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DIVINE SOVEREIGNTY AND HUMAN FREEDOM: A LIBERTARIAN APPROACH

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ABSTRACT

Philosophers and theologians alike have debated endlessly over the relationship between divine sovereignty and human freedom. Too often, in these debates, human freedom is either denied altogether or reduced it to a compatibilist notion. Many people fear that granting humans too much freedom would destroy God's sovereignty. However, the purpose of granting humans freedom is not to elevate the creature over the Creator; rather to uphold both moral responsibility and God's justice. Any theory that preserves God's sovereignty at the expense of His justice, or makes His justice arbitrary, by sacrificing the kind of freedom that preserves moral responsibility, is not worthy to be held by any Christian. This thesis will contend that only libertarian freedom preserves moral responsibility, since only libertarian freedom preserves legitimate possibilities for the agent.

However, a dilemma arises for Christians who advocate libertarian freedom: How can God know what future actions will occur if the actualization of the action is dependent on the libertarian free choice of an agent who does not yet exist? Many of the traditional attempts to preserve libertarian freedom fail because such attempts hold that the future is exhaustively settled. This raises a problem for libertarian freedom since an exhaustively settled future is one without possibilities, which libertarian freedom requires. In order to solve this dilemma, it will be argued that God decided not to determine all events. Instead, God actually gives humans options allowing for legitimate possibilities. In such a world, God knows all those things which He has determined to bring about, as well as all the possibilities He permits. The important distinction this thesis will make is that God knows future possibilities, as possible, until the agent exercises one's free choice.

INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

According to the Christian tradition, God sovereignly reigns over His creation as both Creator and Sustainer. However, if God determines every event, then all human actions are pre-programmed, reducing humans to the role of robots acting out the will of God. This creates a dilemma concerning sin and divine punishment. If humans are merely robots, how can they be punished for any evil actions? Would God's punishment of sinners to eternal damnation be justified if He determined their rebellion? The early Christian patristic thinker, Irenaeus explains, "But if some had been made by nature bad, and others good, these latter would not be deserving of praise for being good, for such were they created; nor would the former be reprehensible, for thus they were made [originally]." ¹ Punishing a person for an act that a person is determined to do, not only contradicts the very notion of justice, but also implies that God desired every sin that occurs. This makes God the cause (author) of sin and humans merely the unfortunate recipients of punishment for actions they could not avoid. ² This position directly contradicts the Christian teachings on God's goodness, justice, love, and holiness, rendering these doctrines incoherent in light of God's sovereignty.

Very few, if any, Christians would claim that God is the author of sin, or that humans lack moral responsibility for their actions. In light of the aforementioned problem one needs to ask: What grounds moral responsibility? This thesis will propose that the answer to this question is free will. If humans "lack the freedom required for moral responsibility...not only do we never

¹ Irenaeus, *Against Heresies: Book III*, trans. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson (Christian Classics Ethereal Library, 2011), Chapter 37 Section 2, <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/anf01.i.html>.

² Roger E. Olson, "The Classical Free Will Theist Model of God," in *Perspectives on the Doctrine of God: 4 Views*, ed. Bruce A. Ware (Nashville, TN: B&H Academic, 2008), 163.

deserve blame, but, moreover, no moral principles or values apply to us...we therefore never deserve blame for having performed a wrongful act..."³ If human freedom is required for moral responsibility, then one must affirm that humans do indeed possess free will in order to hold them morally accountable. Nevertheless, simply positing free will as the grounds for moral responsibility does not solve the dilemma because the concept of free will is inherently ambiguous. In order to establish a coherent theory of the relationship between God's sovereignty and human freedom one must define both the nature and parameters of free will.

In order to meet the challenge of defining free will two main positions emerge—libertarianism (libertarian freedom, LF) and compatibilism (compatibilist freedom, CF). Libertarians argue that determinism is incompatible with human freedom. They claim that an action is free if and only if the person has the ability to do otherwise (this is known as the principal of alternate possibilities—PAP).⁴ PAP implies that a free action has no prior sufficient conditions that extend beyond the powers of the agent themselves, necessitating the action.⁵ While the agent's desires may influence the agent's decision, the person alone determines which desire will be the sufficient condition for a particular action.⁶ Nevertheless, this solution faces a

³ Derk Pereboom, "Determinism al Dente," *Nous* 29, no. 1 (March 1995): 21-22.

⁴ Peter van Inwagen, "Moral Responsibility, Determinism, and the Ability to Do Otherwise," *The Journal of Ethics* 3, no. 4 (1999): 341-350; Robert Kane, "Libertarianism," *Philosophical Studies* 144, no. 1 (May 2009): 35-44. In these articles both Peter van Inwagen and Robert Kane argue for libertarian positions that require alternate possibilities. Van Inwagen forcefully argues for a revised version of PAP that meets the objections of Frankfurt-counter examples. Van Inwagen's revision states that in order for a person to be responsible for an action, that person must have been able to prevent the action from occurring. Robert Kane distinguishes between three different kinds of free acts, the most important are one's that a person is ultimately responsible for. Kane's principle of ultimate responsibility requires the ability to do otherwise, but also provides for explaining how a person may not always have this ability, yet still be morally responsible. The condition for Kane is that one's character must have, at some point, been formed through acts which one was ultimately responsible for. If this is the case then any subsequent act retains moral responsibility if it is derived from one's character that was so formed.

⁵ Ibid. See previous note.

⁶ Kane, *Libertarianism*, 35-44; Timothy O' Connor, "The Agent as Cause," in *Metaphysics: The Big Questions 2nd ed.*, ed. Peter van Inwagen and Dean W. Zimmerman (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2008), 469; John Wild, "Authentic Existence," *Ethics* 75, no. 4 (July 1965): 227-239. Kane establishes the importance of

significant problem—how do desires influence without necessitating actions?⁷ The proponent of LF must find a way to ground an agent's free choices in the agent's own will, while at the same time explaining how the internal and external influences do not provide sufficient conditions for the person's actions.

In light of the problems facing LF, compatibilists reject PAP, claiming that a person can be morally accountable for an action, even if the action is unavoidable (determined).⁸ CF maintains that a person is morally responsible for a particular action if and only if the action chosen is the one that the person wants to do and is done for reasons which are the agent's own.⁹ While the compatibilist argues that free will is compatible with determinism this does not imply that all forms of causal determinism are compatible with human freedom. For example, any form of manipulation that overrides the agent's desires would remove the agent's free will.¹⁰ The strength of CF is that since it only requires that the desires are the person's, the compatibilist has no problem affirming free will even if these desires were derived from factors outside the

the individual person in character formation, in which free acts are the ultimate responsibility of the agent, not causal factors over which the agent has no control. The agent forms one's own character and is responsible because of this. Timothy O'Connor argues that reasons do not need to necessitate the actions which are based on them. Rather, the agent determines which reasons will provide the sufficient condition for the action. John Wild argues the same point from the existentialist perspective. He suggests that influences can be rejected so they do not necessitate a person's will.

⁷ O' Connor, *Agent*, 471.

⁸ Harry G. Frankfurt, "Alternate Possibilities and Moral Responsibility," *The Journal of Philosophy* 66, no. 23 (December 1969), 829-839.; Harry Frankfurt, "What We Are Morally Responsible For," in *Perspectives on Moral Responsibility*, ed. John Martin Fischer and Mark Ravizza (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993), 286-295.; John Martin Fischer, "Responsibility and Manipulation," *The Journal of Ethics* 8, no. 2 (2004):145-177.; John Martin Fischer, "Ultimacy and Alternative Possibilities," *Philosophical Studies* 144, no. 1 (May 2009): 15-20. Harry Frankfurt presents the most popular and well known rejection of PAP, known as Frankfurt counter examples. John Martin Fischer defends the compatibilist position.

⁹ *Ibid.* Frankfurt and Fischer both argue extensively that moral responsibility is maintained if the person's reason for wanting to do a particular act is the person's own reason, un-coerced by outside forces or agents. It is important to note that Fischer also contributes to this the importance of the agent forming the desire to act via the use of an appropriate reasons responsive mechanism. Thus, for Fischer, a deterministic scenario in which the agent's appropriate reasons responsive mechanism is impeded eliminates moral responsibility.

¹⁰ *Ibid.* See previous note.

person's control.¹¹ Libertarians reject this solution arguing that simply wanting to do some act is not sufficient for being morally responsible for that act.¹²

However, LF faces a serious dilemma concerning God's sovereignty. Scripture clearly claims that God possesses foreknowledge of future events. However, if God foreknows a person will perform a particular action, then the person "must" (necessarily) do that action, since God cannot hold a false belief.¹³ If a person must do an action then it appears that God's foreknowledge eliminates PAP. Since LF requires PAP, if PAP is falsified by God's foreknowledge, then LF fails. Boethius explains, "For if God sees everything in advance and cannot be deceived in any way, whatever his Providence foresees will happen, must happen. Therefore, if God foreknows eternally not only all the acts of men, but also their plans and wishes, there cannot be freedom of the will..."¹⁴ Consequently, if the proponent of LF must explain how free acts can be known before they occur.

Statement of Importance of the Problem and Purpose

While no easy answer exists to the problem of divine sovereignty and human freedom, the prospect of a difficult journey should not deter the committed Christian. At stake in this dilemma are not only human moral responsibility, but God's goodness and justice. For if God determines all events, including human actions, then how can God judge people for committing

¹¹ Fischer, *Responsibility*, 159. Fischer makes this clear that a person can be determined by one's nature and still be free and morally responsible for the actions one commits.

¹² Kane, *Libertarianism*, 35-44.; van Inwagen, *Moral Responsibility*, 341-350.; O' Connor, *Agent*, 36-37.; Eleonore Stump, "Intellect, Will, and the Principal of Alternate Possibilities," in *Perspectives on Moral Responsibility*, ed. John Martin Fischer and Mark Ravizza (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993): 237-262. Van Inwagen, Kane, Stump, and O'Connor all stress this point that the desire must be the agent's own in such a way that the agent chooses to make the desire the one acted upon, not merely receiving the desire as a sufficient condition from one's nature.

¹³ William Hasker, *God, Time, and Knowledge* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989), 68.

¹⁴Boethius, "Divine Foreknowledge and Freedom of the Will," in *Philosophy of Religion Selected Readings 3rd Edition*, ed. William L. Rowe and William J. Wainwright (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 24.

the very acts He determined them to perform?¹⁵ Furthermore, how can God claim to be good and hate evil while at the same time determining evil to occur? Thus, the very character of God is in question making the free will debate a necessary philosophical endeavor for anyone who claims that God is just and wholly good.

In light of the problem of divine sovereignty and human freedom, the purpose of this thesis will be two-fold. First, a theory of human freedom will be formulated that preserves moral responsibility by clarifying both its nature and limitations. Second, this thesis will use this theory in order to address the problem presented by God's sovereignty to human freedom. With these two objectives met, this thesis will have provided a coherent account to establish reciprocity between divine sovereignty and human freedom.

Statement of Position on the Problem

This thesis will propose a modified version of LF that only requires PAP to be present in the will. The reason for this distinction is that a person must be responsible for the character one forms in order to be responsible for the actions produced by that character. Consequently, whether or not a person can do otherwise has no impact on the person's moral responsibility for the action. This was the point that Harry Frankfurt correctly argued in his famous Frankfurt counter-examples (FFCs). For example, it could be the case that a person (p) wanted to murder another person (x), but was prevented from doing so. In this case, p's inability to kill x does not remove moral responsibility for p's desire to kill x. As Robert Kane explains, "Free will is not just about free action. It is about self-formation, about the formation of our "wills" or how we got to be the kinds of persons we are, with the characters, motives and purposes we now have."¹⁶

¹⁵ Olson, *Classical Free Will*, 154.

¹⁶ Kane, *Libertarianism*, 37

The shift from focusing on freedom of action to freedom of the will elevates the importance of character formation in attributing moral responsibility for a particular action.¹⁷ Therefore, this thesis will argue that possibilities must exist at the level of the will, in order for the person to be morally responsible for one's character. Thus, PAP can be restated as—a person is morally responsible if and only if the person has the ability to will otherwise.

In order to provide for possibilities in forming one's character, this thesis will argue that a person's character is both fixed and open. The fixed aspects of a person's character lay in the physical and natural desires of the individual, as well as, the person's inherent abilities and talents. On the other hand, the open aspects of a person's character lay in one's ability to reason between desires. Through the process of making decisions one develops attitudes and habits, resulting in the formation of one's character.¹⁸ Furthermore, it is possible to develop character traits and habits that restrict one's freedom in such a way that a person could not (or make it highly unlikely that a person could) have chosen to do otherwise.¹⁹ Since this restriction was the result of past LF free character forming choices, PAP is still preserved via the process of character formation, even if the ability to will or act otherwise is not available for the current decision.²⁰ With PAP preserved, in the sense that the person could have developed a different character, the person is moral responsible for both the character and the actions the person wills from that character.

