material, the scene is now set for a close consideration of how Thomas treats Christ’s temptation in relation to that of other human beings. As was found in my treatment of John of Damascus, it will be clear that Thomas also attempts in various places to affirm a close relationship between Christ’s temptation and Adam’s prelapsarian temptation (on the one hand) and between Christ’s temptation and that of Adam’s postlapsarian condition (on the other). When considered from the perspective of Christ’s constitution as a human being, these claims, respectively, are grounded in Thomas’s consideration of Christ as both a comprehensor (sharing in redeemed and glorified human nature) and a wayfarer (sharing in some of the weakened conditions of
humanity after sin). I will show, however, that for soteriological reasons Thomas’s closest treatments of Christ’s temptation prioritize Christ’s perfections as a comprehensor over his status as a wayfarer. Thomas’s analysis of the three general forms of temptation (temptation from the flesh, external demonic temptation, and internal demonic temptation) in relation to Christ affirms that Christ’s temptation closely resembles Adam’s prelapsarian condition, but shares in certain key postlapsarian conditions that safeguard its soteriological role in Thomas’s thought.

I will proceed in three sections. First, I will consider passages that treat the purpose and means of Christ’s temptation without close consideration of the three temptations in the desert (I). In this material, Thomas variously affirms that Christ’s temptation stands in a typological relationship with Adam’s (A) and in an intimate and sympathetic relationship with fallen forms of temptation (B). Second, I will consider the Christological foundations of these claims by summarizing Thomas’s claims about the person and natures of Christ (I), with especial concern for the perfections (A) and voluntary defects of Christ’s humanity (B and C). Third, on the basis of this analysis of Christ’s being, I will turn to Thomas’s treatment of Christ’s salvific act—meaning specifically his temptation (III). Here, I will treat each of the three medieval forms of temptation (the fomes (A), external demonic temptation (B), and internal demonic temptation (C)) and Thomas’s reasons for affirming or denying them of Christ.

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1 That Christ’s status as a comprehensor grounds the way in which Christ’s temptation is parallel to Adam’s should not be understood to mean that Adam himself was a comprehensor. Adam in the garden did not rest in a state of beatitude that is necessary for one’s status as a comprehensor. Nevertheless, Christ’s benefits as a comprehensor during his earthly life result in conditions that render his temptation more easily related to and placed in typological relationship with Adam’s.
I. The General Role of Temptation in Thomas’s Soteriology

My purpose in this first section is to address the precise soteriological value that St. Thomas assigns, in principle, to Christ’s temptation by the devil. Thomas conceives of Christ’s saving work, at least in part, as a liberating action from those powers that held humankind in bondage following Adam’s sin; in that liberating act, Thomas distinguishes two distinct moments: temptation and death. That is, Thomas argues that Christ’s defeat of the devil is accomplished in these twin acts whereby Christ appears to (and in a sense does) submit himself to the devil’s power. Now, a superficial reading of St. Thomas’s soteriology appears to focus the actual accomplishment of human salvation from the devil solely in the event of the crucifixion and death of Christ. Such a misreading is certainly understandable; when considered in terms of sheer space and number of questions, Christ’s death is certainly the locus of Thomas’s liberation soteriology. But that emphasis is not exclusive, and in the two following subsections, I will show that Thomas indeed conceives of Christ’s temptation as salvific, a means by which Christ satisfies for human sin and redeems humankind from the devil. Following the structure of John of

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2 For Thomas’s reflection on how Christ’s death defeats the devil, see, for instance, Thomas’s Commentary on Hebrews. In this commentary, Thomas focuses nearly exclusively on Christ’s death as the locus of Christ’s redeeming work from the devil. Commenting on 2:17-18, Thomas states that Christ took a mortal and passible nature “so that through death he might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil [ut per mortem destrueret eum qui habebat mortis imperium, id est Diabolum]” (in Thomas Aquinas, Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews, trans. Chrysostom Baer (South Bend, IN: St. Augustine’s Press, 2006)). And later, Thomas states that “through the death of [him who was] God and human, he destroyed him who had the power of death [Per mortem ergo Dei et hominis destructit eum qui habet mortis imperium].” As I will discuss below, though, one passage from this commentary also includes Christ’s temptation among the properly liberating events of Christ’s life. See also Matthew Levering, Christ’s Fulfillment of Torah and Temple; Levering’s work has focused on the liberating nature of Christ’s death in Thomas’s thought.
Damascus seen in Chapter 4, Thomas treats the salvific quality Christ’s temptation variously in terms of its *unfallen* and *fallen* characteristics.

First, I will consider the framework for Thomas’s exposition of Christ’s temptation as *unfallen*: the parallel between Adam and Christ’s temptation. Here, Thomas views Christ’s temptation in a typological relationship with the temptation of Adam.  
This typology implies for reasons I will explain that Christ’s temptation is distinctly *unfallen*, sharing the characteristics of Adam’s temptation in Eden. In the second subsection, I will show that Thomas, by calling Christ’s temptation “satisfactory” for human sin, assigns a purpose to Christ’s temptation that implies an additional, *fallen* form of temptation consisting in Christ’s susceptibility to bodily violence from the devil. The passages where Thomas treats this question are admittedly few in number, but in addition to affirming a certain postlapsarian quality to Christ’s temptation, these passages allow one to see that Thomas’s soteriological emphasis on the cross should not be conceived so as to exclude other events in Christ’s life, especially his temptation. Christ defeats the devil in and through his *temptation* as well as through his *death*.  

**A. The Adam-Christ typology and Christ’s unfallen temptation**

Concerning the particular locus of Christ’s temptation by the devil, Thomas does not make use of the Israel-Christ typology present in the Gospel of Matthew and

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3 As mentioned in Chapter 1, there are scriptural reasons for expositing Christ’s temptation in a chiastic relationship with the various tests that Israel underwent, but to my knowledge Thomas does not invoke this typological relationship—his focus in his treatment of temptation is strictly on the Adam-Christ pair. At the same time, Thomas usually collapses the details of the temptation narrative so that what was simultaneously the temptation of Adam and Eve is treated as if it were only Adam’s temptation. There is one notable exception from the *Commentary on Matthew* that I will note at the beginning of Chapter 6.  

4 In fact, in one passage from his *Commentary on Hebrews*, Thomas gives reason to conceive of Christ’s experience of death as a whole as a form of his temptation. If that is the case, temptation becomes the *primary* category for Christ’s salvific work from the devil, and the cross and death thereby are secondary examples of that temptation. I will discuss this possibility in the final subsection below.
discussed in Chapter 1 above. Instead, Thomas’s recurring framework is to relate Christ’s temptation to that of Adam, as an undoing or reversing of Adam’s failure.

Thomas notes that the order of Christ’s temptations in Matthew’s account parallel the temptations of Adam, moving successively from a temptation to gluttony, to vainglory, and finally to ambition. In the *Summa*, Thomas explains the devil’s reasoning in pursuing this progression of temptations:

> The devil does not straight away tempt the spiritual man to grave sins, but he begins with lighter sins, so as gradually lead him to those of greater magnitude. … Thus, too, did the devil set about the temptation of the first man. … This same order did he observe in tempting Christ.

Thomas thereby demonstrates that his main concern in affirming Christ’s temptation is its relationship to the temptation that Adam failed at the very beginning. In order to undo this temptation, Christ need undergo only the same sort of experiment that Adam endured at the beginning, not the sort of trial experienced after the Fall. Thomas’s reasoning implies that the moral circumstances of Christ’s temptation were identical to those of Adam’s temptation.

To emphasize how important this typology is for St. Thomas, it is worth noting what Thomas is willing to do in order to preserve it. The Adamic order of the temptation

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5 In the *Commentary on Matthew*, Thomas notes that Christ “frequently cites … passages from Deuteronomy” in his temptation, but he does not attribute this frequency to the Israel/Christ typology noted by many modern biblical scholars (Thomas Aquinas, *Commentary on the Gospel of St. Matthew*, trans. Paul M. Kimball (Camillus, NY: Dolorosa Press, 2011), 122; see also Chapter 1). Instead, he states that these citations are “to indicate that the New Testament’s doctrine is signified throughout Deuteronomy” (Aquinas, *Commentary on Matthew 4*, in Aquinas, *Commentary on Matthew*, trans. Kimball, 122), thereby invoking a narrative of the fulfillment of the Law instead of Christ’s personification of Israel’s history and trial.

6 It is also of interest to note that Thomas can also speak (albeit rather briefly) of an “Eve/Christ” typology; see the *Commentary on Matthew* 4: “Just as the devil willed to tempt the woman, he also did to Christ, promising spiritual things” (in Aquinas, *Commentary on Matthew*, trans. Kimball, 114). This example of an Eve/Christ typology is to my knowledge unique in Thomas’s corpus.

7 *ST* III.41.4, response. See also *ST* III.41.2, response and the *Commentary on Matthew* 4, in Aquinas, *Commentary on Matthew*, trans. Kimball, 114 and 116.
(gluttony, vainglory, and ambition) is key to Thomas’s presentation of Christ’s temptation. As he explains in the same article, though, “temptation which comes from the enemy takes the form of a suggestion,” and this suggestion “must arise from those things towards which each one has an inclination.”

In Adam’s case, the devil was able to proceed through three suggestions to sins of increasing severity: gluttony, vainglory, and pride or ambition. The order of Adam’s temptation is tuned to his original integrity; only “lighter sins” were suggested at the outset and, in his original state, only thereby could the idea of the great sin of pride—that “in which … only carnal men have a part”—be suggested. Now, Thomas holds that Adam’s first sin is still pride since gluttony and vainglory—inordinate movements of the sensitive appetite—properly only follow after that first capital sin, but Thomas also argues that the order of the devil’s suggestions was what made the sin of pride especially tempting to Adam and Eve. Even if not sin before Adam succumbed to pride, the first two suggestions paved the way in Adam and Eve’s mind for the Fall into pride: the devil “begins with [temptations toward] lighter sins, so as gradually to lead him to those of greater magnitude.”

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8 ST III.41.4, response. Thomas also addresses this order in ST II-II.163.1, obj. 2 and ad. 2, where he qualifies the first temptation to gluttony as not coming from within, but only from without.

9 See ST II-II.163.1, response and ad. 2 for Thomas’s statement of Adam’s first proper sin. The order matters for Thomas in ST III.41.4, response. There is some difficulty here; in order for Adam to be tempted to pride by the devil in his original, spiritual state, Thomas implies that he must be described already as somehow “carnal” before that pride (ST III.41.4, response). However, Adam was “spiritual” and not “carnal” before he sinned. It may be best, then, to argue that Adam’s “carnal” state before the sin of pride is precisely the fact that the devil had drawn his attention to “carnal” things in the first two temptations.

10 ST III.41.4, response. Thomas goes on to cite Gregory’s *Moralia*, where the only interpretation that coheres with an application to the prelapsarian Adam is an identification of the devil with “vice”: “vices begin by insinuating themselves into the mind under some specious pretext: then they come on the mind in such numbers as to drag it into all sorts of folly …” (ibid.). Since Adam, prior to his pride, properly speaking had no vices, the only thing that can “insinuate” into Adam’s mind is the devil’s suggestion. There remains tension here, however, insofar as Thomas also denies that the devil was able to deceive Adam before his sin of pride; see ST I.94.4. I discuss this passage at greater length in my general conclusion.
In Christ’s case, the devil proceeds through the same order, but since Christ remains perfectly “spiritual” during the first two temptations, the third is no real temptation at all:

Thirdly, he [the devil] led the temptation on to that in which no spiritual men, but only carnal men, have a part—namely, to desire worldly riches and fame … [the third] is inapplicable to spiritual men.\(^{11}\)

There is a divergence between the experiences of Adam and Christ as the temptations proceed; whereas in Adam the first two temptations toward light sins prepared Adam’s mind for his concession to a great sin (which is properly the first sin), Christ holds his mind from such preparation, so that he remains a “spiritual man” going into the third temptation. The devil, who is merely repeating the trick he used on Adam, expects to be able to run through the same list of temptations and end with the same result. But since this concession does not happen, the devil appears foolish by the end, trying to tempt a holy person to something they do not and cannot desire. Indeed, the third temptation is by Thomas’s definition—including that the suggestion “must arise from those things towards which each one has an inclination”—no temptation at all. Thus, it is precisely the reproduction of the Adamic temptation that Thomas regards as salvific and not the “intensity” of the temptation Christ endured. While other temptations might have been more existentially attractive to Christ, such temptations would not apply directly to Christ’s salvific role as the New Adam and thus find no place in his demonic temptation.

Thomas repeats the claim that Christ’s temptation was unfallen in the *De Malo*, where he considers the mode of the devil’s suggestion to be the same for Christ as it was for Adam. The devil

\(^{11}\) Ibid.
persuades human beings to things in two ways: visibly and invisibly. He persuades visibly as when he sensibly appears to human beings in some form and sensibly speaks with them and persuades them to sin. For example, he tempted the first human being in the garden of paradise in the form of a serpent, and he tempted Christ in the desert in some visible form.12

One should note the way that Thomas’s presentation here both parallels and diverges from that of John of Damascus. As seen in Chapter 4, John also argued that something of Christ’s temptation resembles the unique conditions of Adam’s temptation.13 John, however, vacillated on this point; he also wanted to affirm something in Christ’s temptation that resembles our fallen experience of it. John had distinguished between two different forms of post-lapsarian temptation: thoughts and passions. To affirm the likeness to Adam, John said that Christ was not tempted through demonic thoughts, which are a postlapsarian means of temptation by the devil in much of the Greek monastic tradition. To affirm the likeness with fallen temptation, John indicates that Christ was tempted through passion by the devil.

**B. The soteriological importance of Christ’s postlapsarian temptation**

In other passages, Thomas indicates that Christ’s temptation should not be identical to that of Adam. One sees for instance in the *Commentary on Matthew* that Christ’s temptation is not only about undoing Adam’s sin, but also about reversing by experience the fallen aspects of the temptation of Adam’s progeny:

For He willed to be tempted so that, just as by His death He conquered ours, so by His temptation He might overcome all our temptations [*tentatione sua superet omnes tentationes nostras*].14

12 *De Malo* III.4.


Christ undergoes this temptation in order to undo not just those temptations that pertained to Adam’s integral state, but also “all our temptations.”\(^{15}\) Just as death did not pertain to the Adamic state (but yet is taken on by Christ in order to conquer ours), so too the temptation that Christ undergoes pertains to the particular postlapsarian state. This statement—repeated as a quotation of Gregory in the *Summa*—may be Thomas’s clearest and most direct affirmation of the soteriological function of Christ’s temptation, but other passages allow further precision about the nature of this “overcoming” of our temptation. I will consider here two more precise purposes for Christ’s temptation that Thomas delineates and that point to a “fallen” experience of temptation for Christ: the satisfaction of human sin (1) and compassion with fallen humanity (2).

1. *Christ’s satisfaction for sin by temptation.* In the *Tertia Pars* of the *Summa*, Christ’s passion and death play the central role in Thomas’s understanding of Christ’s “satisfaction” for humanity’s sins. While widespread, this emphasis does not exclude a satisfying role for Christ’s temptation. Most significantly, in an explanation of Hebrews 2:17-18 in the *Tertia Pars*, Thomas comments that “By his temptation [*sua tentatione*] and passion Christ has succored us by satisfying for us.”\(^{16}\) In the immediate context of this quote, it is equally evident that Thomas has in mind a defect of Christ’s human nature when considering this satisfactory role for Christ’s temptation. Most obviously, he

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\(^{15}\) *Commentary on Matthew 4*, in Aquinas, *Commentary on Matthew*, trans. Kimball, 112. As I will explain below, Thomas does not think that Christ had to experience *every* fallen kind of temptation in order to overcome all our temptations (most notably, Thomas excludes the fallen experience of the *fomes* from Christ). The question I will ultimately seek to address is whether he experienced *any* fallen kind of temptation.

\(^{16}\) *ST* III.15.1, ad. 3: “Christus sua tentatione et passione nobis auxilio tuit pro nobis satisfaciendo.”
makes this statement in a question on Christ’s assumption of human defects of soul that come from Adam’s sin. More concretely, he also states in that question that Christ “assumed our defects that He might satisfy for us,” so that it is clear that Thomas ranks a component of Christ’s temptation among those defects.

I will explain Thomas’s treatment of this defect in detail in the final section of this chapter but to anticipate that discussion, Thomas’s explanation in the *Summa* and *Commentary on Matthew* make it clear that the relevant defect in his humanity is hunger (in the case of the first temptation) and Christ’s exterior susceptibility to bodily movement by the devil (in the latter two temptations). The second defect should be explained in more detail. Thomas is best understood as arguing that Christ can be said to “suffer” the devil’s transportation to the top of the Temple in Jerusalem and to the mountain and that precisely through this suffering of the devil’s violence, he satisfies for human sin. The devil had no such power over Adam in the garden; it is a distinctly postlapsarian aspect of Christ’s temptation. By reasoning in the way, Thomas indicates that Christ’s temptation is not a mere re-enactment of Adam’s prelapsarian experience in the Garden, but an entering into some of the conditions that Adam’s temptation and subsequent failure entailed for his progeny.

In at least two places in the *Summa*, Thomas offers mutually reinforcing explanations of what it means to satisfy for another person. In *ST* III.14.1, Thomas offers this definition of satisfaction: “one satisfies for another’s sin by taking on himself the

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17 Ibid., response: “Christus suscepit defectus nostros ut pro nobis satisfaceret.”
18 See *ST* III.41.1, ad. 2. There is some difficulty here in light of *ST* II-II.165.1, ad. 3, which states that “an assault is penal if it be difficult to resist it.” Thomas is clear that Christ experiences no “difficulty in doing good” (*ST* III.14.4, response), which might lead one to think that Christ’s “assaults” from the devil were not punitive. But this difficulty is not claimed by Thomas to be the only way in which an assault might be penal. That is, if it is difficult, it is penal, but not necessarily if it is penal, it is difficult. Thus, it is possible for a non-difficult assault to be in a sense penal.
punishment due to the sin of the other.”¹⁹ In *ST* III.48.2, Thomas offers this alternative explanation:

He properly atones [*satisfacit*] for an offense who offers something which the offended one loves equally, or even more than he detested the offense. But by suffering out of love and obedience, Christ gave more to God than was required to compensate for the offense of the whole human race.²⁰

These two definitions address, respectively, the prospective and retrospective nature of satisfaction—a view Thomas first articulated in the *Sentences Commentary*.²¹ According to the first, Christ’s satisfaction acts as a safeguard against future sin by addressing its causes. According to the second, Christ’s satisfaction superabundantly compensates for sin already committed. Each of these aspects contributes to Thomas’s understanding of Christ’s temptation. The latter, retrospective definition shows that Christ’s temptation gave something that was desired (by God) more than the sin committed was hated. By allowing himself to be taken by the devil to the top of the Temple and the mountain, Christ “suffers out of love and obedience” thereby satisfying for past sin. On the other hand, the former, prospective definition also makes perfectly clear that the satisfactory nature of Christ’s temptation requires that Christ take on something of the punishment for sin on himself. That is, since Thomas knows that Christ satisfies by his temptation, he

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¹⁹ *ST* III.14.1, response: “Unus autem pro peccato alterius satisfacit dum poenam peccato alterius debitam in seipsum suscipit.”
²⁰ *ST* III.48.2, response: “Respondeo dicendum quod ille proprie satisfacit pro offensa qui exhibet offenso id quod aequo vel magis diligit quam oderit offensam.” At the time of the *Sentences Commentary*, Thomas demonstrates familiarity with definitions of satisfaction from Augustine (“satisfaction is to uproot the causes of sins, and to give no opening to the suggestions thereof,” quoted in *ST* Supplement, 12.3, obj. 1) repeated by Peter the Lombard as well as the definition offered by Anselm (“Satisfaction consists in giving God due honor,” quoted in *ST* Supplement, 12.3, obj. 5). Thomas argues that these two definitions are essentially consistent (ibid., ad. 5): the former is an aid in preventing future sin, and the latter corrects for sins already committed (ibid., response). This same parallel can be seen in the two definitions above: by taking on punishment, he addresses the causes of sin in ourselves and acts to prevent them in the future; by offering up something loved, he compensates (superabundantly) for sins already committed.
²¹ *ST* Supplement 12.3, response; see also the previous note.
equally knows that something in Christ’s temptation must resemble the punishment that followed from Adam’s sin. Thus, since the same suffering at the hands of the devil exceeds the prelapsarian conditions of temptation, Christ can be affirmed to take on something of the punishment for Adam’s sin in the events of his temptation by the devil.

