Arminianism and Molinism on Divine Foreknowledge

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Abstract

Evidence is examined concerning the coherence of divine foreknowledge as defined by Arminianism and Molinism. Arminianism argues that God has complete and infallible knowledge of the future, and attempts to simultaneously maintain a strong view of libertarian freedom. Molinism agrees with the Arminian stance on foreknowledge and human freedom, but argues that middle knowledge must also be posited for God to have strong providential control over His creation. It is argued that Molinism better accounts for the biblical data and provides a more coherent theological and philosophical position, since Arminianism cannot provide a strong theory of providential control. Subsequently, a defense is given for Reformed Molinism, which combines Molinism with Robert Kane's event-causal version of libertarian freedom.

Arminianism and Molinism on Divine Foreknowledge

Throughout church history, Christians have commonly held that God has complete knowledge of the future, commonly known as divine foreknowledge. This naturally developed from the doctrine of omniscience: if God knows all true propositions, and there are true propositions about the future, then God must have divine foreknowledge. However, skeptics concerning divine foreknowledge have challenged this line of reasoning by arguing that God's omniscience does not include complete knowledge of the future. Consequently, theologians and philosophers have attempted to defend the traditional understanding of divine foreknowledge against new objections. In this study, these defenses of divine foreknowledge will be examined, with the goal of finding which view is the most biblically consistent and theologically/philosophically coherent. Specifically, Arminianism and Molinism will be thoroughly scrutinized. As a result of this investigation, Reformed Molinism seems to be the most theologically/philosophically coherent position.

I. Arminianism

A. Arminian Definition of Divine Foreknowledge

Arminianism argues for the traditional understanding of divine foreknowledge, which says that God has "complete and infallible knowledge of the future."[1] This definition of divine foreknowledge is also called "simple foreknowledge", because Molinists accept God's complete and infallible knowledge of the future while also affirming God's middle knowledge. In defending simple foreknowledge, Arminians represent the most common view of divine foreknowledge throughout church history as well as the most common

1. David Hunt, "The Simple-Foreknowledge View," in *Divine Foreknowledge: Four Views*, edited by J.K. Beilby and P.R. Eddy (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2001), 65.

interpretation of the biblical data. In distinction from Calvinism, which holds that God foreknows because He foreordains, Arminius argued that

> God foreknows future things through the infinity of his essence, and through the pre-eminent perfection of his understanding and prescience, not as he willed or decreed that they should necessarily be done, though he would not foreknow them except as they were future, and they would not be future unless God had decreed either to perform or to permit them.[2]

Though the content of what God knows is agreed upon by Arminians and Calvinists, *how* God knows the future has been fiercely debated since the time of Arminius and Calvin.

B. Biblical Evidence for Arminianism

Throughout the Old Testament, the prophets and kings consistently declare God's knowledge of and mastery over the future. In Psalm 139, David proclaims that "before there is a word on my tongue, Behold, O Lord, You know it all … And in Your book were all written / The days that were ordained for me, When as yet there was not one of them."[3] This psalm not only attests to God's foreknowledge of David's words, but also His control over David's entire future. Similarly, 1 and 2 Kings have an entire promise-fulfillment motif, with many of these promises involving the free choices of human beings.[4] By

2. Jacob Arminius, "Certain Articles To Be Diligently Examined And Weighed Because Some Controversy Has Arisen Concerning Them Among Even Those Who Profess The Reformed Religion," in *The Works of Jacob Arminius*, vol. 2, translated by James Nichols (Buffalo, NY: Derby, Orton, and Mulligan, 1853), accessed January 21, 2017. http://wesley.nnu.edu/arminianism/the-works-of-james-arminius/volume-2/controversial-articles-of-faith/.

3. Verses 4, 16.

4. Roy provides the following examples: 1 Kings 11:34-37 cf. 1 Kings 12:20 and 2 Kings 8:19; 1 Kings 13:2 cf. 2 Kings 21:26, 22:8-13, 23:3; 1 Kings 16:2-4 cf. 16:11-12; 1 Kings 17:13-16; 1 Kings 21:19 cf. 22:29-38; 1 Kings 21:23 cf. 2 Kings 9:6-10, 35-36, 10:17; 2 Kings 7:1-2, 16-20; 2 Kings 20:17-18 cf. 24:12-14; 1 Kings 13:5; Josh. 6:26 cf. 1 Kings 16:34; 2 Kings 1:16-17; 2 Kings 2:21-22; 2 Kings 4:43-44; 2 Kings 10:30 cf. 15:12; 1 Kings 14:5-6; 1 Kings 20:22, 26; 1 Kings 22:22, 28-40; 2 Kings 3:18-19, 24-25; 2 Kings 8:13, 15; 2 Kings 19:32-36. See S.C. Roy, *How Much Does God Foreknow? A Comprehensive Biblical Study* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2006).

emphasizing the fulfillment of God's promises, the author of 1 and 2 Kings is arguing for God's covenantal faithfulness during the tumultuous years of infighting and bloodshed.[5] Outside these two books, predictive prophecy is a prominent feature of the Old Testament, whether it addresses certain actions of the Israelites, future judgment from Yahweh, or the Messiah's arrival. Since this genre is so prevalent, it would be futile to try to cite every example of it.[6] Consequently, the primary example will be Isaiah 40-48, which explains why God uses predictive prophecy so frequently.

In Isaiah 40-48, God puts Israel and its idols on trial. As the prosecutor, God argues that Israel has turned away from Him, the true God, to serve false deities. In order to distinguish Himself as the true and living deity, God challenges the idols to predict the future: "Let them bring forth and declare to us what is going to take place; As for the former events, declare what they were, that we may consider them and know their outcome. Or announce to us what is coming; Declare the things that are going to come afterward, that we may know that you are gods."[7] God is grounding His own claim to deity on His ability to proclaim the future; to prove Himself worthy of allegiance, God says that He will bring forth Cyrus to rule as king and that He will deliver Israel from foreign captivity.[8]

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5. Roy argues that "These numerous and widely varied examples from 1-2 Kings convincingly demonstrate that the prophets of Israel are indeed predictors of the future. They can do so as spokespersons of Yahweh, precisely because Yahweh does in fact know both the near and distant future. And he knows all of the future, including the future free decisions of human beings. Thus to be true to the overwhelming teaching of 1-2 Kings, we must affirm that the foreknowledge of Yahweh is truly exhaustive." See *How Much Does God Foreknow*, 43.

6. Roy records 2,323 predictive prophecies in both the Old and New Testaments in *How Much Does God Foreknow*.

7. Isaiah 41:22-23.

8. Cf. 41:25-28; 42:8-9; 43:9-12; 44:7-8; 44:26-45:6, 20-21; 46:9-11; 48:3-11.

Importantly, this prophecy involves hundreds of human choices, including the monumental task of appointing Cyrus as king. Since God is staking His position as God of Israel on His own ability to prophesy the future, it would be ludicrous to claim that God lacks exhaustive foreknowledge of all events, including human choices.

Jesus makes a similar claim in the Gospel of John during the Passover meal. Throughout His ministry, Jesus made several predictions about His future death at the hands of the scribes and Pharisees, since he was trying to explain why His mission as Messiah would defy contemporary Jewish expectations.[9] Subsequently, Jesus gave the following test for His own messianic claims: "From now on I am telling you before it comes to pass, so that when it does occur, you may believe that I am He."[10] In other words, Jesus states that if His predictions come true, then the disciples will know that He really was the Messiah. He then predicted the betrayals of both Peter and Judas, which involved the free decisions of both men. Just like God in Isaiah 40-48, it makes no sense for Jesus to rest His messianic claim on His own ability to foreknow events if He lacked divine foreknowledge.

Finally, several passages explain how God's plan of salvation was decided before the foundation of the world.[11] This plan involves thousands of free human choices, if not millions. To say that God lacks exhaustive divine foreknowledge simply ignores passages which clearly describe God foreknowing people. Once one combines the predictive

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9. Cf. John 2:19-22; Matt. 16:21; 17:22-23; 20:17-19; Mark 8:31; 9:31; 10:33-34; Luke 9:22, 44; 18:31-33.

10. John 13:19.

11. Cf. Rom. 8:29-30; 1 Pet. 1:2, 18-20; Eph. 1:3-14; 3:11; 1 Cor. 2:7; 2 Tim. 1:9-10; Rev. 13:8; 17:8.

prophecies; God and Jesus both staking their identity claims on their ability to know the future; and the other passages describing God's foreknowing certain people and actions; it becomes exceedingly difficult, if not impossible, to deny exhaustive divine foreknowledge.

C. Theological Evidence for Arminianism

Arminians argue that God's foreknowledge makes the best sense of prayer, divine guidance, and hope in God's ultimate triumph over evil. In each of these areas, exhaustive divine foreknowledge provides greater assurance of God's promises. First, God knows the outcomes of human prayers; He knows what trials we will face and which blessings will come to fruition. This naturally leads to more trustworthy guidance from God. Since God knows the consequences of human actions, we can know that the weightiest decisions we make are understood and accounted for by God. Moreover, God knows the logistics of His own victory over evil since He has foreknown it eternally. Through His exhaustive knowledge of future events, God "can know how to order and rule our own lives and indeed all of history to ensure that his purposes of grace will be ultimately victorious."[12] The security and confidence of God's people rests in His complete and infallible knowledge of the future.

D. Philosophical Evidence for Arminianism

1. The reality of future contingents. Additionally, a positive philosophical case can be made for divine foreknowledge. This case begins by defining God's omniscience as His knowledge of all true propositions. Since this definition is readily accepted by every Christian position, the focus of the debate shifts to the truth value of future-tense

12. Roy, *How Much Does God Foreknow*, 277.

statements. Peter Geach argued that "you can no more name an as yet non-existent object than you can christen a baby not yet conceived, or ring a bell not yet cast … such a name is not a name *of* an object until it has an object to name. And so existential quantification cannot be applied to objects that do not yet exist."[13] Others follow this same line of reasoning in an argument from truth against divine foreknowledge.[14]

However, why must truth only correspond to what presently exists? William Lane Craig argues that for future-tense statements to be true, the present-tense version of the same statement must also be true at some point in time. For instance, if someone said on March 1, 2016 that "Donald Trump will win the presidential election," that statement is true because Donald Trump won the presidential election. It does not matter if the event exists at the time the statement is made; it still corresponds to the fact that Donald Trump won the presidential election. Second, the facts that constitute past-tense or present-tense statements also constitute future-tense statements. It seems rather arbitrary to deny the truth of a fact based on the tense in which it is stated. Third, this position results in a *reductio ad absurdum*: if truth only corresponds to presently-existing events, and past events no longer exist in the present, then to deny the truth of future-tense statements would also require the denial of past-tense statements, which severely limits human knowledge. Given these three arguments, it is reasonable to hold that future-tense statements or propositions can be true. Therefore, God's omniscience must include exhaustive foreknowledge.[15]

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13. Peter Geach, *Providence and Evil* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 54.

14. The argument from truth says that 1) Future events have not yet occurred. 2) A true statement corresponds to what has occurred. 3) Hence, no statements about the future can be true (since the future has not yet occurred). See Norman Geisler, *The Battle for God: Responding to the Challenge of Neotheism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 2001), 59.

Beyond this argument for divine foreknowledge, Arminians also provide several arguments for libertarian freedom, which is another key aspect of their position. There are many different versions of libertarian freedom, although every variation can fit into three broad categories: non-causalist or simple indeterminist, agent-causal, and event-causal or causal indeterminist.[16] Arminians could fit into any of these three categories; yet this paper will focus on Robert Kane's version of event-causal libertarian freedom, which has been one of the most prominent libertarian views of the past 30 years.

2. Robert Kane's event-causal libertarian freedom. For Kane, how one defines a person's "will" is vitally important to understanding human freedom. At the basic level is a person's *appetitive* will, which deals with the person's desires and preferences; these act as the motivation for a person's actions. For instance, a person's desire to eat an apple is the reason why he or she buys an apple from the store. Second, there is the *rational* will, which controls one's choices, decisions, and intentions; for example, a person exercises her rationality when she chooses to buy an apple rather than a pear. [17] Third, there is the

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15. Craig develops these arguments in *The Only Wise God*: *The Compatibility of Divine Foreknowledge and Human Freedom* (Wipf & Stock Publishing, 2000), 56-61.

16. "*Agent-causal* theories postulate 'a *sui generis* form of [nonevent] causation' by an agent or substance that is not reducible to causation by states or events of any kind involving the agent, physical or mental. *Noncausalist* or *simple indeterminist* theories insist that free choices or actions are *uncaused* events, which are nonetheless explicable in terms of an agent's reasons or purposes. *Causal indeterminist* or *event-causal* theories maintain that agents cause their 'free actions via [their] reasons for doing so, but indeterministically.'" See Robert Kane, "Introduction: The Contours of Contemporary Free-Will Debates (Part 2)", in *The Oxford Handbook of Free Will*, 2nd edition, edited by Robert Kane (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2011), 20.