¹⁷ Ibid., 35-44.; Vivienne Brown, "Choice, Moral Responsibility and Alternative Possibilities," *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice* 9, no. 3 (June 2006): 265-288. Brown and Kane's arguments will be essential in developing this point.

¹⁸ Stump, *Intellect*, 237-262.; Eleonore Stump, "Sanctification, Hardening of the Heart, and Frankfurt's Concept of Free Will," in *Perspectives on Moral Responsibility*, ed. John Martin Fischer and Mark Ravizza (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993), 211-234.; Kane, *Libertarianism*, 35-44.; Wild, *Authentic*, 227-239. Eleonore Stump, Robert Kane, and John Wild will be used extensively in developing these points.

¹⁹ Kane, *Libertarianism*, 35-44. This is exactly the position Robert Kane argues in this article.

²⁰ Ibid. This is exactly the position Robert Kane argues in this article.

Once this distinction is fully developed this thesis will then argue how this theory addresses the problems raised by God's foreknowledge. It will be argued that God, as the sovereign creator, knows all the possibilities that could result in creation based on the limitations He placed on it. Through these limitations God can guarantee His plans are accomplished even if he allows for multiple ways of achieving this purpose. Therefore, just as is the case in human character formation, this thesis will argue that God's creation is both fixed and open.²¹ Creation is fixed according to the limitations God placed on it in order to achieve His plan. Creation is open to the extent that he gives humans the freedom to be obedient or disobedient to his plan.

In this view, sin does not originate in God, nor was it necessary for God's plan. God did not force or predetermine anyone to sin, even though he permitted it by granting humans free will.²² God sovereignly uses human rebellion to work out His plan even though it is not necessary that this rebellion occur. Even in cases where God determines that a person will perform a specific action God does not prevent the person from choosing to obey or disobey His command. Nevertheless, God will achieve His predetermined result, regardless of what the person chooses. Furthermore, if people can so incline their wills that they eventually remove their ability to do or will otherwise, then God can use these people to fulfill his plans. These people would still be fully responsible since they could have developed their character otherwise

²¹ Gregory A. Boyd, "The Open-Theism View," in *Divine Foreknowledge Four Views*, ed. James K. Beilby and Paul R. Eddy (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2001), 13-47.; Gregory A. Boyd, *God of the Possible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2000).; Hasker, *Time*.; John Sanders, *The God Who Risks: A Theology of Divine Providence* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2007). This thesis will use insights from the open theist view presented by Boyd, Hasker, and Sanders.

²² Alvin Plantinga, *God, Freedom, and Evil* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1977): 29-30. Alvin Plantinga states that "a person is free with respect to a given action, if he is free to perform that action and free to refrain from performing it; no antecedent conditions and/or causal laws determine that he will perform the action, or that he won't." Consequently, "God can create free creatures, but he can't cause or determine them to do only what is right. To create creatures capable of moral good, therefore, He must create creatures capable of moral evil..." If God has indeed given humans genuine free will then God "can't cause or determine them to do only what is right," to do this would eliminate genuine freedom.

avoiding disaster or gaining reward. If successful, this theory will provide a possible solution that explains how humans can be fully responsible for their actions and at the same time participate in God's sovereign plan. By preserving human responsibility, this theory not only preserves God's justice but illuminates the depths of His grace, mercy, and love.

Limitations

A single thesis cannot possibly do justice to all the various philosophical positions on human freedom. Therefore, for the purpose of this thesis, the arguments for determinism and fatalism will only be expounded upon when explaining the libertarian objections to determinism and CF. This thesis will define determinism as a position that holds that all events have a prior sufficient condition (i.e. the laws of nature or God's predestination) that renders the event necessary.²³ This thesis will not address the mind (soul)/body debate; rather the assumption will be that a dualistic position removes the problem of physical determinism.²⁴ When speaking about God and theology this thesis will specifically be addressing the Christian conception of God. Furthermore, this thesis will not attempt to formulate an exhaustive theology; rather, the goal is a

²³ Pereboom, *Determinism*, 21-45. Derk Pereboom will be used to develop the hard deterministic position that denies humans have free will. Hard determinists, such as Pereboom, are important to the free will debate because they actually agree with libertarians on the incompatibility of free will and determinism.

²⁴ William Hasker, *Metaphysics: Constructing a World View* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1983). This thesis will assume a combination of a Cartesian and Aristotelian position. One of the important questions concerning any dualistic position is the nature or ontological properties of the soul. One common suggestion is that the soul is a mind. However, it is hard to explain how a mind or ideas can have any causal influence. Thus, a soul must be a substance of some kind, not just a mind. This thesis, in agreement with William Hasker, holds the position that the soul could be like magnetic or gravitational field—a force or a field of mental influence. This force field of mental influence possesses both causal powers and intentionality. Furthermore, when present, the soul can take over and control the physical processes causing the person to perform certain actions and pursue certain goals. If this is the case, then while it may be true that the physical processes in the brain are governed by the regularities of the laws of nature, these regularities hold only in the absence of the soul. Now this brings one to the question of how the soul interacts with the physical body. One suggestion is that this interaction occurs on the quantum level. Since scientists admit that there is a level of indeterminacy in quantum physics, it may be the case that the soul-field is connected to the body on this quantum level. Through acts of the will the soul can move the particles on the quantum level to produce actions at a higher level. For example, the soul activates the neurological pathways in the brain to send the signal to the appropriate muscles in the body to perform a particular action. Thus, by proposing the existence of the soul this thesis will assume that one can avoid the problems of causal determinism since the soul has the power to control the physical processes.

purely philosophical analysis of the theological positions. When discussing the issue of God's sovereignty and human freedom, this thesis will specifically focus on the issue of divine foreknowledge. The reasoning for this focus is that foreknowledge provides a larger obstacle to human freedom than predestination. Concerning God's relation to time it will be assumed that God is everlasting (has no beginning or end), not timeless.²⁵ Finally, this thesis will assume a modified version of immutability which rejects the classical idea that God is strongly immutable—experiencing no change whatsoever.²⁶ The modified version will propose that God is immutable in nature only; thus, He can experience other kinds of changes, such as changes in plans and knowledge.²⁷

²⁵ John Sanders, "Divine Providence and the Openness of God," in *Perspectives on the Doctrine of God: 4 Views*, ed. Bruce A. Ware (Nashville, TN: B&H Academic, 2008), 225-228; Sanders, *Risks*, 200-205. William Lane Craig, *Time and Eternity: Exploring God's Relationship to Time* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2001).; St. Anselm, "God is Timeless, Immutable, and Impassible." in *Philosophy of Religion Selected Readings 3rd Edition*, ed. William L. Rowe and William J. Wainwright (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 76-77. An important distinction exists between claiming that God is everlasting, instead of timeless. This thesis rejects that God is timeless since timelessness implies strong immutability. The reason for this assumption is that time is the measure of change. If one assumes that God acts in the world and at some point created the world, then God has to experience duration or at least some logical sequence. For example, if God experiences relationship within the trinity before creation, then this implies a sequence of events of some kind. In addition, by entering into the world God subjected himself to our time experiencing the duration of earthly life. It is important to note that this thesis is not assuming that God is "in" time in the sense of our solar time. Rather, God's existence is the grounding for time itself, true time of an everlasting kind. This is most easily expressed in God's creating acts. God, in creating, preformed acts and the performance of acts is all that is required for time in the sense of duration. Therefore, God's time is based on his willing and actions. This is why God can say that his time is not our time without implying that he exists "outside" of time. In light of this, it seems obvious that God is not timeless in an absolute sense. Rather, he is everlasting (without being or end).

²⁶ Anselm, Timeless, 76-77.; St. Thomas Aquinas, "The Simplicity and Immutability of God." in *Philosophy of Religion Selected Readings 3rd Edition*, ed. William L. Rowe and William J. Wainwright (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 78-80. The classical argument is that in order for God to be perfect He cannot experience any change. Aquinas argued that God is pure actuality and change requires potentiality. Only finite things can contain any potentiality since if something is potential, that thing is not complete. Potentiality implies a lack of some property. For example, a rock sitting on a table lacks movement, thus it is potentially in motion. However, God cannot lack anything; therefore one can never say that God changes in any respect.

²⁷ Thomas V. Morris, "Properties, Modalities, and God," *The Philosophical Review* 93, no.1 (January 1984). The problem with the classical view is it reduces God to a passive onlooker, unable to act in the world. Thomas Morris argues that what is essential to God's immutability is that he cannot cease to have the necessary attributes that belong to a deity. This does not mean that God's intentions and willing are necessary. In other words God's character is immutable, but this does not imply that He cannot experience and interact with the world. This view seems to align with Scripture and removes the dilemma of explaining acts of creation and the incarnation that plague the classical view.

CHAPTER 1

A CASE FOR LIBERTARIAN FREEDOM

The Libertarian Position

Are humans free? This question entails not only (FW1) whether humans possess free will, but also (FW2) how one defines free will. Since the denial of free will would render FW2 meaningless, one must first address FW1. Yet, FW1 possesses an inherent vagueness spurring the ambitious philosopher to ask an even more fundamental question, FW*: what is the significance of human freedom? This chapter will argue that the answer to FW* is that free will grounds or provides the basis for moral responsibility. If free will is necessary for moral responsibility, then one cannot truly address the nature of free will without first asking: What does it mean to say someone is morally responsible for an action? First of all, one must distinguish between causing an act and being morally responsible for causing an act. For example, when Dan throws a rock at the window, the rock may be the cause of the window breaking; however, no one would punish the rock for breaking the window.²⁸ The reason for this is obvious—the rock had no choice whether or not it was thrown at the window. What this shows is that only an active agent who possesses the power to cause an event can be morally responsible.²⁹ Yet, by itself this criterion for moral responsibility seems lacking since other things have active powers (tornadoes, lightening, waves, etc.). Therefore, active power alone is insufficient to establish moral responsibility.³⁰

²⁸ William Rowe, “Responsibility, Agent-Causation, and Freedom: An Eighteenth-Century View,” in *Perspectives on Moral Responsibility*, ed. John Martin Fischer and Mark Ravizza (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993), 265.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 264.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 265.

What causes one to attribute moral responsibility to a human agent for acting while denying moral responsibility to other beings or objects for “acting”? The answer is a person has a particular ability that other things do not possess—intention. Therefore, moral responsibility requires not only that the agent possess causal powers to act, but also intend to perform that act. Consider a boulder resting on the top of a cliff. One day a violent storm causes the boulder to roll down the cliff resulting in the destruction of the car at the bottom of the cliff. No one would hold the storm or the boulder morally responsible for destroying the car, since neither the boulder nor the storm had any intention of hitting the car. Neither the storm nor the boulder had the power to choose to activate “their” causal powers in order to bring about this event.³¹ Instead, both the storm and the boulder “acted” as a result of a causal chain of events which itself was devoid of any intention.³² Consequently, the storm and the boulder, while causing the destruction of the car, do not qualify as “agents” which can be held morally responsible for this “act”.

What if human actions and intentions were the result of a causal chain of events just as in the rock scenario? Derk Pereboom argues that if

[T]he first and second-order desires and the reasons-responsive process that result in [x doing A] are inevitable given their causes and those causes are inevitable given their causes. In assessing moral responsibility [x doing A], we wind our way back along the deterministic chain of causes that results in [x’s] reasoning and desires, and we eventually reach causal factors that are beyond [x’s] control—causal factors that [x] could not have produced, altered, or prevented.³³

Laura Ekstrom illustrates this point with the following example,

Colonel Mustard could not have done other than try to murder Miss Scarlett. When he finds himself with the intention to murder her, precisely that intention was physically

³¹ Ibid., 264-265.

³² Ibid., 264-265. Now of course this illustration is assuming that an agent such as God did not cause this process to happen. Instead, the assumption here is that the process was initiated by natural laws without any intention of bringing about the destruction of the car or the moving of the boulder.

³³ Pereboom, *Determinism*, 23.

necessary at the time: it was the only state that could occur, given the past and the laws of nature. But if there was no causal openness in the formation of Colonel Mustard's mind he had to intend to murder Miss Scarlett at the moment at which he intended to murder her, given the natural laws and what had come before—then it seems that the universe sets him up to be a murderer. Colonel Mustard—causally determined to intend to murder did not have a chance to become someone different, someone who never forms a murderous intention.³⁴

In this case, humans “...lack the freedom required for moral responsibility...not only do we never deserve blame, but, moreover, no moral principles or values apply to us...we therefore never deserve blame for having performed a wrongful act...”³⁵ For if the person’s will is only an event caused by another event over which the person had no control or effective power, then intention becomes just another event thrown into motion like the boulder. So while the person may act for a certain reason, if causal determinism is true, then it no longer matters if a person intends to perform an act.