In addition to the satisfactory role of Christ’s temptation, there is also some thin evidence from the Sentences Commentary that Thomas may also consider Christ’s temptation in other soteriological terms, namely as redemption and conquering the devil. The final clause of the following is the best evidence for this possibility:

Christ redeemed [redimit] us by that which he did and endured in human nature; through which he both made satisfaction [satisfecit] to the Father for all humankind and conquered [vicit] the enemy, resisting his temptation.²²

The location of the phrase concerning Christ’s temptation makes it difficult to ascertain whether Thomas would place it in connection with redemption, but such remains a possibility. It is worth briefly exploring what such an affirmation would mean, though it would be imprudent to build substantially on this claim. ST III.48.4 contains the clearest explanation of Christ’s redemptive work.²³ The idea of redemption there is essentially one of slavery [servitus] and liberation through the paying of a price [pretium]. For Thomas, as for Anselm before him, it is essential to maintain that the payment is ultimately to God and not to the devil. Taking these remarks into consideration, the

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²² Sent. Comm. III.19.1.4.2, response: “Christus nos redimit per ea quae in humana natura fecit et sustinuit; quibus et patri satisfecit pro omnibus hominibus, et hostem vicit, ejus tentationibus resistendo.” This passage only use the root for “satisfaction,” but the use of the term for “redemption” is equally significant. In the Summa, Thomas uses both satisfaction and redemption language in an article on how Christ defeated the devil (ST III.48.4); I will consider that article at length below.

²³ Thomas’s term for redemption, redimere, is only treated substantively in one article in the Tertia Pars (ST III.48.4) and his word for conquer, vincere, is used even more sparsely in his soteriological questions in the Tertia Pars, with no article dedicated to it. For Thomas’s demonic usage of vincere See ST III.46.3 (where the devil conquers humanity and, in turn, a human being conquers the devil), ST III.47.2 (where Christ’s victory is over the author of death), ST III.49.2 (where, in a citation from Augustine, Christ’s justice conquers the devil), and ST III.52.1 (where the devil is conquered by Christ’s passion). As an example of a different usage, in ST III.46.11, it is used in reference to Christ’s defeat of death.
redemptive aspect of Christ’s temptation would lie in the “payment” to God that Christ makes by demonstrating the devil’s lack of justice in trying to hold Christ in bondage, thereby leading to God’s removal of the devil from his role as a tormenter of humankind.\(^{24}\)

\(^{24}\) It is worth explaining these ideas at some greater length here. As Thomas explains, there are two kinds of slavery involved: one to the devil and another to God’s justice. Concerning the latter, God’s justice held humankind to a “debt of punishment [\textit{reatum poenae}]]” that required payment. Concerning the former, humankind is held in slavery to the devil because Adam was overcome by the devil. Thomas’s explanation of this slavery is simply a citation of 2 Peter 2:19: “by whom one is overcome, by the same is that one held in slavery \([\textit{a quo quis superatus est, huic et servus adductus est]}\)” (\textit{ST} \textit{III.48.4}, my translation of Thomas’s citation). Thomas follows this citation with the conclusion: “Since, then, the devil had overcome man by inducing him to sin, man was subject to the devil’s bondage \([\textit{Quia igitur Diabolus hominem superaverat inducendo eum ad peccatum, homo servituti Diaboli adductus erat}]}\)” (ibid.). But in this seemingly straightforward (and scriptural) reasoning, there is a problem: Does the devil in fact had a right to hold humanity in slavery? Does Christ pay a price to the devil for humankind’s liberation?

It is useful to recall that Thomas has a nuanced understanding of the justice of humankind’s slavery to the devil. In Chapter 5, I summarized this understanding by saying that while humankind is \textit{justly held} in slavery, the devil \textit{holds unjustly}. Thomas’s explanation of this situation is found in \textit{ST \textit{III.48.4}}, ad. 2. My own explanation here is based on this text, but moves beyond Thomas’s explicit statements in some ways. In any case, the devil never \textit{earned} or properly \textit{deserved} to gain authority over humanity, but was conditionally granted this authority by God. God, on the other hand, was also just in allowing some punishment to occur and was free to appoint whatever deputies for this punishment that God saw fitting. There was, then, a strict requirement of justice in God’s authorization to the devil: the devil was allowed to place humanity in slavery precisely because of and to the extent of humanity’s guilt. One should thus understand the citation of 2 Peter against this background of conditional authorization governed by the requirements of justice.

Christ’s properly redemptive work, then, is in order to demonstrate the extent of the devil’s injustice by showing that the devil ignores the conditions of the authorization granted by God. Precisely in Christ’s own human life—and quintessentially in his temptation—Christ shows that the devil attempts to hold in slavery even one in whom there is no sin; the devil has an ultimate disregard for the innocence of the one he holds in punishment. By permitting himself to be approached and tempted by the devil, Christ sets a trap. He appears to be indistinguishable from other human beings justly held by the devil, and so the devil presumes to hold him captive as he holds everyone else. But precisely in treating Christ like those who deserve to be tempted (by doing violence to his body), the devil exceeds the bounds of justice, all the more so because Christ proves himself innocent even in and through those temptations. Christ’s life can thus be described by Thomas as the “price \([\textit{pecunia}]}\)” paid for humankind’s liberation, but one cannot say that this price was paid \textit{to} the devil. Most precisely, the payment is the demonstration (and the establishment) of the devil’s injustice to God, who then is all the more right and just in removing the devil from his conditional authorization to enslave humankind. The devil, true to form, did not remain within the bounds established by God and thereby lost the privilege of carrying out God’s justice. Though the devil always held contempt for God and malice toward
Leaving aside these speculations concerning the potentially “redemptive” nature of Christ’s temptation, though, one can say with certainty that Thomas treats Christ’s temptation as *satisfactory* for human sin by means of an apparent submission to the devil’s violence in allowing the devil to take him to the top of the Temple and the mountain. As Thomas’s theory of satisfaction thereby implies, Christ takes on the punishment of Adam’s progeny (anticipating and cutting off future sin) and offers to God a perfect obedience that is loved more than humanity’s sin was hated (to superabundantly satisfy for past sin).

2. *Christ’s compassion for humanity through temptation.* Thomas also assigns an important role to Christ’s temptation in his explanation of Christ’s merciful regard for fallen humanity. In order to explain this relationship properly, I must consider carefully Thomas’s use of the word “mercy” and “compassion” in order to discern the proper subject and various senses of these words. I will briefly consider in turn the use of these words with regard to God and then their use regarding Christ. Of course, God is from eternity good and loving; these attributes are the essential and sufficient cause of any act of God that is called “merciful.”

The goodness of God is the foundation of the acts that Thomas calls the “effects of mercy,” which Thomas explains by reference to the etymology of mercy, *misericordia*. Thomas states that

> a person is said to be merciful [*misericors*], as being, so to speak, sorrowful at heart [*miserum cor*]; being affected with sorrow [*tristitiam*] at the misery of another as though it were his own. Hence it follows that he endeavors to dispel the misery of this other, as if it were his; and this is the effect of mercy. To sorrow, therefore, over the misery [*miseria*] of others belongs not to God; but it does most...

— ST1.21.4, response. In that response, the divine attribute of justice is correlated with the attribute of goodness—and not with mercy—for reasons that will be clear in a moment.
properly belong to Him to dispel that misery, whatever be the defect we call by that name.  

These effects of mercy are traced to God’s goodness because Thomas believes that mercy, understood as an affection of passion rooted in sorrow, does not exist in God. God’s goodness, of course, infinitely exceeds any affective movement human beings can have, so one cannot conclude from the fact that God does not have the passion of mercy that God is not merciful—God’s actions amply and abundantly demonstrate these merciful effects. Indeed, the very incarnation of Christ is itself the greatest demonstration of these merciful effects arising from God’s goodness. This arrangement between God’s goodness and Christ’s mercy is clear in the Summa, where Thomas argues that God’s judgment takes place through Christ “so that [God’s] judgment to men might be sweeter [suavius].” By judging us through Christ’s mediatorial action, God shows a greater effect of mercy than if God had judged us in another way—but it is precisely God’s goodness and love that ground God’s choice to judge us through Christ.

Christ, on the other hand, has mercy as a human in a sense that God does not—precisely as an affection of passion and as a virtue subordinate to charity. Thomas affirms that Christ’s soul, being passible, was capable of sorrow, and he likewise acknowledges that mercy is sorrow at the misfortune of another. In similar terms,

27 Ibid.
28 ST III.59.2. The context reads as follows: “Now judiciary power belongs to Christ in this way according to His human nature on three accounts. First, because of His likeness and kinship with men; for, as God works through intermediary causes, as being closer to the effects, so He judges men through the Man Christ, that His judgment may be sweeter to men. [Competit autem Christo hoc modo secundum humanam naturam iudiciaria potestas, propter tria. Primo quidem, propter convenientiam et affinitatem ipsius ad homines. Sicut enim Deus per causas medias, tanquam propinquiores effectibus, operatur; ita iudicat per hominem Christum homines, ut sit suavius iudicium hominibus.]”
29 See ST II-II.30.3, response, where the affect and virtue are distinguished.
30 For Christ’s sorrow, see ST III.15.6. For the definition of mercy, see ST II-II.30.1, sed contra: “mercy is a kind of sorrow” (as a citation of John of Damascus) and ST II-II.30.1, response: “mercy is some sorrow
Thomas defines human mercy (*misericordia*—literally, distress of heart) as “compassion for another’s affliction”\(^{31}\) and so Thomas’s treatment of Christ’s compassion—to “suffer with [*compatior*]” another—is in essence a discussion of his human mercifulness as well.

In Christ’s case, this affective mercy is perfectly governed by the intellectual appetite (the will), in which mercy can also be present as a rational appetition; Thomas describes this rational disposition as an intellectual recognition whereby “one person’s evil is displeasing to another.”\(^{32}\) Because the sensitive affect can be governed by reason, mercy is called a virtue and like all virtues it is found perfectly in Christ from the moment of his conception.\(^{33}\) Nevertheless, Christ’s experience of human misery is the cause of his active feeling of *misericordia*, his sorrow at heart at another’s misfortune.

While the following quotation does not speak directly of Christ’s temptation, it serves as something of a primer to the nature of Christ’s sympathy. He

> is ready and apt to come to assistance, and this because he knows by experience [*per experientiam*] our misery, which as God he knew from eternity by simple knowledge [*per simplicem notitiam*].\(^{34}\)

Thomas, of course, acknowledges that God has “simple knowledge [*per simplicem notitiam*]” of our misery from eternity. God’s goodness first addresses that misery by

\(^{31}\) *ST* II-II.30.1, ad. 2: “compassio miseriae alterius.” In the same article’s response, he cites Augustine’s parallel definition: “mercy is heartfelt sympathy for another’s distress, impelling us to succor him if we can.”

\(^{32}\) *ST* II-II.30.3, response.

\(^{33}\) *ST* III.7.2 and 12. I discuss Christ’s perfections of virtue in the next section.

\(^{34}\) *Commentary on Hebrews* 4.3, in Aquinas, *Commentary on Hebrews*, trans. Baer, 108. Latin: “importat non nudam potentiam, sed promptitudinem et aptitudinem Christi ad subveniendum, et hoc quia scit, per experientiam, miseriam nostram, quam, ut Deus, ab aeterno scivit per simplicem notitiam” (throughout, Latin versions accessed via http://www.corpusthomisticum.org/iopera.html). One might also mention in this context Thomas’s affirmation in *ST* III.41.4, response: “Christ resisted these temptations by quoting the authority of the Law, not by enforcing His power [*Christus restitit testimonii legis, non potestate virtutis*], ‘so as to give more honor to His human nature and a greater punishment to His adversary, since the foe of the human race was vanquished, not as by God, but as by man,’ as Pope Leo says.” Here, too, it is precisely Christ’s *humanity* that is the proximate cause of the defeat of the devil, not Christ’s power as God.
sending Christ—an act that constitutes an effect of mercy. In Christ’s human life, however, there is a different mode of mercy, one that acts by experience of our misery. Since the virtue involved is the rational governance of one’s sorrow in the face of another’s misfortune, one’s sorrow is rightfully greater as one’s confrontation with the other’s misfortune increases. That is, even if one’s virtue of mercy is absolutely perfect, the appropriate affective response elicited by that virtue is greater if the experience of the sorrowful circumstances is greater. This response is seen clearly in the Gospel of John’s account of the raising of Lazarus (John 11:1-44). Christ knows from a distance that Lazarus has died (v. 14) and even upon entering the town, there is no indication of Christ’s sorrow (vs. 17-32). But when confronted with the sorrow of Mary, Lazarus’s brother, Christ is “deeply moved in spirit and troubled” (v. 33); and when he begins to approach the tomb, Christ weeps (v. 35). Christ’s virtue is perfect throughout, yet the virtuous affective response—sorrow at another’s misfortune or, equivalently, mercy—is greater when confronted experientially with sorrow and death. Thus, while Christ’s *virtue* of mercy is not greater because of his experience of our misery, his rationally governed affective response—his *feeling* of compassion or mercy—is rightfully greater in and through that direct experience of our misery.

In the above citations, Thomas speaks generally of Christ’s humanity and human *experience* as the ground for a unique affective and virtuous mercy in Christ, but Thomas also speaks directly of Christ’s *temptation* as an essential component of that experience of misery. In the Hebrews commentary, one finds the strongest affirmation of the role of Christ’s temptation in his compassion with fallen humanity:

> He was tempted, so that He might be like to us as much in temporal things as in all other things, except in sin alone. For if He would have been without

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temptations, He would not have known them by experience, and thus He would not have been compassionate [Si enim fuisset sine tentationibus, non fuisset eas expertus, et sic non compateretur].

Here, Thomas shows the extent of God’s goodness and merciful effect in willing the incarnation. Through a direct confrontation with some of our miserable conditions in his own temptation, Christ’s virtuous affective response to that misery is greater than if he had not experienced such temptation. Thomas thereby directly links three realities in a unique way: temptation, experience, and compassion. Temptation and experience increase Christ’s rationally governed sorrow concerning our misery to the extent that, within God’s plan to save humanity through Christ, these temptations are the economic sine qua non of his “suffering with” human misery: without them, “he would not have compassion,” that is, the feeling of compassion. By exposing himself to the devil’s violence and allowing the devil to transport him, Christ experiences something of our own postlapsarian conditions for temptation and thereby has a greater virtuous affect of mercy.

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On the one hand, Thomas’s Adam/Christ typological reading of Christ’s temptation establishes a framework for Christ’s temptation that views it primarily from the perspective of Christ’s unfallen experience of temptation. On the other hand, some of

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36 In the previous passages, Thomas’s logic of experience (E) and compassion (C) was E->C, but there was theoretically any number of other ways to arrive at C, including, presumably, God’s simply knowledge. In the citation from Hebrews, though, Thomas excludes (in an economic and fitting sense) that there was another way for Christ to have compassion besides his temptation (T): ~T->E, ~E->C, ∴ ~T->C. Of course, one cannot (and Thomas would not) speak of an absolute necessity of Christ’s temptation for God’s mercy and compassion. In fact, it is quite the other way around, since God’s merciful effect in the incarnation is the basis for Christ’s human mercy in the first place.
Thomas’s other soteriological reflections on Christ’s temptation indicate that his bodily transportation by the devil constitutes a certain fallen experience of temptation that can be seen to satisfy for human sin and to lead to a greater rationally governed feeling of compassion and mercy with our fallen lot. As mentioned above, the juxtaposition of unfallen and fallen characteristics in Christ’s temptation can largely be traced back to John of Damascus, who included fallen and unfallen aspects of temptation in Christ’s experience without explaining clearly the criteria for the inclusion of those aspects in Christ. In his own way, Thomas also argues that it is fitting that Christ’s temptation share some aspect both of Adam’s original temptation and of the postlapsarian experience of temptation.

With this general survey of the purposes of Christ’s temptation established, I turn next to Thomas’s consideration of the ontological constitution of Christ as the ground for this experience of temptation. Three subjects will be of particular significance: (A) what the perfections of Christ’s humanity were; (B) how Christ assumed certain fallen defects of nature and how they are compatible with his perfection of grace and knowledge; and (C) how these defects were voluntary in Christ. Once I have clarified the principles that govern Christ’s assumption of human defects, I can turn, finally, to Thomas’s closest treatments of Christ’s temptation by the devil and elaborate those passages in detail.

II. The Perfections and Voluntary Defects of Christ’s Humanity

As a final preliminary to addressing Thomas’s view of Christ’s temptation by the devil, it is important to consider some of the broader strokes of Thomas’s Christology. Thomas’s understanding of the person of Christ or, one could say, his ontological
constitution is the basis of his reflection on what Christ accomplished in his life, temptation, and death. This arrangement is simply another way of saying that for Thomas, being precedes act, both for mere human beings and for Christ. I have indicated in the first section above that Thomas’s conception of the salvific nature of Christ’s temptation is predicated on two comparisons: Christ’s likeness to both prelapsarian Adam and fallen humanity. In this section, I will show that these affirmations in Thomas’s theory of Christ’s action can be traced to affirmations in Thomas’s understanding of Christ’s constitution. Thomas’s soteriology is based on Peter the Lombard’s application of aspects of the different historical states of human nature to Christ. Thomas does not discuss this schema in great detail, but it is nevertheless an important and perduring component of his thought about the person and work of Christ. Generally speaking, Thomas balances claims of Christ’s perfections as a “comprehensor” with claims of Christ’s human defects as a “wayfarer.”

In the following, I will proceed in three parts. First, I will discuss what aspects of Christ’s ontological constitution are shared by the unfallen states of humankind (whether original or glorified). Second, I will consider those aspects of Christ’s constitution that

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37 It is undoubtedly the case that Patristic soteriology is also constituted on the existence of historical states of human nature (as discussed in the Introduction), but as discussed in Chapter 4 it is characteristic of the Lombard’s distinctions to apply parts of all of those states to the ontological constitution of Christ throughout his earthly life. This fact is discussed in Marilyn McCord Adams’s essay on medieval Christology (Marilyn McCord Adams, What Sort of Human Nature?: Medieval Philosophy and the Systematics of Christology (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1999), 67). Adams refers to what I have dubbed Christological “synecdoche” as “telescoping,” which is also a helpful description, although a contracted telescope has all the parts smoothly gathered into it, whereas Christ does not contain all the parts of the various stages of human nature.