17. "Choices and decisions are to be understood as mental acts whose function is to settle uncertainty, terminate deliberation, and issue in intentions. Intentions are, in turn, states of mind that persist through time and guide action by way of providing plans for organizing both immediate and future action." See Michael McKenna, "Compatibilist Ultimacy: Resisting the Threat of Kane's U Condition*", in *Libertarian Free Will: Contemporary Debates*, edited by David Palmer (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 73.

striving will, which is the efforts one makes to carry out one's intentions. For libertarian freedom to exist, Kane holds that there must be some indeterminacy between a person's appetitive will and rational will:

> … it would be no threat to a libertarian conception of free will if the process giving rise to desires and preferences was a deterministic one. Nor would it threaten libertarian freedom if the relation between intentions once formed and overt actions was also deterministic. What would, however, undermine libertarian freedom is if the relation between an agent's reasons once acquired and her subsequent choices and decisions was deterministic. Settling uncertainty about what to do, for Kane, given the reasons one has, is where the incompatibilists will locate distinctly libertarian freedom.[18]

Additionally, Kane classifies three different kinds of free acts. First, there are Plain Free Acts (PFAs), which are actions done voluntarily, on purpose, and without coercion. Kane believes that these actions can occur in both deterministic and indeterministic situations, thereby accommodating to both compatibilist and libertarian conceptions of free will. Second, there are Freely Willed Acts (FWAs), which are done voluntarily, on purpose, and without coercion, but also are performed out of an intention which the person is ultimately responsible for. This means that a person could be motivated in a deterministic fashion, thereby being unable to act otherwise, and still be able to perform an FWA.[19]

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18. Ibid., 74. I recognize that the word "indeterminacy" has a specific meaning in quantum physics, and this scientific use of the word has implications on the free will debate. However, Kane uses "indeterminacy" to refer to a lack of causal necessity, and I will be using the word in the same fashion throughout this essay. For those interested in the scientific side of the debate, I recommend reading Part II, "Physics, Determinism, and Indeterminism," of *The Oxford Handbook of Free Will*, 2nd edition, edited by Robert Kane (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).

19. "In the cases of many FWAs, probably most, all that is required is that the pertinent psychological ingredients in the proximal etiology of her acts be ones for which she is personally responsible. These ingredients have to be hers, in the sense that she helped form them. These motives, purposes, and character traits might themselves be secured within her overall psychic constitution so that she 'just is' the way she is at the time roughly coincident with the action. In this sense, she might, at that time, be unable to do otherwise, and so fail to satisfy an AP [alternate possibility] condition within the context of that time frame. Indeed, her performing of these FWAs thus might arise from locally deterministic causes that are internal to her own motivational psychology. But they will still count as FWAs so long as the proximal will-

The third kind of free act, Self-Forming Acts (SFAs), are most important in Kane's analysis, since they are the only kind of act where indeterminacy must occur. SFAs are the actions that permanently define one's character; they shape the course of one's personal history. Now these kinds of actions are not so powerful as to drastically change lives because of one decision (though that may occur in extreme circumstances); lives are changed "by repeated activity, in piecemeal fashion, through a series of SFAs over the course of a life. Hence, the freedom of our agency, when we act of our own free wills is, at least sometimes, an achievement that represents the long-term shaping of our dearest conceptions of our own characters."[20] Thus, Kane holds that many decisions may arise deterministically and persons can still be held responsible; but for persons to be held responsible, one's character must have been solidified over time through a succession of SFAs.

These SFAs enable a person to be *ultimately responsible*, where ultimate responsibility (UR) for an action requires that

> *an agent must be responsible for anything that is a sufficient cause or motive for the action's occurring*. If, for example, a choice issues from, and can be sufficiently explained by, an agent's character and motives (together with background conditions), then to be *ultimately* responsible for the choice, the agent must be at least in part responsible by virtue of choices or actions voluntarily performed in the past for having the character or motives he or she now has.[21]

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constituting psychic ingredients themselves are the products of *other* FWAs wherein, at earlier times in her history, the agent acted in such a way as to *then* directly shape her character, her motives, and purposes by choosing or deciding in conditions of uncertainty involving torn decisions." See McKenna, "Compatibilist Ultimacy," 76.

20. Ibid.

21. Robert Kane, "Libertarianism", in John Martin Fischer et al., *Four Views on Free Will* (Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishing, 2007), 14.

Yet for UR to be attributed to an agent, SFAs must also be *will-setting actions*, where "agents make choices or decisions between two or more competing options and do not settle on which of the options they want more, all things considered, until the moment of choice or decision itself."[22] Additionally, for there to be two or more competing options, Kane thinks that there must be more than one way a person could act voluntarily, intentionally, and rationally. He calls this the *plurality conditions* for free will.[23]

One can summarize Kane's analysis into a three-step argument, which McKenna labels the Ultimacy Argument (UA):

1. A person acts of her own free will only if she is the ultimate source of her act.
2. If determinism is true, no one is the ultimate source of her acts.
3. Therefore, if determinism is true, no one acts of her own free will.[24]

Thus, Kane's analysis (as summarized by McKenna) necessitates that any compatibilist account of free will must account for a person's ultimate responsibility. If it cannot do so, then it seems that compatibilism cannot support moral responsibility.[25]

E. Critiques of Arminianism

1. Biblical critiques. Biblically, one main point of contention between skeptics about divine foreknowledge and traditional Arminians is predictive prophecy. In the

22. Ibid., 20.

23. Ibid.

24. Michael McKenna, "Compatibilist Ultimacy: Resisting the Threat of Kane's U Condition*", in *Libertarian Free Will: Contemporary Debates*, edited by David Palmer (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 80.

25. Compatibilism, as a general view of human freedom, holds that "even if every act we perform is caused by something outside ourselves (such as natural causes or God), we are still free, for we can still act according to our character and desires." See John Frame, *The Doctrine of God* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing, 2002), 136. In Kane's terminology, compatibilism holds that even if a person is not the *ultimate* source of her act, she is still free since she acts according to her desires.

section on Biblical Evidence for Arminianism, it was noted that predictive prophecy is a prominent feature of the Old Testament and is difficult for skeptics to properly explain. In response, they say that every predictive prophecy in scripture fits into one of three categories: prophecy can express God's intention to do something in the future irrespective of creaturely decision; it can express God's knowledge of what will happen due to necessary conditions currently existing in the world; or it may be a conditional prophecy about what will happen if something obtains.[26] However, each of these options proves problematic for the skeptic.

If the skeptic's analysis is correct, then the first option, God's intention to do something irrespective of creaturely choices, must account for very few prophecies in scripture since they accept libertarian freedom. If libertarian freedom is extremely valuable to God, then it is unlikely that He would run roughshod over it to accomplish His purposes; and since many of the prophecies in scripture involve the free choices of human beings, these skeptics must hold that most prophecies fit into the other two categories. Yet the second option, God's knowledge of what follows from necessary conditions, removes any theological significance from these predictions. Humans can know what necessarily follows from certain actions; consequently, these predictions would not be especially compelling or express God's uniqueness. Subsequently, Arminians and Molinists accept the reality of conditional prophecies in scripture; they just view these prophecies as restating God's moral standard rather than predicting the future. However, if skeptics are

26. This schema was developed in Richard Rice, "Biblical Support for a New Perspective," in *The Openness of God: A Biblical Challenge to the Traditional Understanding of God* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 1994), 51-52, and has been widely accepted by others.

saying that God's conditional prophecies are statements of His knowledge of what would occur given certain circumstances, then this is an assertion of God's middle knowledge, which skeptics regularly deny. Thus, these three categories cannot account for every predictive prophecy in scripture, and the skeptic's analysis fails.[27]

Even if the skeptics's explanations did account for every predictive prophecy, they still fail to account for Isaiah 40-48 and John 13:19. Greg Boyd interprets Isaiah 46:9-11 and 48:3 by appealing to God's intention to bring about His own purposes: "The Lord is not appealing to information about the future he happens to possess; instead, he is appealing to *his own intentions* about the future. He foreknows that certain things are going to take place because he knows *his own purpose and intention* to bring these events about."[28] Yet this interpretation ignores the earlier chapters where God explicitly states that His criterion for true deity is knowledge of the future (e.g. Isaiah 41:22-28; 42:8-9). Additionally, none of the skeptics previously cited have explained John 13:19, where Jesus grounds His messianic purpose in His own ability to predict the future. Given the paltry explanation of these two passages by skeptics, one can only agree with Bruce Ware's analysis:

> Since God himself declares the criterion by which the question of his deity is to be evaluated and established, and since that criterion is the possession of a knowledge of the future that can be declared and its truthfulness verified (or falsified) by the unfolding of future events, how utterly impertinent and presumptuous to deny of God divine foreknowledge and so deny *the very basis by which God himself has declared that his claim to deity shall be vindicated and made known*.[29]

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27. These arguments are made in Craig, *The Only Wise God*, 43-44; and Ware, *God's Lesser Glory*, 132-134.

28. Gregory Boyd, *God of the Possible: A Biblical Introduction to the Open View of God* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 2000), 30.

29. Bruce Ware, *God's Lesser Glory: The Diminished God of Open Theism* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2000), 104.

The other passages given in defense of exhaustive divine foreknowledge are poorly interpreted by skeptics as well. Boyd tries to argue that God predetermines some things without predetermining everything, even though Psalm 139:16 says that God ordained every day for David before he lived one of them. In response to texts declaring God's plan for salvation to be through Christ before the foundation of the world (Eph. 1:3-14; 3:11; 1 Cor. 2:7; 2 Tim. 1:9-10; Rev. 13:8; 17:8), Boyd and other skeptics argue that God predetermined that Jesus would die, but did not predetermine for specific people to kill Him.[30] Yet if God decided before He created the world that Christ would be crucified, then He did so irrespective of creaturely decisions. Consequently, He had to plan for persons to crucify Jesus. Considering the number of people involved in Jesus's betrayal and crucifixion, it seems unlikely that God could orchestrate Jesus's crucifixion based on his knowledge of the past, present, and probability calculations concerning the future. Thus, it seems much more plausible that God has exhaustive foreknowledge.

2. The compatibility of divine foreknowledge and human action. Although the biblical evidence seems to conclusively favor divine foreknowledge, Arminians face tougher challenges by simultaneously holding to exhaustive divine foreknowledge and libertarian freedom. The problem may be shown through the following argument for theological fatalism:

1. God's being omniscient necessarily implies that if Jones mows his lawn on Saturday afternoon, then God believed at an earlier time that Jones would mow his lawn on Saturday afternoon.
2. Necessarily, all of God's beliefs are true.
3. No one has the power to make a contradiction true.

30. Boyd argues that the Bible "never suggests that the individuals who participated in this event were predestined to do so or foreknown as doing so. It was certain that Jesus would be crucified, but it was not certain from eternity that Pilate, Herod, or Caiaphas would play the roles they played in the crucifixion. They participated in Christ's death of their own free wills." See *God of the Possible*, 45.

4. No one has the power to erase someone's past beliefs, that is, to bring it about that something believed in the past by someone was not believed in the past by that person.
5. No one has the power to erase someone's existence in the past, that is, to bring it about that someone who existed in the past did not exist in the past.
6. So if God believed that Jones would mow his lawn on Saturday afternoon, Jones can refrain from mowing his lawn only if one of the following alternatives is true:
    a. Jones has the power to make God's belief false;
    b. Jones has the power to erase God's past belief; or
    c. Jones has the power to erase God's past existence.
7. But alternative (a) is impossible (this follows from steps 2 and 3).
8. And alternative (b) is impossible (this follows from step 4).
9. And alternative (c) is impossible (this follows from step 5).
10. Therefore, if God believes that Jones will mow his lawn on Saturday afternoon, Jones does not have the power to refrain from mowing his lawn on Saturday afternoon; that is to say, Jones is not free.[31]

This argument is essentially a more nuanced version of the argument against exhaustive divine foreknowledge; subsequently, traditional Arminians must show how divine foreknowledge and libertarian freedom can coexist without infringing on each other.