In light of the implications of causal determinism, the proponent of LF claims that free will is incompatible with causal determinism. An act is causally determined if it “is the result of an unbroken causal sequence which originates in something other than S’s beliefs and desires and in virtue of which A is unavoidable for S.”³⁶ Therefore, according to LF the will is free if and only if it is not causally determined by forces over which the person had no control.

Furthermore, if free will requires that the person’s will is not causally determined by any outside forces, then for every free action, if (x) is free to do the action this implies x is free to refrain from the action—PAP.³⁷ The reasoning behind PAP is that “...there is virtually no chance that we are doing (or willing) what we really want to do unless it is possible for us to do (or will)

³⁴ L. Ekstrom, “Free Will, Chance, and Mystery,” *Philosophical Studies* 113, no. 2 (March 2003): 160.

³⁵ Pereboom, *Determinism*, 21-22.

³⁶ Stump, *Intellect*, 244.

³⁷ Rowe, *Responsibility*, 278.

otherwise...if there is no alternate possibility open to us, it is because some external force or agent is constraining us to act as we do, *so that what we do isn't what we ourselves really want to do*" (emphasis mine).³⁸

The Compatibilist Objection—Frankfurt Counter Examples

Proponents of CF reject LF, arguing instead that free will is compatible with determinism. In response to FW2, CF claims that freedom of will is “the absence of obstacles to willing what one wants to will.”³⁹ In other words, x is free as long as x has the ability to do what x wants to do.⁴⁰ One of the central arguments raised by CF against LF is the falsification of PAP. Frankfurt explains,

The fact that a person lacks alternatives does preclude his being morally responsible when it alone accounts for his behavior... a lack of alternatives is not inconsistent with moral responsibility when someone acts as he does for reasons of his own, rather than simply because no other alternative is open to him. It is therefore of no particular significance, so far as ascriptions of moral responsibility are concerned, whether determinism is true or false, or whether it is compatible or incompatible with free will as PAP construes it.⁴¹

He further explains,

Now if someone had no alternative to performing a certain action but did not perform it because he was unable to do otherwise, then he would have performed exactly the same action even if he could have done otherwise. The circumstances that made it impossible for him to do otherwise could have been subtracted from the situation without affecting what happened or why it happened in any way. Whatever it was that actually led the person to do what he did, or that made him do it, would have led him to do it or made him do it even if it had been possible for him to do something else instead.⁴²

³⁸ Stump, *Intellect*, 261.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ Frankfurt, *Alternate*, 829-839. This is the premise of the entire article and articulated through various illustrations.

⁴¹ Frankfurt, *Morally Responsible*, 286-287.

⁴² Frankfurt, *Alternate*, 837.

In order to illustrate his objection against PAP, Frankfurt formulated scenarios (FFCs), in which there is a person “x” who is deciding whether or not to choose a particular action A—to kill y. Unknown to x, another agent “z,” wants x to do A and designed a plan “P” (the specific plan does not matter as long as it guarantees the end result) to guarantee that x will perform A. Now the important thing to note is that z will only activate P if x decides, or begins to decide, to waver in the decision to do A. If this happens then z will activate P, and P will override x’s decision to not do A, forcing x to do A. Clearly, x will necessarily do A either by x’s own will or by z activating P. Frankfurt claims that one can imagine a particular scenario, in which x chooses on x’s own to do A. The result is z simply observes this decision without activating P. In this scenario, x is free because x did A without coercion from z. Consequently, x can be responsible even if an A is inevitable, as long as x can do what x wants to do without coercion.⁴³ Since FFCs demonstrate that x is moral responsible despite the inability to do otherwise, PAP is falsified.

The Libertarian Response—Two Arguments Against Frankfurt Counter Examples

Despite the initial appeal of FCCs, CF ultimately fails on two accounts. First, FCCs do not eliminate alternate possibilities.⁴⁴ In order to understand how alternate possibilities still exist within FCCs, consider the following example. Bob is the manager of a train track and is responsible for controlling a switch that determines whether trains proceed on track 1 or track 2. In this scenario, a person (Jim) is tied up and laying on track 1 and Bob is aware of this. However, unknown to Bob, his evil twin James wants to kill Jim and has devised this entire scenario. Furthermore, James is no fool. Deciding to leave nothing to chance, he secretly installs a device on the switch giving him the ability to change the train to the track he desires.

⁴³ Ibid., 834-836. This summary of Frankfurt’s argument closely resembles the one he gave on these pages.

⁴⁴ Brown, *Choice*, 268-271. This position is argued by Brown on these pages.

Therefore, regardless of Bob's decision James will ensure Jim is killed by the train. Now, there is a catch; James will use this device to control the switch if and only if the train is not set to go on track 1. In the actual scenario, Bob decides that he wants to kill Jim, and throws the switch to track 1, resulting in Jim's death.⁴⁵

In order to see how alternate possibilities exist for Bob in this scenario, a distinction must be made between consequence-particulars (CPs) and consequence-universals (CUs). The difference between CPs and CUs is, "the actual causal pathway to a consequence-particular is an essential feature of it, so that if a different causal pathway were to occur, then a different consequence-particular would occur."⁴⁶ On the other hand, "the same consequence-universal can be brought about via different causal antecedents."⁴⁷ In this case the CU (Jim is killed) is inevitable since James will ensure that the switch is thrown to track 1. Now proponents of LF, like Peter van Inwagen, argue that Bob is not be responsible for the CU (Jim is killed) because he could not have prevented the CU from obtaining.⁴⁸ The problem with this claim is intuitively one would say that Bob is responsible for killing Jim. This would result in LF removing responsibility in a case where responsibility appears to be warranted.

However, William Rowe points out that LF is not necessarily committed to dismissing moral responsibility in such cases. He argues that while Bob may not be responsible for the "inevitability" of the CU (Jim is killed), Bob is responsible for actualizing the CP (Bob kills

⁴⁵ William L. Rowe, "Causing and Being Responsible for What is Inevitable," in *Perspectives on Moral Responsibility*, ed. John Martin Fischer and Mark Ravizza (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993), 312. This argument is modeled after the one presented by Rowe in this article. However, the scenario was changed in some respects including the names and that fact that a person was tied to the track instead of a dog as in Rowe's example.

⁴⁶ John Martin Fischer and Mark Ravizza, "Responsibility for Consequences," in *Perspectives on Moral Responsibility*, ed. John Martin Fischer and Mark Ravizza (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993), 326-327.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 327.

⁴⁸ Peter Van Inwagen, "Ability and Responsibility," *The Philosophical Review* 87 (1987): 210.; Van Inwagen, *Moral Responsibility*, 346

Jim), which is a sufficient condition for the actualization of the CU.⁴⁹ Rowe then claims that a person is responsible for a CU, “if [a person does] something that is sufficient in the circumstances for E, and [one’s] doing it *prevents the actualization of other potential generators* of E, then [that person caused] E by doing that thing.”⁵⁰ Since the CP (Bob kills Jim) provided the sufficient condition for the CU (Jim is killed), and prevented the actualization of the alternate CP (James kills Jim by overriding the switch controls), Bob is morally responsible for the CU (Jim is killed).

This distinction between CU’s and CP’s reveals that in FFC’s alternate possibilities exist. Even though x cannot prevent the CU (x kills y), since z will ensure that the CU obtains, x can actualize the CP1 (x kills y on x’s own) or the CP2 (x refuses to kill y and P is activated by z causing x to kill y). If x chooses CP 1, then z never activates P and the CU occurs because of CP1. However, if x chooses CP2, then CP2 is the sufficient condition for the occurrence of CU, removing x’s responsibility for the CU (x kills y) since z is the cause of CU in the case of CP2. Consequently, while x does not have the ability to “do” otherwise, since x will kill y one way or the other; x does have *the ability to will otherwise*. Therefore, FFC’s do not remove alternate possibilities. Instead, PAP may be modified to state that a person is morally responsible if and only if the person has the ability to will otherwise, regardless if the person is able to “do” otherwise.⁵¹

However, compatibilists may argue that the libertarian begs the question. The point of FFCs is *that x is able to do what x wants to do, not whether x could ever have wanted to do*

⁴⁹ Rowe, *Causing and Being*, 320.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 315.

⁵¹ Brown, *Choice*, 271.

otherwise. According to the compatibilist, “If a person has done what he wanted to do because he wanted to do it and the will by which he was moved when he did it was his own will, then he acted freely, whether or not he also acted with freedom of will.”⁵² Therefore, contrary to the libertarian suggestion, when x chooses on x’s own to kill y, *this does not imply that x could have wanted to not kill y*. This response leads to the second failure of CF—the assumption that determinism is true, eliminating not only alternate actions, but also alternate willing. In order to solve this dilemma the compatibilist must explain how a person can be morally responsible for willing a certain action if one’s will was determined to will that action.

Derk Pereboom argues that the compatibilist fails to provide a sufficient solution to this dilemma. He gives the following illustration in which Mr. Green kills Miss Peacock. In the first case, Mr. Green is like a normal human, but neuroscientists created him and directly control his actions through making him have egotistical desires, which lead to him killing Miss Peacock. In case two, Mr. Green is created by neuroscientists, but they do not control his actions directly, instead they pre-programmed him to have egotistical desires, which lead to him to killing Miss Peacock. In the third case, Mr. Green was determined to be egotistic by his community and home at such a young age that he could not have decided to reject developing an egotistical character, which causes him to kill Miss Peacock. In the fourth case, physical determinism is true and Mr. Green decides to kill Miss Peacock. Pereboom concludes that if Mr. Green was not responsible in the first three cases, then neither can Mr. Green be responsible in the fourth case because in every case Mr. Green is directly controlled by other agents or by deterministic laws that extended beyond his control.⁵³ Pereboom’s argument reveals that if a person is going to be held morally

⁵² Stump, *Intellect*, 243.

⁵³ Pereboom, *Determinism*, 23-25.

responsible for willing to do a particular action, then the person must be accountable for the will that willed the particular action.

In response to this objection Fischer suggests that one must make a distinction between moral responsibility and moral blameworthiness.⁵⁴ He argues that “Moral responsibility...is more abstract than praiseworthiness or blameworthiness: moral responsibility is, as it were, the "gateway" to moral praiseworthiness, blameworthiness, resentment, indignation, respect, gratitude, and so forth.⁵⁵ Therefore, “an agent can be morally responsible, but circumstances may be such as to render praise or blame unjustifiable.”⁵⁶ In Pereboom’s example, Fischer argues that the manipulation of Mr. Green’s brain “does not issue in desires so strong as to count as compulsions.”⁵⁷ Mr. Green’s “actual-sequence mechanism has the general power or capacity to respond differently to the very reasons that actually obtain in the case...he is not forced or compelled to act as he does; thus, he is not a robot - he has a certain minimal measure of control, and moral responsibility is associated with control (of precisely this sort).”⁵⁸ Therefore, while Mr. Green may be morally responsible for killing Miss Peacock he is not blameworthy.⁵⁹

However, Fischer’s response is inadequate for two reasons. First, one cannot simply solve the dilemma of moral responsibility by redefining the term. By separating moral responsibility from blameworthiness, Fischer removes its significance. The problem for Fischer’s definition of moral responsibility is that even if he establishes that a person is morally

⁵⁴ Fischer, *Responsibility*, 157.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 158.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 157

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 158.

responsible for a particular act, this does not entail that person deserves blame or praise for the action. However, the idea that a person could be held accountable and worthy of punishment is the reason for attributing free will to a person. Any kind of freedom that only provides one with moral responsibility but not blameworthiness renders moral responsibility an empty term. What benefit does Fischer provide in attributing morally responsible to a person if the person cannot be held blameworthy for the action?

Secondly, Fischer's response to Pereboom's argument appears to undermine his own compatibilist position. He claims that Mr. Green is not a robot and his "actual-sequence mechanism *has the general power or capacity to respond differently* to the very reasons that actually obtain in the case" (Emphasis mine).⁶⁰ However, if the power or capacity to respond differently is present, then it seems contradictory to say that Mr. Green does not have the ability to will otherwise. Fischer responds to this objection by claiming that the counterfactual intervener can be placed on the level of the will.⁶¹ However, as already shown, the presence of the counterfactual intervener does not remove alternate possibilities. One can still will on one's own to do the action or force the counterfactual intervener to intervene by trying to will otherwise.⁶² It seems that the only way for the compatibilist to remove alternate possibilities is to

⁶⁰ Ibid., 157.

⁶¹ Fischer, *Ultimacy*, 17.