Thomas’s Christological synecdoche is taken for granted with minimal discussion in the Sentences Commentary. He briefly addresses the fact that Boethius assigns a different number of stages (three), but attributes the difference to Peter the Lombard and Boethius’s respective treatment of the states of the soul and of the body. In the Summa, Thomas dedicates an article to discussion of two of these states (wayfarer and comprehensor) but does not systematically address what was taken from the original Adamic state and he sometimes chooses not to distinguish there between the baptized and unbaptized fallen conditions (ST III.15.10).
Thomas considers “fallen” or, in his language, characteristic of Christ’s state as a wayfarer. Third, I will discuss the way in which Thomas affirms these wayfarer attributes be to fully voluntary in Christ. This last question is particularly important in light of the coming final analysis: how is Christ’s temptation fittingly said to be voluntary?

**A. Christ’s human perfections**

Thomas categorizes Christ’s human perfections along two lines: perfections of knowledge and perfections of grace. Thomas recognizes a strictly soteriological orientation in these perfections; since Thomas conceives of Christ’s mission as one of satisfying for sin and reconciling to God, these characteristics are indispensable to his work. To briefly summarize the reasons for these perfections as presented in the previous section, satisfaction requires the taking on of another’s punishment as well as offering to the one offended something that is loved as much as or more than the offense is hated.\(^{38}\) This latter qualification is the source of Christ’s perfections, for in order for Christ’s life to be of greater value to God than human sin, Christ must offer back to God a life of perfection: he is utterly upright, aware of his purpose, and able to proclaim truthfully the coming of God’s reign.\(^{39}\) I will consider in turn the perfections of Christ’s knowledge and grace, as these constitute for Thomas an absolute limit on any defects that might exist in his human nature.

Thomas first affirms that Christ’s mission of bringing humankind into union with God requires that he share from the beginning that knowledge of God that will be shared by the blessed and “comprehensors” in heaven. Thomas reasons that this *visio Dei* should be given to Christ because “the cause ought always to be more efficacious than the

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\(^{38}\) *ST* III.14.1 and *ST* III.48.2, respectively.

\(^{39}\) See *ST* III.48.2, response, where it is Christ’s “exceeding charity” (his virtue) that makes his sacrifice superabundant.
effect.”

That is, since Christ’s redemption causes us to enter into the beatific vision, Christ himself should possess that knowledge of God in abundance. Thomas clarifies that Christ’s human knowledge of God does not violate the innate limitations of his human nature. This knowledge is indeed given to Christ as grace, but even then it is not the same knowledge that the Word has by virtue of the divine nature; “the uncreated knowledge [of God from eternity] is in every way above the nature of the human soul,” so Christ’s human soul, strictly speaking, does not participate in this uncreated divine self-knowledge.

Secondly, beside the beatific vision of God, Christ also possessed two other forms of knowledge (infused and acquired) that correspond to two cognitive faculties constitutive of human nature (passive and active intellect). According to the first, infused knowledge, Christ was granted knowledge of all intellectual species capable of comprehension by a human mind in his passive intellect. Thomas draws a parallel here between Christ and the angels; just at the latter were infused at their creation with all “intelligible species” capable of comprehension by their individual natures, so too Christ was granted “an infused or imprinted knowledge, whereby He knows things in their proper nature by intelligible species proportioned to the human mind.” Here again, this knowledge is bounded in a sense by the finitude of Christ’s human mind; the species of his knowledge are “proportioned to [his] nature,” so that this knowledge is not absolutely

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40 ST III.9.2, response. For further detail of Thomas’s thought on this subject, see ST III.10.
41 Thomas’s doctrine of Christ’s visio Dei is often misunderstood as violating Christ’s finitude. For an excellent, sympathetic discussion of Thomas’s doctrine of the visio Dei in Christ, see the work of the late Edward Oakes, Infinity Dwindled to Infancy (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2011), 210-221. Even Oakes concedes that “if the term ‘beatific vision’ conjures up a feeling that Christ is not really a wayfarer sharing humanity’s collective pilgrimage to God … it should be retired, provided that the biblical witness of Christ’s unique awareness of his identity is preserved” (ibid., 220, emphasis original).
42 Ibid., ad. 3.
43 ST III.9.3, response. See also ST III.11.
identical to the knowledge that God has of creation from eternity or even, indeed, to the infused knowledge of angelic natures. Thomas is careful to point out that this infused knowledge also bears a relation to Christ’s mission, so that he might know and thereby be able to teach “all things made known to man by Divine revelation.” Essentially, in order for Christ to reconcile humanity to God, Christ must understand the relationship between the two (humanity and God), comprehend his role in bringing about that reconciliation, and impart that knowledge to his followers.

Finally, Thomas argues by the writing of the Summa that Christ possessed a human acquired knowledge that differs in its origin from Christ’s infused knowledge. Thomas’s reasoning here is based on the utility of all aspects of human nature. Christ had in his passive intellect a comprehension of all those sorts of knowledge a human being can understand, but human nature also has the ability in its active intellect to abstract knowledge or intellectual species from the impression of phenomena on the sense organs. Since Christ has that active intellect by virtue of the incarnation (that is, because it is an essential feature of human nature), Thomas reasons that it would not be fitting if Christ were not to make use of that faculty, since “God and nature make nothing in vain.” Thus, during the course of his human life on earth, Christ also made use of this faculty, abstracting intellectual species from the impression of sensory data. This form of

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44 See ST III.11.4, where Thomas distinguishes one sense in which Christ’s human knowledge is greater than the knowledge of the angels and another in which it is comparatively limited by the nature of human knowledge in relation to angelic knowledge. See also ST III.11.1, where Thomas also avows that this knowledge of Christ is a strictly human knowledge, proportioned to the human sciences and divine revelation.

45 ST III.11.1, response. See also ST III.7.7, response: “it behooves him who teaches to have the means of making his doctrine clear; otherwise his doctrine would be useless.”

46 ST III.9.4, response. Thomas acknowledges here that in the Sentences Commentary he had argued otherwise, so this point is an admitted point of development in Thomas’s thought. See also ST III.12.

47 Ibid.

48 This active abstraction might be considered a sort of “redundancy” in Christ, since he already had
knowledge expresses Thomas’ strongest affirmation of the natural functioning of Christ’s human cognition. Even though Christ had perfect human knowledge in his passive intellect, Christ still made use of his active intellect, thereby in a sense “growing” in human knowledge in his active intellect.49

Taken together Thomas’s claims about Christ’s knowledge amount to a denial that Christ could properly be called ignorant.50 Each of these three forms of knowledge contributes in its own way to Christ’s saving mission. Christ’s beatific knowledge proleptically displays what all the blessed will enjoy in heaven; Christ’s infused knowledge allows him to carry out his mission with a full understanding of his purpose and role and also to share that knowledge with his followers; and Christ’s acquired knowledge reveals the fittingness of all the parts of Christ’s human intellect, so that no part of his humanity would be without purpose in the course of his human life.

Along with Christ’s perfections in knowledge, Thomas discusses Christ’s perfection of grace. For the purposes of this study, I will focus on two aspects of this perfection: the graces of virtue and the “gifts” of grace. First, Thomas considers the perfection of Christ’s virtue as it too is a form of God’s grace. Thomas states that since the grace of Christ was most perfect, there flowed from it, in consequence, the virtues which perfect the several powers of the soul for all the soul’s acts; and thus Christ had all the virtues.51

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49 See ST III.12.2, where he explains that the kind of growth he means exceeds that of “comparing the infused intelligible species with what He received through the senses for the first time,” which was his previous position. In that view, Christ played a sort of intellectual matching game in which what he already knows is paired with what is presented to him and in turn abstracted to an intellectual species. In his developed thought, Christ’s knowledge can increase “in essence” and “in the soul of Christ there was a habit of knowledge which could increase by the abstraction of species” (ibid.).

50 This claim is made explicit in ST III.14.4, response.

51 ST III.7.2, response.
In light, again, of my ultimate aim, the most prominent of those virtues in Christ’s soul is the virtue of temperance residing in the sensitive appetite. Thomas takes particular care to affirm this virtue in Christ:

Christ had no evil desires whatever, as will be shown; yet He was not thereby prevented from having temperance, which is the more perfect in man, as he is without evil desires.52

It is important to note that Thomas’s later demonstration of Christ’s lack of evil desire does not address all the cases I discussed in the previous chapter. When Thomas addresses Christ’s lack of evil desire in detail, Thomas considers two cases: outright sin and the presence of the fomes, both of which he emphatically denies to be present in Christ.53 Thomas considers these two cases to be a sufficient demonstration that there could be no evil desire in Christ. However, since Thomas also believes that evil desires can be stirred up directly by the devil, one should be careful to note that this demonic activity (as explained in the previous chapter) is in a sense subordinate to the fomes peccati. That is, the devil could not affect the sensitive appetite of one who lacks the fomes, since the perfect governance of that faculty through temperance rules out precisely any irrational movement of that appetite.

Two other pieces of relevant information help one to glean Thomas’s thought on Christ’s perfection of virtue. Most importantly, Thomas also sees Christ’s perfection in grace to entail two other qualities in Christ: a lack of “proneness towards evil [pronitas ad malum]” and a parallel lack of “difficulty in well-doing [difficultas ad bonum].”54

52 Ibid., ad. 3.
53 ST III.15.1 and 2.
54 ST III.14.4, response.
Taken alongside Thomas’s categorical denial that “Christ had no evil desires whatever,” one begins to see a pattern in Thomas’s portrayal.

A second aspect of Christ’s “fullness of grace” further illuminates how Thomas speaks of Christ’s temptation by the devil. Thomas argues that in Christ, all the graces capable of flowing into the human soul were present to a maximal degree in Christ and with a maximum of power so that it might “overflow” from Christ to the rest of humanity. In order to pass grace on to the rest of humankind, Christ must possess it fully and superabundantly. Thus Thomas affirms that “His grace extends to all the effects of grace, which are the virtues, gifts, and the like.”\(^{55}\) In this light, one should remember from Chapter 5 that Adam’s original condition had a “special favor of grace” that prevented the devil from harming him interiorly; the existence of such a grace along with Thomas’s affirmations about the fullness of Christ’s grace should predispose one to think that Thomas would deny an inner demonic attack in Christ. However, a complete discussion of what Christ’s perfections entail for his temptation by the devil will wait until the final section of this chapter.

**B. Christ’s human defects**

Having traced the essential features of Christ’s human perfections in Thomas’s presentation, I turn next to how Thomas conceives of the defects of Christ’s humanity. I will treat the content of those defects here; the *voluntary* manner in which Christ takes them on will be considered in the final subsection below. In the following, I will treat Thomas’s two questions on Christ’s human defects together—concerning both defects of body and defects of soul.

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\(^{55}\) *ST* III.7.9, response.
To begin this discussion, I must return to the matter of Burgundio of Pisa’s translation of the *De Fide Orthodoxa*. As I have shown in Chapter 4, there was a fairly significant error in Burgundio of Pisa’s translation of John of Damascus’s text that had repercussions on the way that John was subsequently read in Latin Christianity. Briefly, John of Damascus had written that Christ assumed the “natural and blameless passions” of human nature, specifying that these “are not under our control and have come into man’s life as a result of the condemnation occasioned by his fall.” But Burgundio translated this passage as “the natural and indetractible [indetractibilis] passions” that, Burgundio continues,

are those which are not in us whatsoever [quae non in nobis quaecumque] from that which comes into human life by condemnation through the transgression. Two things about Christ’s passions are obscured or, indeed, denied here by Burgundio: that they are a result of the fall; and that they are “not under our control” as a clarification of the fact that they are “blameless.” The first of these consequences is far-reaching but does not seem to have affected Thomas’s reading of John. The second, however, has significant impacts in two ways. Firstly, the state of John’s text renders it difficult for Thomas to confront John’s claim that there are passions

56 *De Fide Orthodoxa*, III.20; see Chapter 4 as well. *PG* 94, 1081-2 reads: “Φυσικὰ δὲ καὶ ἀδιάβλητα πάθη εἰς τὰ οὐκ ἕφ’ ἡμῖν, ὅσα έκ τῆς ἐπί τῇ παραβάσει κατακρίσεως εἰς τὸν ἀνθρώπινον εἰσήλθε βίον.”
57 Ibid. The Latin can be found in Buytaert, 259: “Naturales autem et indetractibles passiones sunt, quae non in nobis quaecumque ex ea quae per transgressionem condemnatione in humanam devenere vitam.”
58 This particular aspect of the transmission of John’s teaching to Thomas does not directly affect my concerns, so I will discuss the “fallenness” question briefly here. The fact that Thomas accurately identifies hunger, thirst, and other defects as coming into human life “by reason of the sin of our first parents” can be explained in two ways. Either Thomas weighed Burgundio’s text against other sources that identified those realities as post-lapsarian and decided to part from Burgundio/John on that point, or Thomas had a manuscript that was in the family of the 13th century Paris manuscript labeled by Buytaert as “N” (ibid., 259). This manuscript tradition is the only one identified by Buytaert that omits the “non” in the crucial passage cited above. Thomas’s treatment of the passibility of Christ’s soul in *ST* III.15.4 does not resolve the textual problem since Thomas never cites precisely the above quotation from Burgundio’s version. In the end, the loss of “out of our control” from John’s text is more important for my purposes.
that are “not up to us” that are taken on by Christ. It is not immediately clear how such a claim would be reconciled with Thomas’s understanding of absolutely perfected temperance and the fomes as described in Chapter 5.\(^{59}\) Given the state of Burgundio’s translation, however, there is simply no way to adjudicate the way in which Thomas would reconcile these views. Second, the word that Thomas does read in Burgundio’s text—indetractibilis—makes for some interpretive difficulties concerning John’s meaning. Indeed, Thomas has to extrapolate John’s apparent meaning from relatively thin textual evidence.\(^{60}\) When Thomas considers what is meant by calling Christ’s passions “indetractible,” he focuses carefully on the word, looking for something related to Christ’s passions that “cannot be taken away,” as the term denotes. The answer for Thomas is fairly close at hand: Christ’s knowledge and grace, both of which were uniquely perfect in Christ and thus unable to be fittingly removed from him. But note—Thomas’s reading of indetractibilis does not (strictly speaking) conform to the grammar of Burgundio’s text. In Burgundio’s text, it is the passions that are described as unable to be taken away (indetractible) but in Thomas’s reading, he rather applies this term to Christ’s knowledge and grace. In fairness, such a reading makes a great deal of sense. Because the meaning of Burgundio’s claim that Christ’s passions “cannot be taken away” is at best unclear, Thomas applies the term to qualities of Christ that were indetractible.

The net result of this negotiation of a difficult text in his source material is that for Thomas Christ shares in the fallen moral circumstances of human nature only and precisely to the degree that those circumstances do not take away from his perfections of

\(^{59}\) Crucially, as I discussed in Chapter 4, the idea that they are “not up to us” or “not under our control” can in part be attributed for John (as for Maximus) to demonic instigation of passion.

\(^{60}\) As for Burgundio himself, it seems clear from his denial that these passions come from the Fall and that they are unable to be taken away (indetractibilis) that he thought Christ’s passions were wholly unfallen.
knowledge and grace.\textsuperscript{61} The perfections, again, are altogether fitting in order for Christ to satisfy for human sin, offering something to God of more value that Adam’s fault. But on the other hand, Thomas explains that Christ’s defects—which, most notably, are mortality and corruptibility of body and passibility of soul—are also economically fitting for three reasons. First, by them Christ’s takes on the punishment of another, which is also constitutive of Thomas’s definition for satisfaction. Second, the assumed defects demonstrate the reality of the incarnation. Third, Christ thereby gives his followers a clear “example of patience by valiantly bearing up against human passibility and defects.”\textsuperscript{62} These three explanations thus constitute another limit in Thomas’s soteriology—one that delineates precisely how much Christ’s humanity participates in fallen characteristics. Without these defects, Christ’s saving mission would have been somewhat impeded; their presence makes his life, temptation, and death more satisfactory.

If one were to find a situation wherein a human perfection and a universal human defect were ever in direct conflict (such as the \textit{fomes peccati}), Thomas argues that the perfections are more essential to Christ’s mission and must be guarded over and against the contrary defect. Knowledge and grace are, in a sense, more essential to Christ’s mission than is Christ’s seeming to share fully in the human condition as we experience it:

The fulness of all grace and knowledge was due to Christ’s soul of itself … and hence Christ assumed all the fulness of knowledge and wisdom absolutely. But He assumed our defects economically, in order to satisfy for our sin, and not that

\textsuperscript{61} It is logically possible, then, that this criteria could disagree with that of John, for whom Christ instead takes those passions that are “out of our control.” Further remarks on this transmission will be held for the general conclusion.

\textsuperscript{62} ST III.14.1, response.
they belonged to Him of Himself. Hence it was not necessary for Him to assume them all, but only such as sufficed to satisfy for the sin of the whole nature. Thus, knowledge and grace are “absolute” qualities of Christ’s soul, but his defects are taken economically, which is to say selectively and thus not in their entirety. Thomas further explains that since other defects—such as the *fomes peccati*—can in some way be traced back to the corruptibility and passibility of humanity after the fall, those two defects alone were sufficient to heal our nature:

since Christ healed the passibility and corruptibility of our body by assuming it, He consequently healed all other defects.

And he heals these aspects precisely because he did not assume the other defects which would interfere with his perfections of knowledge and grace. For Thomas’s soteriological reasoning, there is an indispensable subordination of defect to perfection in the human nature of Christ. If Christ is to heal our brokenness, he must not succumb to that brokenness in himself.

C. Christ’s voluntary assumption of human defects

In this final subsection, I need to consider in greater detail the way in which Thomas affirms Christ to take on defects of human nature. Following a tradition that goes back to at least John of Damascus, Thomas affirms that Christ’s assumption of human defects is not the same as a fallen human’s contraction of those defects from Adam. The basic affirmation is that since Christ’s origin is unique (not arising from carnal concupiscence), his humanity is not bound to the effects of Adam’s sin that other human beings acquire simply because they originate from an act that binds them to Adam’s

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63 ST III.15.4, ad. 2.
64 Ibid., ad. 1. This way of addressing the “root cause” of sin reflects the synecdotal or telescopic Christological reasoning that I have explained above and that is used frequently by Peter the Lombard and the following tradition.
transgression.\textsuperscript{65} Because of this absolute freedom, there is a perfect gratuity in Christ’s allowing himself to take on characteristics of our wounded nature.

But as pointed out in my treatment of John and some of his successors in the medieval tradition, an orthodox articulation of Christ’s voluntary assumption of human defects requires greater precision because the unique person of Christ has not one will but two. How does each of these wills cooperate in this gratuitous acceptance of human woundedness? There are certain natural boundaries to the problem. On the one hand, Christ’s human will cannot be said to act toward some effect when that will does not itself exist; any act that describes the decision to take a certain form or condition of human nature would therefore a priori appear to describe the divine will alone in the eternal decision to undertake the incarnation. On the other hand, orthodox dyotheletism requires that both wills (human and divine) be in accord; it would not do to say that Christ as God willed something that Christ as human did not (or vice versa), as that would rupture Christ’s hypostatic unity.

