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Foreknowledge, Free Will, and the Divine Power Distinction in Thomas Bradwardine's De futuris contingentibus

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Abstract

Thomas Bradwardine (d. 1349) was an English philosopher, logician, and theologian of some note; but though recent scholarship has revived an interest in much of his work, little attention has been paid to an early treatise he wrote on the topic of future contingents, entitled *De futuris contingentibus*. In this thesis I aim to address this deficit, arguing in particular that the treatise makes original use of the divine power distinction to resolve the apparent conflict between God's foreknowledge on the one hand, and human free will on the other. Bradwardine argues that God's foreknowledge operates in accord with God's ordained power, and so relative to God's ordained power, our actions are indeed compelled; however, because of Bradwardine's appeal to the distinction in power, he is able to maintain that our actions remain free relative to God's *absolute* power, and are thus free, absolutely speaking. This solution is, I argue, unique to Bradwardine, although it seems to be abandoned in his later writing.

Bradwardine's approach to the problem is heavily influenced by three figures in particular — Boethius, Anselm of Canterbury, and John Duns Scotus — each of whose solutions I discuss in some detail. Furthermore, Bradwardine explicitly places his own solution in opposition to that of William Ockham, and so I give substantial attention to examining Ockham's position. But while I agree with Bradwardine's assessment that Ockham's position undermines God's foreknowledge in ways that should be untenable to someone of 14th-century Christian commitments, I argue that Bradwardine's solution amounts to an equally untenable determinism.

An appendix contains excerpts from my own English translation of the *De futuris contingentibus* (the first into any modern language), in parallel with the original Latin.

Keywords: Thomas Bradwardine, William Ockham, free will, divine foreknowledge, medieval philosophy, future contingents, divine power distinction, ordained power, absolute power, Boethius, Anselm, John Duns Scotus, history of philosophy.

But I ne kan nat bulte it to the bren,
As kan the hooly doctour Augustyn,
Or Boece, or the Bisshop Bradwardyn,
Wheither that Goddes worthy forwityng
Streyneth me nedely for to doon a thyng, -
"Nedely" clepe I symple necessitee;
Or elles, if free choys be graunted me
To do that same thyng, or do it noght,
Though God forwoot it, er that I was wroght;
Or if his wityng streyneth never a deel
But by necessitee condicioneel.
I wol nat han to do of swich mateere;
My tale is of a Cok, as ye may heere. . .

Geoffrey Chaucer
"The Nun's Priest's Tale," lines 474 - 86

Dedicated with deep gratitude to my beloved husband, Elliot,

whose loving and faithful presence brings me much joy and light.

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List of Abbreviations

For each of the following, see the bibliography for complete information

CP — Boethius, *The Consolation of Philosophy*

DCD — Thomas Bradwardine, *De causa Dei*

DFC — Thomas Bradwardine, *De futuris contingentibus*

PPD — William Ockham, *De praedestinatione et de praescientia Dei et de futuris contingentibus*

SR&T — Boethius, *Theological Tractates*, ed. Stewart, Rand, and Tester

Introduction

Bradwardine's context

Thomas Bradwardine was probably born in the last decade or so of the 13th century, somewhere in Sussex — most likely in the diocese of Chichester.[1] Though little is known about his exact provenance or year of birth, he rose to such prominence in adulthood that we know with a great deal of certainty the exact date of his untimely death: 26 August 1349. He was thus a direct contemporary of William Ockham (who probably died at some point between 1347 and 1349[2]). In fact, Bradwardine and Ockham were likely both in Oxford for much of the 1320s and 30s, while Bradwardine was a fellow at Merton College, and undoubtedly the two crossed paths during that time.

In the 1340s, Bradwardine's life took an increasingly ecclesiastical and political turn, and he became chaplain and confessor to the King, Edward III, whom he accompanied on campaigns in France. In 1348, Bradwardine was appointed Archbishop of Canterbury; however, King Edward seems not to have wanted to lose Bradwardine's services as advisor and confessor, and prevented his ascension to the See of Canterbury, having John de Ufford made Archbishop instead. But even before his consecration as Archbishop, Ufford succumbed to the plague, which was at this

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[1] Jean-François Genest (1979), "Le De futuris contingentibus de Thomas Bradwardine," *Recherches Augustiniennes* vol. 14 (1979), p. 251. In my overview of Bradwardine's life, I am relying largely on Genest's report, as well as Heiko Oberman's book *Archbishop Thomas Bradwardine: A Fourteenth-Century Augustinian* (Utrecht: Kemink & Zoon, 1957).

[2] Older scholarship often gives the later date, but more recent scholarship has uncovered evidence to suggest something closer to the earlier date.

time at a particularly high point in its ravagings. Edward did not seek to prevent Bradwardine's appointment a second time, and in June of 1349, Bradwardine was consecrated Archbishop of Canterbury, the most powerful ecclesial position in England. But Bradwardine fared little better than his unlucky predecessor: on the 26th of August, 1349, while travelling back to Canterbury from his consecration at Avignon, he, too, died of plague. He was buried at Canterbury.