The first attempt to reconcile foreknowledge and libertarian freedom is the Boethian view. Named after Saint Boethius, this view argues that since God exists outside of time, He knows all things at once, and there is no sequential time in His thought. In other words, "He simply knows in one eternal *Now*."[32] Because God exists outside of time, His knowledge is not temporally prior to Jones's action, which means that the argument cannot get off the ground. Just like my watching Jones mow his lawn from across the street does not affect his freedom to continue or stop mowing, God's eternal knowledge of Jones's

31. In *The Only Wise God*, William Lane Craig takes a whole chapter ("The Argument for Theological Fatalism") to present this syllogism. However, Craig cites Nelson Pike as the original formulator of the argument. For Pike's version, see his article "Divine Omniscience and Voluntary Action," *The Philosophical Review 74*, no. 1 (Jan. 1965): 27-46, accessed January 21, 2017, http://www.jstor.org/stable/2183529.

32. Geisler, *The Battle for God*, 62.

lawn mowing does not coerce or force Jones to perform that action. Therefore, the Boethian concludes that God can foreknow human actions without eliminating human freedom.

Since its initial statement in Boethius's *The Consolation of Philosophy*, the Boethian view has been popular among laypersons as a go-to response to the sovereignty-freedom debate, but it has received harsh criticism in the academic community. The simplest critique is to recognize that even if God's timeless knowledge does not coerce a person into performing an action, "the timeless realm is as ontologically determinate and fixed as the past … we have no more reason to think that we can do anything about God's timeless knowledge than about God's past knowledge. If there is no use crying over spilt milk, there is no use crying over timelessly spilling milk either."[33] Even though it's true that God's timeless knowledge does not coerce a person into acting a certain way, it does not rebut the argument for theological fatalism. In order to circumvent the force of the argument, one must add something to God's timeless knowledge to maintain the conjunction of foreknowledge and human freedom.[34]

Due to the failure of the Boethian view, many philosophers have tried to rebut the argument for theological fatalism by adopting two different variants of Ockhamism. Both versions rely on the distinction between soft and hard facts. Soft facts are facts whose grammar indicates the past but whose content belongs at least partly in the future; hard

33. Linda Zagzebski, "Recent Work on Divine Foreknowledge and Free Will," in *The Oxford Handbook of Free Will*, 1st edition, edited by Robert Kane (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2002), 52.

34. Molina also gives a more complex critique in Disputation 48, sections 9-11 (102-103 of Freddoso's translation) and Disputation 49, sections 15-16 (122-124 of Freddoso's translation). The reader can decide if Molina's objection is cogent or not.

facts are facts whose grammar and content is entirely focused on the past.[35] In the first version of Ockhamism, it is argued that God's beliefs about the future are soft facts, and that this maintains libertarian freedom. For instance, Ockhamists will argue that *God believes that Adam will sin* is a soft fact by

> unpacking what it is for God to hold a belief about the future and then showing that this fact is constituted not just by what is *now* the case but also (in part) by what will be the case *later* … if God's belief is constituted as *the belief that Adam will sin* only retroactively, once Adam actually sins, then nothing about God's prior belief would appear to be inconsistent with either Adam's freedom to sin or his freedom not to sin.[36]

To understand how this argument works, it will be necessary to give further nuance to the argument against the conjunction of divine foreknowledge and human freedom.

The tension between divine foreknowledge and human freedom centers around the idea of accidental necessity, also known as temporal necessity.[37] It works as follows: God is omniscient, so He knows all true propositions, including propositions about the future. This means that, as an example, God knows whether a person will have a glass of water rather than a glass of milk at lunchtime *before he makes that choice*. Yet God's foreknowledge is also infallible, meaning that His knowledge of the future cannot be wrong. Consequently, if God knows that a person will choose to have a glass of water before he chooses to do so, and His knowledge is infallible, then he cannot choose other than what God already knows he will choose. Otherwise, if he chose to have the glass of

35. Hunt, "The Simple-Foreknowledge View," 84.

36. Ibid.

37. Both terms are used interchangeably, so I will use "temporal necessity" because it gives the reader a clearer understanding of the idea being conveyed.

milk, then God's foreknowledge would be wrong and He would not be omniscient. Thus, his choosing the glass of water is now *temporally necessary*.

To maintain the coexistence of libertarian freedom and divine foreknowledge, Ockhamists argue that soft and hard facts are two kinds of facts that cannot overlap; a proposition can only be a soft fact or only be a hard fact. Additionally, they introduce three different principles: the Fixity of the Past Principle, which states that no one can do anything during a present or future time period to render false a truth *strictly* about a past time period; the Mixed Conjunction Principle, which states that the conjunction of one proposition strictly about a time period and another not strictly about that time period is also not strictly about that time period; and the Equivalence Principle, which states that if two propositions are equivalent, then one of them is strictly about a given time period just in case the other is also strictly about that time period. Given these three principles, the Ockhamist may argue that

> Since "God believed during t [a point in time] that X would do A during T [a later point in time]" and "God existed during t and X will do A during T" are equivalent, the equivalence principle forces a choice between both being strictly about t on the one hand and neither being strictly about t on the other. The mixed conjunction principle guarantees that "God existed during t and X will do A during T" is not strictly about t. So, "God believed during t that X would do A during T" must also fail to be strictly about t.

Because the Fixity of the Past Principle only applies to truths strictly about a past time period, and "God believed during t that X would do A during T" is not strictly about the past, then God's belief about the future could be falsified by human actions, meaning that God's belief is not temporally necessary and libertarian freedom is maintained. This kind

of response has been heavily critiqued in the scholarly literature, but there are other views which seem more promising.[38]

Although the Boethian and Ockhamist views seem inadequate to rebut the argument for theological fatalism, Luis de Molina proposed a unique response to it that adds a fourth alternative to premise 6 (see page 18): d) if Jones were to act in a different way than what God foreknows, then God would have believed that instead of what he believes now. Molina says that "even if (i) the conditional is necessary (because … these two things cannot both obtain, namely, that God foreknows something to be future and that the thing does not turn out that way), and even if (ii) the antecedent is [temporally necessary], nonetheless the consequent can be purely contingent."[39] In essence, Molina argues that the foreknown event is the ground of God's foreknowledge; if the ground of His foreknowledge were different than it is now, then God's foreknowledge would be different than it is now:

> Pike is certainly correct that God's infallibility prevents his holding a false belief. But that same infallibility guarantees that if Jones were to refrain, God would have held a *different* belief. Since God cannot be mistaken or fooled, he would have foreknown from eternity if Jones were going to refrain. God cannot hold a false belief. Therefore, whatever Jones will do, God foreknows it. If Jones were to act differently, God's true belief would not have been false; rather his belief would have been different.[40]

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38. The three definitions and the quote were from D.E. Brant, "On Plantinga's Way Out," *Faith and Philosophy 14*, no. 3 (July 1997): 338-340, accessed June 27, 2016, DOI:10.5840/faithphil199714327. In the original article, Brant used t' to symbolizes "a later point in time", but I substituted that with T to make the difference clearer, since the quotation marks made it hard to see the apostrophe. Also, I cannot discuss the objections to Ockhamism due to page constraints. However, I recommend that the reader start by reading Brant's article, which gives a thorough critique of Alvin Plantinga's version of Ockhamism.

39. See Disputation 52, section 34 of *On Divine Foreknowledge* (page 189 of Freddoso's translation).

40. Craig, *The Only Wise God*, 71. Craig puts it another way on page 74: "God's foreknowledge is *chronologically* prior to Jones's mowing the lawn, but Jones's mowing the lawn is *logically* prior to God's

Because the event itself grounds God's foreknowledge, the event itself cannot be temporally necessary; thus, human action is still free.

Just like the Boethian and Ockhamist views, the Molinist rebuttal does not escape criticism. David Hunt argues that this strategy does not avoid accidental necessity:

> Does it make any difference that God's belief depends on what I do and that it would have been different if I were to act differently? No, for he has already held this belief, and my action must be consistent with this fact about the past … God's believing that I will press the button does not leave me any alternatives to pressing the button, since he can't hold that belief and I fail to press the button.[41]

However, it seems that Hunt's criticism misses the point of Molina's argument. What follows from the argument for theological fatalism is that the action *will* happen, not that the event *will necessarily* happen: "From God's foreknowledge of *x* we can be absolutely sure that *x* will happen. But it does not have to occur; it is possible for it to fail to happen. What is impossible is a situation in which God foreknows *x* and *x* fails to happen, for this would be a logical contradiction."[42] Therefore, it seems that Molina's rebuttal to the argument for theological fatalism is coherent.

Nevertheless, if one does not find Molina's rebuttal convincing, there is one more strategy available to Arminians. Hunt labels it the Augustinian view, as he argues that Augustine has been misinterpreted by those who espouse compatibilism regarding determinism and human freedom. The traditional interpretation of Augustine held that Augustine was a soft determinist who accepted that human actions are causally necessary.

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foreknowledge. Jones's mowing is the ground; God's foreknowledge is its logical consequent; Jones's mowing is the reason why God foreknows that Jones will mow the lawn."

41. Hunt, "The Simple-Foreknowledge View," 86.

42. Craig, *The Only Wise God*, 73.

By contrast, Hunt argues that Augustine rejected both causal necessity and the power of contrary choice:

> Temporal necessity is determined by the temporal order; but what is relevant to free agency, Augustine maintains, is the *causal/explanatory* order. The two orders normally coincide: what is prior in the one order is prior in the other. In cases of divine foreknowledge, however, the two orders diverge, and what is temporally closed (because infallibly foreknown) may remain causally/explanatorily open; as Augustine notes in The City of God, "a man does not therefore sin because God foreknew that he would sin" (V.lO). This is enough for Augustine to regard W as free despite the fact that God's foreknowledge of W renders it unavoidably necessary.[43]

The result is a new form of libertarian freedom: even if a person does not have the power of contrary choice, she can freely choose as long as there are no causal constraints on her freedom.

Some Arminians may have a problem with rejecting the power of contrary choice, otherwise known as the principle of alternate possibilities (PAP), because it has been at the core of the Arminian position for many years. Boyd echoes this sentiment when he says that "Person X is free regarding an action *A* if and only if it's genuinely possible for him to do ~*A*."[44] Yet for Hunt and others, PAP seems intuitively false. Henry Frankfurt developed supposed counterexamples to PAP which denied the power to do otherwise and yet seemingly maintained morally responsibility. Counterexamples to PAP usually involve a situation where a mechanism is placed inside a person's head without her knowledge, and if she were to form the intention of performing a specific action, that mechanism would

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43. David P. Hunt, "On Augustine's Way Out," *Faith and Philosophy 16*, no.1 (January 1999): 10, accessed June 2, 2016, DOI: 10.5840/faithphil19991612

44. Gregory Boyd, "An Open-Theist Response," in *Divine Foreknowledge: Four Views*, edited by J.K. Beilby and P.R. Eddy (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2001), 108.

activate and prevent her from performing the action. In the counterexample, the person chooses a different action, and the mechanism does not activate. Consequently, it is argued that even though she could not have done otherwise (the mechanism would have activated and prevented her from doing so), she is still responsible for the choice she makes since she was causally uninhibited.

For traditional libertarians, the invocation of a mechanism in someone's head seems implausible and uncompelling. Consequently, there has been considerable debate over Frankfurtian counterexamples to PAP.[45] In his contribution to the overall discussion, Hunt has argued that divine foreknowledge provides a better counterexample to PAP than Frankfurt's argument:

> To whatever extent it is clear in the Frankfurt counterexamples that an action can be unavoidable without this jeopardizing its libertarian freedom, it is at least as clear (if not more so) in divine foreknowledge cases that the foreknown action can be unavoidable yet libertarianly free. The same intuitions that support Frankfurt's argument, when brought to bear on divine foreknowledge of human actions, provide direct support for the claim that these actions can be libertarianly free despite their inevitability. There is no need to seek indirect support for this judgment via a consideration of Frankfurt counterexamples—indeed, doing so can only muddy the waters by making freedom in the face of divine foreknowledge appear on a par with, and to require support from, freedom in the face of counterfactual intervention.[46]

However, the discussion of Frankfurtian counterexamples and PAP, as well as the discussion of the tension between divine foreknowledge and human freedom, is only

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45. For a nice representation of the overall discussion, see J.M. Fischer, "Responsibility and Control," *The Journal of Philosophy* 79, no. 1 (January 1982): 24-40; David Widerker, "Libertarian Freedom and the Avoidability of Decisions," *Faith and Philosophy 12*, no. 1 (January 1995): 113-118; and J.M. Fischer, "Libertarianism and Avoidability: A Reply to Widerker," *Faith and Philosophy 12*, no. 1 (January 1995): 119-125.

46. David Hunt, "Frankfurt Counterexamples: Some Comments on the Widerker-Fischer Debate," *Faith and Philosophy 13*, no. 3 (July 1996): 400, accessed May 29, 2016, DOI: 10.5840/faithphil199613331.

necessary if libertarian freedom itself is intelligible. Consequently, it is necessary to consider critiques to libertarian freedom to see if this core tenet of Arminianism is even required for moral responsibility.