Thomas addresses this issue in both the Sentences Commentary and the Summa. In approaching the general question of the voluntary nature of the assumption of human defect, Thomas articulates a distinction between assumption and contraction.\textsuperscript{66} One who “contracts” a defect does so out of necessity:

In the verb “to contract” is understood the relation of effect to cause, i.e. that is said to be contracted which is derived of necessity together with its cause. Now the cause of death and such like defects in human nature is sin … And hence they who incur these defects, as due to sin, are properly said to contract them.\textsuperscript{67}

\textsuperscript{65} ST III.14.3 discusses the way in which Christ “assumed” but did not “contract” his bodily defects.
\textsuperscript{66} This distinction is found first in the Sent. Comm. III.15.1.3 and again in the Summa III.14.3.
\textsuperscript{67} ST III.14.3, response.
So human beings whose origin stands in a “seminal” connection to Adam’s original sin are bound by a strict necessity in taking on the defects consequent to his sin. But Christ did not share this relationship to Adam’s sin and was therefore free either to assume the defects or not:

For He received human nature without sin, in the purity which it had in the state of innocence. In the same way He might have assumed human nature without defects. Thus it is clear that Christ did not contract these defects as if taking them upon Himself as due to sin, but by His own will.  

This mode of taking on defects is what Thomas calls “assumption,” and Thomas follows John of Damascus in affirming that this action is properly ascribed to the divine will alone, since the action is concerned with the very creation of Christ’s human will. If, then, the decision to enter into the conditions of human defect is made before Christ’s human will exists, how can Thomas affirm that Christ, as human, wills such defects?

In this respect, Thomas’s reflections on the matter consider mortality—the relationship of Christ’s human will to his own death—more directly than passibility, though the cases are parallel. At the time of the early Sentences Commentary, Thomas restricts to the divine will alone the power to change the normal course of nature, including altering the natural progression toward death:

only he is [said] to change the established law and course of nature who instituted and ordained nature; which God alone accomplished. And thus no other bodily, spiritual, animate, or angelic power, not even the soul of Christ [nec etiam animae Christi], could change the divinely established law of nature, except by way of prayer or intercession.

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68 Ibid.
69 ST III.14.2, ad. 2.
70 Sent. Comm. III.16.1.3, response. Latin text: “ejus solius est immutare legem et cursum naturae impositum, qui naturam instituit et ordinavit; quod solus Deus fecit: et ideo neque aliqua virtus corporalis, nec spiritualis, aut animae aut Angeli, nec etiam animae Christi, potuit ad immutationem legis naturae impositae divinitus, nisi per modum orationis aut intercessionis.”
There is a strictly defined, finite limitation on the power of Christ’s human soul considered in itself; since the divine will had established that Christ’s humanity would suffer from certain defects such as mortality, the ability to avoid death is not properly attributed to Christ’s soul. Thomas affirms this explicitly:

as the death of Christ’s body followed according to the law and course of nature (as is said and as the Teacher says in the text), it must be said that the necessity of dying in Christ was not subject to his human will, but only to the divine \[necessitas moriendi in Christo non subdebatur voluntati ejus humanae, sed solum divinae\], as one opinion says.\(^{71}\)

In the *Sentences Commentary*, then, the divine will alone could prevent Christ’s death by establishing his humanity at the moment of the incarnation in an unfallen condition. In this sense, Thomas’s early thought is clear that Christ’s mortality (and, by analogy, passibility) is “not subject to his human will.” Nevertheless, these claims are clarified in the *Summa* in such a way that it is still possible to affirm the fully voluntary (non-constrained) character of Christ’s human corruptibility, death, and passibility.

In the *Summa*, Thomas equally denies that Christ’s human soul was omnipotent since human nature is necessarily finite.\(^{72}\) Elaborating this claim further, Thomas distinguishes what is and is not proper to the power of Christ’s soul in a way that helps clarify something of the positive sense in which Christ’s death was in the power of his human soul and thus fully voluntary. Thomas considers three different kinds of creaturely change and addresses whether Christ’s soul was capable of performing each: a natural transmutation of creatures (such as using a hand to pick up a cup); a miraculous transformation (such as raising the dead); and the creation and destruction of creatures.

\(^{71}\) Ibid.

\(^{72}\) *ST III.13.1.*
(such as in Genesis). The first of these is unquestionably in the power of Christ’s soul, as such actions pertain to the normal relationship between soul and body in human nature; the third of these is described by Thomas as absolutely beyond the power of Christ’s human soul.

The second case, however, is crucial to the way in which Thomas affirms that Christ willingly accepts human defects: Thomas affirms that Christ’s human soul has an “instrumental power” to raise the dead insofar as it is conjoined to the Word. This instrumental power is later affirmed by Thomas as the means by which Christ can be said to be omnipotent with regard to his human body.

Christ’s soul may be viewed as an instrument united in person to God’s Word; and thus every disposition of His own body was wholly subject to His power. Nevertheless, since the power of an action is not properly attributed to the instrument, but to the principal agent, this omnipotence is attributed to the Word of God rather than to Christ’s soul.

There is, again, a certain limit to this power; the “principal agent” of the act remains the Word of God and not Christ’s human soul. But Thomas is willing to extend this instrumental power quite far, so that Christ’s soul can be affirmed as capable of preventing his death: “His spirit had the power of preserving His fleshly nature from the infliction of any injury; and Christ’s soul had this power, because it was united in unity of person with the Divine Word.”

In an important sense, then, Thomas’s affirmation of the voluntary character of Christ’s assumption of defect requires that Christ have the power to do otherwise, even as human—otherwise Christ’s human action would be constrained and therefore

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73 ST III.13.2
74 ST III.13.3.
75 ST III.47.1.
significantly involuntary. To be sure, Christ’s human will accepts death. As Thomas states in the *Summa*, “insofar as such necessity [of constraint] is opposed to the will, it is clear that these defects were not in Christ by necessity, either with respect to the divine will nor with respect to the human will absolutely, as following the deliberation of reason.”

Essentially, Christ does accept death, but Christ does not *merely* accept death—his human soul instrumentally *allows* it. One can accept death without the ability to prevent it, but such is not what Thomas says of Christ in the *Summa*; there is a more active, instrumental permission that, because of the hypostatic union, is essential in order for Christ to undergo any of the defects fittingly ascribed to Christ. Without this human and instrumental permission, Christ would not have undergone these defects. On these grounds, I can turn finally to Thomas’s understanding of Christ’s temptation by the devil.

### III. Christ’s Temptation and the Three Medieval Temptations

The object of this final section is to consider those passages in St. Thomas’s corpus where he treats Christ’s temptation at length and in detail. These passages provide Thomas’s closest study of this question and demonstrate as closely as possible Thomas’s mind on the place and purpose of Christ’s temptation by the devil. In what follows, I will structure my discussion around each of the three main kinds of temptation recognized by Thomas and the medieval tradition (in turn, the *fomes peccati*, external demonic temptation, and internal demonic temptation), considering within each section both of the most relevant passages—the fourth chapter of Thomas’s *Commentary on Matthew* and *ST* III.41. In my treatment of each of these kinds of temptation, I will address why Thomas believes it to have been present or absent in Christ. By doing so, I hope to explain as

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76 *ST* III.14.2, translation modified.
precisely as possible the implications of Thomas’s view of Christ’s status as both wayfarer and comprehensor for the purpose and means of Christ’s temptation.

A. Thomas’s denial of the fomes peccati in Christ

As was shown in the last chapter, the fomes peccati bears some relevance to the question of Christ’s temptation by the devil. Since the devil is understood by Thomas to be an intentional yet indirect cause of this habitual corruption, it would be possible (if perhaps slightly misleading) to say that one who was tempted by the fomes was, in a remote way, being tempted by the devil. Now, it is no surprise at this point of this study that Thomas denies Christ to have been infected or consequently tempted by the fomes peccati. Yet, the reasons for Thomas’s denial require a final exposition—and these reasons differ slightly in important passages. In ST III.41, Thomas argues that the fomes peccati in Christ would contradict Christ’s sinlessness; in ST III.15, it is rather Christ’s absolutely perfected virtue that would be contradicted. I will consider the relationship between these explanations and then end this section with an assessment of how these two explanations ultimately coincide with an affirmation of Christ’s redemptive work of bringing humanity to a final state of blessedness.

Prior to these different explanations, Thomas’s argument for the exclusion of the fomes peccati from Christ is first and foremost rooted in the fact that this defect is “not ordained to satisfaction,” meaning that were Christ to have it, he would be less—and not more—capable of acting as the mediator between humanity and God.77 It would detract from Christ’s offering of something “more loved” in place of the offenses committed by humankind.78 But what about the fomes detracts from this offering?

77 ST III.15.2, response.
78 See the discussion of satisfaction in the first part of this chapter.
Thomas’s reasoning in *ST* III.15.2 indicates a response that invokes Christ’s virtue as the criterion by which the *fomes* must be denied in Christ. This article makes no reference to Christ’s sinlessness in its explanation and instead reasons to the denial of the *fomes* solely on the ground of Christ’s virtue. Thomas argues that there is an inverse relationship between virtue and the *fomes peccati*—as the movement of the *fomes* increases, one’s virtue decreases. Since the virtue of temperance resides precisely in the sensitive appetite (as does the *fomes peccati*), the opposition between virtue and the *fomes* can be stated even more specifically: the stronger the *fomes*, the weaker one’s temperance; the stronger one’s temperance, the weaker the *fomes*. Since Christ had the fullness of virtue and an absolutely perfected temperance (as an aspect of his status as a comprehensor), the *fomes* was as weak as possible—which is to say, non-existent: “since in Christ the virtues were in their highest degree, the *fomes* of sin was nowise in Him.”

This position coincides easily with my presentation of the virtue of temperance in Chapter 5. Because Thomas invokes Christ’s virtue here and not his sinlessness, Thomas indicates that Christ’s freedom from morally culpable error is not immediately and necessarily contradicted by the presence of the *fomes*. And so Thomas argues about the *fomes* in general; the constitutional lack of governance over the sensitive appetite does not (and cannot) require an absolute necessity of culpable sin in the one so inflicted. But nonetheless, no one contracts the *fomes* in a world without sin, and so its status as part of the *reatu poenae*—the debt of punishment—is still crucial. Even if one can resist the movement of the *fomes* in a morally blameless fashion, its presence is still a mark of a fallen, sinful human nature. While a fallen human being might not be culpable for certain

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79 *ST* III.15.2, response.
movements, the *fomes* remains opposed to a human nature in possession of its original integrity and of an absolute freedom from sin.

One must understand Thomas’s second denial of the *fomes* from Christ in light of the place of the *fomes peccati* as a component of the *reatu poenae*. This second denial appears to begin from a different premise—instead of Christ’s virtue, it invokes Christ’s sinlessness. One reads in Thomas’s *Summa* question on Christ’s temptation that

Christ wished to be *tempted in all things, without sin*. Now, temptation which comes from an enemy can be without sin: because it comes about by merely outward suggestion. But temptation which comes from the flesh cannot be without sin, because such a temptation is caused by pleasure and concupiscence.80

At a glance, Thomas’s explanation appears to draw on the prior medieval tradition’s view that the *fomes peccati* is always culpably sinful (as for Peter the Lombard and Alexander of Hales and discussed in Chapter 4) but Thomas’s appropriation of this tradition is in fact more complicated. For Alexander, Christ cannot be tempted from within (either demonically or from the flesh) because such would contradict Christ’s freedom from culpable sin; Alexander held that a suggestion begins to be sin when one experiences desire for it.

Thomas, however, should not be understood to follow Alexander in this narrow sense of the word “sin” whereby it signifies “culpable.” Rather, Thomas’s citation of Hebrews and his subsequent discussion of “sin” should be construed broadly so that one cannot be tempted from the flesh while lacking the *reatu poenae*. Essentially, temptation

80 *ST* III.41.1, ad. 3. A similar explanation drawing on the sinfulness of “pleasure” is found in the *Commentary on Matthew* 4, where Thomas almost surely draws from the Halesian reading of Gregory the Great: “there are three stages of temptation, namely, by suggestion, pleasure, and consent. The first is from without, and can be without sin; the second is from within, in which it begins to be a sin, and which indeed is completed by consent. The first stage could have been in Christ but not the others” (in Aquinas, *Commentary on Matthew*, trans. Kimball, 112). Insofar as it draws on Gregory’s interpretation, it is difficult to place a line between protology and personal moral exhortation.
from the enemy can and did come without sin (see Adam and Eve’s case before the Fall); the temptation from the flesh only came after sin. Thus, when Thomas says that fleshly temptation cannot be “without sin,” this description signifies something about protology and not moral psychology or culpability. By construing “sin” in this broad way, Thomas clearly does not reverse his earlier articulation of non-morally culpable movements of the *fomes*. A fallen subject could remain free of moral culpability with the *fomes* (in a narrow sense ‘sinless’) but by definition no one infected by the *fomes* could remain untouched by those deleterious consequences of sin that would detract from Christ’s mission of guiding humankind to a final blessed state. Such an explanation is fully consonant with his mature thought about the *fomes* and with his explanation of the absence of the *fomes* from Christ in *ST III.15.2.*

These two explanations, then, ultimately coincide and can be summarized in one affirmation: Christ, in order to pass a final blessedness on to his followers, was free of the reatu poenae with regard to the *fomes peccati*. Thomas could articulate this claim in two distinct ways: either by pointing to Christ’s virtue as proleptically that of a comprehensor or by recognizing Christ’s absolute separation from sinful humanity that comes to him by the same proleptic grace. In both explanations, Thomas is concerned with a careful delineation of what sort of human existence Christ would lead in order to satisfy for human sin and lead humankind to its final end.

While these two criteria (virtue and sinlessness) may not appear identical, Thomas views them as consonant and equally rooted in the Christological affirmations of the Letter to the Hebrews. As discussed in Chapter 1, Hebrews uses the term “weakness” in two different ways, so that sometimes it denotes a valuable aspect of sympathy in
Christ’s mission but at others it denotes a point of contrast between Christ and the former high priests. Thomas’s explanations of Christ’s virtue and possession of flesh free from the stain of sin elaborate both the sympathy and the separation. Certainly, Christ sympathizes—but he does so in a way different than the former high priests who were “beset by weakness” (Heb. 5:2). This contrast between Christ and the high priests is also seen in Hebrews 7:28: whereas “the law appoints men in their weakness as high priests,” the “word of the oath … appoints a Son who has been made perfect forever.” In Hebrews as in Thomas, there are weaknesses that would detract from Christ’s saving mission, whereby he points the way to the final state of humankind. Thus, for both Hebrews and for Thomas, it would not be salvific for Christ to take such weakness, since he could no longer be the pioneer and perfector who points the way to humanity’s final destiny—a state that Thomas succinctly labels as “comprehensor.”

B. The Devil’s Exterior Temptation in Thomas’s Account

When Thomas speaks positively about how Christ was in fact tempted by the devil, his comments are exclusively about a sort of visible temptation. I will address in

81 ST III.15.10, response.
82 The Commentary on Hebrews (in the passage on Hebrews 4:15) offers an interesting account of Christ’s temptations that might allow for the devil to work ‘hiddenly’ through the Pharisees and other events near the end of Christ’s life. The passage is also notable because it categorizes Christ’s temptations in a way much like Maximus’s division between temptations to pleasure and temptations from pain. In this passage, there are two external temptations: that “by being drawn to oneself through prosperity, or by being frightened by adverse things [alliciendo per prospera, vel terrendo per adversa]” (Commentary on Hebrews, trans. Baer, 108). The first of these temptations is accomplished by the devil in the desert. But Thomas avoids using demonic language in his description of the latter, which he places primarily in the events surrounding Christ’s death. Thomas transitions to the temptation by adversity by means of Luke’s reference to the devil: “the devil left him for a time” (ibid.). But Thomas does not explicitly mention the devil in his treatment of Christ’s temptation by adversity. In his sentence introducing the temptation by means of adversity [per adversa], his construction is passive and only one element of it is assigned an immediate agent: the ‘snares [insidias]’ are attributed to the tempting agency of the Pharisees. The other three means that Thomas mentions—insults [contumelias], scourges [flagella], and torments [tormenta]—are not assigned any agent, either immediate or ultimate (ibid., 108-9). Obviously, the devil was not the immediate agent in these temptations, but Thomas’s late typology of temptation states that when human beings tempt toward evil, they do so “as minister of the devil [hoc agit inquantum est minister Diaboli]” (ST I.114.2). In this sense, the devil’s action might be hidden, but
the final subsection whether Thomas could also support an invisible or internal temptation from the devil, but three final matters about Thomas’s positive affirmations need to be considered here. First, I will address how Christ’s external temptation is affirmed as a form of punitive or postlapsarian temptation. Second and most extensively, I will treat how Thomas conceives of Christ’s visible temptation by the devil as exemplary for human temptation in general. In this material, I will have recourse to the claims above about the voluntariness of Christ’s temptation in relation to Thomas’s later treatment of the idea of an occasion of sin. Third and briefly, I will review how Christ’s temptation accomplishes a defeat of the devil.

As seen in the previous chapter, Thomas sees the fomes peccati and internal demonic temptation as at least partly punitive. But, if Christ’s “satisfaction” for sin by temptation implies that he takes on something of that punishment on himself, it is important to clarify how the external temptation Christ endured might also be somehow punitive, even if it does not include these distinctly postlapsarian modes of temptation. As discussed in Chapter 5, the phenomenon of external temptation as such is decidedly not punitive; it occurred in the Garden before sin. However, it is essential to note that even the conditions of external temptation are changed by sin so that even a purely external assault can still be described as punitive (and thus satisfactory). Thomas states that “the devil had a minimum of power against man before sin, wherefore he was [able to tempt] … only by outward suggestion.” But this outward suggestion is not the only condition of temptation that Christ endures; Thomas clearly affirms that Christ “suffered

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the temptations themselves are not such that Thomas would describe them as the inner demonic temptation I mean to distinguish in the main text. Because Thomas’s description of Christ’s temptation “by terrifying … with adversity” is not explicitly demonic, I will not treat this passage in the main text above.

83 ST II-II.165.2, ad. 2.
from the devil in being ‘taken up’ on to ‘the pinnacle of the Temple’ and again ‘into a very high mountain.’ Such bodily transportation exceeds the conditions of temptation that Adam experience in the garden, and thus constitutes a distinctly postlapsarian component of Christ’s experience of temptation. Even if there are some difficulties with this reading, such is the clearest and most consistent way in which Thomas affirms the satisfactory nature of Christ’s temptation.

84 ST III.41.1, ad. 2.
85 There are two such difficulties, though neither of them is insurmountable. First, the Commentary on Matthew might at first glance indicate that Thomas’s preferred reading of the transportation to the top of the Temple and mountain does not coincide with this “suffering” I have outlined above. In that commentary, Thomas takes great care to limit the sense in which the devil might be said to have power over Christ’s body and therefore prefers to argue that Christ went into Jerusalem under his own power—that the devil did not force him (Commentary on Matthew 4, in Aquinas, Commentary on Matthew, trans. Kimball, 117). Even though Thomas prefers this reading when it comes to the movement into Jerusalem, Thomas only explicitly addresses the “suffering” interpretation (i.e. that the devil in a sense forced Christ’s body) when it comes to the movement to the top of the Temple and to the mountain (Aquinas, Commentary on Matthew, trans. Kimball, 117 and 119). Thus, Thomas simply repeats what must be said “according to those who say that he [the devil] was carrying Him” (ibid., 117) without articulating an alternative in the case that Christ was going of his own power (which may be his preference). And the reference regarding the movement to the mountain is even more terse: “Regarding the taking [by the devil], it is discussed above” (ibid., 119). Neither of these resolves definitively to what extent or in which particular movements Thomas prefers to think Christ went of his own power. Given, however, that there is significant soteriological importance in there being some form of demonic violence done to Christ’s body, it is prudent to limit Thomas’s meaning specifically to the movement into Jerusalem and not to apply it to all the instances of Christ’s bodily movement in the temptation scene.