⁶² Stump, Eleonore. "Alternative Possibilities and Moral Responsibility: The Flicker of Freedom." *The Journal of Ethics* 3, no. 4 (1999): 299-324. It should be noted that many compatibilists argue that this ability to will otherwise is merely a flicker of freedom and not robust enough to attribute moral responsibility. By proposing that the counterfactual intervener be moved to the will, the compatibilist assumes that this eliminates alternate possibilities of any kind without affecting the responsibility of the agent. However, compatibilists seem to miss the point. The libertarian argues that a person has to be responsible for the character one has. In order for a person to be responsible in this way the person must have the ability to will otherwise at some point. This does not mean that the person must always have the ability to will otherwise, since a person can set one's will in a particular way which eliminates an alternate will as one the person would desire. However, the significant difference is that the limitation must be within the control of the agent, not a counterfactual intervener. Furthermore, how does one acquire one's will in the first place? The compatibilist naively assumes that in the situation the person's desires are the person's own desires, not one's imputed to them from outside causal factors. However, this is the fundamental question that

assert that all actions are in fact causally determined by factors beyond the agent's control. For if the agent had any sort of control of one's own will then alternate possibilities would be possible. This solution returns the compatibilist to the original problem—if causal determinism is true, then it is irrelevant whether x did what x wanted to do since that desire originated in a causal process beyond x's control.⁶³

Compatibilists woefully miss the obvious point that "...there is virtually no chance that we are doing (or willing) what we really want to do unless it is possible for us to do (or will) otherwise...if there is no alternate possibility open to us, it is because some external force or agent is constraining us to act as we do, *so that what we do isn't what we ourselves really want to do*" (emphasis mine).⁶⁴ John Wild explains, if "...my 'self' has been bestowed upon me in advance...[i]t is simply a condition that requires to be realized by meeting other external conditions in a course of action whose general pattern, at least, has already been determined. But, if this is true, how can I possibly become free, and in what sense can I call this self, and the life that I live, my own?"⁶⁵ If a person has no power to change one's will or determine one's dispositions then either "everything has become necessary to a man/or that everything has become trivial..."⁶⁶

Consequently, if a person receives all one's desires (via genetics, culture, laws of nature, etc.) then like the storm and the boulder, a person performs only those actions that are the causal

must be addressed. How does the person acquire the desires which are operative in the FFCs? It seems entirely inadequate to assume that just because a person wants to do something that the person is responsible for having the wants and desires to will that thing.

⁶⁴ Stump, *Intellect*, 261.

⁶⁵ Wild, *Authentic*, 228.

⁶⁶ Soren Kierkegaard, *The Sickness Unto Death*, trans. Walter Lowrie (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1944), 62.

results of the desires one received. If this is true, “Freedom would then be in a sorry case...since it would be responsible for what did not belong to it, being destined to bring offspring into the world for necessity to devour. Freedom itself would be an illusion...”⁶⁷ The only significant difference between the boulder and storm destroying the car and x killing y, is that x’s causal process included the illusion of freedom. In light of this, since x had no control over which desires x had, x cannot be morally responsible for the action these desires produced. Therefore, compatibilism is revealed as a wolf in sheep’s clothing, freedom’s Brutus, offering the illusion of friendship with one hand while concealing a dagger in the other.

An Agent Causation Libertarian Account

This chapter has argued that CF fails to provide a viable account of free will and moral responsibility. However, this failure does not entail the truth or validity of LF. In order to accomplish this, the remainder of this chapter will analyze one final objection—the grounding objection. The grounding objection claims that indeterminism also eliminates moral responsibility because if one’s actions are not grounded in a fixed nature (character), then they are arbitrary, mere chance. When one claims that an action is done by chance this means (1) that the actualization of the action is not guaranteed and (2) it “depends to some extent on eventualities or circumstances which it is not in the power of that individual (or individuals) to control.”⁶⁸ If a chance event occurs via factors over which the person has no control, then like a determined event, it does not preserve moral responsibility.

⁶⁷ Soren Kierkegaard, *Philosophical Fragments*, trans. David F. Swenson and Howard V. Hong (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1962), 96.

⁶⁸ Helen Steward, "The Truth in Compatibilism and the Truth of Libertarianism," *Philosophical Explorations* 12, no. 2 (June 2009): 169.

However, the grounding (chance) objection is based on a misconception of indeterminism. While indeterminism does entail the existence of chance, chance does not entail the negation of moral responsibility.⁶⁹ When libertarians claim that an event or action is undetermined they simply mean that it did not occur out of necessity, not that it is random.⁷⁰ Laura Ekstrom explains, “When an agent acts on a preference with undefeated authorization, there was indeed "some chance" that she would prefer otherwise than as she did. Yet her preference formation was nonetheless not accidental or purposeless, and her subsequent overt action is free.”⁷¹ It is important to understand that LF does not deny all forms of determinism. Philippa Foot points out, “[A] moral agent is a man whose actions are in general determined, if determinism is involved in "having a motive" for what he does.”⁷² Therefore,

It does not follow from the fact that an event has indeterminate causation in its immediate history that the event is uncaused or unplanned...The free agent's decision concerning what to prefer is caused by and made for reasons...Her choice is in no clear sense capricious or arbitrary. It is random or chancy only in the probabilistic sense: it might not have occurred, given the past and natural laws.⁷³

Nevertheless, the compatibilist may argue that this solution simply begs the question. If libertarians want to appeal to the desires and motives as the grounding for moral responsibility, then they must explain how one’s desires do not exert an irresistible appeal toward certain actions.⁷⁴ Such objections need not worry libertarians because these objections are based on an incorrect assumption that one’s genetic make-up, environment, culture, etc, necessarily

⁶⁹ Kane, *Libertarianism*, 39.

⁷⁰ Ekstrom, *Free Will*, 169-170.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 169.

⁷² Philippa Foot, “Free Will Involving Determinism,” *The Philosophical Review* 66, no. 4 (October 1957): 443.

⁷³ Ekstrom, *Free Will*, 169-170.

⁷⁴ O’Connor, *Agent*, 471.

determine a person's actions and will. Libertarians argue that such limitations, "do not exercise an implacable causal efficacy. They work only by issuing an appeal of meaning... Like any partner in a living dialogue, this appeal can be re-fused."⁷⁵ Helen Steward points out that, "'powerful considerations' are just not the sorts of things that can 'push' me into deciding in a way that is antithetical to freedom because they can do nothing independently of my appreciation of them and my acceptance of them as reasons for me to act in a certain way."⁷⁶

Not only are these limitations not coercive, they actually provide the grounding for free will. C.S. Lewis explains, "...the freedom of a creature must mean freedom to choose; and choice implies the existence of things to choose between. A creature with no environment would have no choices to make: so that freedom, like self-consciousness, again demands the presence to the self of something other than the self."⁷⁷ What this reveals is one's decision making process is not arbitrary, grounded in an indifferent will. Instead, the person is confronted with real conflicting desires and limitations that provide the basis for free choice. Kane points out that "If this were not so, there would have been nothing we could have ever done differently in our entire lifetimes to make our wills other than they are; and we would never act 'of our own free will' in the sense of a will ultimately of our own making."⁷⁸

Yet, this response does not explain exactly how a person's desires do not present an irresistible appeal to the will. If libertarians want to claim that desires do not exert determinate causal powers over the agent's will, then they must explain what component of human nature

⁷⁵ Wild, *Authentic*, 238.

⁷⁶ Steward, *Truth*, 173.

⁷⁷ C.S. Lewis, "The Problem of Pain," in *The Complete C.S. Lewis Signature Classics* (New York: Harper One, 2002), 562.

⁷⁸ Kane, *Libertarianism*, 36.

prevents this determinate causal influence. The answer to this question is human reason or intellect. When humans act they do so for reasons, not out of necessity or causally determined factors. The person, not the motives or desires, determines which motive will provide the sufficient condition for a particular action.⁷⁹ One may ask how someone decides on which reasons one will act. Eleonore Stump proposes, “the will is not a neutral capacity for choosing but a hunger for the good, which takes as good what the intellect represents as good.”⁸⁰ Therefore, “an agent’s volition is his own only if his intellect represents what is willed as the good to be pursued and the agent forms the corresponding volition in consequence of that representation on the part of his intellect.”⁸¹

In order to understand how this process works one must distinguish between first and second order desires. A first order desire is simply one’s desire to perform a particular act, while a second order desire is one’s desire to desire to perform a particular action. For example, consider a scenario where Bob is trying to decide to lie or tell Jim the truth. Both the desire to lie and the desire to tell the truth are first order desires. When Bob considers both these first order desires he must decide which one is the one he wants to pursue. Bob may reason that not only would lying possibly help him escape consequences, but he can get away with this lie without causing anyone else harm. Consequently, Bob forms the second order desire to act upon the first order desire to lie. When a second order desire is effective in moving the agent to act upon one’s first order desire this is called a volition.⁸² In Bob’s case his second order desire to lie becomes his second order volition by causing his first order desire to lie to become the desire on which he

⁷⁹ O’ Connor, *Agent*, 471.

⁸⁰ Stump, *Intellect*, 262.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 245.

⁸² Stump, *Sanctification*, 217.

acts. The end result is that Bob lies because he decided that lying was the good to be pursued and it was his reasoning that led him to act upon his desire to lie.

In light of this decision making process, the proponent of LF will say that "...an individual has freedom of the will just in case he has second-order desires, his first order volitions are not discordant with his second-order desires, and he has the first order volitions he has because of his second order volitions."⁸³ Therefore, Bob is free and morally responsible for his action because he formulated the second order volition to act upon his first order desire to lie. Furthermore, the reason why he formed this second order desire was that Bob's "intellect approves of [lying] as the good to be pursued, and there is no higher-order desire of [Bob's] with which [lying] is discordant."⁸⁴ It is important to point out that this model of libertarian free action avoids the grounding objection since,

[A]n agent *forms a second-order desire by reasoning* about his first-order desires; and a second order desire is *a direct result of an agent's intellect* representing a certain first-order desire as the good to be pursued. Given his connection between the intellect and second order desires, an agent cannot be a passive bystander to his second order volitions. To be a second order volition, *a volition must be the result of reasoning on the agent's part*" (Emphasis mine).⁸⁵

Not only does this account of LF avoid the grounding objection, but it also explains how a person can be limited in FFCs in a relevant morally responsible way. FFCs are correct in accreting that the ability to do otherwise is not necessary for moral responsibility. However, one cannot separate the person's decisions from the will that wills the decisions. It would be pointless to say a person is responsible for what they will if they were not responsible for the will itself. Thus, if a person is not responsible for the dispositions of the will one is not responsible for the

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 222.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 219.

actions that result from these dispositions. Consequently, FFCs cannot eliminate alternate possibilities within the will without eliminating moral responsibility. Yet, what if there are cases in which a person is unable to will otherwise? This version of LF provides a solution to these scenarios without appealing to causal determinism by intimately connecting one's moral responsibility with character formation. A person's choices deeply impact on one's character as Kierkegaard states, "[t]he choice itself is decisive for the content of the personality, through the choice the personality immerses itself in the thing chosen."⁸⁶ Consequently, it is possible that through character formation a person's will becomes more fix and set toward certain inclinations.

For example, when Bob considers his options and formulates a second order volition to act on his first order desire to lie, he does this because he considers lying the good to be pursued. Not only does the lie prevent the negative consequences of the action, but Bob gets away with the lie. When faced with the decision to lie again, Bob remembers the success of the previous lie and decides to lie again. Over the course of time Bob gets into the habit of lying, so eventually Bob no longer thinks about the possibility of telling the truth as the good to be pursued. Kane points out that an agent can be held morally responsible for any act, as long as, the agent was "at least in part responsible by virtue of choices or actions voluntarily performed in the past for having the character and motives he or she now has."⁸⁷ Since the habit of lying was not acquired by necessity, rather through a previous free choice, this explains why one would not excuse Bob's lying simply because he told a lie out of habit. The only way Bob could avoid being

⁸⁶ Soren Kierkegaard, *Either/Or Vol. 2*, trans. Walter Lowrie (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1944), 168.

⁸⁷ Kane, *Libertarianism*, 36.

morally responsible for lying is if he formulated a second order desire to stop being a liar, but his first order desire to lie compelled (forced) him to lie.⁸⁸

This argument reveals that LF does not require a person to be able to do or will otherwise for every act, as long as “we could have done otherwise with respect to some acts in our past life histories by which we formed our present characters.”⁸⁹ Since one’s character was freely formed the person is responsible not only for the character but for the actions one wills from this character. Consequently, any limitations of the will in FFCs can be accounted for by past LF free acts even if in the present scenario the person is unable to will otherwise. Therefore, one may say that a person (x) is morally responsible for an act (A) if and only if x has LF to will x’s second order desire in accord with x’s first order desire to do A, and this second order desire caused x to do A. This entire process could occur within a FFC since it is possible that x has neither the ability to act, nor will otherwise. However, x remains morally responsible, as long as, the will which determined the A was formed through previous LF free acts in which x could have willed otherwise.