3. Critiques of libertarian freedom. To begin, there are objections raised specifically against Robert Kane's event-causal view of libertarian freedom. First, Michael McKenna argues that Kane's UR condition is not necessary for moral responsibility by emphasizing the contextual nature of ultimacy:

> We speak, for instance, of the original or ultimate source of Perrier drinking water as being a spring somewhere in the south of France, and we regard the refrigerator or the bottling plant as, by contrast with the spring, a mediated source for the sparkling water in our glass. In ordinary contexts, it would never dawn on us to think that whether the water in our glass really originated in France turned on whether determinism was true or not.[47]

Since the notion of ultimacy is context-sensitive, McKenna emphasizes the need to determine the context of ultimacy in discussions of moral responsibility. In his view, "the proper context for settling whether a person ultimately formed herself, or pertinent features of her character or will, via an SFA, is located in the domain of ordinary folk psychological discourse."[48] Even if libertarians disagree with contextualizing ultimacy in the domain of folk psychological discourse, McKenna thinks that it's important to realize that there are many contexts in which ultimacy does not depend on whether determinism is true or false.[49]

In response, Kane partially agrees with McKenna's analysis. He accepts that the notion of ultimacy is contextual, and that the source of Perrier drinking water does not

47. McKenna, "Compatibilist Ultimacy," 85.

48. Ibid., 86.

49. Ibid.

depend on whether determinism is true. However, he insists that in the context of free will and moral responsibility, it really does matter whether the person is responsible for their own character in some fashion or whether it is entirely due to deterministic factors:

> … if determinism is true, *wherever* you stop, there would always be conditions in the past such that once they had occurred (given the laws), it was settled that a person's later will (character, motives, and purposes) would be exactly as it is now, *though nothing whatever the person voluntarily and intentionally did or omitted played any role in producing or bringing about those conditions*.[50]

Although McKenna made some valuable points about contextualizing ultimacy, his point fails to challenge and/or defeat Kane's understanding of ultimate responsibility.

Another objection to Kane's view is the issue of competing desires and intentions. In *Freedom of the Will*, Jonathan Edwards harshly critiqued the idea that a person is in a state of complete indifference whenever she decides to perform an action, and that her desires and intentions do not decisively lean in one way or the other. He insisted that "to suppose the Will to act at all in a state of perfect indifference, is to assert that the mind chooses without choosing. To say that when it is indifferent, it can do as it pleases, is to say that it can follow its pleasure, when it has no pleasure to follow."[51] Edwards thought that the confusion resulted from the focus of the indifference. He held that the Arminian is thinking of indifference towards the objects he is choosing (each cake looks equally appetizing), whereas Edwards was speaking of indifference in the choice itself. Subsequently, he said that "the determination is not about the objects, unless indirectly and

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50. Robert Kane, "New Arguments in Debates on Libertarian Free Will: Responses to Contributors," in *Libertarian Free Will: Contemporary Debates*, edited by David Palmer (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 183.

51. Jonathan Edwards, *Freedom of the Will*, 1754, reprint (Grand Rapids, MI: Christian Classics Ethereal Library, 1999), 48.

improperly, but about the actions, which it chooses for other reasons than any preference of the objects, and for reasons not taken at all from the objects."[52] In other words, one may be indifferent about the cake he chooses, but he is not indifferent about the choice to act itself.

In response, Kane would likely agree with Edwards, in that persons do not choose out of a state of indifference. In all situations, a person is inclined to perform an action. In this sense, both Edwards and Kane disagree with noncausal libertarians, who were Edwards's primary intellectual opponent. However, the uniqueness of Kane's view is that it focuses on the importance of circumstances where persons have the desire to complete two different efforts:

> These [are] circumstances in which (i) we are deliberating between competing options; (ii) we intend to choose one or the other but cannot choose both; (iii) we have powerful motives for wanting to choose each of the options for different and competing reasons; (iv) there is a consequent resistance in our will to either choice, so that (v) if either choice is to have a chance of being made, effort will have to be made to overcome the temptation to make the other choice; and (vi) we want to give each choice a fighting chance of being made because the motives for each choice are important to us. The motives for each choice define in part what sort of person we are; and we would be taking them lightly if we did not make an effort in their behalf. These conditions, I contend, are the conditions of 'self-forming' actions (SFAs).[53]

Kane readily accepts that persons always have intentions for performing actions, but he insists that there must not be any external or internal causal coercion involved in SFAs.

A third and final objection to Kane's event-causal view of libertarian freedom takes the form of an infinite regress argument: if SFAs are required for free and morally

52. Edwards, *Freedom of the Will*, 50.

53. Kane, "New Arguments," 198.

responsible actions, then must these be preceded by other SFAs? If so, then it seems like those SFAs would need to be preceded by other SFAs, and on goes the infinite regress. Subsequently, Kane recognizes this infinite regress and argues that SFAs need not be preceded by more SFAs. Instead, an agent must simply have teleological guidance control (TGC). This kind of control is exhibited in persons when they tend "through feedback loops and error correction to converge on a goal in the face of perturbations … the kind of control (TGC) agents exercise over the efforts or volitional streams that may lead to SFAs—in contrast to the [plural voluntary control] they exercise over the SFAs themselves—is a compatibilist kind of control."[54] However, TGC is also compatible with indeterminism, meaning that persons are responsible irrespective of the necessity involved in the action. Kane recognizes that the resulting view is quite remarkable when he calls the reader to

> Note where we thus arrive: multiple parallel goal-directed cognitive processes (volitional streams, as I also call them) simultaneously exercised by the agent, over each of which the agent has 'one-way' or singular voluntary control (TGC), when occurring together, make possible 'more-than-one-way' or plural voluntary control (PVC), since the agent might succeed in attaining the goal of either process at a given time voluntarily, on purpose and for reasons. Stated differently, two cognitive processes over each of which an agent has what Fischer calls guidance control, exercised simultaneously and in parallel, give rise to what he calls regulative control, the power at a time to bring about a choice by attempting to bring it about and the power at that same time to bring about an alternative choice by attempting to bring it about.[55]

Beyond the critiques of Kane's specific view, there are several critiques of libertarian freedom in general that arise from both philosophical and theological issues.

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54. Kane, "New Arguments," 199. Plural voluntary control is when agents "are able to bring about *whichever* of the options they will, *when* they will to do so, *for* the reasons they will to do so, *on* purpose, rather than accidentally or by mistake, *without* being coerced or compelled in doing so or wiling to do so, or otherwise controlled in doing or willing to do so by any other agents or mechanisms." From Robert Kane, "Libertarianism", 30.

55. Ibid., 200.

The most prominent critique of libertarian freedom is the luck/chance objection, which argues that indeterminism makes all human actions arbitrary or the result of luck or chance. Before answering this objection, Kane starts by explaining five key aspects of his position. First, he holds that indeterminism need not be involved in every act a person makes of her own free will; indeterminism is only necessary for SFAs. Second, he holds that SFAs occur when one encounters two difficult choices that she must choose between, which involves some internal tension that Kane attributes to indeterminacy in a person's neural processes.[56]

Third, Kane labels this indeterminism in the neural processes *parallel processing*. To explain this idea, Kane posits a woman who encounters a mugging on her way to work. She has two competing motivations: help the victim, or continue her commute and avoid getting involved. Given the complexity of the idea, it will be useful to quote Kane here at length:

> … imagine that two competing neural networks are involved, each influencing the other and representing her conflicting motivations. (These are complex networks of interconnected neurons in the brain circulating impulses in feedback loops that are generally involved in higher-level cognitive processing). The input of one of these networks consists in the woman's desires and motives for stopping to help the victim. If the network reaches a certain activation threshold (the simultaneous firing of a complex set of 'output' neurons), that would represent her choice to help. For the competing network, the inputs are her ambitious motives for going on to her meeting; and its reaching an activation threshold represents the choice to go on. Now imagine further that the two networks are connected so that the indeterminism that is an obstacle to her making one of the choices is present because of her simultaneous conflicting desire to make the other choice—the indeterminism thus arising from a tension-creating conflict in the will, as noted. Under such circumstances, when either of the pathways reaches an activation threshold which amounts to choice, it would be like your solving the mathematical problem by overcoming the indeterministic background noise generated by the presence of the other pathway. And just as when you solved the mathematical problem despite the

56. In Kane's presentation of libertarian freedom, he always discusses two competing choices or motives. Of course, it seems possible that there could be more than two competing motives, but in all his examples, Kane always uses two motives/choices.

> presence of this indeterminism, one could say you did it and are responsible for it, so one can say this as well, I would argue, in the present case, *whichever one is chosen*. The network through which she succeeds in reaching a choice threshold will have succeeded despite the indeterminism present because of the existence of the competing networks.[57]

Fourth, he holds that the indeterminism involved in the choice is an ingredient in the larger teleological activities of the agent, where the indeterminism functions as an interference of the cognitive processes which could result in either the failure or success of the goal. Fifth, he holds that this indeterminism, when functioning as an obstacle to the teleological activity of the agent, does not exclude responsibility if the activity reaches its intended goal. Assuming these five steps, Kane argues that the luck objection does not apply to his version of libertarian freedom.[58]

The first version of the luck objection argues that the agent did not bring about the action, but rather that it "just happened." Kane responds by stating that "the agent *brings about* the choice that is made by engaging in a goal-directed process of *trying* or *attempting* or *making an effort* to bring about that particular choice for the reasons favoring it, and by succeeding in attaining this goal, whichever choice is made."[59] The second version argues that the agent did not have control over the choice, but Kane says that the agent has the power to make the event be or not be, as well as the power to make the competing choice be, because "either of the efforts in which the agent is engaged might succeed in attaining

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57. Robert Kane, "Rethinking Free Will: New Perspectives on an Ancient Problem," in *The Oxford Handbook of Free Will*, 2nd edition, edited by Robert Kane (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2011), 388-389.

58. The five aspects of Kane's position are given in "New Arguments in Debates on Libertarian Free Will," 193-195. The third step is the same as described in the quote from *The Oxford Handbook of Free Will*, but the quote gave more detail than Kane's description in "New Arguments in Debates on Libertarian Free Will," so I used the quote instead.

59. Kane, "New Arguments in Debates on Libertarian Free Will," 195.

its goal despite the chance of failure," with the chance of failure coming from the indeterminacy in the cognitive processes.

The third, fourth, and fifth versions of the objection stipulate that the choice was not made intentionally/voluntarily/for reasons, but Kane responds by pointing out that the choice would have resulted from a goal-oriented cognitive process aimed at making that choice; and since the alternative was also available to the agent, it would have been made voluntarily and for reasons given by the agent. Finally, the sixth version of the objection questions the agent's moral responsibility for the action. Yet Kane holds that agents in SFAs have plural voluntary control, which is "the power to act in more than one way and to be able to do so, either way, voluntarily, intentionally, and rationally," and this seems satisfactory for the agent to be considered morally responsible for that choice.[60] Therefore, since all six versions of the luck objection have been sufficiently accounted for by Kane's analysis, it seems that the luck objection fails to challenge libertarian freedom.

The underlying factor behind these different versions of the luck objection is the idea that "if the occurrence of a choice depends on the occurrence of some undetermined or chance events (e.g., quantum events) in the brain over which the agent lacks control, then whether or not the choice occurs would appear to be the matter of luck or chance," which removes responsibility.[61] In other words, the objector thinks that one needs to micro-manage each neuron in order to be responsible for the action. However, this would be a misunderstanding of cognitive processes. To perform purposive actions, what one needs is

60. Ibid., 196.

61. Kane, "Rethinking Free Will," 393.

> macro-control of processes involving many neurons—processes that may succeed in achieving their goals despite the interfering or hindering effects of some recalcitrant neurons. We do not micro-manage our actions by controlling each individual neuron or muscle that might be involved. But that does not prevent us from macro-managing our purposive activities (whether they be mental activities such as practical reasoning, or physical activities, such as arm-swingings) and being responsible when those purposive activities attain their goals.[62]

Thus, instead of the indeterminacy being the cause of the action, the reasons/motives of the person and his efforts to overcome the temptation to perform the other choice are the cause, and the indeterminacy acts as a *causally relevant hindrance* or *interference* for the achievement of the outcome.[63]

In addition to the luck objection, Jonathan Edwards critiqued non-causal libertarians on their understanding of causation. In his time, Arminians argued that any form of necessity eliminated human freedom. Edwards retaliated by arguing that this conception of causation could never work. First, saying that an event has a cause of its existence and yet is not connected to that cause is inconsistent, for it directly denies the definition of contingency. An effect that is contingent to its cause is necessarily dependent upon its cause for its existence; to say otherwise is unintelligible. Second, if the effect was not necessarily connected to the cause, then it would have no cause or reason for its existence, which is directly opposing the reasoning previously considered. Third, to suppose that events may have causes which they are not directly connected to is to say that

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62. Ibid., 395.