Second, there is a potential difficulty in the way that Thomas defines a “penal” temptation or attack from the devil. Thomas briefly defines when a temptation can be considered punitive. He argues that “an assault is penal if it be difficult to resist it,” and cites Adam’s original state as an example of a temptation that is easily resisted and thus not penal (ST II-II.165.1, ad. 3). Now, it is relatively easy to prove that, for Thomas, Christ’s temptation should not be called “difficult.” Such difficulty in doing well is denied by Thomas (at ST III.14.4, response) in relation to the fomes peccati, but even in the Commentary on Matthew, it is likely that Thomas would deny that Christ’s temptation is difficult. Hence, in the Commentary on Matthew, “Christ’s members [other Christians] … need the angels’ guardianship … [but] this cannot be said concerning Christ, because He would not have been able to dash by an occasion of some sin” (Commentary on Matthew 4, in Aquinas, Commentary on Matthew, trans. Kimball, 118). Later, he similarly states that the angels come to minister to Christ by “performing services in exterior things,” but that “in interior things He did not need them” (Aquinas, Commentary on Matthew, trans. Kimball, 123). From these indications, it is clear that Christ’s external temptation was not difficult (D)—but as I mention in a note above, there may be other ways for a temptation to be punitive (P). D→P, but it is not necessarily the case that ¬D→¬P. Now, this reasoning admittedly renders Thomas’s proof at ST II-II.165.1, ad. 3 insufficient (since the fact that it is not difficult would no longer be sufficient to prove that it is not punitive, which is precisely what Thomas sets out to prove in that reply), but it is easy to supply what that proof is lacking. The only additional qualification needed is that, unlike Christ’s temptation, Adam’s involves no bodily violence. Thus, given that there is no bodily violence and that it is not difficult, it follows that Adam’s temptation is not penal.
The second matter of the exemplarity of Christ’s temptation is more complicated in Thomas’s work. Some aspects of this exemplarity are undertaken by Christ only for our sake and not for his own. Thus, Thomas accepts the idea that Christ had no personal need of fasting, but that he does so to show others how to avoid temptation.86 Concerning a central aspect of Christ’s exemplarity in the temptations, Thomas indicates a matter of some significance in the Commentary on Matthew. There, Thomas explores the possibility that it would not have been sinful for Christ to have changed the stones into bread.87 If it would not be sinful to change the stones into bread, Thomas goes on to argue that Christ refuses this demonic suggestion precisely in order to give “instructions which ought to be followed by the one who has been tempted.”88 Thomas states:

Man ought to do nothing at the devil’s choice. Vegetius said, “A wise leader ought to do nothing at the choice of his enemy [ad arbitrium sui hostis], even if it seem to be good.” And thus, although the Lord would have been able to change the rocks into bread without sin, He was not willing to do so because the devil was suggesting it [suggerebat].89

Thomas argues that even though it may not have been sinful, Christ’s example still demonstrates something important to his followers: not to cooperate with the devil’s

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86 ST III.41.3, response. The idea comes in a quotation of John Chrysostom, which Thomas approves. Although Thomas does not state the same explicitly on the need for “taming the flesh” (ibid., ad. 1) his phrasing (and consistent Christological position) would place this exemplary teaching as nothing more than an example for others and not as if Christ himself needed to tame his flesh.

87 In the Summa, Thomas argues that it would be pointless for the devil to propose something morally indifferent; the devil only “tempts in order to induce us to sin” (ST III.41.4, obj. 1.). For this reason, Thomas argues that it would have been inordinate (read: sinful) for Christ to have performed a miracle when he could have simply done what John the Baptist did—eat locusts and honey (ST III.41.4, ad. 1: “if a man do anything inordinate out of the desire for such support [of the body], it can pertain to the sin of gluttony”). It is possible that the student notes that become Thomas’s commentary are defective concerning Thomas’s ultimate judgment on the matter of the sinfulness of the first temptation, but the reasoning of this section of the text is clear enough that is encapsulates an important piece of Thomas’s reasoning. What is essential here is that (regardless of whether the first temptation is toward something sinful or not), Thomas never contradicts Vegetius’s advice and presumably always holds that it is best for fallen humans to avoid even apparently good suggestions from the devil.


suggestion, even concerning an apparent good. However, this form of exemplarity is not always present in Christ’s actions because of his unique mission to provoke and defeat the devil in a fully voluntary manner.

Within the bounds of the *Commentary on Matthew*, Thomas’s explanation of the second temptation places such a limit on the exemplarity of Christ’s temptation. Thomas takes great care in that commentary to avoid certain senses in which the devil would be said to do violence to Christ. Thomas refers to Jerome’s opinion that “Christ virtuously permitted” the devil to tempt him, so that even things that the devil thought he was “forcing” Christ to do were in fact permitted by Christ. Thomas’s exegesis limits this permission in a number of ways, so that the devil has a minimum of power over the mind and body of Christ. For instance, Thomas prefers to deny that the second and third temptations are “according to the manner of an imaginary vision” that would have appeared only to Christ or “according to the manner of a corporeal vision” that would have appeared objectively to anyone who had been in the desert. Following the explicit affirmation of Matthew (and thus primarily as a matter of proper exegesis), Thomas argues that the first temptation was in the desert but that the other two took place in the physical localities described by the text outside the desert. The essential question regarding Christ’s exemplarity, however, is this: how did Christ get to those places?

I have delineated above how Thomas argues for a certain suffering of the devil’s power, whereby the devil is responsible for moving Christ’s body to the top of the Temple and to the mountain. Concerning the movement of Christ’s body into the city of Jerusalem, Thomas considers two options: either he was carried by the devil (and that Christ permitted this carrying) or Christ went by his own power and wisdom—he walked.

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Thomas, following a reasoning that limits the power that the devil has of Christ’s body (because it seems unfitting that Christ be carried such a long distance by Satan), prefers the latter option:

How did he take Him [to Jerusalem]? Some say that he carried Him upon himself. Others say (and indeed better), that by exhorting he persuaded Him that He go to this place [exhortando induxit ad hoc quod iret]; and Christ from the disposition of His wisdom [ex dispositione suae sapientiae], went into Jerusalem.91

The exemplarity of Christ in the first temptation—that one not cooperate with the devil even in apparent goods—recedes in the second temptation when the “disposition of Christ’s wisdom”—Christ’s elicited decision—agrees with the devil’s exhortation to proceed into Jerusalem. Thus, even if Christ’s movement toward Jerusalem is morally neutral and blameless, the exemplarity that Christ demonstrates in this second temptation is different than that of the first temptation. Christ certainly does not cooperate in any demonic suggestion toward evil, but he does cooperate in neutral suggestions that further his unique mission to defeat the devil. Thomas can argue in this way because what would be an occasion of sin for others is not for Christ. As cited above, Christ “would not have been able to commit a fault [offendere] by an occasion of some sin.”92 Christ can cooperate in such morally neutral suggestions from the devil because he is impeccable; his followers cannot because they are not.

In the Summa, Thomas treats a similar question about the occasion of sin with perhaps a greater attentiveness to the way in which Christ’s temptation should be considered exemplary for his followers. In this passage, Thomas does not consider the

manner of Christ’s movement to the temple and mountain, but rather the more general fact that Christ entered the desert to be tempted in the first place. The objector asks:

It seems that, by going into the desert to be tempted, He exposed Himself to temptation. Since, therefore, His temptation is an example to us, it seems that others too should take such steps [se ingerere] as will lead them into temptation. And yet this seems a dangerous thing to do, since rather we should avoid the occasion of being tempted.93

Thomas’s answer introduces a distinction that accounts for Christ’s exemplarity in a slightly different way than did the Commentary on Matthew. There are, Thomas argues, two occasions of temptation: one “on the part of the devil” and one “on the part of man.” The circumstances of the first are described in these terms:

such occasions of temptation are not to be avoided [non est vitanda]. Hence Chrysostom says: “Not only Christ was led into the desert by the Spirit, but all God’s children that have the Holy Ghost. For it is not enough for them to sit idle; the Holy Ghost urges them to endeavor to do something great [urget eos aliquod magnum apprehendere opus]: which is for them to be in the desert from the devil’s standpoint, for no unrighteousness, in which the devil delights, is there. … Now, there is no danger [non est periculosum] in giving the devil such an occasion of temptation; since the help of the Holy Ghost, who is the Author of the perfect deed, is more powerful than the assault of the envious devil.94

As Thomas explains, what he calls an occasion “on the part of the devil” might be more accurately described as an occasion on the part of the Holy Spirit, since it is first and foremost the Spirit that leads both Christ and other humans into such experiences, not in order that they might fail, but in order that they might “do something great.” With such direct guidance from the Spirit, however, cooperation in an occasion of demonic temptation is permissible both for Christ and for his followers. The reasoning here is slightly different than in the Commentary on Matthew; there, the priority of the devil’s

93 ST III.41.2, obj. 2.
94 Ibid., ad. 2.
intentions lead Thomas to affirm that the occasion should be avoided (at least in the case of Christ’s fallen disciples) but here the priority of the Spirit’s intentions lead Thomas to affirm that the occasion should not be avoided. Because the Spirit led Christ to the desert (and presumably to the Temple and mountain), Christ and his followers both should follow the Spirit’s prodding. The result will be that, empowered by the Spirit, even Christ’s followers will “do something great.” Between the *Commentary on Matthew* and the *Summa*, Thomas does not give clear criteria by which to judge which temptations come from the Spirit (and should therefore be sought) and which, if any, come only from the devil (and should therefore be avoided), but such is not the object of his concern in these passages. One might think that Thomas has in mind a process of discernment whereby the intention of the Spirit might be rightly determined. Whatever spiritual pedagogy may be involved, Christ’s temptation is thus an example of virtuous accomplishment of the good that others should imitate under the Spirit’s direction and against the devil’s wiles.

On the other hand, even in Thomas’s presentation in the *Summa*, Christ’s impeccability still somewhat limits the sense in which Christ’s temptation can be exemplary for his followers. The second occasion of temptation “on the part of man” occurs when “a man causes himself to be near to sin by not avoiding the occasion of sinning (*occasiones peccandi non evitans*).” As Thomas stated in his *Commentary on Matthew*, however, Christ “would not have been able to commit a fault [*offendere*] by an

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95 It should also be noted, though, that Thomas’s answer here does not directly confront the objection, which asks if the one tempted should “take steps [*se ingerere*]” to enter into temptation. He only argues here that such demonic temptation is “not to be avoided [*non est vitanda*]”—he does not address whether it should be *sought*.

96 Ibid.
occasion of some sin.”

Since Christ cannot sin, neither can he be “near to sin,” with the result that there is no occasion “on the part of man” for Christ to avoid. In this way, Christ inculpably “of His own free-will exposed Himself to be tempted by the devil” and goes to the desert “as to a field of battle” because he knows he will conquer. Thus, events and scenarios that would be potentially dangerous for those inflicted with the *fomes peccati*—events and scenarios that should be fled—are not dangerous for Christ, who needs not flee them. It is not that Christ breaches the boundaries of the occasion of temptation on the part of man—rather, it is that for Christ, there is no boundary to breach in the case of otherwise morally neutral situations. Christ is separated from sinners and in no way near to an occasion of some sin. For Christ utterly to defeat the devil, he must be able to go and conquer where others should not go and cannot conquer.

Thomas qualifies the exemplarity of Christ’s temptation precisely in order to safeguard another soteriological fact: Christ points the way to the future state of humankind in heaven. Since Christ is a comprehensor, he shows humanity here on earth the kind of freedom with which we will be endowed in the next life, an absolute freedom from difficulty in striving after the good. While Christ may not point the way through the morally ambiguous minutiae of our own fallen temptations, he nevertheless imparts hope

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97 Ibid., 118, translation modified: “non poterat offendere occasione alicuius peccati.”

98 Thomas reaffirms the sense of Christ’s inability to sin at *ST* III.18.4, obj. 3 and ad. 3. Christ’s will is “determined to the good” and could not become determined to evil. See also the discussion of Christ’s impeccability in Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange, *Reality: A Synthesis of Thomistic Thought*, trans. Patrick Cummins (St. Louis: B. Herder Book Co., 1950), 224-227. He argues that “The power to sin is not included in the idea of freedom, but is rather the defectibility of our freedom, just as the possibility of error is the defectibility of our intellect. This power to sin does not exist in God who is sovereignly free, nor in the blessed who are confirmed in good. Hence it did not exist in Christ, whose freedom, even here on earth, was the most perfect image of divine freedom. Genuine freedom then does not include disobedience, but rather excludes it” (ibid., 226). For his French, see Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange, *La Synthèse Thomiste* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1946), 349-354.
to his followers that these temptations will fall away and that we will someday have no cause to fear the devil at all.

The voluntary quality of Christ’s temptation, thirdly and finally, is also essential to the way in which it brings about a defeat of the devil. Just as Christ willingly suffered death, Thomas argues that Christ had to willingly expose himself to the devil’s attack: “that He allowed Himself to be tempted was due to His own will.”99 Without this voluntary permission, “the devil would not have dared to approach Him.”100 Nor was Christ only free before he allowed the devil’s approach; he remained free throughout the “sufferings” that the devil inflicted in the course of the temptations:

And we understand Him to have been taken up by the devil [to the Temple and mountain], not, as it were, by force, but because, as Origen says, “He followed Him in the course of His temptation like a wrestler advancing of his own accord.”101

The militaristic or agonistic image for this event is very common in Thomas’s presentation. In the Commentary on Matthew, Christ enters into “single combat [singular certamen] with the devil”102 and in the Summa, he went out “as to a field of battle [campum certaminis]” against the devil.103 In all these images, Thomas’s emphasis on Christ’s freedom in and through the battle with the devil ensures that the battle imagery does not imply that the result was uncertain. Christ always battles freely and with an assurance of victory.

It is precisely by this apparent submission to the devil’s power that he conquers the devil: “Christ came to destroy the works of the devil, not by powerful deeds, but

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99 ST III.41.1, ad. 2; see also ST III.41.2, response.
100 ST III.41.2, response.
101 ST III.41.1, ad. 2.
102 Commentary on Matthew 4, in Aquinas, Commentary on Matthew, trans. Kimball, 111.
103 ST III.41.2, response.
rather by suffering from him and his members, so as to conquer the devil by righteousness [iustitia], not by power.”\textsuperscript{104} As I have argued above, this demonstration of Christ’s justice is part of the overthrowing of the devil. The devil always implicitly holds humankind unjustly (without respect for the bounds of his conditional permission from God to punish humankind for sin), but this injustice is demonstrated publicly to God the moment that the devil attempts to claim an individual who proves himself to be without sin. God is thus perfectly in the right to remove the devil from the subordinate position he had theretofore occupied, even if the complete overthrowing of the devil is delayed until the final judgment. Ultimately, this confrontation occurs so that Christ might render humankind free from all temptation.\textsuperscript{105}

In all these reflections, Thomas is concerned to maintain the dual affirmation that Christ is, even on earth, simultaneously a wayfarer and a comprehensor—both “on the way” and already sharing the final blessings of heaven. As a wayfarer, he allows the devil to approach him, tempt him, and to do violence to his body. As a comprehensor, he has a perfect inability to sin and thereby gives a sign of hope to those who follow his footsteps. He conquers the devil perfectly by marching onto the “battlefield” of temptation and standing fast in the devil’s attack. While this status and mission grants Christ the ability to approach the devil in ways that his followers in this life cannot imitate without danger, the voluntary quality of all Christ’s temptations and of his mission to defeat the devil require that he “provoke” the devil’s attack by willingly exposing himself to the devil’s

\textsuperscript{104} ST III.41.1, ad. 2.  
\textsuperscript{105} ST III.41.1, response and Commentary on Matthew 4, in Aquinas, Commentary on Matthew, trans. Kimball, 112.
temptation. Thus, the uniqueness of Christ’s mission is, for Thomas, what ultimately undergirds the difference between Christ’s temptation and that of other human beings.

**C. The possibility of Christ’s inner demonic temptation in St. Thomas’s corpus**

In the preceding, I have established that the punitive temptation from the flesh is absent from Christ and that the external temptation Christ endures is punitive precisely in light of the violence done by the devil in taking Christ to the top of the Temple and to the mountain. However, in order to thoroughly consider the ways in which Christ’s temptation might be considered to be punitive, I must address whether the other form of temptation Thomas recognizes as partially punitive—inner demonic temptation—can be found in Christ. This task is particularly difficult in light of the fact that Thomas himself does not explicitly address internal demonic temptation when he clarifies the ways in which Christ was tempted:

> Temptation which comes from an enemy can be without sin: because it comes about by merely outward suggestion. But temptation which comes from the flesh cannot be without sin, because such a temptation is caused by pleasure and concupiscence … And hence, Christ wished to be tempted by an enemy, but not by the flesh.  

Since Thomas himself does not address this question directly, this third category of temptation is rarely discussed in the secondary literature but its place is essential to an estimation of the “satisfactory” nature of Christ’s temptation discussed above.  

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106 Thomas uses the word, citing Ambrose at *ST III*.41.2, response.

107 *ST III*.41.1, ad. 3.

108 Most modern authors restrict their comments so as to say that Christ endured the external temptation of the devil and did not experience the inner temptation of the flesh, but this distinction does not exhaust the way that Thomas addresses temptation. As I say above, though, Thomas himself does not address this third kind of temptation directly in his treatment of Christ’s temptation, so this neglect is understandable. I will review here some important voices in recent literature that do not address (either positively or negatively) the matter of Christ’s inner temptation by the devil.
First, Joseph Wawrykow allows the distinction between inner and outer to correspond to that between the flesh and the devil. After clarifying that the main distinction in temptation is between that from without and that from within, he argues that “The devil tempts people from without, employing the things of this world to try to lure people away from God and into sin” (Joseph Wawrykow, Westminster Handbook to Thomas Aquinas (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2005), 147, emphasis original). Yet, this explanation ignores Aquinas’s claims that the devil also “employs” the things of the flesh for the same purpose. Wawrykow elsewhere further restricts the devil’s ability to act on human subjects—even contradicting Thomas’s point that the devil can work inwardly on the human person. Wawrykow states that “No angel can work inwardly on a human; the inward moving of the person is reserved to God…” (ibid., 38). As for the inner temptation, Wawrykow ascribes it purely to the flesh and argues that “temptation from within is itself a consequence of sin; hence, those who lack sin, lack such temptation” (ibid., 148). This argument may hold true, but not solely through a denial of the fomes in Christ. Concerning this inner temptation, Wawrykow states, not without some difficulty, that “Temptation can be strong, but there is no compulsion to sin. … But it is not possible to resist all temptation, at least not by the exertion of one’s natural powers” (ibid., 147). This latter claim seems to imply at least some sort of compulsion. Based on this distinction, however, Wawrykow argues that neither Adam nor Christ suffered such internal assault. To be clear, then, Wawrykow does not acknowledge any sort of internal assault from the devil, either for fallen humanity or for Christ.

Thomas Weinandy also holds to this inner/outer-flesh/devil distinction. In his early work on the “fallenness” of Christ’s humanity, Weinandy argues that temptation is a result of Christ’s weakened (read: fallen) moral conditions, but Christ’s particular suffering of it does not share the “morally corrupting effects of original sin.” That is, “the received tradition seems to demand that Jesus’ temptations could not have risen from within him since he did not share our concupiscence, i.e., our propensity to sin” (Weinandy, Likeness, 98-9). Further, Weinandy argues that a denial of Christ’s internal temptation is dogmatically required by the canons of three councils in Denzinger: Constantinople II, Lateran in 649, and Toledo XI. Again, this arrangement may be true, but a sole denial of concupiscence in Christ is not sufficient as a treatment of Thomas’s thought on the subject. There is no hint in Weinandy’s treatment of the equally traditional discussion of the devil’s temptation of humankind from within. Weinandy’s more recent work still adheres to this inner/outer distinction: Christ “did not have an inner propensity to sin (concupiscence),” but he “truly experienced … temptation and harassment by Satan” (Thomas Weinandy, Does God Suffer? (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2000), 212).