⁸⁸ Stump, *Intellect*, 249.

⁸⁹ Kane, *Libertarianism*, 36.

CHAPTER 2

LIBERTARIAN FREEDOM AND THE FOREKNOWLEDGE DILEMMA

Divine Foreknowledge—An Argument Against Libertarian Freedom

Thus far this thesis has argued that LF is required in order to preserve moral responsibility. However, if the theist is going to hold onto the notion of LF he must address the problem raised by God's foreknowledge. In order to understand the problem presented by divine foreknowledge one must first define omniscience. Most people define omniscience as all-knowing. However, this definition is inadequate because there exists at least one set of propositions that cannot be known—false propositions. For example, the statement “Earth does not exist,” is false, thus one cannot know that “Earth does not exist.” If someone believes that “Earth does not exist,” this is not considered knowledge. Rather, the person is judged as holding a false belief—*lacking knowledge*. Nevertheless, while one cannot know that “Earth does not exist,” one can know that “it is false that Earth does not exist.” Knowing that something is false is itself a true belief. Since it is logically impossible to know something if that thing is false, omniscience may be redefined as the ability to know what is logically possible to know.⁹⁰

What then is logically possible to know? An obvious answer is true propositions, since something must be true in order for someone to know it. Therefore, if knowledge entails that what is known must be true then omniscience entails that God must know all truths. This brings one to the question: What grounds the truth of a proposition or what makes a proposition true? The answer is “A statement is true if it corresponds with reality, false if it does not.”⁹¹ T. M

⁹⁰ Boyd, *Open Theism*, 42.; St. Thomas Aquinas, “The Omnipotence of God,” in *Philosophy of Religion Selected Readings 3rd Edition*, ed. William L. Rowe and William J. Wainwright (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 60. This restriction on omniscience is also justified since Thomas Aquinas placed the same restriction on God's omnipotence and this move is widely accepted in the Christian tradition.

⁹¹ Boyd, *Possible*, 124.

Rudavsky points out, “Without an identity between knower and the thing known, there can be no knowledge. For if the proposition known is true, it must refer to something which exists; without this referential relation, there can be no identity, and hence no knowledge.”⁹² This reveals, “The debate over the nature of God’s foreknowledge is not primarily a debate about the scope or perfection of God’s knowledge (omniscience). All Christians agree that God is omniscient and therefore knows all of reality perfectly. The debate over God’s foreknowledge is rather a debate over the *content of reality* that God perfectly knows.”⁹³ Traditionally Christians have believed that since God is perfect, He must have perfect knowledge which includes all truths past, present, and future. Boethius argues,

[F]or nothing whatever can be done or even desired without its being known beforehand by the infallible Providence of God. If things could somehow be accomplished in some way other than that which God foresaw, his foreknowledge of the future would no longer be certain...And if He merely knows that they may or may not happen that is, if He knows only their contingent possibilities, what is such knowledge worth, since it does not know with certainty?...Divine Providence would be no better than human opinion if God judges as men do and knows only that uncertain events are doubtful. But if nothing can be uncertain to Him who is the most certain source of all things, the outcome is certain of all things which He knows with certainty shall be.”⁹⁴

However, this conception of omniscience and foreknowledge raises a problem for proponents of LF: If God knows what “will” happen this removes contingency in the occurrence of these events, making them necessary. The movement from God’s knowledge to the necessity of an action is justified for the following two reasons. First, (R1) God can never be wrong concerning what he knows.⁹⁵ Second (R2), since the past is fixed and God’s knowledge of the

⁹² T. M. Rudavsky, “Divine Omniscience and Future Contingents in Gersonides,” *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 21, no. 4 (October 1983): 520.

⁹³ Boyd, *Open-Theism*, 13.

⁹⁴ Boethius, *Divine Foreknowledge*, 24-25.

⁹⁵ Hasker, *Time*, 72.

future is in the past then the future can never be altered.⁹⁶ Concerning R1 Gersonides explains, “Knowledge is distinguished from opinion according to its degree of certainty. For, ‘when we say that we have knowledge that a specific one of a set of possibilities will be actualized, then it is not possible (logically) for us that it will not be actualized.’”⁹⁷ For example, if God said He foreknew in 1923 that Bob lies to Jim in 2014, yet Bob tells the truth, then God did not know that Bob would lie. Therefore, if God foreknows that Bob will lie then necessarily Bob will lie. While Bob’s lie may not have been necessary in a fatalistic sense, once God knows in 1923 that Bob will lie in 2014 this knowledge is now in the past and necessary since God cannot change what He knew in 1923.⁹⁸ In this case one is justified in claiming that if God foreknows in 1923 that Bob will lie in 2014, then necessarily Bob will lie in 2014.⁹⁹

In spite of this argument many proponents of LF contend that no inconsistency exists between God’s knowledge of future free acts and LF. Libertarians usually offer one of the following three solutions to this challenge—simple foreknowledge, divine timelessness, or middle knowledge. The rest of this chapter will analyze each of these views arguing that despite the ingenuity of each of these theories they all fail to achieve the proper kind of reciprocity required to preserve God’s sovereignty and human freedom. The failure of all these theories is that in order to preserve God’s foreknowledge of LF actions they succumb to determinism, the uselessness of foreknowledge, or the grounding objection.

⁹⁶ Ibid., 68.

⁹⁷ Rudavsky, *Divine Omniscience*, 525.

⁹⁸ Hasker, *Time*, 68.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

The Simple Foreknowledge View

One of the common libertarian responses to the foreknowledge dilemma is the simple foreknowledge view (SF). This view claims that one must make an important distinction between cases "...in which someone might 'settle' or 'determine' what happens by *making* it happen," and cases "... in which someone might 'settle' or 'determine' what happens by *finding out* about it."¹⁰⁰ Proponents of SF claim that "[i]t is in this latter sense that exhaustive foreknowledge settles or determines the future—God simply *finds out* about it in advance."¹⁰¹ In other words, "...God *directly knows the actual future event*; that God's belief about the matter in question is somehow brought about by the future event itself."¹⁰² Consider once again the example of Bob lying to Jim. According to SF, when God foresees the act of Bob lying to Jim, it is actual action that provides God with the content of His foreknowledge.¹⁰³ Therefore, even though the "...future is epistemically settled in the divine mind...it does not follow that the future is causally settled in any way that conflicts with human freedom."¹⁰⁴ For Bob's decision was free in the libertarian sense because he was not determined either to lie or tell the truth. Therefore, it was that free choice itself which determined the content of God's knowledge.

Nevertheless, while SF preserves LF it renders divine foreknowledge useless. This is the case, "...since the decision's *actually having been made* is presupposed by God's *knowledge* of

¹⁰⁰ David Hunt, "A Simple Foreknowledge Response," in *Divine Foreknowledge Four Views*, ed. James K. Beilby and Paul R. Eddy (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2001), 49.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Hasker, *Time*, 56.

¹⁰³ Ibid., 59.

¹⁰⁴ Hunt, *Response*, 53.

the future, he cannot possibly use that knowledge in deciding how to *influence* that decision.”¹⁰⁵ William Hasker explains, “For what God foreknows is *not* certain antecedents which, unless interfered with in some way, will *lead* to the occurrence of the event; rather, it is *the event itself* that is foreknown as occurring, and it is contradictory to suppose that an event is *known* to occur but then also *prevented* from occurring.”¹⁰⁶ Gregory Boyd points out that for this reason SF “is inconsistent with the Bible’s teaching about God’s foreknowledge... whenever the Bible speaks of God’s foreknowledge, it is to emphasize his ability to control what comes to pass, not to declare that he knows a future he can’t control.”¹⁰⁷ Consequently, “*Whether or not there are creatures endowed with libertarian free will, it is impossible that God should use a foreknowledge derived from the actual occurrence of future events to determine his own prior actions in the providential governance of the world*” (Emphasis author’s).¹⁰⁸ Hence, if the purpose of foreknowledge is to demonstrate God’s providential governance, then foreknowledge cannot be understood in the SF sense.

Divine Timelessness

Despite the failure of SF, libertarians who want to assert that God has exhaustive foreknowledge have another option—divine timelessness (DT). This view was proposed by Boethius, who claimed,

Since God lives in the eternal present, His knowledge transcends all movements of time and abides in the simplicity of the immediate present. It encompasses the infinite sweep of past and future, and regards all things in its simple comprehension as if they were now taking place. Thus, if you will think about the foreknowledge by which God distinguishes

¹⁰⁵ Hasker, *Time*, 57.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁷ Boyd, *Possible*, 101.

¹⁰⁸ Hasker, *Time*, 63.

all things, you will rightly consider it to be not a foreknowledge of future events, but knowledge of a never-changing present.¹⁰⁹

Boethius contends that free will is preserved because even though God's knowledge makes the action necessary it does not cause the action.¹¹⁰ He explains,

[I]f Providence sees anything as present, that thing must necessarily be, even though it may have no necessity by its nature. But God sees as present those future things which result from free will...all the things God sees as present will undoubtedly come to pass; but some will happen by the necessity of their natures, others by the power of those who make them happen.¹¹¹

Consider once again Bob lying to Jim. According to DT, God does not “in” 1923 see that Bob “will” lie to Jim in 2014; instead God actually sees Bob lying to Jim because both 1923 and 2014 are present to God. For God it is not a matter of looking into the future because God has no future or past, God just is (presently exists). Therefore, the act of Bob lying is grounded in Bob committing the act. Furthermore, if God's knowledge is grounded in Bob committing the act this view raises no problems with LF, since God does not foreknow the act “before” it happens. Consequently, DT not only avoids the grounding objection, but also preserves LF.

DT, however, faces some metaphysical as well as theological difficulties.¹¹² However, one need not enter into the metaphysical quagmire of the debates surrounding the legitimacy of divine timeless in order to demonstrate why it fails. Even if divine timelessness is coherent, it makes foreknowledge useless. Hasker explains, “What God knows is necessary, simply and absolutely necessary, as it is known by God; for it is known by God as present, and everything

¹⁰⁹ Boethius, *Divine Foreknowledge*, 30.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 31.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹¹² See Footnotes 25, 26, and 27.

that is present is necessary—*by the time something is, it is then too late for it not to be!*¹¹³ If this is true then like SF “it is impossible that God should use a foreknowledge derived from the actual occurrence of future events to determine his own prior actions in the providential governance of the world.”¹¹⁴ Therefore, while DT does preserve LF, it renders God unable to prevent an act from occurring, since God knows everything as it occurs. Like SF, DT presents God with an already completed story, which God simply knows. This kind of knowledge fails to give God any control over His creation.

The Middle Knowledge View

Not all libertarian views fall prey to the uselessness objection. The middle knowledge view (MK), claims that God possess not only knowledge of what will be, but knowledge of what would be—known as counterfactual knowledge.¹¹⁵ MK, unlike SF, does not claim that God sees into the future. Instead, God has knowledge of all possible worlds he could create.¹¹⁶ Since each of these worlds is only possible, the future is not settled and unalterable before God’s decree to create it. Each possible world also includes counterfactuals of creaturely freedom (CCF). A CCF reveals what a creature would freely do in any given circumstance. An example of a CCF would be: if Dan was given \$10,000, he would pay off his college loans. Now unfortunately this

¹¹³ Hasker, *Time*, 10-11.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 176.

¹¹⁵ William Lane Craig, “The Middle-Knowledge View,” in *Divine Foreknowledge Four Views*, ed. James K. Beilby and Paul R. Eddy (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2001), 120-123. According to MK God has three logical moments in his knowledge—natural knowledge, middle knowledge, and free knowledge. In the first moment, God has knowledge of all the possible worlds he could create. In the second moment, logically prior to His creative decree, God has knowledge based on the truth of counterfactuals what worlds are feasible for him to create. After this second moment, called middle knowledge, God decides which possible world he is going to actualize. This leads to the third moment where God knows what will happen because he determined which possible world to make actual.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 133

counterfactual does not obtain in the actual world, but it is true nonetheless that if Dan was given \$10,000, he would pay off his college loans.