63. As an example of a causally relevant hindrance or interference, Kane uses the example of a vaccine: "A vaccination may hinder or lower the probability that I will get a certain disease, so it is causally relevant to the outcome. But if I get the disease despite it, the vaccination is not the *cause* of my getting the disease, though it was causally relevant, because its role was to *hinder* that effect. The causes of my getting the disease, by contrast, are those causally relevant factors (e.g., the infecting virus) that significantly enhanced the probability of its occurrence." See ibid., 394.

an effect's cause is not its cause, which is an explicit contradiction. Thus, Edwards found it "clearly manifest, that every effect has a necessary connection with its cause, or with that which is the true ground and reason of its existence."[64]

Kane would agree with Edwards's analysis, since he finds non-causal libertarianism to be unintelligible as well. Subsequently, he would likely argue that his own event-causal view is not susceptible to such critique, and he could argue so for two reasons. First, Kane accepts that most actions are examples of teleological guidance control, and since this is compatible with determinism, he would not disagree with Edwards. Second, Kane could argue that self-forming actions are connected to their cause, but that cause is hindered due to the competing cognitive processes. In other words, Kane could recognize the necessary connection between cause and effect without giving up indeterminism.

Although the philosophical objections to Kane's event-causal libertarian freedom seem ineffective, John Frame provides theological objections to libertarian freedom in general. One group of criticisms points out that the Bible never explicitly teaches, grounds moral responsibility in, places any positive value on, or judges anyone's conduct by reference to libertarian freedom. In this case, Frame is absolutely right; libertarian freedom is a philosophical concept that is never explicitly proposed in scripture. Likewise, one could argue that compatibilist freedom is not explicitly proposed either. Frame argues that the "integrity of human personality is not possible in a libertarian construction, for on that view the will must always be independent of the heart and all of our other faculties," but it seems

64. These arguments come from Edwards, *Freedom of the Will*, 59-61. The quote specifically comes from page 61.

that this critique does not hold for Kane's event-causal view, since the heart and all other faculties are necessary for the cognitive processes we undergo when making a decision.[65]

Additionally, Frame argues that since people won't sin in heaven, and since God cannot act against His own holy character, then libertarian freedom must be false.[66] Yet Kane's view does not rest upon the power of contrary choice; instead, it maintains that a person must be ultimately responsible for the action, which requires that the action itself must be made intentionally and without coercion, or that the action deterministically follows from a prior SFA. In this sense of ultimate responsibility, God is a unique case; since His character is perfectly good and immutable, He has never required any "self-forming" or "will-setting." Consequently, God has never performed a SFA, but He could still perform FWAs (see page 12) and be ultimately responsible for those choices. Similarly, people in heaven will have formed their wills through a succession of SFAs throughout their lifetime. As Christians live on earth, their desires and motives will become more in tune with God's perfectly good desires. Consequently, it is plausible that they would perform FWAs in heaven and, due to their will being permanently set to follow God, not sin. Thus, Frame's objections fail to apply to Kane's event-causal view.

Frame's final category of objections to libertarian freedom also questions the explanatory power of simple foreknowledge. These objections focus upon God's providential control of the world: how does God ensure that His plan will come to pass if humans have libertarian freedom? Scripture attests to God's control over all creation,

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65. John Frame, *The Doctrine of God*, 142.

66. The argument from the lack of sin in heaven comes from page 140 of *The Doctrine of God*, while the argument from God's character comes from page 142.

including the many sins committed by people throughout history. Arminius himself declared that God's providence "preserves, regulates, governs and directs all things and that nothing in the world happens fortuitously or by chance."[67] Given this strong view of God's control over creation, one must ask if simple foreknowledge is sufficient to "govern and direct all things."

4. Simple foreknowledge and providential control. Skeptics concerning divine foreknowledge have argued that simple foreknowledge has the same amount of providential control as present knowledge; thus, simple foreknowledge is insufficient for the strong view of divine providence stated above. The argument starts by defining simple foreknowledge as complete and infallible knowledge of the future. What follows from this definition proves problematic:

> since foreknowledge can be utilized in a providentially beneficial manner only if there is a time at which what is foreknown can influence a divine decision that is itself not also already foreknown, there can exist no conceivable context in which [simple foreknowledge] would enable God to make providentially beneficial decisions that he would not be able to make without this knowledge.[68]

In other words, foreknowledge would only be helpful if God has not made up His mind about how to act; but because God foreknows both the future events in the actual world and His own response to those events, foreknowledge does not give him any advantage.

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67. Jacob Arminius, "A Declaration of the Sentiments of Arminius", in *The Works of Jacob Arminius*, vol. 1, translated by James Nichols (Buffalo, NY: Derby, Orton, and Mulligan, 1853), accessed June 11, 2016, http://wesley.nnu.edu/arminianism/the-works-of-james-arminius/volume-1/arminius-theological-sentiments/.

68. David Basinger, *The Case for Freewill Theism: A Philosophical Assessment* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1996) 55.

This could also result in a violation of the Doxastic Principle, which states that "it is impossible to hold the belief that *p* while deciding to bring it about that *p*."[69]

David Hunt seeks to avoid this problem by narrowing the scope of the Doxastic Principle. He does so by delineating between accessed and unaccessed knowledge. In human experience, accessed knowledge is what one consciously thinks of at a moment in time; unaccessed knowledge is what one holds in his subconscious and accesses when needed. Hunt thinks that God's knowledge could work in the same way, in that God would "possess complete unaccessed foreknowledge and simply access whatever would maximize providential control without stultification."[70] Tomis Kapitan agrees with this analysis, arguing that the Doxastic Principle would only be plausible if revised to account for accessed and unaccessed knowledge: "It is impossible for a rational, self-reflective agent to consciously entertain the belief that he/she will perform an action *A* while, at the same time, deliberating about whether to perform *A*."[71]

Nevertheless, Kapitan also recognizes that another principle undergirds the Doxastic Principle, one that involves the notion of doxastic openness: "If at t_1 *S* decides to do action *A*, then at some time t_2 appropriately prior to t_1, *S* believes that it is yet open for him/her to do *A*."[72] Doxastic openness implies that God forms intentions and deliberates between different options, but if God foreknows what He will do in the future, then this

69. David Hunt, "Divine Providence and Simple Foreknowledge," *Faith and Philosophy 10*, no. 3 (June 1993): 399, accessed May 29, 2016, DOI: 10.5840/faithphil19931036.

70. Ibid., 409.

71. Tomis Kapitan, "Providence, Foreknowledge, and Decisions Procedures," *Faith and Philosophy 10*, no. 3 (July 1993): 416, accessed May 29, 2016, DOI: 10.5840/faithphil19991612.

72. Ibid., 415.

deliberation and intention-formation cannot occur, leaving God providentially impotent. Subsequently, Hunt suggests that there is a difference between propositional and practical beliefs which may avoid this doxastic problem: "what one comes to believe as a result of foreknowledge is a *propositional* belief about *what will happen*, whereas what one comes to believe as a result of deciding is a *practical* belief about *what to do* … even if the propositional belief is acquired first, it may still be necessary to go through the actual process of decision-making in order to achieve the practical belief."[73]

For this distinction between propositional and practical beliefs to work, Hunt posits that before God chose to create the world, He thought through possible sets of conditions He would encounter. As He thought through the possible situations, He decided that if some event X obtains, then it would be best to respond with action Y. Hunt thinks that God did this for every possible instance of providential control that He might perform, and that some of these instances might require God to act before the temporal occurrence of X. Once He has decided what to do for every possible instance of providential control, God accesses His simple foreknowledge and determines which of these possible sets of conditions will actually occur in creation. Because God knows which conditions will obtain, He subsequently acts to accomplish the plans He formulated before His foreknowledge was accessed. If this conception of God's mental activity is correct, then "simple foreknowledge allows God to undertake providential interventions that would not

73. Hunt, "Divine Providence and Simple Foreknowledge," 410.

otherwise have been feasible, and only complete foreknowledge can guarantee that no conditional decision with a true antecedent will go unimplemented."[74]

Although Hunt argues that this model bypasses the doxastic problem at hand, he fails to see the fatal flaw in his argument. Even if God did this planning without accessing His foreknowledge, once He decides to access it, then He consciously knows that He will perform a certain action while also deliberating about whether to perform that action, which violates the revised Doxastic Principle. Thus, the doxastic problem remains. Yet David Basinger wonders if Hunt's argument could be salvaged by replacing God's complete and infallible foreknowledge with "a justified belief about what will quite probably come about."[75] If God only believed that something would probably happen, then He might still be doxastically open per Kapitan's definition.

David Basinger answers his own question by examining God's desires. Since God is a perfectly good being, it seems that He would be committed to doing as much as He possibly could to accomplish His desired ends, since His own ends would also be perfectly good. If God is committed to achieving His own ends, then He must consider the relevant data to understand what is necessary to meet His own goals. Otherwise,

> it is not only possible that he will make decisions that fail to actualize his desired ends to the extent they could have been actualized if he had considered all of the relevant data available, it is possible that his decisions will in fact significantly hinder the actualization of his creative goals. Thus, if we assume that God is a perfectly good being, we must conclude, I believe, that he would *never* formulate conditional decisions before creation that did not contain in the antecedent

74. The entire argument, which ends with this quote, is found in "Divine Providence and Simple Foreknowledge," 413. Note: This sequence is an explication of the logical process in God's mind; to interpret this as a temporal sequence would be a misinterpretation of Hunt's position.

75. Basinger, *The Case for Freewill Theism*, 126.

> conditions all the relevant data to which he would have access when these decisions were implemented.[76]

Once one agrees that God formulated these conditional decisions and consulted the relevant data in order to do so, then it follows that God must have knowledge of His own actions and the consequences of those actions as part of the relevant data being considered. This is eminently plausible, as God could commit Himself to an action and then discover that this decision would not accomplish His own ends. To ensure that His own perfectly good goals would be met, God must have complete knowledge of His own future actions and their consequences. Yet if He requires complete knowledge of His own actions and their consequences, then He cannot form conditional plans based on probability, which loops directly back into the Doxastic Problem. Thus, if simple foreknowledge is adopted, then God cannot act providentially in His own creation.[77]

The resulting image of God is defined by impotence, which clearly contrasts God's depiction in scripture: "The mind of man plans his way, but the Lord directs his steps."[78] To properly account for the biblical text, one's view of divine foreknowledge must allow God to providential guide the world according to His perfectly good will. Moreover, one's view of divine foreknowledge must support a coherent view of human freedom and moral responsibility. The next view under consideration—Molinism—attempts to balance both

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76. Ibid., 127-128.

77. This has been a paraphrase of Basinger's argument. If one wishes to read the entire formulation in Basinger's own words, consult his appendix, "Simple Foreknowledge and Providential Control," in *The Case for Freewill Theism*.

78. Proverbs 16:9 NASB. There are other passages that describe God's providential control, but this verse seemed most straightforward.

aspects by positing divine middle knowledge. It remains to be seen whether Molinism adequately accounts for divine foreknowledge or whether it falls flat.

II. Molinism

A. The Molinist Definition of Divine Foreknowledge

To properly understand the Molinist definition of divine foreknowledge, one must first understand middle knowledge; and to understand middle knowledge, one needs to understand the several compartments of God's knowledge. Consequently, it will be best to start by defining God's *natural* knowledge, which is the first compartment. As has been discussed previously, Christians hold that God is, by nature, omniscient. Thus, natural knowledge refers to what God must know by nature of being omniscient. This category includes knowledge of all logically possible worlds as well as knowledge of all metaphysically necessary truths.[79] This natural knowledge is also *prevolitional*, meaning that God had this knowledge prior to any creative act.[80]

Another compartment of God's knowledge is *free* knowledge. When God decided to create a world, He did so out of His own divine will; He was not forced to create by anyone/anything else. By choosing to create a world, He foreknows what exists in the actual world. Since this knowledge results from His creative act, and God freely chose to create the world, it is labeled *free* or *postvolitional* knowledge. In other words, God could

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79. Freddoso defines metaphysical necessity as a state of affairs obtaining "at every moment in every possible world." God's natural knowledge includes perfect comprehension of the natures of all possible creatures, all of the active and causal powers these creatures might exercise, and all of the different space-time arrangements of creatures so that He knows how they will interact with each other. From his "Introduction," 11-12.