Weinandy states, on the one hand, that “Jesus’ temptations verify that he genuinely assumed our human condition. Otherwise, he could not sympathize with our weakness…” (Weinandy, Likeness, 98). But after describing the details of a fully fleshed-out temptation, he argues that Christ’s temptation was not like that: “Temptation presupposes enticement. There must be a lure and an attraction. … Our concupiscence conspires with external stimuli to give rise to temptation. … Our memory and imagination in turn spawn temptations. Jesus appears to be in a different situation” (ibid). Weinandy attempts to overcome this problem by arguing that the denial of inner temptation makes Christ’s temptation even stronger than our own. That is, in the same way that the beatific vision heightens Christ’s suffering in Thomas’s account, Weinandy argues that Christ’s perfect resistance to temptation makes his experience of it still stronger, the devil attacking Christ “with a ferocity that we never experience.” This, in itself, may be the case—however, insofar as Weinandy does not address the distinct subject of inner demonic temptation, his treatment is somewhat incomplete.

In a similar vein, Matthew Levering states that believers can trust in Christ’s mercy “since Christ has undergone the same suffering.” Yet there are aspects of our universal fallen condition that lie beyond what Christ could fittingly assume. “Christ’s temptation is not absolutely the same as ours, because his is without sin.” Faithfully expositing Thomas’s explicit claims here, Levering argues that
of this neglect in both the primary and secondary literature, any proposed answer to the question of Christ’s inner temptation must be somewhat speculative—though there is certainly some evidence to indicate his answer.

There are two aspects to this question, pertaining to the two faculties that Thomas admits to be susceptible to the devil’s internal attack: the sensitive appetite and the imagination. I do not need to consider the first of these in detail; I have clarified in Chapter 5 that the devil can only interiorly attack the sensitive appetite of an individual whose temperance is not absolutely perfect—but Christ’s is absolutely perfected. 109 For

109 Paul Gondreau has also considered at some length whether it is possible to affirm that Christ was tempted by his passions (though without addressing the action of the devil in such temptation). Gondreau’s conclusions are appropriately tentative. In his reading, Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane was able to undergo “an instinctive affective impulse towards the natural good … before any kind of awareness on the part of his reason” (Gondreau, Christ’s Passions, 309-10). Earlier in the same paragraph, Gondreau argues: “Aquinas does not opt for a rationalistic take … on the integration of affectivity into Christ’s moral life, as if the unmitigated imperium of reason suppresses the proper spontaneity or inclination of Jesus’ sense appetite, only to allow it to move when automated to do so ‘on command’ in a cold, restricted, planned, and calculated manner, or as if Christ’s reason imposes its rule on his sensibility from above or from without.” But even though Gondreau wants to maintain the autonomy of the sensitive appetite in Christ, this can only be done in a fairly restrictive way. As Gondreau also clarifies, “By virtue of a unique grace, Christ’s affectivity instinctively and innately followed the good of reason, which ensured that every passion worked towards its natural end” (Gondreau, Christ’s Passions, 309-10; see also ibid., 340: “Jesus experienced a supremely ordered life where all his actions, including movements of affectivity, proceeded from on high … i.e., where all his powers worked in fundamental synergy with reason’s imperium”).

When Gondreau applies this analysis to Christ’s affectivity in Christ’s temptations in the desert, his conclusions, he acknowledges, contradict his previous analysis. In order for a temptation to be “real” in Gondreau’s estimation, it must be toward an object that is perceived as desirable. He states that “the devil’s tempting influences proceed nowhere without the presentation of an object which, though illicit according to reason and the higher human good, is yet perceived by the senses as desirable and good—and desirability, or appetibility, implies an already initiated affective inclination to the object in question. If, therefore, Jesus recognized the desirability of the objects proffered by the devil, and the realism of his temptations requires that he did, it stands to reason that he was, even at the opening stages of the assault, affectively inclined to goods that were in reality unlawful. Such an affective inclination to unlawful goods seems to undermine Jesus’ supposed immunity to temptation from within, or temptation a carne. (Ibid., 359).” His resolution is to argue that Christ experienced an “instinctive inclination of both his intellectual and lower appetites to the natural good in a purely spontaneous manner” (ibid., 360), despite the fact that that inclination is to a good “illicit according to
this reason, a passionate interior attack from the devil is not possible in Christ. The imagination is a different case—as noted significantly by Jean-Pierre Torrell’s work on Christ’s temptation. However, while Torrell’s suggestions are happily taken as broadly Thomistic, Torrell is willing to diverge from Thomas’s own treatment in some ways. 110

reason.” There are, it seems to me, two ambiguities that are not resolved in this explanation of Christ’s temptation: the instinctive character of the sensitive appetite and the natural object of that appetite. First, as Gondreau eventually admits, the instinctiveness of Christ’s sensitive appetite is somewhat equivocal: this instinctiveness is described as both following in the Garden and desert a good that is ultimately illicit (and thus not commanded by reason) and only instinctively following goods that align with the good of reason. When Gondreau acknowledges this impasse, he punts: “this position does not resolve all the problems, and, in my opinion, represents one of the elements of Thomas’ theology of Christ’s human affectivity that remains open to further scrutiny. For, if the penetration of reason into Christ’s sensibility was so radically extensive that every movement of his affectivity was instinctively and innately oriented to reason’s imperium, it remains unclear how this holds true for the instinctive impulse of affectivity that Jesus experienced in the Garden of Gethsemane, even if this impulse offered before his reason had determined what was best to choose. … For all its noted accomplishments, however, Thomas’ doctrine on the moral quality of Christ’s affectivity leaves this matter unsettled” (Gondreau, Christ’s Passions, 317). The same goes, then, for the temptations in the desert, where there is, as Gondreau holds, an identical appetitive inclination against the good of reason.

Second, from another perspective, the precise quality of the sensitive appetite’s natural end is also at stake. At points, Gondreau argues that this end is the good of human life itself, but in the same paragraph he argues that the “proper object” of the sensitive appetite can be disordered and out of line with the good that reason commands (ibid). Since, as Gondreau admits, it is only grace that keeps Christ’s sensitive appetite in line with reason, the natural state of that appetite manifestly does not incline to the good of human life itself, but is indifferent to it. As Thomas states in his Sent. Comm. II.32.2.1: “a supernatural principle is not subjected to anything positive in man [supernaturalia principia non supponunt aliquid positive in homine].” Nature cannot demand grace.

Gondreau, like Thomas and the Damascene before him, wants to affirm both halves: Christ’s affectivity is perfectly ordered to reason as Adam’s was by a supernatural grace in the unfallen state; and Christ’s affectivity maintains a limited autonomy by which Christ shares in our fallen experience of passion. In arguing this way, Gondreau laudably wants to maintain as much identity with our fallen moral circumstances as possible. However, Thomas only has two historical states from which he must choose in his explanation of Christ’s affectivity: either the perfect rational governance of the unfallen Adamic state, in which all affective movement is perfectly voluntary; or the fallen condition in which that movement has a political obedience to reason whereby the “members” sometimes rebel against reason. Thomas’s explicit claims—based at least in part on John of Damascus’s De Fide Orthodoxa—tend to an identification with the unfallen Adamic state. Gondreau, however, wants to forge a Thomistic middle state wherein the perfect order to reason is combined with a certain sort of spontaneity, but in doing so, Christ’s human state is that of neither Adam nor fallen humanity—Christ identifies perfectly with the moral conditions of neither Adam nor his progeny.

110 Jean-Pierre Torrell’s analysis in Le Christ en ses Mystères: La vie et l’Oeuvre de Jésus selon saint Thomas d’Aquin, t. 1 (Paris: Desclée, 1999), 224-242 addresses the possibility of an “internal” temptation as some length, though Torrell explicitly diverges from Thomas’s own positions first and foremost by denying that the second and third temptations are physical transportations as Thomas
For this reason, I will briefly present Thomas’s statements on this matter and show that their cumulative force indicates that Thomas would not affirm that Christ’s imagination was tempted from within by the devil.

As noted above, Thomas’s explicit statements about Christ’s temptations only affirm that the devil appeared to him in some visible form. The Commentary on Matthew affirms this visibility in a few places. Most obviously, Thomas speaks of the “corporeal form” that the devil took when tempting Christ. Similarly, using the “stages” of sin from Gregory the Great and as interpreted by Alexander of Hales (as in Chapter 4), Thomas indicates that any “interior” movement of the devil would have to come with pleasure and thus would begin to be sin. Finally, the Commentary on Matthew also

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112 Ibid., 112. Alexander of Hales uses this argument explicitly (and, I argued above, contradictorily) in order to deny that the devil tempted Christ from within; Thomas does not use this reasoning in this way, but there appears to be a clear textual dependence here on Alexander’s usage. From this dependency, one might argue that Thomas would be predisposed to accept Alexander’s usage as well.
uses the textual authority of Matthew’s affirmations to argue against the idea that the devil could produce an image or mirage to Jesus’s imagination or senses in the desert.\footnote{Ibid., 116-7.}

The evidence of the \textit{Summa} on this point is sparse. The affirmation at \textit{ST III}.41.1, reply 3 bases Christ’s assumption of demonic attack in the fact that it “comes about by merely outward suggestion,” and for that reason one might presume that Thomas believes the devil’s attack to have been only exterior.\footnote{\textit{ST III}.41.1, ad. 3. \textit{ST III}.41.3, ad. 2 contrasts the “visible temptations which are related by Matthew and Luke” to “certain other assaults which perhaps Christ suffered from the devil during the time of his fast.” There are two reasons this should not be read as an affirmation that Christ would have been tempted interiorly. First, these “other assaults” are not described as “invisible,” so there is no positive reason to believe that is the nature of the contrast Thomas is drawing. Second, the “visibility” of these temptations may refer simply to the fact that they are recounted by the Gospels (and thus ‘visible’ to the reader). The opposite of visible here would thus be ‘hidden’ or ‘unrecorded,’ not ‘invisible’ or ‘interior.’} Perhaps the strongest evidence—and the only evidence that discusses Christ’s temptation in any proximity to Thomas’s affirmation of internal demonic temptation—comes from the \textit{De Malo}. There, in the midst of his question on the internal instigations of the devil, Thomas states:

The contrast that Thomas draws is fairly clear; if Thomas had wanted to affirm that the devil had tempted Christ in some internal way, this passage would have been an ideal place to do so. Instead, precisely as Thomas distinguishes between internal and external forms of demonic suggestion, he limits Christ’s temptation to the external or visible form. On this limited, though fairly significant evidence, it seems that Thomas would intend to exclude any interior imaginative temptation from Christ.

\footnote{\textit{De Malo} III.4, response.}
One could further speculate that Thomas argues in this way in order to maintain
the fullness of grace in which Thomas knows Christ to have existed. I have argued above
that there was a distinct Adamic grace that protected him from an imaginative attack from
the devil, so that the devil had a “minimum of power” against humankind before sin.116
Since Thomas shows some interest in limiting the power of the devil over Christ’s mind
and body,117 it would be consonant both with that limitation and with Christ’s possession
of the fullness of grace that the devil would not have this power over Christ. In this way,
Christ’s freedom from such attack would come to him as part of his status as a
comprehensor who imparts hope in his followers by showing them the future condition of
heaven.

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Thomas’s presentation of Christ’s temptation by the devil shares the same
affirmations as does John of Damascus’s De Fide Orthodoxa. Both John and Thomas try
to uphold two claims: that Christ’s temptation undoes Adam’s temptation by reenacting
that temptation without fault; and that Christ’s temptation enters into the fallen conditions
following Adam’s sin so as to sympathize with the fallen condition and undo it from
within. Though each of these claims plays an important place in John and Thomas’s
soteriology, these claims can be difficult to reconcile. How can a single event of
temptation—even if composed of three different temptations—be both “fallen” and
“unfallen”?

116 ST II-II.165.2, ad. 2.
Thomas, for his part, affirms the “unfallenness” of Christ’s temptation through an exposition and affirmation of an Adam/Christ typology in his detailed accounts of Christ’s demonic temptation. Those detailed presentations depend heavily on this imagery to explain the means and purposes of Christ’s temptation. Christ’s temptation undoes Adam’s, as the condition of the possibility of fallen temptation in his descendants. The two distinct forms of fallen forms of temptation (the *fomes peccati* and internal demonic temptation) are rejected in Christ’s case on the grounds that they would not contribute to Christ’s satisfaction for sin and would detract from his status as a comprehensor who shares proleptically in the glorified condition of humankind.

Thomas also recognizes in a distinct way the “fallenness” of Christ’s temptation through his affirmation that it satisfies for human sin—and this means that Christ must prospectively take “on himself the punishment due to the sin of the other”118 and retrospectively offer “something which the offended one loves equally, or even more than he detested the offence.” Such an affirmation means that Christ’s temptation should share in something of the fallen conditions human beings experience after sin, and Thomas identifies this component as the violence that the devil does to Christ’s body by taking him to the top of the Temple and to the mountaintop. Even if Christ’s temptation does not share the two distinctively fallen forms of temptation, it is still superabundantly satisfactory through the taking on of this punitive aspect of temptation. Any further evaluative comments on this arrangement can await the general conclusion.

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118 *ST* III.14.1, response.
In this study, I have traced two distinct trajectories concerning the diagnosis of human fallenness and its remedy by the atoning work of Christ’s temptation. According to the early Origenistic tradition, thoughts and desires within the human subject that tend toward evil find their origin in the personal intervention of demonic agencies. In a subordinate sense, one can speak here of a “fleshly” temptation, but it is one that is externalized and personified—not purely internal or anthropological. Even before Maximus, Evagrius had articulated a Christological consideration of this subjective tyranny of the devil: drawing on the narratives of Christ’s three-fold temptation, Evagrius saw Christ as an exemplar in his confrontation with the three “root” demons that tempt humankind to sin. Maximus thinks much the same, though he parses the categories according to the anthropological appetitive categories of attraction and repulsion and articulates more clearly the empowering character of Christ’s temptation. Thus, Christ confronts and defeats the demons of attraction at the beginning of his ministry in the desert and the demons of repulsion at the end of his ministry in Gethsemane and on Golgotha. In this way, Christ’s temptation is an empowering example, both “putting off the principalities and powers” of the devil’s tyranny and showing others the way to follow.
According to the tradition of the fomes peccati—which can be traced in other
terms back at least to Augustine—the relevant corruption of human nature is understood
primarily as an internal corruption of the sensitive appetite. Here, the idea of a “fleshly”
temptation is perfectly accurate; the corruption of human nature is conceived as an
intrinsic disordering of the lower appetitive faculty to the inordinate pursuit of apparent
goods. In a subordinate sense, one can speak in this context of an inner demonic
temptation, but it is a corollary of God’s withdrawal of original grace from the
imagination and the sensitive appetite—it cannot happen without this withdrawal that is
the formal cause of disordered concupiscence. Accordingly, this tradition refuses to
reproduce a very common—perhaps even the most common—form of human temptation
(disordered concupiscence) in Christ, since this would amount to denying a
superabundance of grace and virtue in Christ. But in Thomas’s work this refusal does not
diminish the reality of Christ’s temptation by the devil and, Thomas would argue, it
increases the saving efficacy of his temptation. Essentially, Thomas conceives of Christ’s
temptation as satisfactory: it takes on something of the punishment for Adam’s sin and
offers to God something loved more than the offense was hated. According to Thomas,
Christ allowed the devil a certain amount of external authority over his body during his
temptation—an authority that was not present in Adam’s original state. In this way,
Christ has compassion with the misery of our fallen condition and undoes that misery in
his confrontation with Satan. And because he is full of grace and virtue (thus lacking
concupiscence), he is able to pass those attributes on to his followers.

What is one to do with these distinct trajectories? One might legitimately rehearse
the particular difficulties of Maximus and Thomas. For Maximus, there are questions
about the nature of virtue, about his understanding of the corruption of human nature, and
about the beginning of appetition in demonic thoughts. First, given that Maximus sees
demons at work in the appetitive and apprehensive aspects of fallen human beings
throughout their lives, how (if at all) can Maximus speak of a virtue—a good habit—that
resides precisely in those faculties? Are the lower faculty not truly unruly or unrulable?
The basis for an answer must be found in the way that Maximus accounts for the final
state of human desire in eternity, but a more precise response is needed. Second, can
Maximus speak of a true corruption of human nature itself? Is humanity’s “second
nature,” in the words of Trent’s decree on original sin, a change “for the worse”? How
does Maximus make sense of James 1:13-14, which affirms that temptation comes from
“one’s own desire”? Does that affirmation not point to some purely anthropological
corruption? Could Maximus convincingly interpret this verse in the framework of his
demonology?

Finally for Maximus, how do demonic thoughts and desires relate? This question
is particularly pertinent in light of the medieval distinction (found in Alexander of Hales)
between a demonic apprehensive attack and a demonic appetitive attack. Evagrius, for
instance, speaks in terms of the “spirit/thought of gluttony,” but does not seem to
distinguish between a thought—which seems to be about perception—and the
corresponding desire—which would indicate the beginning of movement toward the
object. The problem is perhaps somewhat anachronistic because none of the Greek
figures involved seem to be concerned with this particular distinction. Indeed, much the
same is the case for their Western counterparts in Cassian and Gregory the Great. But the
later medieval tradition certainly would want more clarity in this regard. Further answers
here would probably be found in the details of Maximus’s spiritual pedagogy of separating thoughts and the passions that they suggest.

As for Thomas, one might inquire further about the adequacy of his articulation of the satisfactory nature of Christ’s temptation. Thomas’s articulation consists in the bodily violence done to Christ during his temptation, in his being taken to the top of the Temple and to the mountain. As Thomas defines it, satisfaction requires the taking on of some else’s punishment. If, however, Christ’s satisfaction for sin resides in the violence done to his body by the devil, is it not the case that Christ’s suffering—and not his temptation as such—satisfies for sin? The movement of Christ’s body by the devil quite literally sets the scene for his temptation, but can Thomas say that the temptation itself—the proposition of illicit goods to Christ by the devil—takes on something of Adam’s punishment? Instead, is not the temptation considered in its essence a clear repetition of Adam and Eve’s prelapsarian temptation in the garden? In this respect, Torrell’s suggestion of an interior imaginative attack against Christ is happily received since such an attack is surely not prelapsarian. Though Thomas himself does not support this solution, it likely does not undermine any of Thomas’s central Christological principles.

These questions are certainly important, but they should not distract from the work that both Maximus and Thomas do in their Christological reflections on Christ’s temptation—or, ultimately, from the work the Christ himself has accomplished through his temptation on behalf of humankind. Rather than criticize either thinker in themselves, I would like to offer some final synthetic remarks about the theological trajectories traced and the historical development involved. These remarks indicate, I believe, the most fruitful avenues for future study of the nature of temptation and of Christ’s rectification
of our fallen state. In a first section, I will suggest historical and theological areas for future study of Christian traditions of temptation (I). After briefly outlining the work yet to be done in these areas, I will consider broadly the fate of the devil in the history of Western theology (II) and offer certain suggestions about how that fate could be changed (III).