William Lane Craig argues that MK preserves both God's sovereignty and human freedom because "by knowing how persons would freely choose in whatever circumstances they might be in, God can—by decreeing to place just those persons in just those circumstances—bring about his ultimate purposes through free creaturely decisions."¹¹⁷ Therefore, "God can plan a world down to the last detail and yet do so without annihilating creaturely freedom, since what people would freely do under various circumstances is already factored into the equation by God."¹¹⁸ Yet, one may ask: How does God obtain knowledge of a future free act without looking into the future? Craig suggests that God could acquire this knowledge in two ways:

(MK1) God knows the individual essence of every possible creature so well that he knows just what each creature would do under any set of circumstances he might place him in, or (MK2) that God, being omniscient, simply discerns all the truths there are and, prior to the divine decree, there are not only necessary truths but counterfactual truths, and therefore God possesses not only natural knowledge but middle knowledge as well.¹¹⁹

While many arguments have been leveled against MK 1 and 2, I would like to suggest that one does not need to argue against the possibility of MK 1 or 2 in order to refute MK. Such metaphysical debates are futile, usually ending in a stalemate with neither side willing to except the premises of the other. Instead, one only needs to demonstrate that MK 1 and 2 contradict, or fail to preserve, LF. Consider the following argument raised by Gersonides,

[a] If the Lord knows them [events or actions] before they come to pass, then his knowledge will depend upon the non-existent. Moreover, in that case the following disjunction must be true: [i] either He knows them according to the possible aspect of

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 122.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

their nature, which implies the possibility of the contradictory alternative of that which He knows will come to pass; or [ii] He knows completely which of the contradictory alternatives will come to pass, the other alternative not being possible. [i] If He knows them according to the possible aspect of their nature, then the knowledge He possesses of these matters before they come to pass must change when they come to pass. For it was possible that they come to pass or not come to pass before their origination, and that possibility was removed after their origination... [ii] If we assume that the Lord knows completely the alternative that will come to pass of the two contradictory alternatives, this destroys the nature of possibility.¹²⁰

In light of Gersonides argument, MK 1 and 2 imply the acceptance of [ii] which removes alternate possibilities, however LF affirms [i] (that possibilities exist). Therefore, MK cannot affirm LF without claiming a contradiction—that people possess LF yet, no possibilities exist. Consequently, since affirming both MK and LF produces a contradiction, it fails to provide a viable libertarian solution to the problem of divine foreknowledge.¹²¹

In order to understand why MK contradicts LF consider the claim of MK 1. MK 1 states that God has knowledge of CCFs because “creaturely essences contain all the relevant counterfactuals of freedom concerning what their exemplifications would do in any circumstances.”¹²² As Gersonides pointed out, if an action is certain then possibilities cannot exist and conversely, if possibilities exist then the action cannot be known prior to its

¹²⁰ Gersonides, “The Wars of the Lord,” in *The Jewish Philosophy Reader*, ed. Daniel H. Frank, Oliver Leaman, and Charles H. Manekin (New York: Rutledge, 2000), 260.

¹²¹ Bruce A. Ware, “A Modified Calvinist Doctrine of God,” in *Perspectives on the Doctrine of God: 4 Views*, ed. Bruce A. Ware (Nashville, TN: B&H Academic, 2008), 110-111. Bruce Ware raises the same objection presented by Gersonides that God cannot know a LF free act based on the person’s character in a particular situation. He correctly points out; that God could only know what the person could possibly do since LF eliminates the certainty of a choice before it is chosen. Ware then develops a compatibilist notion of MK demonstrating how if one adopts CF, then MK is successful in explaining how God’s providential control could work without being the author of evil. Ware points out that while LF does not allow God to foreknow what a person will freely do; CF argues precisely that a person’s character is determined and knowable. It is obvious that God would know how each person would respond in any situation under the assumption of CF. Ware’s argument, I believe, clearly demonstrates that MK must be reduced to CF in order to remain a coherent concept. This reveals that MK is not a viable solution for the libertarian.

¹²² William Lane Craig, “Hasker on Divine Knowledge,” *Philosophical Studies: An International Journal for Philosophy in the Analytic Tradition* 67, no. 2 (August 1992): 100.

actualization.¹²³ Therefore, if the person's decision, in a particular scenario, is guaranteed by the person's character, then it is impossible for the person, if that scenario obtains, to do otherwise.¹²⁴ The last chapter argued that while the ability to do otherwise is not a necessary requirement for LF, the ability to will otherwise is required for LF (at least for some character forming decisions). Therefore, if MK wants to preserve LF, it must be assumed that for every CCF the person freely wills that act, otherwise the person would be acting against one's own will. (This would apply even in FFC-like scenarios as explained in the previous chapter.)

However, if in every CCF the person's will is to do the action, and MK 1 requires that the person is unable to do otherwise, then neither is the person able to will otherwise. Hence, MK 1 creates a contradiction—that LF is true yet a person cannot will otherwise. One may point out that the last chapter did allow for a person to be unable to will otherwise without LF being violated. This is true, but the important distinction made was that the inability to will otherwise had to result from a character formed by prior free choices, in which, the person was able to will otherwise. This exception is eliminated by MK since the claim is that all CCFs are determined by the person's character. Hence, PAP, as defined in the previous chapter, is violated.

¹²³ Gersonides, *Wars*, 260.

¹²⁴ Hasker, *Time*, 42-45. For example, consider the illustration of Bob lying to Jim. One can symbolize the two propositions Bob lies as (not T or -T) and Bob tells the truth as (T). If God knows that Bob will (-T) if he meets Jim, and this CCF is true because of Bob's character, then (T) can never be true in that scenario. One may attempt to provide alternate possibilities by proposing that while (T) may not be possible due to Bob's character, it is possible that (-T) does not obtain, because Bob never meets Jim. It still may be the case, if Bob "would have" confronted Jim, he would have (-T), however since no meeting occurred Bob did not (-T). Despite the ingenuity of this solution it ultimately fails. Hasker argues that this solution fails because when one considers counterfactuals of freedom, only those worlds that most closely resemble the actual world (A) can be used to determine counterfactuals. For example, consider two counterfactual worlds. In the first world (W1) Bob does not (-T) because he never meets Jim, while in the second world (W2), Bob meets Jim and (T) obtains. In this case, W2 resembles A more than W1 because in both A and W2 Bob meets Jim. On the other hand, W1 is significantly different from A since this meeting never occurs. Furthermore, notice that in W1 Bob does not (-T), not because (T) obtains, but because he never meets Jim. Therefore, it is still true in W1 that Bob will (-T) if he meets Jim. Consequently, W1 does not demonstrate alternate possibilities pertaining to Bob's will, but simply the removal of the need for Bob to act upon his will.

Nevertheless, Craig claims that MK does not contradict LF.¹²⁵ He argues that the previous argument is grounded in a misunderstanding that fails to make a “distinction between the *sensus compositus* and the *sensus divisus* of a proposition.”¹²⁶ For example, take the claim “A future event can fail to occur.”¹²⁷ Craig points out that in *sensu divisio* this means, “Possibly, an event, which is future, will fail to occur.”¹²⁸ However, in *sensu composito* it means, “Possibly, an event which is future, will fail to occur.”¹²⁹ In *sensu divisio*, no contradiction exists in saying that a contingent future event can fail to occur, since possibility is the very nature of a contingent event.¹³⁰ However, the failure of a future event to obtain in *sensu composito* means that the person can bring it about “that the event both will and will not occur,” and this does present a contradiction.¹³¹

Craig claims that this same distinction can be applied to past events. He agrees that a person cannot change the past in *sensu composito* (making a past event both occur and not occur), however this does not rule out the ability to change the past in *sensu divisio*.¹³² Thomas Flint agrees, claiming, “[I]t seems extremely plausible to suppose that if something which is a fact about the past would not have been fact about the past had I exercised my power to act in a

¹²⁵ Craig, *Hasker*, 92-97. This section lays forth the argument which will be summarized here.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, 93.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, 94.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*

¹³¹ *Ibid.*

¹³² *Ibid.*, 94-95.

certain way, then that something is not a hard, fixed, settled fact about the past.”¹³³ When Craig and Flint suggest that one can change the past in *sensu diviso* this means,

[M]y ability to prevent the event is not the ability to bring about the self-contradictory state of affairs that God foreknew the event and the event does not occur. It is the power to prevent the event, which is foreknown by God, and were I to do so, it would not have been foreknown by Him... This is not the power to alter or eliminate past events in *sensu composito*, which is absurd, but the power to bring it about that the past would have been different. For by acting differently now, one brings about the truth of different present-tense propositions and indirectly the past truth of different future-tense propositions. Since God is essentially omniscient, one thereby indirectly brings it about that He believed different propositions than He does.¹³⁴

For example, God’s foreknowledge of Peter’s denial does not eliminate Peter’s freedom because “what is impossible is not Peter's refraining from sin, but the composite state of affairs of God's foreknowledge of Peter's sin and Peter's refraining.”¹³⁵ In other words, “Peter's power to refrain implies that were he to refrain, the circumstances (God's foreknowledge) would have been different.”¹³⁶ Flint points out that, “From a libertarian perspective, we needn't modify the circumstances at all in order for [Peter] freely to [refrain from sinning]. All that is needed is that, given precisely the reasons [he] actually had, [he] reach a different verdict.”¹³⁷ Consequently, LF is preserved since CCFs do not necessitate the person’s decision; rather the person’s decision determines the truth of the CCF. This means if the person would have freely done otherwise, then the counterfactual would have been different.

¹³³ Thomas P. Flint, “A New Anti-Anti-Molinist Argument,” *Religious Studies* 35, no. 3 (September 1999): 302-303.

¹³⁴ Craig, *Hasker*, 95-96.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, 96

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*

¹³⁷ Thomas P. Flint, “Hasker’s ‘God, Time, and Knowledge,’” *Philosophical Studies: An International Journal for Philosophy in the Analytic Tradition* 60, no. 1/2 (September-October 1990): 110.

However, this solution is inadequate. Flint's statement actually returns one to the contradiction between MK and LF stated earlier. One must ask Flint, how God, by knowing Peter's character, can have knowledge of which decision Peter will make if both decisions are possible given Peter's character. For if both options are possible then nothing in the character, apart from the decision itself, can determine which action is actualized.¹³⁸ It is important to note that the claim here is not that all CCFs are unknowable, for there are also "might" and "possible" CCFs that are compatible with LF. Instead, the claim here is that only CCFs which supposedly provide God with certain knowledge of libertarian free acts before the creation of the world are incompatible with LF.¹³⁹ The last point raises an additional dilemma for MK. Since MK is supposedly prior to the very act of creation, not only is the knowledge contained in CCFs prior to the actual act, but also to the creature's existence! Timothy O'Connor expresses the ambiguity of proposing such knowledge, "Rather, the bafflement has to do with how one can be directly acquainted with what is not "there"- there simply are no "grounds" in the case of [CCFs] of which God's prevolitional intellect might be aware."¹⁴⁰

The common response to this grounding objection, posed by proponents of MK, is found in MK 2—that God just knows the truths of CCFs. The argument for MK 2 rests in the logical

¹³⁸ Gersonides, *Wars*, 260.

¹³⁹ Timothy O'Connor, "The Impossibility of Middle Knowledge," *Philosophical Studies: An International Journal for Philosophy in the Analytic Tradition* 66, no. 2 (May 1992): 139-166. Timothy O'Connor takes this claim further, arguing that MK is an impossible concept. While I agree with his argument, the purpose of this thesis only requires me to demonstrate that MK is incompatible with LF, in order to rule out MK as a viable libertarian solution to the foreknowledge dilemma. Furthermore, while I agree that CCFs, as conceived by MK, are false I do not deny the existence of CCFs after creation. Once a person exists, with an actual character, undoubtedly God can know many CCFs about that person. In fact, it is this type of CCFs that many proponents of MK point to in order to give evidence that CCFs exist. One of the most popular examples is the prediction God gives David "that if he stays in the city the leaders will hand him over to Saul." However, notice that this example involves already existing people who have had the opportunity to form their characters. Since many of the examples of CCFs concern people who exist in the actual world, the proponent of MK still faces the dilemma of explaining how CCFs can be true before a person exists.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 159.

fact (Law of the Excluded Middle) that every proposition is either true or false. Consequently, since omniscience entails that God knows all truths, He necessarily knows the truth value of all CCFs. Therefore, the grounding objection is avoided since according to MK 2, God's knowledge is grounded in the proposition's truth value, not in the agent. One cannot deny that every proposition is either true or false. Hence, it may very well be true that God knows all CCFs, since they will necessarily have a truth value.

Nevertheless, MK 2 alone does not preserve LF. Even if God does know CCFs via logical principles, this does not guarantee that the person has LF in performing the act. While it is certainly possible that MK 2 allows for LF in CCFs, by reducing God's knowledge of CCFs to a law of logic, the person becomes irrelevant to the truth of the CCF.¹⁴¹ If the person is irrelevant to the process then how can the proponent of MK claim that the CCF reveals what the agent will freely do in those circumstances? All that MK 2 reveals is that the proposition contained in the CCF has a truth value, but it says nothing regarding the process involved in the actual decision. It seems rather arbitrary for the proponent of MK to claim that God has knowledge of CCFs, via MK 2, and simply tack on LF. This strategy appears ad hoc and without a proper analysis of the decision making process remains an empty claim.