80. Ibid.

have decided to not create a world and thereby not have free knowledge while still having natural knowledge.[81]

In between God's natural and free knowledge is His *middle* knowledge, which is unique to Molinism.[82] Through his middle knowledge, God knows *conditional future contingents*, otherwise known as counterfactuals of freedom.[83] This particular kind of proposition indicates what effects "*would in fact* be produced, remotely or immediately, by indeterministic secondary causes under a condition or hypothesis that specifies a possible spatio-temporal arrangement of secondary causes."[84] In other words, counterfactuals of freedom indicate what God could create in any possible world given the secondary causes included in each possible world. Additionally, middle knowledge shares characteristics of both natural and free knowledge. Middle knowledge is prevolitional like natural knowledge, meaning that God has no control over which counterfactuals of freedom are true and which are false; yet middle knowledge is also contingent like free knowledge, in

81. Thomas Flint refers to four different logical moments, where "in the third logical moment, God decides upon a particular creative act of will—he decides which beings to create in which circumstances. From this divine decision and the knowledge which precedes it flow not only all contingent creaturely events ultimately precipitated by God's creative action, but also (and immediately) the fourth logical moment, in which God knows all the contingent truths under his control—that is, in which he has free knowledge." See his discussion in *Divine Providence: The Molinist Account* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell Univ. Press, 1998), 43.

82. Other positions, such as Calvinism, hold that God knows what persons would do when placed in certain circumstances. However, they would not separate this from God's natural knowledge; Molinism is unique in its separation of natural and middle knowledge.

83. In his own writing, Freddoso refers to them as conditional future contingents because it makes sense within Molina's own terminology. Later Molinist writings refer to them as counterfactuals of freedom, and William Lane Craig sometimes calls them subjunctive conditionals.

84. Freddoso, "Introduction," 21.

the sense that counterfactuals of freedom that are true could have been false depending upon the possible world in question.[85]

By introducing the concept of divine middle knowledge, Molina provided a way to ground God's complete and infallible foreknowledge in His own decree without sacrificing the libertarian freedom of free creatures. The logical process flows as follows: natural knowledge enables God to know infallibly how Peter *could* act in any logically possible world. Middle knowledge enables God to know infallibly how Peter *would* act given any possible combination of secondary causes and circumstances. God then decides to actualize one of these worlds, with the actual world containing the situation where Peter denied Christ three times. God's free knowledge is His knowledge of the actualization of this situation. In other words,

> given that God knows infallibly by His middle knowledge that Peter would in fact freely deny Christ if placed in those circumstances, it follows that by decreeing that Peter will be in those circumstances God ensures that it is true from eternity that Peter will freely sin—long before Peter actually brings about the effect in question. So God freely knows that Peter will sin because it is already true by divine decree that Peter will sin, just as God freely knows that a given necessary effect will obtain because it is already true by divine decree that it will obtain. And it is in this sense—and this sense alone—that God knows by His free knowledge that *S* will obtain *because S* will in fact obtain.[86]

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85. Ibid., 47. Freddoso makes the distinction between the three kinds of knowledge clearer by using Adam's sin in the garden as an example on page 47: "By His natural knowledge God knows that it is metaphysically possible but not metaphysically necessary that Adam will sin if placed in the garden; by His free knowledge he knows that Adam will in fact be placed in the garden and will in fact sin. What He knows by His middle knowledge, on the other hand, is something stronger than the former but weaker than the latter, namely, that Adam will sin *on the condition* that he be placed in the garden. So God has middle knowledge … if and only if He has comprehensive *prevolitional* knowledge of *conditional future contingents*."

86. The paragraph is paraphrased and the quotation is taken from ibid., 54. Flint also importantly notes that "Free knowledge, then, is neither causally nor explanatorily prior to the true future contingent foreknown. Indeed, in the sense that the truth of a proposition must be thought of as prior to the fact that someone knows that truth, it seems evident that the true future contingent should be seen as explanatorily prior to God's knowledge of it." Cf. *Divine Providence*, 45.

B. Biblical Evidence for Molinism

As far as biblical evidence for divine foreknowledge goes, Molinists and Arminians agree that the Bible clearly teaches God's complete and infallible knowledge of the future. Rather, the issue is whether scripture teaches God's knowledge of counterfactuals of freedom. Molina and other Molinists cite two passages that seem to suggest God's middle knowledge: 1 Samuel 23:6-13 and Matthew 11:20-24. In 1 Samuel 23, David is told that Saul and his large army are marching toward Keilah to capture David and his men. When David hears this report, he asks God whether Saul will come to Keilah to capture him, and God says that Saul will march on the city. David then asks if the inhabitants of Keilah will turn him and his men over to Saul, and God says that they will. Consequently, David and his men leave before Saul arrives and they avoid getting captured.

Now this result raises some questions. Why did God answer affirmatively to both of David's questions if David did not actually get captured? Rather than denying God's foreknowledge, it makes more sense to posit that God knew the following counterfactual: "If David remains in Keilah until Saul arrives, the men of Keilah would turn David over to Saul." This situation only makes sense if God knows counterfactuals of freedom. Likewise, Jesus displays knowledge of counterfactuals when He judges Chorazin and Bethsaida: "Woe to you Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the miracles had occurred in Tyre and Sidon which occurred in you, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes."[87] Without knowledge of counterfactuals, Jesus could not honestly make this statement.

87. Matt. 11:21. Other passages that are less cited but also display God's counterfactual knowledge: Jeremiah 38:17-18 and John 15:22-24. The passages cited in this section were referenced by William Lane

Additionally, Molinists hold to a strong account of divine providence. However, it would take too much space to fully explicate the biblical case for strong providential control, so the reader must examine the evidence at his or her leisure.[88]

C. Theological Evidence for Molinism

Admittedly, the Molinist position cannot be directly proven from scripture, since the concept of middle knowledge requires counterfactuals to be known prevolitionally, and this is not mentioned by any passage of scripture. In other words, middle knowledge is a philosophically derived concept rather than something that is derived from scripture. Nevertheless, the Molinist position proves to be very compelling when one sees its implications for Christian doctrine.

First, Molinism provides a coherent view of divine providence. Since God knows what any person *would in fact* do in any set of circumstances, He may order the world to meet His goals and purposes without compromising human freedom and the resultant moral responsibility. The world is such that God will certainly have the ultimate victory over evil because He chooses what circumstances to actualize, and this enables Him to ensure that He will be glorified and exalted by what occurs in creation.[89]

Craig in his chapter, "The Middle-Knowledge View," in *Divine Foreknowledge: Four Views*, edited by J.K. Beilby and P.R. Eddy (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2001), 123-124.

88. For a book-length discussion of the relevant biblical passages, see D.A. Carson, *Divine Sovereignty and Human Responsibility: Biblical Perspectives in Tension* (Atlanta, GA: John Knox Press, 1994). For more coverage of the New Testament data, see chapter four, "God's Control: Its Efficacy and Universality," in Frame, *The Doctrine of God*.

89. Craig even argues that God could providentially guide the world to have an optimal balance of saved and unsaved persons, where "those who never in fact hear the gospel are persons who would not respond to it if they did hear it. God brings the gospel to all those who he knows will respond to it if they hear it. Thus, the motivation for the missionary enterprise is to be God's ambassadors in bringing the gospel to those whom God has arranged to freely receive it when they hear it. No one who would respond if he heard it will be lost." Cf. *The Only Wise God*, 150-151.

Second, Molinism provides a coherent picture of prophecy. The Molinist could provide a model of prophecy that involves God's middle knowledge, thereby ensuring the certainty of the event while also ensuring the freedom of the person performing the prophesied action. Flint argues that

> we need to think of God as prevolitionally recognizing via middle knowledge that, *if* he willed to put Peter in *C**, Peter would deny Jesus, and God could, if he so willed, prophesy that denial. On the basis of this (and other) prevolitional knowledge, God could then perform a single act of will that would have among its results both Peter's being in *C** and Jesus's prophesying the denial; and only logically posterior to this single act of will would God have foreknowledge.[90]

Therefore, God can have complete certainty about the actual occurrence of the action prophesied due to His providential guidance via middle knowledge while maintaining the freedom of the person being prophesied.

Beyond these two theological topics, there have been several essays arguing for Molinist understandings of the perseverance of the saints, biblical inspiration, infallibility, and theistic evolution.[91] In sum, the Molinist doctrine of middle knowledge has some wide-reaching explanatory power that Open Theism and Arminianism cannot match.

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90. Flint, *Divine Providence*, 209.

91. I will not be discussing these articles in this essay, but I encourage the reader to explore these on his or her own time. For perseverance of the saints, see William Lane Craig, "'Lest Anyone Should Fall': A Middle Knowledge Perspective on Perseverance and Apostolic Warnings," *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion 29* (1991): 65-74. For biblical inspiration, see William Lane Craig, "'Men Moved by the Holy Spirit Spoke from God' (1 Peter 1:2): A Middle Knowledge Perspective on Biblical Inspiration," *Philosophia Cristi 1* (1999): 45-82. For infallibility, see Thomas Flint, "Middle Knowledge and the Doctrine of Infallibility," in *Philosophy of Religion*, vol. 5 of *Philosophical Perspectives*, edited by Jas. E. Tomberlin (Atascadero, CA: Ridgeway, 1991), 373-393. For theistic evolution, see Del Ratzsch, "Design, Chance and Theistic Evolution," in *Mere Creation*, edited by William Dembski (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 1998), 289-312.

D. Philosophical Evidence for Molinism

Much of the philosophical evidence for Molinism has been explained in the previous section on Philosophical Evidence for Arminianism. Thus, if one wants evidence for Molinism's conjunction of divine foreknowledge and human freedom or for its support for libertarian freedom, turn back to that section. This section will give an argument for middle knowledge that was presented by William Lane Craig and explain its premises. The argument runs as follows:

1. If there are true counterfactuals of creaturely freedom, then God knows these truths.
2. There are true counterfactuals of freedom.
3. If God knows true counterfactuals of creaturely freedom, God knows them either logically prior to the divine creative decree or only logically posterior to the divine creative decree.
4. Counterfactuals of creaturely freedom cannot be known only logically posterior to the divine creative decree.
5. Therefore, God knows true counterfactuals of freedom (from 1 and 2).
6. Therefore, God knows true counterfactuals of creaturely freedom either logically prior to the divine creative decree or only logically posterior to the divine creative decree (from 3 and 5).
7. God knows true counterfactuals of creaturely freedom logically prior to the divine creative decree (from 4 and 6).[92]

The first premise is a logical implication of divine omniscience, which was previously defined as God's knowledge of all true propositions. If counterfactuals of freedom are true propositions and God does not know them, then God is not omniscient. The second premise is the most controversial, and objections to the premise will be handled later. For now, it will be assumed that it is true. The third premise states the logical alternatives: either God knows counterfactuals logically before or after the divine creative decree.

92. Craig, "The Middle-Knowledge View," 136-137.

The fourth premise is also somewhat controversial, but there is plausible support for it. If God only knew counterfactuals of freedom after His creative decree, then He would be deciding what each person would do in every actual circumstance rather than having His middle knowledge be based upon what a person would do in every possible set of circumstances. In other words, "if God knows counterfactual truths about us only posterior to this decree, then there really are no counterfactuals of creaturely freedom. If there are such counterfactuals, they must be true logically prior to the divine decree."[93] Given these four premises, then the rest of the argument logically follows; and since premise 7 is the definition of middle knowledge, it follows that Molinism is true.

E. Critiques of Molinism

1. Biblical critiques. The first objections to Molinism are focused on the biblical evidence for God's knowledge of counterfactuals of freedom. As was explained previously, there are only three or four passages of scripture that can plausibly be taken as evidence for divine counterfactual knowledge, but even these passages are disputed. Objectors argue that these passages are only rhetorical, and that God and/or Jesus is using the subjunctive mood to emphasize the point he is making. However, the Molinist can rightly point out that the burden of proof is on the skeptic to show that this language is *only* rhetorical; since no one has successfully made that case, it seems reasonable to recognize the biblical evidence for God's counterfactual knowledge.[94]

93. Ibid., 143.

94. This objection and the response to it is provided by Freddoso in his "Introduction," 62-63.

2. Theological critiques. In addition to the biblical objections, Thomists from Molina's period raised three theological objections to Molinism that need to be addressed. The first objection focuses on the asymmetry thesis, which states that God relates to good and evil in two different ways. Normally the asymmetry thesis is understood as the intention/permission distinction, which argues that God intends good events to occur but only permits evil events to occur. Based on this distinction, Thomists argued that "God's *total* causal contribution to free actions is nondetermining and hence that the very same causal influence on God's part may result indifferently in either a good act or an evil act."[95] Without this intention/permission distinction, God could be considered the author of both good and evil actions.