I. Future Study in Christian Traditions of Temptation

Historically, two areas for future study are particularly worth noting: early Latin reception of Evagrian teaching about demonic temptation and John of Damascus’s understanding of Christ’s “natural and blameless passions.” While the Origenistic tradition of demonic temptation can be found in a variety of Eastern figures, its reception in the Latin West is fairly narrow. And even though John Cassian does not seem to have had any direct effect on Thomas’s view of temptation, Cassian is certainly the key figure in the Latin reception of this tradition. Cassian’s *Conferences* abound with references to Evagrian spiritual practices and to an Evagrian diagnosis of troublesome thoughts. Like Evagrius, Cassian traces evil thoughts only to the devil: “A train of thoughts comes too into being from the devil when these undermine us with the attractiveness of sin and when the devil gets to us with his hidden snares.”¹ Cassian’s diagnosis leads to distinctive spiritual practices, foreshadowing later Ignatian discernment of spirits. Cassian draws an analogy of a money-changer who scrupulously weighs his coins to determine their value: similarly, the ascetic must consider thoughts and the actions they suggest to determine whether they are of God or from the devil. This process is so important to Cassian that

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one of his interlocutors can claim that “discernment is the source and root of all the virtues.”

Beyond Cassian, distinct echoes of this demonology can be found in Gregory the Great, whom I treated at greater length in Chapter 4. But several other figures require more investigation that I could afford above, especially, Augustine, Gennadius, and, later, Hugh of St. Victor. Augustine’s role in the tradition of inner demonic temptation is unclear. To what extent might Augustine assign a prominent place in temptation to the devil? In particular, how might the Liber Ecclesiasticorum Dogmatum—by Gennadius, but ascribed to Augustine for centuries—have affected the way Augustine has been interpreted? When, for instance, Gennadius states that “Not all of our evil thoughts are [always] excited by the influence of the devil,” does this reflect Augustine’s mind on the matter? How does Hugh of St. Victor’s view of an “external invisible” temptation of the devil from On the Sacraments relate to these sources, and how is his view modified in Peter the Lombard? Further investigation of all of these figures would be immensely fruitful for tracing the reception of Eastern Christian demonology. Whether one appraises this tradition positively or negatively, these figures would help explain the ways in which these traditions were adopted and adapted in the early West. Especially significant would be a close investigation of their understanding of thoughts and desires: whether there is a clear distinction between them; who can instigate each; and how they conceive of the beginnings of culpability.

2 Ibid., 67; see also ibid., 57-8.
3 St. Leo the Great may also have important contributions to this topic. See Anne Field, The Binding of the Strong Man: The Teaching of St. Leo the Great (Ann Arbor, MI: Word of Life Press, 1976), though Field, by her own admission, does not follow Leo’s Latin texts closely.
Second, the translation and use of John of Damascus’s *De Fide Orthodoxa* was an essential part of medieval reception of Greek Christology. In Chapter 4, I have indicated certain deficiencies in the Christological sections of Burgundio of Pisa’s popular translation of the *DFO*. While an accurate translation would not likely have changed the substance of medieval or, particularly, Thomas’s articulation of Christ’s passions, there are certain apparent disjunctions between John’s original text and Thomas’s articulation. On the one hand, Thomas recognizes that the *fomes peccati* leads at times to constitutionally unavoidable, inculpable disordered movements of the sensitive appetite. One could accurately describe these movements as (1) a consequence of the Fall for which (2) the baptized individual cannot be held responsible but which (3) must be denied in Christ because of their fundamentally disordered nature. On the other hand, John of Damascus’s text affirms that (3) Christ’s natural and blameless passions are those that are (2) “out of our control” and (1) enter human life as a result of Adam’s sin. Though John did not have in mind the medieval *fomes peccati* when he formulated his criteria for Christ’s passibility, there is an apparent disjunction between these two articulations of human passibility: (1) both damaged by the fall, (2) both (potentially) inculpable, but (3) each form receiving apparently divergent Christological applications. What other criteria might be implicit in John’s work that would help these views to coincide? Without the specification of some other criterion, this disjunction would point to opposed conceptions of virtue and sinlessness in John and Thomas: What is true virtue and how did Christ have it? What is true sinlessness, and how did Christ possess it in his temptation? To respond to these questions, future work might fruitfully trace the
medieval reception of Burgundio’s translation and locate places where his translation noticeably affects the reception of John’s Christology.

From a more systematic perspective, there are three further questions that deserve discussion: the “ranks” of the devil; the place of deception in the Fall and sin, and the necessity of temptation in the fallen condition. Concerning the first, Origen is quite clear that the devil has well-formed battalions and ranks, organized according to the vices and kinds of sins they hope to inspire. Aquinas, too, assigns a question to the investigation (and general affirmation) of the order and precedence of demons in their natural ranks. Modern voices, however, are not so content with this solution. Hans Urs von Balthasar states that

it is incorrect to speak of a somehow organized ‘realm’ of demons, let alone a ‘corpus mysticum diaboli [a mystical body of Satan].’ … we cannot conclude from [the centrality of Satan in the New Testament] that there is an organized imperium, nor can we assume that a clear distinction is to be drawn between devil and demons: what is hostile to God is both one and many; it is anonymous and amorphous.⁵

Balthasar’s point is well-taken: if good is characterized by order, harmony, and charity, should not the devil’s house be divided against itself, the cause of its own downfall? In that light, how can earlier voices articulate so confidently the ranks and order of the demonic hosts?

The monks of the desert would likely respond to Balthasar that, as far as epistemology goes, they are on the most solid ground to be found, engaged in daily warfare with these demons. The monks’ description of the devil’s ranks thus becomes their counter-measures and battle plan. Today, on the other hand, one might still hold systematically that the devil is the ultimate cause of his own downfall while recognizing

that evil often succeeds precisely when it convinces us that it is of a whole, internally consistent. Evil is self-contradictory but its greatest lie is to hold itself together and appear intact. The foundation of the devil’s house of cards has been destroyed by Christ, but it has not yet totally collapsed. If these observations are accurate, do they justify the monastic and scholastic confidence concerning the order of the devil’s ranks? How, ultimately, should the Christian describe evil? One? Many? Somehow both?

Second, there is the matter of the role of the devil’s deception in Eastern accounts of the sin of Adam. Whether it be Gregory of Nyssa or Maximus the Confessor, deception and intellectual error are key components in Eastern conceptions of human sin. Both Gregory and Maximus, I have shown, talk about intellectual error as an originating and recurring feature of human sinfulness, but is not the Christian conception of sin primarily or even exclusively about willful disobedience? Is not the key claim of Romans 7 that we somehow still choose what we know to be wrong? At times, however, an invocation of deception—especially at the devil’s hands—appears to be an essential way to explain God’s mercy toward humankind. The prevalence of the legend of the cheirograph in some parts of Eastern Christianity is a key instance of this invocation.\footnote{See Stone, Adam’s Contract with Satan, discussed in notes in Chapter 3.}

Despite appearances to the contrary, this legend should not be understood as merely self-exculpatory, but the point is that the question of the relationship of intellectual and volitional error in Adam is a deep and recurring one.

Third and finally, there is the matter of the necessity of temptation in this life. Thomas’s recommendations on this topic, for one, shift to an extent between the Sentences commentary and the Summa—guided, it seems, by the complex interactions of pastoral and theological considerations. In the Sentences commentary, he mitigates the
necessity of temptation so that people will not seek it out and thereby fall into sin; in the
*Summa*, he recognizes that the Holy Spirit can guide one into trial and that such situations
are not to be avoided. The Origenistic tradition is fully in agreement with this latter
recommendation. For Maximus, at least, temptation is unequivocally a *sine qua non* of
salvation and only “the one who competes according to the rules will be crowned” (2
Timothy 2:5). In the Eastern tradition, can one seek out temptation *too much*? How might
the desert monks—who have withdrawn there precisely in order to fight the devil—
articulate a “near occasion of sin”? If one can seek out temptation, when does one begin
to *cooperate* with it? In the Western tradition, how positively can the purposes of
temptation be articulated? If God allowed Adam to be tempted even before sin, does not
temptation make up a part of God’s *original* plan for human salvation? How has it
maintained its original role and how has its role been changed by sin?

All of these questions are important to a proper Christian articulation of
temptation and none of them has a univocal answer. Future historical and theological
research in any of these areas would prove to be both speculatively and pastorally
significant, both probing more deeply into the mysteries of God’s saving will for
humankind and explaining the Christian’s attitude toward one of the most confounding
aspects of that will.

II. The Fate of the Devil in the Latin West

After Gregory I, the Latin West invokes the devil less and less as a systematic
way of thinking about problematic “inner” tendencies in human nature and relies more
and more on a combination of the purely anthropological categories of concupiscence and
(later) “instinct” to account for such tendencies. In this way, Latin Christianity shares much in common with the early rabbinic interpretation of the yetser hara discussed in the introduction to this work. To briefly review those interpretations, the Second Temple world took the devil and his suggestions very seriously for a variety of reasons: Qumran’s concern about outsiders and the need to keep insiders observant, Paul’s worry about the majority of Israel’s rejection of the Gospel, an anthropological theodicy, among perhaps many others. In such a reading, the yetser hara would be truly evil, coming as it would from the devil’s suggestion. But another strand of early Jewish interpretation—recoiling in part from the apparent dualism of the first strand—thinks of the yetser hara much more as instinct, “domesticating” desire, calling it God’s creation, and articulating a this-worldly τέλος for which these desires are needed. The dualism of the first strand is thus mitigated and the yetser hara is then able to be affirmed as “very good.” While this second strand has of late held sway in Jewish studies, the first strand has not gone away and in some respects is making a resurgence.

This same gamut of interpretations is also found in the Latin West, from the somewhat dualistic theories of demonic temptation in Cassian and Gregory the Great to the early Augustinian articulation of concupiscence as an interiorly disordered desire. Like the second Jewish strain of thought above, the Christian version also “domesticates” disordered desire by placing it purely into anthropological categories. However, unlike the Jewish version, the Christian version additionally sees disordered desire as a consequence of sin and thus as punishment from God. It is not created by God, but rather permitted by God. And so, while the Jewish version of the second strain might map rather
comfortably onto the modern concept of “instinct,” the Christian version maps there less comfortably.

Some explanation of this claim is in order. Scientifically, instinct (and perhaps reflex as well) indicates a “hard-wired” drive that serves a definable purpose for the survival of the individual or the species unbeknownst to (or prior to the knowledge of) the individual who experiences that drive. Defined in this way, instincts are wholly in line with our natural end. Though disordered movements of concupiscence are understood by St. Thomas as an expression of the “natural” relationship between intellect and sensibility, such movements do not serve any positive end of human nature—they disorder us, both interiorly and socially. As such, the Christian concept of disordered concupiscence is not “needed” for any end of the human individual or species. In this particular way, disordered concupiscence does not correspond with instinct (as the yetser hara may in the second strain of Judaism above). But disordered concupiscence does correspond with instinct insofar as it domesticates disordered desires inside of anthropology. Thus, while disordered concupiscence has some potential for interdisciplinary study and comparison with scientific categories, it is not capable of reduction to naturalistic categories and must be affirmed in light of the spiritual or supernatural ends of humankind.

Moving for a moment into the modern era, what is the Christian to do with behavioral science and the discipline of psychology? I am not in a position to offer an etiology for the modern psychological disciplines or even a basic map of the state of these disciplines, but certain observations are in order regarding psychological behaviorism. Modern behaviorism most likely conflicts with a Christian account of concupiscence in two ways: the lack of a way to mark the beginning of human moral responsibility and, more deeply, the lack of the very category of moral evil in human psychology. Concerning the first, behaviorism considers there to be such a great continuity between drive and action that the sort of moral responsibility present in an account of concupiscence (and any other non-deterministic framework) is impossible. Concerning the second, it is clear enough that a naturalistic account of human action cannot speak in moral absolutes; there is, perhaps, an id that drives us to certain socially unacceptable behaviors but these impulses could not be described as evil in the way a Christian would want to use the term. Nevertheless, there is a certain continuity between

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8 For “behaviorism” I use the sense conveyed in Yankelovich and Barrett, *Ego and Instinct*, 220-226, where they begin with an analogy to lupus: “Lupus presents us with an example of a response by a living organism that does not require either cognition or consciousness. It shows a swift, regulatory response on the part of the organism—made vivid by its destructiveness—which does not involve the suspect concepts of purpose, freedom, or will. The process is purely automatic, and it contains all that is needed in the behaviorist model. There is a living organism, represented by the reticular activating system. There is an environment, represented by the body tissues. The organism responds to changes in the environment in a complex fashion, but without requiring us to postulate any mental process whatsoever, [sic] No discussion of free choice, will, or decision need cloud the issue. A stimulus in the form of the kidney’s protein provides the necessary and sufficient conditions to bring about the response. The entire process can be expressed in physicalistic language, can be translated into 'operational definitions,' and is explicable in terms of measurable chemical processes. The most stringent behaviorists maintain that this model can be applied to all human actions—at least to those that represent the proper domain of a scientific psychology” (ibid., 221). And in the case of more moderate behaviorists, “intervening variables” do not affect the overall deterministic framework of their study.

9 The lack of the first starting point is captured by another description of behaviorism from Yankelovich and Barrett: “Behaviorism is usually referred to as S-R psychology, standing for Stimulus-Response. One psychologist has noted that behaviorism is increasingly becoming the study of the hyphen between the S and the R” (ibid., 221-2). But this study of the hyphen never leads the behaviorist to question their basic framework for human action: They never lose faith that the deterministic process between the S and the R can and will be scientifically measured, given further advancements.
behaviorism and disordered concupiscence insofar both recognize troubling affective propensities to be part of the natural (and, from the theologically-minded parties, fallen) condition of humankind. The difference is, simply stated, whether human beings at some point are responsible for or can intentionally do anything about them.

What has all this consideration of concupiscence and instinct to do with the devil? Not much—but that is precisely the point. Neither modern psychology nor Western theology at large has any particular need of the devil to explain any given human action. Arising from significant theological concerns, Western theology, for its part, has neglected the urgency that drove earlier demonology. There are three areas in which this growing neglect is significant. Arranged according to their historical progression, the devil is no longer (or at least rarely) considered necessary in (1) an account of personal sin, (2) with regard to an account of human protology, or (3) in Christian accounts of the atonement. The first of these shifts from the devil’s importance can be located relatively early. After Cassian and perhaps Gregory the Great, the devil lost his prominent place in predominant Western Christian accounts of an individual human’s thoughts and desires. Disordered concupiscence, in short, renders the devil’s inner temptation largely redundant, merely copying or amplifying desires that arise all too naturally in the human heart independently of the devil. In modern times, and as it has been pointed out by people quite close to me, “We humans don’t need the devil’s help to do evil.” Insofar as this claim intends to uphold the human capacity for radical evil, it is certainly true. But it does not perfectly capture the problem that the Origenistic trajectory intended to solve by invoking the devil’s role in “inner” human temptation.

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10 I allow myself to speak for a moment in abstraction here from any given thinker; I take the three coming observations to be trivially demonstrable in large veins of modern Western Christianity.
As for the second question—the role of the devil in accounts of human origins—the theological demotion of the devil is more recent. A figure as late as Hugh of St. Victor (in the mid-12th century) could argue that the devil’s temptation of Adam was the condition of the possibility of Adam’s repentance: “the devil did not deserve forgiveness, because he sinned without any temptation. But … because [Adam] had some occasion, though small, for falling, grace finally raised him to God’s pardon.”

In Hugh’s thinking, then, had Adam not been tempted and had he sinned anyway, he would not have been capable of repentance. In a nice piece of irony, Hugh argues that the devil’s very attempt to draw Adam into his power became the loophole through which Adam (and his progeny) could escape. The role assigned by Hugh to the devil is thus crucial—a necessary, determining factor in the history of human salvation. But in an effort to maintain the integrity of the original human condition and to explain Adam’s punishment for his sin, this position also fell out of favor. St. Thomas, for one, is aware of this tradition but denies it to be true. After all, he might say, it is ultimately God’s choice who can and cannot repent; it cannot be up to the devil to determine whether humankind can repent or especially whether Christ would become human! Here, too, the theological concerns that drive this position are important, but they do have the effect of significantly mitigating the devil’s role in salvation history.

12 ST I-II.80.4, obj. 3 shows Thomas’s awareness of the tradition without clearly addressing the human component of the problem. It is probable here, though not absolutely clear (since it is in an objection), that Thomas concedes that it “is clearly false” that “if any men were to sin of their own free-will and without suggestion from any other, their sin would be irremediable.” Both ST I.114.3, response and De Malo III.5, response cite Origen to indicate that even before Adam’s sin, humankind did not need the devil’s temptation to fall into evil, but these do not address the issue of repentance. The only clear reference may be in ST I.64.2, reply obj. 4: “The fact that man sinned from another’s suggestion, is not the whole cause for man’s sin being pardonable.”
In addition to these two anthropological aspects, a third area where the devil has been made theologically redundant is soteriology. The Abelardian unease with the presence of the devil in Christian soteriology has been magnified significantly in the modern world. The ransom theory of atonement continues to be widely criticized as incoherent; any positive articulation of the ransom theory is quickly dismissed as dualistic or as a denial of God’s absolute sovereignty over the devil. To dismiss the theory, one only need note that God could not pay the devil for humankind and move on to more “plausible” theories of the atonement. Moreover, when modern theology does speak of human salvation as liberation from the devil, it all too commonly intends to invoke the reductive “principalities and powers” of human social structures (as seen in the introduction). These two moves, intentionally or not, exorcize the devil in a serious way from Christian soteriology.

In personal and protological accounts of human sinfulness and in predominant soteriologies, then, the devil has come to play a secondary role in Western theology that can be replaced with other categories, respectively: concupiscence, God’s abounding mercy, and any number of alternative atonement theories. In light of this increasingly marginal role of the devil in Western theology, theological skepticism about the devil is no surprise. If the devil does not have a role in the economy of sin and redemption in Christian theology, it is hard to avoid making him the marginal figure that one finds in Schoonenberg and Kelly (within Catholicism) or in Pagels and Barth (outside Catholicism), as described in the introduction. If one were inclined to the dramatic, one might even echo Nietzsche: The devil is dead, and our theology has killed him. Some will be happy about this development—but others, like myself, will not be.
III. Giving the Devil His Due

What would it mean for modern Christian theology to reassert the role of the devil in human sinning and, under God’s providence, in salvation as a victory over the devil? There are four ways in which such a reassertion may be possible, corresponding in reverse order to the criticisms just outlined: (1) God’s providential use of the devil for human salvation; (2) the devil’s place in Christian soteriology; (3) a renewed appreciation of the devil’s role in the Genesis narrative; and (4) the devil’s personal and internal temptation.

The first of these ways arises from my closing observation of Barth’s circumspection regarding the devil. In my estimation, Barth’s terse treatment of the devil stems from his unwillingness to dwell on a creature that stands outside God’s electing purposes. After all, Barth is concerned with a God who says Yes to humankind in Christ; if God should say No to the devil, that fact cannot concern Christian theology. But as well intended as this reasoning is, Barth ends up placing distinct boundaries on God’s providential action. Essentially, to recognize that the devil is incapable of personal redemption does not mean that the devil is not a component in God’s providential plan for humankind. Aquinas is surely right, in this regard, to extend God’s providential use of demons for the “procuring of man’s welfare” all the way to the end of time.13 Such an ironic reversal is a much better way to deal with the demons’ perverted agency than Barth’s attempt simply to ignore it. Such a method has the added advantage of focusing on the pedagogical purpose of temptation, viewing human trial as an opportunity—with God’s help—to advance toward our supernatural end.

