

- I. Background material
 - a. Evil – Three definitions
 - i. *Malum in corruptionone rerum* – Physical evil
 - ii. *Malum poenae* – Evil inflicted as punishment
 - iii. *Malum culpae* – Evil of sin
 - b. God IS responsible for the first two, but not the second, as such
 - i. *Malum in corruptionone rerum* – Because creation is ordered primarily to the good of the universe, not the individual creature. (ST I.49.2.c)
 - ii. *Malum poenae* – Because Justice is in the order of good¹ (ST I.49.2.c)
 - iii. *Malum culpae* – This is what we are going to discuss
 - c. Two extremes on origin of evil
 - i. Gnostics and Manicheans – God cannot in ANY sense be the cause of evil since he is perfect and good, so they posit a lesser (or sometimes equal) being that is either ignorant and defective or positively wicked and malicious.
 - ii. Calvin and Luther – avoid saying so, but basically assert that God positively wills evil. Calvin asserted “that God predestines some men to eternal ruin, leaves them without the grace which is essential for good actions, even instigates them to wicked actions (‘*Dei impulsu*’)”²
- II. Article 1: Does God cause sins
 - a. Answer: No
 - b. Sin can either be sinning oneself or causing another to sin
 - c. Definition of sin proper to morals: culpable failure of will to reach a due goal because it is drawn towards an unsuitable one.
 - i. Note that this identifies that the will is attracted to evil insofar as it is perceived as good. Evil is **not** sought insofar as it is evil.
 - d. God cannot sin himself
 - i. God’s power to act cannot fail – Omnipotence
 - ii. God’s will cannot fail to reach its due goal – Simplicity (God’s will=nature=supreme good). So, His will seeks supreme Good in the same way that anything must seek it’s own good.
 - e. God cannot cause another to sin
 - i. God cannot make another turn away from its ultimate goal since He is that ultimate goal.
 - ii. Just as created agents turn things to be more like them (e.g., fire heats), God turns things to be more like himself. Therefore, He cannot turn things away from himself, i.e., cause sin.
 - f. THEREFORE: God does not cause sin.
- III. Article 2: Does God cause sinful actions
 - a. Answer: Insofar as they are actions, yes. Insofar as they are sinful, no.
 - b. Even though Manichaeian and Gnostic, etc., said no, it seems necessary for two reasons:

¹ William E. Addis and Thomas Arnold, *A Catholic Dictionary*, Sixth Edition, With Additions (New York: The Catholic Publication Society Co., 1887), 325-27.

² Ibid.

- i. Since God's essence is existence, He must be the source of everything else's existence
 - ii. Since God is the first source of movement, bodily and spiritual, all subsequent movement finds its source in Him.
- c. The movements that God, as first mover begins are not received into everything in the same way, but in a manner appropriate to each – That which is received is received according to the mode of the receiver.
- d. When a recipient is rightly disposed, it will succeed in the intent of God in starting the movement.
- e. When a recipient is NOT rightly disposed, it is traced back to God insofar as it is movement, but NOT insofar as it is flawed.
 - i. "The flaw in the action results from the agent precisely as not rightly ordered to its first mover"
 - ii. Just as an animal's will to move does not cause the limp, but rather the defect in the receiving limb.
 - iii. Maritain – Evil lies in the will [of man] when it does not consider the higher good. That non-consideration is a nothing, so it originates with the creature, and it is solely caused by the creature, not God.
- f. End of In Reply: "what there is of action can be traced back to God's causality, but what there is of disorder and deformity does not have God as cause, but our free choice."
- g. THEREFORE: God is the cause of sinful actions, but not for sins.