In response, it is important to distinguish between God's concurrence and God's grace. Every traditional Christian position has believed that "God's general causal influence is required in order for secondary causes to bring about any effects whatever anywhere in the created world."[96] This cooperation with secondary causes is termed God's *general concurrence*. For Molina, God concurrently upheld secondary causes by directly acting on the effect itself, in contrast to the Bañezian position that God acted directly on the secondary agent.[97] Furthermore, Molina argued that God's concurrence is intrinsically

95. Freddoso, "Introduction," 64.

96. Ibid., 17.

97. The Bañezians were followers of the Dominican Domingo Bañez, who Freddoso describes as "Molina's chief theological nemesis … who taught at Salamanca from 1577 to 1600 and was active in the official ecclesiastical inquiry into Molina's writings" (134, note 13). They were Thomists who also accepted the reality of counterfactuals of freedom, but they argued that counterfactuals are located *after* the God's creative decree, so that God decides which counterfactuals are true and which are false. For a broader discussion of the Bañezian position, see Freddoso, "Introduction", 36-42.

neutral and is only rendered efficacious by the secondary causes, whereas Bañezians believed that God's concurrence is intrinsically efficacious so that they could keep the intention/permission distinction intact.[98]

Rather than grounding the intention/permission distinction in God's concurrence, Molina grounds it in God's grace. Molina thinks that grace is a *particular* cause in contrast to the *general* causation of divine concurrence. He thinks that God's grace inclines a person toward the good without causally necessitating their choice of the good. In other words, God may causally enable a person to choose the good and that person could still choose to make the evil choice. Consequently, the Molinist may still uphold the asymmetry thesis:

> when a good act is elicited, it is perfectly proper to say that it was elicited *because of* God's grace acting as a cause that inclined the agent internally toward such an act. When an evil act is elicited, it is perfectly proper to say that God's particular causal influence on the subject has been impeded, so that His only *effective* causal contribution to the act has been His general concurrence, which is intrinsically neutral in the strong sense and hence does not determine in any way the specific moral character of the act.[99]

A second Thomist objection invokes the principle of predilection, which states that no one would be better than another person unless he were loved and helped more by God. This objection argues that Molinism violates this principle, since two persons could be placed in the same circumstances and they would act differently, with the result that the one person may boast in his acceptance and use of God's grace. Molinists may counter argue that this principle does still hold, since "it is God who gratuitously singles Peter out by arranging things in such a way that Peter will freely act well. By the same token, God

98. This explanation of concurrence, as well as the difference between Molinist and Bañezian conceptions of concurrence, are found in ibid., 17-18.

99. This paragraph and the quotation may be found in Freddoso, "Introduction," 64-65.

permits Judas to sin by allowing him to be so situated that, as God knows via middle knowledge, he will freely sin." In other words, God is still giving more grace to some people instead of other people, which meets the criteria of the principle of predilection.[100]

The third theological objection involves petitionary prayer. The reader might recall a time in his or her life where a prayer was offered for a friend involving a request for that person's salvation, a plea for that person to change a destructive habit, or a number of other things. If one accepts Molinism, then one must reconcile the conjunction of strong providential control and libertarian freedom. Since libertarian freedom maintains that one agent cannot causally determine another agent's actions, Bañezians argued that if God cannot directly cause us to act in certain ways, then He could not effectively answer prayers, which means that Molinism diminishes the importance of prayer.[101]

To answer this objection, two distinctions are in order. First, it is arguable that some aspects of conversion are the result of God's direct causation (e.g. removing a heart of stone and replacing it with a heart of flesh, as described by Ezekiel 36:26) while others involve the will of the person converted (e.g. choosing to sin no more). In this way, Molinists could accept God's direct causal influence while still holding to libertarian freedom. Second, one needs to distinguish between strong and weak actualization. When God strongly actualizes something, He directly causes it to occur; when He weakly actualizes something, He brings about the states of affairs which result from His direct causation of something else. Accordingly, whatever happens in conversion and

100. This objection and the quotation that responds to it come from Freddoso, "Introduction," 66.

101. Flint mentions this objection in *Divine Providence*, 110.

sanctification that does not involve human free will may be the result of God's strong actualization, and whatever happens in conversion and sanctification that does involve human free will may be the result of God's weak actualization. Thus, Molinism provides a plausible account of God's interaction with humanity without diminishing the importance of prayer.

3. Semantic and metaphysical objections. Although the biblical and theological objections to Molinism prove unsuccessful, many philosophical objections to Molinism have been raised ever since Plantinga reintroduced it in *The Nature of Necessity*. The most prominent objection to Molinism has been the "grounding" objection, which argues that counterfactuals of freedom lack metaphysical grounds and therefore cannot be true or false, meaning that God cannot know them. Robert Adams was the first modern philosopher to raise this objection in his 1977 article, "Middle Knowledge and the Problem of Evil." To his mind, the only plausible metaphysical grounding of counterfactuals are the intentions, desires, and character of the persons mentioned in the counterfactual. However, traditional conceptions of libertarian freedom hold that a person may act against their character; thus, the only plausible counterfactuals would say that it is *probable* agent *S* would do action *A*, which fails to meet the Molinist criteria for counterfactuals that *S would in fact* do *A*.[102]

While Adams's analysis initially seems plausible, there are two problems that seem to undermine it. First, Wierenga points out that the proposition "Saul may act out of character" can be understood in two different ways: it either indicates an ability that Saul has (Saul has it within his power to act out of character), or it indicates a logical possibility

102. Robert M. Adams, "Middle Knowledge and the Problem of Evil," *American Philosophical Quarterly* 14, no. 2 (April 1977): 109-117, accessed June 25, 2016, http://www.jstor.org/stable/20009657.

(it might be that David stays in the city and Saul acts out of character, deciding not to besiege the city). It seems that Adams argument is that since either of these interpretations is plausible, it cannot be said that Saul's intentions or character entails the certainty of the counterfactual. Yet this potential argument fails due to Adams's own understanding of metaphysical grounding:

> Perhaps we can avoid settling that issue, however, if we recall that Adams is willing to allow that a causally sufficient condition can ground a proposition. Since a causally sufficient condition for the truth of a proposition need not entail the proposition, it seems clear that Adams does not require that a ground of a proposition entail the proposition. Hence, the fact that [Saul's character and intentions] does not entail [the claim of the counterfactual] does not seem to show that it does not ground it.[103]

If Adams himself thinks that lack of entailment does not necessarily result in lack of metaphysical grounding, then Molinist counterfactuals have metaphysical grounding as well even if they lack entailment.

Second, Freddoso argues that Molinist counterfactuals have metaphysical grounding like the grounding of absolute future contingents. A realist about the absolute future holds that a future-tense proposition has proper metaphysical grounds *now* if "there *will* be at some future time adequate metaphysical grounds for the truth of its present-tense counterpart *p*." In other words, all that is necessary to metaphysically ground a future-tense proposition is that "some agent has caused or will cause the corresponding present-tense propositions to be true." Subsequently, Freddoso argues that Molinist counterfactuals could be grounded in a similar way: "it seems reasonable to claim that there are now adequate metaphysical grounds for the truth of a conditional future contingent F^t (*p*) *on H* just in

103. The argument of this paragraph and the quote may be found in Edward Wierenga, *The Nature of God: An Inquiry into Divine Attributes* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989), 141-143.

case there *would* be adequate metaphysical grounds at *t* for the truth of the present-tense proposition *p* on the condition that *H* should obtain at *t*." Unless one wants to deny knowledge of the future, then one should accept the grounding of Molinist counterfactuals as well.[104]

Based on Freddoso's argument, a formula for metaphysical grounding can now be created: "'It *X* the case (*Y*) that *z*' is now grounded iff it *X* the case (*Y*) that '*z* is now grounded.'" For instance, if one wants to know whether the statement "It might be the case that Donald Trump wins the presidential election in 2020" is grounded, then

> we need to look where the temporal or modal operator *X* tells us to look (into the past of our world, the future of our world, some other world), look precisely where the specifier *Y* tells us to look (three years ago, two months from now, the nearest world in which I offer Gore the bribe), and see if the present-tense proposition *z* is grounded *there* by the causal activity of some agent. If it is, the proposition in question is grounded; if it isn't, the proposition is ungrounded.[105]

This formula requires a proposition's grounding to be determined by its proximity to the actual world; but what if a possible world where a person refrains from an action is equally proximal to the actual world as another possible world where the same person performs the same action? If the propositions "tie" in this way, then a false proposition has the same grounding as a true proposition. Since false propositions are not grounded, it supposedly follows that true propositions are ungrounded as well.[106]

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104. The quotations in this paragraph are found in Freddoso, "Introduction," 72-73. To read the whole argument, read pages 69-75.

105. Both quotes are from Flint, *Divine Providence*, 134. The Trump example is my own.

106. Ibid., 135. This same objection is also raised by David Hunt in "A Simple-Foreknowledge Response" in *Divine Foreknowledge: Four Views*, edited by J.K. Beilby and P.R. Eddy (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2001), 153-154.

Subsequently, both Plantinga and Flint have responded by appealing to primitive properties that apply to certain possible worlds rather than others:

> A *Z*-less world [where *Z* stands for an action in a possible world] may be no less similar to the actual world than is a *Z*-ful one if only fundamentally non-conditional propositions are considered. But if, as Plantinga contends, 'one feature determining the similarity of worlds is whether they share their counterfactuals,' then the *Z*-ful world may well be more similar to the actual world due to the fact that, both in it and in the actual world, ($c \rightarrow z$) is true, whereas the same counterfactual is false in the relevant *Z*-less worlds.[107]

Some have worried that such a response contradicts the standard semantics for counterfactuals, but Mares and Perszyk have shown that it does not, since these primitive properties "can help determine which closeness relations are appropriate for the assessment of [counterfactuals of creaturely freedom]. The semantics is still used to give a compositional theory of truth for counterfactuals."[108] Thus, this "primitive facts" view seems to adequately resolve the "tie" argument.

Nevertheless, the rebuttal of the "tie" argument results in the introduction of a metaphysical issue, commonly termed the "priority" problem. It essentially argues that God cannot know counterfactuals of freedom prior to His act of creation, rendering them useless for providential action in the world. I do not have the space to cover this objection here, but Plantinga gave a plausible response that seems to defuse the objection.[109]

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107. Flint, *Divine Providence*, 135. Note that ($c \rightarrow z$) would be false in *Z*-less worlds because the agent would choose to perform the action rather than refrain; he has the ability to refrain from *Z*, but chooses to perform *Z* instead, meaning that the *Z*-ful world contains the true counterfactual.

108. Edwin Mares and Ken Perszyk, "Molinist Counterfactuals," in *Molinism: The Contemporary Debate*, edited by Kenneth Perszyk (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 110.

109. For formulations of the priority problem, see Hugh J. McCann, "The Free Will Defense," in *Molinism: The Contemporary Debate*, edited by Kenneth Perszyk (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 259, and Adams, "Middle Knowledge and the Problem of Evil," 113-114. Plantinga's reply may be found in "Replies to My Colleagues," in *Alvin Plantinga*, edited by James Tomberlin and Peter van Inwagen (Dordrecht: D. Reidel, 1985), 376.

4. Critiques of the conjunction between Molinism and libertarian freedom. Up until now, the objections examined have focused either on semantic issues or metaphysical grounding issues pertaining to counterfactuals of freedom. Thus far, it seems like those issues have been sufficiently rebutted by Molinists. Yet there is one category of objections not yet examined which focuses on Molinism's adherence to libertarian freedom. Beginning with William Hasker in 1986, a slew of arguments and counterarguments have been written debating whether counterfactuals of freedom eliminate a person's free will.[110] To keep things concise, only Hasker's most recent version of the argument will be explained.

To begin, Hasker defines the crucial notion of "bringing about" something: "*A* brings it about that *Y* iff [if and only if]: For some *X*, *A* causes it to be the case that *X*, and $(X \& H) \Rightarrow Y$, and $\sim (H \Rightarrow Y)$, where '*H*' represents the history of the world prior to its coming to be the case that *X* and '⇒' stands for broadly logical or metaphysical necessity."[111] Using this definition, and assuming that "□→" symbolizes the connective in a counterfactual, he builds the following argument:

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110. If the reader wishes to follow the paper trail, one may do so as follows: William Hasker, "A Refutation of Middle Knowledge," *Noûs 20*, no. 4 (December 1986): 545-557; Freddoso, "Introduction," 75-78; Robert Adams, "An Anti-Molinist Argument", in James E. Tomberlin, ed., *Philosophical Perspectives 5* (1991): 343–53; William Lane Craig, "Robert Adams's New Anti-Molinist Argument," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research 54* (1994): 857-861; William Hasker, "Middle Knowledge: A Refutation Revisited," *Faith and Philosophy 12*, no. 2 (April 1995): 223-236; William Hasker, "Explanatory Priority: Transitive and Unequivocal: A Reply to William Craig", *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research 57* (1997): 389–93; William Lane Craig, "On Hasker's Defense of Anti-Molinism," *Faith and Philosophy 15*, no. 2 (April 1998): 236-240; Flint, *Divine Providence*, chapters 6 and 7; William Hasker, "A New Anti-Molinist Argument," *Religious Studies 35* (1999): 291-297; and William Hasker, "Anti-Molinism is Undefeated!" *Faith and Philosophy 17*, no. 1 (January 2000): 126-131.