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13 ST I.64.4, response: “It was fitting for this procuring of man’s welfare to be brought about through the wicked spirits, lest they should cease to be of service in the natural order.”
As for the second matter of Christian soteriology, it is obvious that one cannot argue straightforwardly that God pays the devil for humankind; Abelard is right so far as he goes. Similarly, one cannot speak of any absolute necessity regarding the means by which God chooses to redeem humankind. Nevertheless, one can speak—as Aquinas speaks—of a fittingness to God’s action in redeeming humankind from the devil. There is a symmetry in Aquinas’s presentation of human captivity to the devil that deserves renewed attention. Firstly, Aquinas holds that human captivity to the devil can be coherently described as a just result of Adam’s sin. Secondly, in acknowledging that the devil is a tyrant, Aquinas is careful not to ignore that this role is played only within the limits set by God. And thirdly, when Christ sets humankind free from this tyranny (through his temptation and death), it is less a “price” paid to the devil and more a courtroom demonstration of the devil’s despotism. When articulated in this way—as Aquinas does—the devil can be quite “useful” for Christian soteriology even today.

Whereas these first two suggestions arise naturally from St. Thomas’s theological principles, the latter two move outside his thought in significant ways. In these suggestions, then, I move to more speculative use of sources prior to St. Thomas. I have already noted that St. Thomas denies that the “occasion” of Adam’s sin is a sufficient condition of its repentability. The reason for this denial must be located in Thomas’s high regard for Adam’s original condition: since Adam and Eve were incapable of deception in the original state, the devil cannot be considered as a truly serious occasion for their sin.14 Thus, for Thomas, Adam’s sin is ultimately separable from Satan’s, an independent

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14 ST 94.4, response and reply 1 and 5. Thomas first defines two senses of deception: one in which the subject adheres to a falsehood without the assent of belief and a second with a firm belief. The only way that Thomas allows that Adam could have been “deceived” is in the former sense—and only then about hidden thoughts or future contingent realities. That is, he could only have entertained that a false
production of pride in a different species. Additionally, Thomas might argue, to make Adam’s sin essentially independent of the devil serves the plausibility of the punishment that follows it—if Adam had been deceived, why punish him so harshly?

The force of St. Thomas’s arguments is related to his relative weighing of intellectual and volitional error—the devil would only be a convincing “occasion” of sin were the devil to have deceived Adam (which the devil could not have done). But even if an intellectual error were somehow bound up in Adam’s sin, Thomas’s two relevant principles are, perhaps, not necessarily undermined. Certainly, Adam’s original condition was lofty, yet it was not absolutely perfected; in any case, the final state of the human intellect will be more firmly grounded in the truth than it was the original state. If nothing else, then, to allow for some sort of deception at the outset may be a way to recognize the intellectual superiority of the final, blessed condition. Similarly, supposing some intellectual deception, one might still reasonably uphold the justice of a punishment. These comments are meant to be merely suggestive and I only intend to ask how the theologian might take the “occasion” of Adam’s sin as a serious condition of its performance and repentability. In any case, the irony of Hugh’s solution and the important place that he assigns to the devil are worthy of attention.

15 I avoid a chicken-and-egg formulation of a “prior” intellectual error while acknowledge the moral difficulties in tying the volitional and intellectual together here.
The final area in which Christian theology might newly assess the devil’s role is the one at the heart of this study. Consequently, my final goal is to ask whether St. Maximus’s anthropology can be appropriated as a general model for human temptation in the West. As is clear by now, the frameworks of Maximus and Thomas regarding human temptation are quite distinct. Whereas the devil’s inner suggestion is the overarching framework for Maximus’s theory of temptation (and Christ’s redemptive work), the fomes peccati guides Thomas and, generally, Western accounts of human temptation (and Christ’s redemptive work). Briefly, I hope to address two questions. First, in what ways might Maximus be appropriated in the West to resolve difficulties about concupiscence and the atonement? Second, to what extent can Maximus’s framework substitute for the Western one? To consider the first, I wish to address the “subjective dominion” of sin in the thought of Peter Abelard. To consider the second, I will turn to the dogmatic affirmations of the Council of Trent regarding concupiscence.

Though widely characterized as “objective” and “subjective” theories, respectively, some have argued that the soteriologies of Anselm and Abelard may not be so diametrically opposed. Certainly, Anselm’s view of an objective exchange—however the devil is involved—places salvation in our transferal by Christ from the devil’s power to God’s camp. But, as argued by Thomas Williams, Abelard’s supposedly “subjective” account must be and in fact is accompanied with an objective accomplishment by Christ.16 Accordingly, Williams identifies two “dominions” over fallen humankind: an objective punishment and a subjective concupiscence. The first dominion, the objective punishment, is taken on by Christ on the cross; Christ’s acceptance of punishment,

Williams argues, is Abelard’s objective redemption. The second dominion of disordered concupiscence—not taken on by Christ—is overcome on the basis of Christ’s conquering of the first. Christ’s example of self-sacrifice “enkindles love” in the heart of the believer and thereby frees the believer from disordered concupiscence. In this account, the subjective liberation from disordered desire is ultimately based on an objective accomplishment of Christ. However, despite Williams’ attempt to resolve the problem, the specter of a merely exemplary liberation is not entirely dispelled in this account; the connection between Christ’s sacrifice and our gratitude still appears to be a relatively natural mechanism by which we perceive Christ’s act and are inwardly moved to love him in return. It is our love and not Christ’s act that overcomes the subjective dominion of disordered desire.

Maximus’s Origenistic tradition of demonic temptation provides a different soteriological avenue toward the subjective dominion of sin in fallen humankind that may help to resolve Williams’ difficulty. Rather than a strict division between an objective and a subjective dominion, the Origenistic tradition would argue that both dominions are in fact the objective dominion of the devil—one carried out against the body and the other carried out against the soul and the mind. That is, instead of an inward and purely anthropological or subjective corruption of the sensitive appetite in human nature, the Origenistic tradition would propose the inward action of objective and malicious forces. When this subjective dominion is expressed in this way, figures in the Origenistic tradition have been comfortable with a significantly different soteriological approach. Instead of an external punishment taken on by Christ and a disordered concupiscence that is not, Evagrius and Maximus see Christ defeating the devil both in an external and an
internal battlefield. Such an internal battlefield does not mean for Maximus that Christ experienced what the medieval West calls disordered desires (they are still “natural” passions in Maximus’s account), but it does mean that Christ objectively defeats the devil in all the “places” that other human beings experience the devil’s oppression in a morally relevant way.17

In contrast to the common deficiencies of Abelard’s approach, then, Maximus’s account would give clear expression to the soteriological mechanism of human liberation and avoid altogether the dangers of a merely exemplarist account of Christ’s redemptive work. Certainly, there are other, potentially less savory corollaries to such a theory—the distinct account of virtue being perhaps the most important. As I have discussed this theory in Chapter 2, such an account may limit temperance’s governance of the sensitive appetite in significant ways. In this model, demons would be able bring natural passions into a “powerful [δυνατότερον]” and “violent [βιαιότερον]” state, but it would remain in the power of the will whether they would become strictly “against nature [παρὰ φύσιν].” Maximus’s lack of clarity regarding the limits of demonic power over sensibility is thus a weakness of this hypothesis. The cost of this limitation of temperance will be too high for some, but I hope that it is clear that the stakes are high either way: either a limitation of human power over the sensitive appetite in this life or a limitation of Christ’s personal or experiential confrontation with and defeat of the “dominion” that oppresses fallen humankind in times of temptation.

Finally, to consider the extent to which Maximus’s theory can be appropriated in the West, it will not work to simply compare him with Thomas. In an absolute sense,

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17 This articulation attempts to exclude at least possession, which (as I have argued above) is not a morally relevant form of demonic oppression.
neither the theology of St. Maximus or of St. Thomas is binding on the Christian or, specifically, Catholic conscience. For this reason, I must turn to Trent’s affirmations about the nature of “concupiscence,” the reality tied to—yet distinct from—original sin in Trent’s decrees. Here alone does the Catholic find specific dogmatic remarks about concupiscence that are conscientiously binding.

Concerning original sin, Trent characterizes it as a loss of holiness and justice. It incurs God’s wrath and indignation, death, captivity under the devil, a transformation of humanity “for the worse, and the death of the soul. At the remedy for these negative consequences, Trent states that baptism makes recipients “innocent, immaculate, pure, guiltless, and beloved sons of God,” and consequently that “there is nothing whatsoever that impedes their entry into heaven.”18 The previous spiritual condition is reversed as the baptism is cleansed from both original and actual sin—although certain consequences remain. Paragraph 5 of the decree considers is largely dedicated to explaining the central remnant of original sin that remains in the baptized: concupiscence. Trent states:

But this holy synod confesses and senses that there remains in the baptized concupiscence or the fomes [concupiscentiam vel fomitem]; although it is left for the struggle [ad agonem relicta sit], it cannot harm the one who does not consent and who fights strongly through the grace of Jesus Christ. Indeed, the one who competes according to the rules will be crowned. The holy synod declares that the Catholic Church has never understood this concupiscence, which the Apostle sometimes calls sin, to be called sin in the sense of being truly and properly sin in the baptized, but [rather] because it is from sin and inclines to sin. But if anyone believes to the contrary, anathema sit.19

18 Trent, Decree on Original Sin, §5, my translation. The Latin is found in Norman P. Tanner, Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils, vol. 2 (Georgetown: Georgetown University Press, 1990), 667: “induentes, innocents, immaculate, pure, innoxii ac Deo dilecti filii effecti sunt, heredes quidem Dei coheredes autem Christi, ita ut nihil prorsus eos ab ingress coeli remoretur.” An English translation of this sentence and the following excerpt can be found in Denzinger, §792.

19 Trent, Decree on Original Sin, §5 (Tanner, Decrees, vol. 2, 667), my translation: “Manere autem in baptizatis concupiscensiam vel fomitem, haec sancta synodus fatetur et sentit; quae cum ad agonem relicta sit, nocere non consentientibus et viriliter per Christi Iesu gratiam repugnantibus non valet. Quinimmo qui legitime certaverit, coronabitur. Hanc concupiscentiam, quam aliquando Apostolus
The positive affirmations of the decree are very carefully stated. I would summarize them as follows. Nothing related to original sin—either concupiscence or other remnants of original sin—is “truly and properly sin” in the baptized, but concupiscence is called “sin” because it arises from sin and inclines the baptized toward sin. The preceding context also shows that it occurs “in the baptized” and does not impede the baptized from entering heaven. Finally, God allows concupiscence to remain “for the struggle [ad agonem]” and as an opportunity for the baptized (with the aid of Christ’s grace) to be crowned (2 Tim 2:5).

Although it may appear a strange comparison, how might Maximus’s theory of demonic temptation map onto Trent’s affirmations? That is, instead of putting demonic temptation alongside concupiscence as St. Thomas does, what if one were to “map” concupiscence (in the narrow sense used by Trent) onto inner demonic temptation—to treat them as the same phenomenon? Certainly, Maximus’s understanding of inner temptation differs in significant ways from medieval definitions of the fomes, one being a surreptitious “hiding” of external malicious forces in natural movements of sensibility and the other being an intrinsic corruption of the sensitive appetite toward inordinate goods. But Trent’s affirmations about concupiscence could arguably embrace either of these frameworks—either Maximus’s inner demonic temptation or the medieval fomes. Negatively, Trent does not bind the Catholic to hold concupiscence to be a wholly intrinsic, purely anthropological corruption or disorder in the sensitive appetite. More positively, I would argue that the data of Trent’s decree are at worst neutral toward a

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peccatum appellat, sancta synodus declarant, ecclesiam catholicam nunquam intellexisse, peccatum appellari, quod vere et proprie in renatis peccatum sit, sed quia ex peccato est et ad peccatum inclinat. Si quis autem contrarium senserit: a.s.”
demonological reading of concupiscence. To briefly attempt this “mapping,” then, one might rehash Trent’s affirmations in Maximus’s framework: the devil’s inner suggestion (as Maximus understands it) is from sin and inclines to sin; it remains “in the baptized”; it does not impede one from entering heaven; and it is ad agonem and an opportunity to be crowned. Further, even in these adverse conditions, the baptized can be called “innocent, immaculate, pure, guiltless, and beloved sons of God.” All of Trent’s affirmations about concupiscence could arguably apply as much to Maximus’s understanding of demonic temptation as to medieval accounts of the fomes.

Of course, to argue that such a reading is possible does not make it probable that one should read concupiscence in this way, nor does it provide any particular reason beyond novelty for doing so. Such justification would necessarily be found outside of the comparison itself—in the potential theological consequences it might have. There are at least three such reasons: the positive and pedagogical purpose of Trent’s articulation of concupiscence; certain ecumenical possibilities tied to anthropological matters; and, most significantly, Christological and soteriological considerations.

First, in light of the conciliar affirmations of concupiscence as ad agonem and an opportunity for coronation, an ascetical and even demonological reading has certain advantages. I remarked in Chapters 2 and 5 the ways in which Maximus and Thomas conceive of God’s providential permission of temptation: for both of them, the devil’s temptation is first and foremost pedagogical, intended by God to bring about the strengthening of human virtue and to bring human beings to their supernatural end. When one considers Trent’s perspective on concupiscence, the emphasis falls squarely and uniquely on the pedagogical end for concupiscence in the baptized. Considered in itself,
concupiscence in the baptized is not described by Trent in punitive terms at all. Rather, in Trent’s estimation this concupiscence is for struggle and coronation, ends that arguably coincide closely with the ascetic ends of demonic temptation.

Second, a demonological reading of concupiscence could have important ecumenical ramifications. On the one hand, Maximus’s theory holds deeply to the fundamental goodness of human nature—the corruption of human nature can and must be considered in a certain sense extrinsic to itself, a “second nature” or a “garment of skin.” The natural will (θέλησις) and wish (βούλησις) still incline toward the true goods of human nature—God has not constituted humankind in such a state that the individual naturally turns from the divine. These affirmations rise out of a deeply Orthodox approach to anthropology and would be presumably be easily accepted in the East. Yet, while claims of this nature often lead to the observation that Eastern Orthodox anthropology is more “optimistic” than the West’s, Maximus’s theory certainly does not imply a fully intact human nature, perfectly free to pursue its supernatural ends without hindrance. “Hidden” in both the appetitive and cognitive activity of the human subject are forces that attempt to drive the human subject to the pursuit of merely apparent goods. As the monks would certainly admit, this battle is no easy one—this framework is not naively optimistic about the human struggle to do good. It is harder to do good with the

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20 Certainly, Trent affirms that original sin (to which concupiscence is intrinsically linked) changed human nature “for the worse.” However, following the presentation of Panayiotis Nellas, Deification in Christ, 63 (and as discussed in Chapter 2), I would argue that concupiscence (or Nellas’s ‘second nature’) in the baptized must be called “biform,” like the ‘duck-rabbit’ image that involves an ambiguous gestalt switch. Without any objective change in the image, it can appear in two ways. Concupiscence in the baptized is much the same—both bad and good, “for the worse” and “for our coronation,” depending on how one looks at it. Accordingly, the experience of it can be alternately an experience of desolation or consolation—but arguably both of these experiences find a grounding in a deeper reality of God’s will to save. If a temptation truly leads one to despair (to lose hope), then it is fair to argue that such a result is more properly the devil’s intention than God’s. The punitive aspect recedes with baptism, and the “gestalt switch” to its pedagogical function comes clearly into sight. When this shift takes place, it is nothing less than God’s will for the baptized to see it in this new way.

21 See, again, Nellas, Deification in Christ, 43-91, especially 60-4.
garments than it was without and these garments—especially when their demonic aspects are noted—constitute a “law of sin” that appears as a quasi-natural inclination away from God. Thus, it remains possible for Maximus to affirm the corruption of human nature “for the worse” (as required by Trent). In this sense, Maximus’s framework might still appeal to predominant Western conceptions of fallen human nature—perhaps even to Lutheran and Reformed conceptions.

In the end, Maximus’s view of the corruption of human nature, following the observation of Panayiotis Nellas discussed in Chapter 2 and in a note above, is “biform,” both bad and good, both punishment and pedagogy. But baptism is part of the transformation or recognition of this skin as the second, positive reality it can be. By being engrafted into Christ, the believer finally has the ability to conquer the devil with Christ—and to recognize that this conquest is now possible. While inner temptation remains in some way both punishment and pedagogy, baptism becomes a transition from the predominance of the former to the predominance of the latter. Whereas the punitive role of temptation may express God’s permissive will, pedagogy thus emerges as a deeper expression of God’s positive, economic will for humankind—as noted in Chapter 2, these two wills are deeply intertwined in Maximus’s thought. When one can discern a higher, positive purpose for which an otherwise “permissive” act of God’s will is performed, it becomes economic—aimed toward human redemption. Fittingly, then, baptism allows the recipient to see and to existentially experience the way in which God draws good from human sinfulness and woundedness. The devil continues to tempt but the baptized are able, because of their union with Christ, to conquer.
Third and finally, Maximus’s framework could provide a unique way to affirm Christ’s voluntary condescension into the woundedness of our fallen condition without compromising Christ’s impeccability, orderly passions, or virtue (defined, admittedly, in a different way than Thomas defines the virtues that govern the lower appetites). As just discussed above, Maximus’s framework allows Christ to confront the entirety of the devil’s tyranny—both exterior and interior—and to provide an empowering example for the defeat of the devil in each form. If this affirmation were to take place by way of a mapping of demonic temptation onto Trent’s doctrine of concupiscence, it would imply that Christ would voluntarily take on a very carefully defined “concupiscence.” To be clear: this concupiscence would not be the disordered desire of the medieval *fomes peccati*, which is an intrinsic disorder implying a serious defect of grace and virtue. It is instead a confrontation with the devil on the “battlefield” of the human mind and passibility, where the devil has particular weapons that he can yield—but also where Christ uniquely brings the power to overcome them. It is taken on voluntarily as a part of Christ’s “double descent” into human nature—not “contracted” in the sense Aquinas uses it when discussing Christ’s human defects. In line with John Cassian and Ignatian spiritual practice, perhaps the highest virtue in this framework is the *discernment of spirits*, which certainly Christ had and has to the highest degree. To be sure, this affirmation of Christ’s virtue is not identical to that of Thomas, but this difference is strictly in the realm of anthropology and not in Christology.

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22 John Pierre Torrell’s suggestion of an imaginative attack is different than the current suggestion, since that imaginative attack remains purely apprehensive and not appetitive. If the devil were to attack Christ appetitively (as Maximus indicates), the virtues that govern those appetites must be considered in a way that would be distinct from Thomas’s account of those virtues.
Such would be the final and perhaps the most existentially pertinent way to reassert the devil’s place in modern Christian theology. It is put forward merely as a hypothesis, with no claim to be “better” on its own terms than the traditional Western conception of disordered concupiscence is on its own terms. In light of the various modern attempts to affirm the reality of Christ temptation outlined in the introduction, it is a hypothesis with certain distinct advantages. Perhaps its most important advantage over certain other attempts is the sincerity with which it approaches Paul’s affirmation in Ephesians 6:12: “For we are not contending against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world rules of this present darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.” If Paul is right, it is not altogether clear that the strict medieval distinction between fleshly and demonic temptation is needed. Certainly, there is a “law of sin” in the flesh—but even as late as John of Damascus this law can be defined as “the devil’s suggestion and our free consent to it.”23 While one might therefore speak of fallen humankind as its own enemy, Ephesians 6:12 reminds us who the real and most fundamental Enemy of humankind is. By putting off the principalities and powers in his temptations by the devil, Christ defeated this Enemy and allows his followers to participate in that victory when we overcome, with his help, our own temptations.

23 DFO IV.22.
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