In addition to this, another argument can be leveled against MK 2. This argument calls into question the very logical principle, on which MK 2 is grounded. What proponents of MK, who support MK 2, fail to consider is the possibility that the laws of logic could rule out the truth value of a libertarian free proposition. No one who holds to the traditional Christian notion of God denies that He knows all truths. Nevertheless, remember that earlier in this chapter it was argued, "Without an identity between knower and the thing known, there can be no knowledge.

¹⁴¹ Kevin Timpe, "Truth-Making and Divine Eternity," *Religious Studies* 43, no. 3 (September 2007): 310.

For if the proposition known is true, it must refer to something which exists; without this referential relation, there can be no identity, and hence no knowledge.”¹⁴² Consequently, the opponent of MK could easily turn the logical criterion of MK 2 around on the proponent of MK. One could claim that God knows all truths, but CCFs have no truth value because LF requires that they remain possible up until the decision is made. Therefore, God cannot logically know the truth value of such propositions; rather He can only know that they are possible. Consequently, by using the criterion of LF, one can show that MK 2, like MK 1, also fails to uphold this criterion. Hence, MK fails to provide a viable libertarian solution to the foreknowledge dilemma.

Conclusion

This chapter has revealed the problem that divine foreknowledge presents to LF and the failure of some of the libertarian solutions to resolve this dilemma. In an attempt to uphold both LF and God’s exhaustive foreknowledge each of these libertarian positions run into incoherencies. Both SF and DT fail by making God’s foreknowledge useless in His providential control over the world, while MK succumbs to the grounding objection, failing to preserve LF. Therefore, one is left with the question: If LF is required for moral responsibility, is there any way to reconcile LF with God’s foreknowledge? If the proponent of LF fails to find a solution to this dilemma, God’s foreknowledge would be a decisive defeater for LF. Such a victory would reveal free will as a farce rendering moral responsibility an arbitrary concept.

¹⁴² Rudavsky, *Divine Omniscience*, 520.

CHAPTER 3

LIBERTARIAN FREEDOM AND FOREKNOWLEDGE—A SOLUTION

Omniscience and Libertarian Freedom—The Logical Problem

The last chapter demonstrated that many of the libertarian accounts of human freedom fail to reconcile LF with divine foreknowledge without either eliminating human freedom or negating the usefulness of God’s foreknowledge. This chapter will argue that a solution to this dilemma does exist without violating either God’s omniscience or LF. In order to understand the proposed solution one must reflect on the definition of omniscience. The last chapter defined omniscience as the ability to know anything that is possible to know and that only truths can be known. Since truths are grounded in reality, something is true if it is in fact the case. It should now be obvious that foreknowledge will correspond directly with one’s concept of reality. Since God is the creator of reality, foreknowledge is directly dependant on what kind of world He created.

This brings one to the heart of the problem—what kind of world did God create? It is at this point that the libertarian views of the last chapter fail. They want to claim that God can have exhaustive foreknowledge without determining human free actions. The failure of the libertarian responses stems, not from their view of God’s omniscience, but from the inconsistency between their views of God’s foreknowledge and predestination. While this thesis rejects the compatibilist view, compatibilists are consistent in claiming that God knows the future because He determined it.¹⁴³ For compatibilists, God can know future free actions because CF allows God to, “guarantee that his goals will be accomplished freely even when someone does not want

¹⁴³ John Feinberg, “God Ordains All Things,” in *Predestination and Free Will: Four Views of Divine Sovereignty and Human Freedom*, ed. David Basinger and Randall Basinger (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1986), 29.

to do the act.”¹⁴⁴ Since CF is compatible with determinism, God not only decrees the ends, “but also the means to such ends.”¹⁴⁵ Feinberg points out that “Such means include whatever circumstances and factors are necessary to convince an individual (without constraint) that the act God has decreed is the act she or he wants to do. And, given the sufficient conditions, the person will do the act.”¹⁴⁶

This position directly contradicts the very nature of LF. Therefore, proponents of LF cannot use God’s determination of future free acts as the grounding for His knowledge of those acts. However, as argued in the last chapter, neither can Libertarians appeal to God’s foreknowledge of a person’s character prior to the person’s existence. If libertarian free actions are contingent and uncertain until the moment they are preformed (or at least decided on by the agent), then the only solution remaining is that God cannot know which action will be actualized prior to their actualization. Boethius recognized this obvious consequence of LF actions,

So, if the outcome of some future event is either uncertain or unnecessary, no one can know in advance whether or not it will happen. For just as true knowledge is not tainted by falsity, so that which is known by it cannot be otherwise than as it is known... If this is so, how does God foreknow future possibilities whose existence is uncertain? If He thinks that things will inevitably happen which possibly will not happen, He is deceived.¹⁴⁷

This was precisely the reason Boethius advocated DT. Consequently, if libertarians claim that God does not determine humans’ free choices, allowing for contingency and LF, then it is a contradiction to claim that God knows what the person will do. Therefore, when one asserts that

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., 26.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

¹⁴⁷ Boethius, *Divine Foreknowledge*, 25.

God can know anything that is possible to know, this cannot include future libertarian free choices.

The Open Theist Solution

In light of these logical restrictions on omniscience another libertarian solution is required. This thesis suggests is that in order to defend libertarian freedom one must propose that,

Reality... is composed of both settled and open aspects. Since God knows all of reality perfectly, this view holds that he knows the possible aspects as possible and knows the settled aspects as settled. In this view, the sovereign Creator settles whatever he wants to settle about the future, and hence he perfectly foreknows the future as settled *to this extent*. He leaves open whatever he wants to leave open, and hence he perfectly foreknows the future as possible *to this extent* (Emphasis authors).¹⁴⁸

This position, known as open theism (OT), gleans the important insights from the views in the last chapter without committing one to the metaphysical quagmire surrounding the other theories. OT agrees with DT in claiming that God knows everything when it occurs, while denying that everything is eternally present to God. By denying that everything is eternally present to God OT opens up the door to genuine possibilities. Therefore, OT also agrees with MK in claiming that God knows all possibilities. God can know possibilities even if they are never actualized because “[p]ossibilities, unlike actualities, are eternal. Whatever has or ever shall come to pass was always possible, as is whatever could have or might still come to pass. Possibilities are thus eternally in God’s omniscient mind.”¹⁴⁹ In other words, possibilities have a truth value in the fact that they are possible. For example, the statement “It is possible that the Loch Ness Monster exists” is true even if the statement “The Loch Ness Monster exist” is false.

¹⁴⁸ Boyd, *Open-Theism*, 14.

¹⁴⁹ Boyd, *Possible*, 124-125.

Therefore, as Aquinas explains, “Those things that are not actual are true in so far as they are in potentiality, for it is true that they are in potentiality; and as such they are known by God.”¹⁵⁰

However, OT makes an important distinction concerning possibilities from MK. For the proponent of MK, possibilities refer to the different worlds God could create, not to possibilities open to creatures within these worlds.¹⁵¹ Paul Helm explains “These worlds have, so to speak, already run their course, for they are complete, filled out in every detail... So the counterfactuals of freedom such worlds may initially be thought to contain are not really counterfactual; what is conditional is the possible world, not bits of it.”¹⁵² The reason for this is that no true counterfactuals of freedom exist. For example, if God knows that when Bob meets Jim that he will lie, it is not possible for Bob to tell the truth if this scenario obtains. The option God has is to create a world in which that scenario obtains and Bob lies or create a world in which an alternate scenario obtains (i.e. Bob never meets Jim or Bob meets Jim but is forced to tell the truth). Consequently, possibility lies not with what Bob does, but in God’s decision to create this situation or not.

In contrast to MK, OT affirms that possibilities are open to the creatures. It is not certain whether Bob will lie to Jim or tell the truth until Bob actually makes that decision.¹⁵³ While God cannot know whether Bob will lie or tell the truth if he meets Jim, God can know it is possible that Bob will lie or tell the truth in that situation, by actualizing the situation in which Bob is

¹⁵⁰ St. Thomas Aquinas, “The Knowledge of God,” in *Philosophy of Religion Selected Readings 3rd Edition*, ed. William L. Rowe and William J. Wainwright (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 36.

¹⁵¹ Paul Helm, “The Augustinian-Calvinist View,” in *Divine Foreknowledge Four Views*, ed. James K. Beilby and Paul R. Eddy (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2001), 175.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*

¹⁵³ Boyd, *Possible*, 124-125.

faced with that possibility.¹⁵⁴ Nevertheless, while OT rejects that God can know future free actions before the person exists, OT does not exclude the possibility of God foreknowing a future free action based on the “existing” person’s character. Boyd explains, “As we all know, character becomes more predictable over time. The longer we persist in a chosen path, the more that path becomes part of who we are.”¹⁵⁵ Therefore, a person’s character can become settled as they make choices and form habits. As argued in the first chapter, LF can still be preserved as long as the character that determines an action was developed through previous LF choices. This raises the question: can a person ever change once a character is formed? In response, Boyd points out that even when someone’s character becomes predictable, “[t]his does not mean that our every move is predictable, for our present character doesn’t exhaustively determine our future behavior.”¹⁵⁶

Yet, this appears to pose a contradiction. How can God foreknow something based on a person’s fixed character if possibilities still exist? To explain how this is possible consider the following example. Everyone knows that if a person jumps out of a plane that the person, all things being equal, will fall at 9.8 meters per seconds square. This is a scientific fact based on the law of gravity. However, there are many factors that can prevent this fact from obtaining such as giving the person a parachute. With a parachute the person will gently glide to the ground. Now you know that if Dan jumps out of the plane without the parachute he will die, so you offer Dan a parachute to save his life. In this case, if Dan takes the parachute, it does not imply that you were wrong in knowing that Dan would fall at 9.8 meters per second squared if he jumped out of

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵⁵ Boyd, *Open-theism*, 20.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

the plane. What you knew was the outcome of the act Dan was intending to do, not that Dan was certain to perform that act.

One can imagine this is similar to God's knowledge of one's character. Just as God has created natural limitations via the natural laws, He also created cause and effect relationships through moral laws.¹⁵⁷ Therefore, if someone is persisting in some sin God can know what will happen if the person continues. However, this does not imply that the person is determined to continue on this course. Gersonides explains, "God's knowledge does not imply that a particular event will occur to a particular man, but that it may occur to any man who falls under this [general] ordering of events, insofar as these events are ordered; in addition, God knows that this event may not occur because of human choice."¹⁵⁸ God may warn the person to turn from evil in order to avoid the impending disaster. The person remains free to continue to in sin or repent, determining which variable is actualized. In light of this, "The Lord does know...that [these possibilities] may not come to pass because of the power of choice that He placed within man..."¹⁵⁹ Therefore, "possible things are determined and ordered in one respect and possible in another. Hence it is clear that the respect in which [the Lord] knows them is the respect in which they are ordered and determined...The respect in which He does not know them is the respect in which they are undetermined, namely, the respect in which they are possible."¹⁶⁰ This demonstrates how, contrary to the claims of Boethius, knowledge of possibilities can be useful in God's governance of creation if He grants humans LF. God knowing the outcome of certain

¹⁵⁷ Romans 6:23, Galatians 6:7-9, James 1:15.; Steven Nadler, "Gersonides on Providence: A Jewish Chapter in the History of the General Will," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 62, no. 1 (January 2001): 55.

¹⁵⁸ Chris Schabel, "Philosophy and Theology Across Cultures: Gersonides and Auriol on Divine Foreknowledge," *Speculum* 81, no. 4 (October 2006): 1111.

¹⁵⁹ Gersonides, *Wars*, 259-260.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 259.

actions, based on the moral laws He put in place, can provide warnings in an attempt to bring people to repentance.

Another objection raised against OT, is that this theory destroys God’s sovereignty. However, opponents of OT incorrectly assume that sovereignty requires meticulous control over every detail. One need not assume that God has to determine all events in order to ensure that his plan is fulfilled.¹⁶¹ For just as the infinitely intelligent chess player can always guarantee they will achieve victory without determining what their opponent does, God can easily create a world in which all contingencies lead to the same end without determining which contingencies are actualized.¹⁶² God is sovereign, not because He meticulously controls everything, but because He is the creator and not dependant on anything for His existence. Therefore, “God had the power to create a world in which *everything* is exhaustively settled in advance and he had the power to create a world in which *some* things are *not* exhaustively settled in advance.”¹⁶³ What makes God sovereign is not in how He chooses to govern the world He creates, but in the fact that He is the creator and the world is the one He wanted to create. Consequently, it is incorrect to assume that OT eliminates God’s sovereignty simply because it denies meticulous control.