111. This definition is originally found in Hasker, "A New Anti-Molinist Argument," 291, but I found it in William Hasker, "The (Non-) Existence of Molinist Counterfactuals," in *Molinism: The Contemporary Debate*, edited by Kenneth Perszyk (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 31.

1. Agent *A* is in circumstances *C*, the counterfactual of freedom '$C \mathrel{\Box\!\!\rightarrow} Z$' is true of her, and she freely chooses to do *Z*. (Molinist premise)
2. *A* is in *C*, and it is in *A*'s power to refrain from doing *Z*. (From premise 1 and definition of libertarian freedom)
3. It is in *A*'s power to bring it about that: *A* is in *C*, and *A* refrains from doing *Z*. (From premise 2)
4. If it is in *A*'s power to bring it about that *P*, and '*P*' entails '*Q*' and '*Q*' is false, then it is in *A*'s power to bring it about that *Q*. (Power Entailment Principle)
5. (A is in C and refrains from doing Z) $\Rightarrow$ ($C \mathrel{\Box\!\!\rightarrow} \sim Z$). (Molinist premise)
6. If it is in *A*'s power to bring it about that *A* is in *C* and refrains from doing *Z*, and '($C \mathrel{\Box\!\!\rightarrow} \sim Z$)' is false, then it is in *A*'s power to bring it about that ($C \mathrel{\Box\!\!\rightarrow} \sim Z$). (From premises 4 and 5)
7. It is in *A*'s power to bring it about that ($C \mathrel{\Box\!\!\rightarrow} \sim Z$). (From premises 1, 3, 6)
8. It is not in an agent's power to bring about the truth of the counterfactuals of freedom about her.
9. It is not in *A*'s power to bring it about that ($C \mathrel{\Box\!\!\rightarrow} \sim Z$). (From premise 8)[112]

The crucial step in this argument is the move from premise 7 to premise 8. To support this move, Hasker claims that counterfactuals of world-actualization are an important part of God's decision to create a world, and therefore are a key part of a world's history. But if these counterfactuals are part of a world's history, then "'H' *does* entail 'C $\mathrel{\Box\!\!\rightarrow}$ X', where 'C $\mathrel{\Box\!\!\rightarrow}$ X' is a true counterfactual of freedom. But if this is so, then we created free agents do not bring about the truth of counterfactuals of freedom about us; there is no possible world in which we do this."[113] Consequently, Hasker thinks that premise 8 is adequately supported, resulting in the impossibility of libertarian freedom.

Thomas Flint disagrees with Hasker's conclusion, arguing that his objection to Molinism fails even if one assumes that counterfactuals of freedom are included in a world's history, such that "(BA*) *A* brings it about that *Y* iff: For some *X*, *A* causes it to be

112. Premises 1-7 are on pages 31-32 of Hasker, "The (Non-) Existence of Molinist Counterfactuals"; premises 8 and 9 are on page 34 of the same chapter.

113. Ibid., 33.

the case that *X*, and (*X* & *H*) ⇒ *Y*, and ~ (*H* ⇒ *Y*), where '*H*' represents the history of the world (*including all true counterfactuals of creaturely freedom*) prior to its coming to be the case that *X*."[114] The fatal flaw of Hasker's argument arises from the assumption that "if it's not possible that *A* brings it about that *X*, then it's not possible that *A* has the power to bring it about that *X*."[115] Using this assumption, Flint revises premises 6 and 7 of the argument to say that (6*) In no possible world does *A* bring it about that (*C* □→ ~ *Z*), and (7*) In no possible world does *A* have the power to bring it about that (*C* □→ ~ *Z*). This revision accurately captures Hasker's assumption while maintaining the flow of the original argument, yet it also results in a contradiction; although 6* is true given the revised definition of "bringing about", 7* is not true. This is because "(7*) amounts to the claim that (7) is true in *no* possible world. And as we've already seen, the Molinist will quite reasonably say that, *given* (BA*), (7) is *in fact* true—true in the actual world—and hence true in some possible worlds."[116]

If (6*) is true and (7*) is false, then Flint has derived a counterexample to Hasker's assumption, thereby giving a reason to reject Hasker's move from premise 8 to premise 9. In the end, Flint thinks that arguments like Hasker's—those that try to invoke notions of a world's history or numerous definitions of "bringing about"—miss the crucial issue of the whole debate. In Flint's mind, the whole debate revolves around the Molina's view that God's middle knowledge depends upon what persons would do in actual circumstances:

114. Thomas Flint, "Whence and Whither the Molinist Debate: A Reply to Hasker," in *Molinism: The Contemporary Debate*, edited by Kenneth Perszyk (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 40-41.

115. Ibid., 41.

116. The revised versions of premises 6 and 7, as well as the quote, are from ibid., 42.

"Even though ($C \mathrel{\Box\!\!\rightarrow} Z$) is true and *A* is in *C*, *A* still is able to do ~ *Z*. Had she done ~ *Z*, ($C \mathrel{\Box\!\!\rightarrow} Z$) wouldn't have been true. Instead, ($C \mathrel{\Box\!\!\rightarrow} \sim Z$) would have been true. So *A* has the power to do something (~ *Z*), such that, had she done it, a counterfactual that is true—namely, ($C \mathrel{\Box\!\!\rightarrow} Z$)—would have been false."[117] Molinists and anti-Molinists have argued fiercely over the plausibility of this position, but Flint thinks that revising the same arguments over and over again will move the discussion nowhere.

In sum, Molinism has been the most biblically consistent and philosophically coherent position thus far. It has seemingly answered all objections, and provided a balanced way of accepting both strong providential control over creation and libertarian freedom. Nevertheless, it seems that some theological aspects of Molinism should be corrected. Most well-known Molinists, such as William Lane Craig, ardently hold to an Arminian view of soteriology, where God offers prevenient grace to all people so that they may choose to follow Him.[118] By contrast, the author holds that the Reformed view makes better sense of the biblical data, and will therefore argue that Reformed Molinism provides the best option for maintaining a biblical soteriology and a coherent view of human responsibility.[119]

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117. Flint, "Whence and Whither the Molinist Debate," 43.

118. "Arminian-Wesleyan theologians concur with the Augustinian-Calvinist position that humans are unable to believe in Christ without the prior drawing of the Holy Spirit; however, they deny that this drawing is the same as regeneration. They instead maintain that this drawing is prevenient grace, or prior ability-supplying grace, that the Spirit gives to all humanity (John 12:32)." See Kirk R. MacGregor, "Regeneration," in *The Lexham Bible Dictionary*, edited by John D. Barry et al. (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2016).

119. Admittedly, the Arminian-Calvinist debate over soteriology is one of the most contentious areas of Christian theology, so simply stating that the Reformed view better accords with the biblical data is questionable, to say the very least. To back this claim is far beyond the scope of this paper, so the reader should investigate the varying positions in due time.

III. The Author's View

Calvin argued that the Fall resulted in the corruption of humanity's reason and heart (i.e. intentions and character). This is central to the Christian religion, so it seems very unwise to deny this claim. He then argued that this corruption results in humanity's inability to choose salvation in Christ and inability to even desire the good. This seems correct; humans have lost what Frame calls *moral freedom*.[120] Yet the entailment between one's loss of moral freedom and one's loss of libertarian freedom is unclear.

Of course, a person's moral freedom is what should be truly desired, since it allows people to seek after God and pursue Him wholeheartedly. Calvin thought that

> Man, since he was corrupted by the fall, sins not forced or unwilling, but voluntarily, by a most forward bias of the mind; not by violent compulsion, or external force, but by the movement of his own passion; and yet such is the depravity of his nature, that he cannot move and act except in the direction of evil.[121]

Yet it is far from clear how the natural disposition of the human heart necessarily leads to a compatibilist account of human freedom. If a person (who was not empowered by God's prevenient grace) performed an SFA, could they not choose between two conflicting reasons, both of which are evil? Is there any reason why this could not be the case, unless a person presupposed a compatibilist view of human freedom?

On the other hand, is this a possibility on the Molinist scheme? Molina himself held to a strong view of libertarian freedom, where "at [time] *t* [person] *P* contributes causally to [state of affairs] *S* only if (i) at *t P* contributes causally to *S* and (ii) *P*'s contributing

120. Frame, *The Doctrine of God*, 135-136.

121. John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion* 2.3.5.

causally to *S* does not obtain at *t* by a necessity of nature and (iii) the total causal activity at *t* of causes other than *P* is compossible with *P*'s not causally contributing at *t* to *S*."[122] Kane's analysis could readily accept this definition as well; the only difference would be that the power of contrary choice is not necessary for *every* decision to be morally culpable, since PFAs and FWAs do not require this power.

By adopting Kane's event-causal view, a nuanced view of human freedom begins to emerge. One may hold that many, if not all, desires and intentions arise from a corrupted will, so that one is naturally inclined towards wrongdoing. Next, one can grant that many decisions are the result of teleological guidance control, where one path is clearly more appealing than the other and one follows his desires without thought. These would be common actions which one (usually) puts little thought to: what food to eat, what music one enjoys listening to, and what clothes one chooses to wear. However, Christians also believe that God intervenes and imparts His prevenient grace, which inclines a person toward the good. It is at these moments, when God's grace clashes with carnal nature, that self-forming acts occur.[123]

This clash of grace and human will is most visible at the moment of conversion. Through His middle knowledge, God knows that if a person is given enough grace and placed in the right circumstances, then that person would decide to accept Christ as his or her Lord and Savior. If God elects an individual to salvation, then His particular grace

122. Freddoso, "Introduction," 27.

123. Kane thinks of these clashes in primarily physical terms, where neural processes are clashing in the brain. While I would accept this clashing in the brain, I also hold that humans experience spiritual conflict, where "the spirit" and "the flesh" conflict with one another. Although this conflict readily accommodates to substance dualism, it could apply to a neo-Aristotelian metaphysic as well.

begins to change the person's heart and he or she is drawn to Him. At the moment of conversion itself, God changes the person's heart apart from any act of the person's own will; since no one would ever decide to follow God without His help, God must change the spiritual orientation of a person's soul. With the changed heart, the person now has two desirable options before him or her: choose God and follow His perfect plan, or reject God's call and live a life of rebellion. Because God has placed the person in the set of circumstances where he would in fact choose Him, the person overcomes the indeterminacy in his neural processes and surrenders his life to Christ.

After conversion, there will be more opportunities for self-forming actions as part of the process of sanctification. The flesh and the spirit will continue to do battle, resulting in difficult choices. Nevertheless, God's middle knowledge allows Him to place persons in the right circumstances so that they will choose Him over the desires of the flesh. Thus, He can guarantee that person's perseverance throughout the rest of his life on earth.

Now this is a basic version of the author's proposed model; to give it the proper nuance would go well beyond the scope of this paper. Still, this initial form captures both the biblical data and lived experience. In the life of a Christian, there is a tug-of-war between the desires of the flesh and the desires of the spirit that is readily incorporated into Kane's view. Furthermore, it merges well with Molinism so that God still has strong providential control over His creation. In sum, Reformed Molinism expands Kane's view by incorporating it into a Molinist framework and adding the conflict between flesh and Spirit to the already-existing clash between conflicting motivations or intentions, combining the best aspects of Molinism and Reformed soteriology.

IV. Conclusion

At their core, Arminianism and Molinism agree about the proper definition of divine foreknowledge. Both camps hold that the biblical evidence supports God's completely and infallibly knowing the future; the difference arises when one addresses the implications of this definition. Arminians hold that divine foreknowledge alone is sufficient to explain God's providential control over creation and the coherent conjunction of God's sovereignty and human responsibility. However, it was shown that divine foreknowledge alone is incapable of supporting a strong theory of providential control, since it eliminates God's ability to deliberate between options. By contrast, Molinism establishes a basis for strong providential control through its affirmation of divine middle knowledge, and it coherently maintains God's sovereignty and human responsibility. Additionally, Reformed Molinism conjoins Robert Kane's event-causal libertarianism with Molinism and Reformed soteriology to produce the most biblically consistent and philosophically/theologically coherent view available.

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