Divine Frankfurt Counter Examples

Nevertheless, despite the arguments in favor of OT, OT faces a potential defeater—prophecy. The number one objection raised by opponents of OT is that prophecy demonstrates God’s exhaustive foreknowledge, which includes future free acts. However, proponents of OT point out that there are really three kinds of prophecies, none of which require exhaustive

¹⁶¹ Boyd, *Possible*, 34.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, 127.

¹⁶³ Hunt, *Response*, 48-49.

foreknowledge.¹⁶⁴ First, some prophecies are conditional “*even when this is not explicitly stated*” (Emphasis authors).¹⁶⁵ Second, some prophecies are predictions “based on foresight drawn from existing trends and tendencies.”¹⁶⁶ Third, some prophecies are based “...on *things that are foreknown because it is God’s purpose to bring them about*” (Emphasis authors).¹⁶⁷ Notice that the first type of prophecy does not entail exhaustive foreknowledge since it is conditional, dependent on the actions and responses of humans. For example, many prophecies of judgment throughout Scripture are given to bring people to repentance, not declare what necessarily will occur. The second type of prophecy also does not entail exhaustive foreknowledge because this type of prediction is based on existing trends and tendencies. This foreknowledge does not require God to have known these trends and tendencies prior to the person’s existence. The third type of prophecy also does not require exhaustive foreknowledge, since as already pointed out, OT claims that God determines some aspects of the future and thus knows what He will bring about. The fact that God determines some things does not imply that all things are determined.

Nevertheless, the third type of prophecy does present a problem if God determines a particular action for which a person is held morally accountable. Such instances do appear to occur in Scripture providing evidence against LF. The goal of the remainder of this thesis will be to demonstrate how an act can be determined in such a way that LF is not violated. I propose that one can resolve the issue surrounding determined actions by reformulating the scenario into a FFC. Since in these particular FFCs God is the counterfactual intervener, they will be called divine Frankfurt counter examples (DFFCs). By reformulating cases of determined actions into

¹⁶⁴ Hasker, *Time*, 194-195.; Sanders, *Risks*, 131-134.

¹⁶⁵ Hasker, *Time*, 194.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 195.

DFFCs, one can then reiterate the conclusion of chapter one that a person (x) is morally responsible for an act (A), if and only if, x has LF to will x's second order desire in accord with x's first order desire to do A and that this second order desire caused x to do A. Furthermore, in DFFC's it is possible that x has neither the ability to act, nor will otherwise. Yet, x remains morally responsible as long as the will which determined A was formed through previous LF free acts in which x could have willed otherwise.

For example, consider the story of Jonah. This story gives a perfect example of how God's determination of a specific action (Jonah going to Nineveh) does not eliminate moral responsibility. While it may have been the case that Jonah was determined to go to Nineveh, Jonah was given the freedom to obey or disobey God's command and was morally responsible for his choice. Reformulating this story into a DFFC one can say that Jonah (J) was faced with the first order desires to obey (O) or disobey (D) God's command. However, unknown to Jonah, God (G) had a plan P that he would activate if and only if J disobeyed His command. J decided to form a second order desire in accordance with the first order desire to D, because J regarded D as the good to be pursued. Since J chose D, G activated P resulting in J going to Nineveh. Even though J ended up going to Nineveh, J maintained the second order desire to act on the first order desire D as evidenced by J's response to God's forgiveness. Consequently, the determination of the action had no effect on the moral responsibility placed on Jonah's response. Despite the fact that Jonah ended up going to Nineveh he was not morally praiseworthy for this act since this action was the result of P and not in accord with his second order desire to D.

DFFCs can also be used to explain other similar instances in which God determines a particular action. What DFFCs reveal is that since moral responsibility requires only the ability to will otherwise, predestination destroys LF if and only if God provides the sufficient conditions

for a person to will what God wants them to will. Nevertheless, one particular kind of case exists in which God either hardens or softens a person's heart. In these cases God seems to obstruct the will from willing otherwise, yet He still holds the person responsible for not only the action but the will to perform the action. These cases do present a major obstacle to LF since they appear to directly contradict the claim that the ability to will otherwise is necessary for moral responsibility. If this is true, then such examples would provide a sufficient reason for rejecting LF.

Nevertheless, such cases do not require one to abandon LF, since hardening or softening one's heart does not require God to act against one's will. In order to understand why this is true one must reflect back to the discussion in chapter one. Stump argued that a person is free "...just in case he has second-order desires, his first order volitions are not discordant with his second-order desires, and he has the first order volitions he has because of his second order volitions."¹⁶⁸ Therefore, returning to the illustration of Bob lying to Jim, Bob is free and morally responsible for his action as long as he formulated the second order volition to act upon his first order desire to lie. Furthermore, the reason why he formed this second order desire was that Bob's "intellect approves of [lying] as the good to be pursued, and there is no higher-order desire of [Bob's] with which [lying] is discordant."¹⁶⁹

Consider the following example. Bob is faced with the decision to lie or tell the truth. In this scenario, Bob's character is such that lying is his natural response. Imagine that something happens to Bob which causes him realize the evilness of his lying. Bob now develops a second order desire to change this habit. However, every time Bob is faced with lying or telling the

¹⁶⁸ Stump, *Santification*, 217.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 222.

truth, his first order desire to lie overwhelms him, causing him to lie. The conditions for freedom of the will no longer obtain, since Bob now has a second order desire not to lie that is in discord with his first order desire to lie.¹⁷⁰ Suppose Bob prays to God for help in order to resist the desire to lie. In this case, if God overrides Bob's first order desire to lie allowing Bob to act according to his second order desire to tell the truth, God would not be violating Bob's free will because God would be giving Bob what he really wants—the ability to act upon his desire to tell the truth.¹⁷¹ If this is the case then God overriding Bob's first order desire would actually result in the conditions for LF being restored—Bob's second order desire to tell the truth could now move him to act on the first order desire to tell the truth producing a free act.¹⁷²

This same solution also explains how instances of God hardening a person's heart do not violate LF. Consider Bob's scenario once again, only this time Bob has the second order desire to lie. Bob has identified lying as the good to be pursued and this is what he wants to do. Now suppose that Bob is struggling with some first order desire of guilt for how he takes advantage of people through his lies. In this case, Bob's first order desire produces a guilt that conflicts with his second order desire to want to lie for his own benefit. Suppose that Bob's first order desire produces such a strong sense of guilt that Bob experiences a moment of weakness, resulting in him telling the truth. After he tells the truth, he hates the fact that he gave into such a stupid notion of guilt. In giving into this first order desire of guilt, Bob acts upon a first order desire that is in discord with his second order desire to lie for his own benefit. Since telling the truth is not what Bob identifies as the good to be pursued, he is not free or morally praiseworthy for telling

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., 227-228.

¹⁷¹ Ibid., 227-228. This illustration is taken from the example Stump gives except it is revised to match the Bob illustration that has been used throughout this thesis.

¹⁷² Ibid.

the truth.¹⁷³ In this case, if God was to override Bob's first order desire of guilt this would allow Bob's second order volition to lie to be effective in actualizing the first order desire to lie. Hence, God would actually be preserving Bob's free will by hardening Bob's heart to the first order guilty desires.¹⁷⁴

One may object that such an act on God's part would be causing Bob to sin. Why would God want to remove Bob's guilt? Is it not better that Bob tells the truth regardless of the struggle going on within his will? In response to these objections, one must first point out that whether God is answering Bob's prayer or hardening Bob's heart, God never does anything to Bob's second order desires.¹⁷⁵ Instead, God is only acting on Bob's first order desire to bring them into accord with Bob's second order desires. In other words, God is only permitting or giving Bob the freedom to act upon his desires, not changing or influencing Bob's desires in any way.¹⁷⁶ What this means is that in both cases Bob's second order desire remain untouched and able to change. Thus, whenever God hardens or softens someone's heart this does not mean the person cannot change their mind; it simply means that God allows that person to do what that person wants to do.¹⁷⁷ Secondly, in both cases whether God is hardening or softening a person's heart, He does so with redemptive purposes in mind. Stump explains, "In giving [Bob] the first order desires he wishes, God may be providing [Bob] with a mirror, into his character and its consequences, to show him the evil of his wish; and [Bob] understanding the evil of his second order desire is the

¹⁷³ Ibid., 231-232. This illustration is taken from the example Stump gives except it is revised to match the Bob illustration that has been used throughout this thesis.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid., 233.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid.

requisite first step to straightening his distorted conscience, to reforming his reason and second order desires, and thus to beginning a moral rebirth.”¹⁷⁸

However, someone may ask: What about cases in which a person fulfills a particular prophecy? The cases of Pharaoh and Judas provide excellent examples of this objection. Did they really have freedom of the will if they were determined to fulfill certain prophecies? Even if hardening of someone’s heart does not necessarily eliminate LF, if a person is predestined to fulfill a prophecy, then LF would be eliminated. These objections, however, are based on the assumption that God predestined particular individuals to fulfill certain prophecies. On the contrary,

Scripture never suggests that these specific individuals were destined or foreknown to carry out these wicked deeds. It only teaches that these specific deeds were destined and foreknown to take place. Saying that someone carried out a predestined or foreknown wicked event is much different from saying that someone was predestined or foreknown to carry out a wicked event.”¹⁷⁹

In order to understand how a person can be responsible for the fulfillment of a prophecy that is guaranteed to occur, recall the distinction made between CUs and CPs in chapter one. It was argued that a person can be responsible for an action which is inevitable “if [a person does] something that is sufficient in the circumstances for E, and [one’s] doing it *prevents the actualization of other potential generators* of E, then [that person caused] E by doing that thing.”¹⁸⁰ For example, let us assume the prophecy of Jesus’ betrayal was determined and hence inevitable. By formulating this scenario into a DFFC and implementing the insights of Rowe one can argue that Judas was morally responsible for fulfilling this prophecy and did so of his own

¹⁷⁸Ibid.

¹⁷⁹ Boyd, *Open-Theism*, 22.

¹⁸⁰ Rowe, *Causing and Being*, 315.

libertarian free will. The CU (Jesus is betrayed) was inevitable because God was going to find someone to fulfill it. However, one could suggest that the CP (Judas betrays Jesus) was not. It was not determined that Judas was going to fulfill this prophecy before he was born. Rather Judas became the person through his own free choices to develop his character in such a way. In this case, Judas chose to actualize the CP (Judas betrays Jesus) which supplied the sufficient condition for the occurrence of the CU (Jesus is betrayed) and prevented the actualization of an alternate CP (someone else betrays Jesus).¹⁸¹ Thus, Judas, while not predetermined, was morally responsible for bring about the predetermined prophecy. Consequently, both God's sovereignty in bringing about the prophecy and Judas's free will in choosing betray Jesus are both preserved without violating LF. This argument reveals the efficacy of OT in finding reciprocity between God's sovereignty and human freedom without sacrificing either.

¹⁸¹ Ibid., 320.

CONCLUSION

This thesis argued that (1) LF is the only kind of freedom that preserve moral responsibility. (2) The key aspect to moral responsibility is freedom of the will, not necessarily freedom of action. If this account of LF is successful then, contrary to the claims of compatibilists one does not need to redefine free will in order to explain how determinism and free will are compatible. Rather, determinism can come in degrees and as this thesis has demonstrated certain degrees of determinism are in fact compatible with human freedom and moral responsibility to the extent that the act determined does not determine the will. The thesis then argued that God's foreknowledge presents a critical challenge to LF and that most of the libertarian solutions fail to resolve the problem. The proposal here was that OT is the only libertarian view that establishes the proper kind of reciprocity between LF and divine foreknowledge by rejecting God's foreknowledge of future free acts. Finally, this thesis answered some objections to OT by using DFECs in order to demonstrate how LF can be preserved even in the cases where God does determine specific actions.

In the end this thesis revealed that God's sovereignty is not incompatible with LF. Therefore, humans are fully responsible for their actions and at the same time can be part of God's sovereign plan. In this case sin does not originate in God, nor was it necessary for God's plan. God did not force or predetermine anyone to sin even though he permitted it by granting humans LF. While God did not determine human sin, nothing, including sin can prevent God from fulfilling His overarching plan. In fact, God can even use human rebellion to work out his plan even though it was not necessary that this rebellion occurred. Even in cases where God has determined that a person will perform a specific action, God does not prevent the person from choosing to obey or disobey His command. Furthermore, God can both soften and harden hearts

without violating LF, since He never gives someone desires contrary to the person's will. Thus, the person remains morally responsible despite God's work in the person's life. As a result, this theory removes any accusations of God being the author or cause of sin by placing the responsibility of sin on created moral agents. Therefore, God is revealed as sovereign and just, a God full of grace, mercy, and love.

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