During his early career at Oxford, Bradwardine established his reputation as a talented geometer, mathematician, and physicist among the "Oxford Calculators", writing treatises in these areas that have received considerable attention. He was also a notable logician, devising a unique and influential solution to the Liar Paradox (Stephen Read has been a strong advocate for the strength of this solution).[3] It was during his tenure at Oxford that Bradwardine became a strong intellectual opponent of William Ockham. In particular, Bradwardine objected strongly to those elements of Ockham's teaching that he perceived as undermining the authority and power of God. In this line of writing, Bradwardine is best known for the theological tome *De causa Dei contra Pelagium* – the "Pelagians" being identified as Ockham and his followers.[4] In this work, Bradwardine emphasizes the primary importance of God's will and action in the work of salvation, and the necessity of God's extension of grace for our salvation. Thus, *contra* the "Pelagians," human creatures are dependent upon God's action for their salvation and, apart from God's will and grace, they can do nothing to independently merit salvation. There is much in this work of Bradwardine that anticipates the emphases of various Reformation theologians,

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[3] There is currently a vast literature on this topic, with contributions by Stephen Read, Graham Priest, Catarina Dutilh Novaes, and others (see the bibliography for more sources); a good place to start, though, is Stephen Read, "The Liar Paradox from John Buridan back to Thomas Bradwardine," *Vivarium* vol. 40 (2002), no. 2, pp. 189 – 218; and Read, "Bradwardine's Revenge," in J.C. Beall (ed.), *Revenge of the Liar: New Essays on the Paradox* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2007). A critical response to Read can be found in Yann Benétreau-Dupin, "Buridan's Solution to the Liar Paradox," *History and Philosophy of Logic* vol. 36, no. 1 (2015), pp. 18-28.

[4] Thomas Bradwardine, *De causa Dei contra Pelagium et de virtute causarum*, ed. Henry Seville (London: 1618). (Reprint, Frankfurt: Minerva, 1964. There is currently an inexpensive reprint-of-the-reprint available on demand from Nabu Public Domain Reprints, with an erroneous attribution of authorship to Henry Seville.)

particularly John Calvin and John Knox, and various historians of theology have pointed to the probable influence Bradwardine had on these later thinkers.[5]

But prior to writing this theological manifesto, Bradwardine treated the related topic of future contingents in a shorter treatise entitled, unsurprisingly, *De futuris contingentibus* ("On future contingents").[6] The topic of future contingents relates strongly to the questions of *De causa Dei*, because it is generally assumed that, in order for human beings to genuinely act freely, there must be a genuine contingency with regard to their future actions. That is, they must really be free to act in either of two ways, with no strong compelling force to one way or the other.

Medieval Degrees of Contingency

To put this in medieval terms, human free will requires the existence of *ad utrumlibet* future contingents — "ad utrumlibet" being a virtually untranslatable phrase which in this context designates contingent events which have no strong compulsion to happen in one way over another. About this concept perhaps a bit more should be said, because it stands in marked contrast to our contemporary understandings of contingency. We are typically inclined to divide events into three categories: what is necessary; what is impossible; and whatever is neither necessary nor impossible is simply termed "contingent." We make no further distinctions between different kinds of contingency, and unless we are determinists (which, of course, many of us are), probably consider the vast majority of events — everything from the Big Bang to the daily ebb and flow of tides to our own actions and decisions — to fall within this rather broad category of contingency. (We may in fact not conceive of *any* events as necessary, only the relationships between events. The tides, for instance, are not strictly or logically necessary, but are only necessary

[5] Most notable in this vein of scholarship is Oberman 1958.
[6] Thomas Bradwardine (1979), *De futuris contingentibus*, ed. J.-F. Genest, *Recherches Augustiniennes* vol. 14 (1979), pp. 280 – 336.

insofar as certain physical relationships (contingently) hold between the sun, moon, earth, and the waters on the earth — if the moon were smashed to smithereens by an enormous asteroid, the tides would cease to function in the ways we expect them to. This demonstrates their contingency. But assuming that the heavenly bodies whose gravitational pull influences the course of the tides remain as they are, then relative to these facts, it is necessary that the tides continue as we expect them to do.) To illustrate visually, this is perhaps something like the way we tend to modally catagorize events in our own parlence:

IMPOSSIBLE	CONTINGENT	NECESSARY

Late medieval logicians, by contrast, conceived of the category of contingency as being subdivided itself into three categories: *contingens ut raro, contingens ad utrumlibet*, and *contingens ut in pluribus*.[7] We might think about these categories as being something like "technically contingent, but practically impossible," "*really and truly* contingent," and "technically contingent, but practically necessary," respectively. A revision of the above table in these terms would therefore look something like this:

CONTINGENT

IMPOSSIBLE	*UT RARO*	*AD UTRUMLIBET*	*UT IN PLURIBUS*	NECESSARY

[7] There are other variations on these distinctions and terminology. *Contingens ut in pluribus* seems to be more or less equivalent to what is sometimes called *contingens natum* (its opposite being *contingents non natum*). For our purposes, however, since *contingencia ad utrumlibet* is what concerns us, we will content ourselves with this perhaps somewhat simplified formulation. More about this can be found in Henrik Lagerlund (2000), *Modal Syllogistics in the Middle Ages* (Leiden: Brill, 2000).

Let us explore this subdivision for a moment. On the one hand, there are events which, though *technically* having it within their power to turn out otherwise (and therefore being contingent), hardly ever (or perhaps in finite time, never) do so, because they are generally prevented from doing so by other factors. For example, that a raven is black is a contingent fact, since on rare occasions an albino raven may turn out white. But since it is almost always the case that a raven turns out black, and, furthermore, since there are certain factors (in this case, mainly genetic) which generally prevent it from being any colour other than black, the medieval logician would consider the raven's blackness to be contingent only in the *contingens ut in pluribus* sense -- technically contingent, but necessary for all practical purposes. On the other hand, there are events which, though technically possible, almost never happen. These can be seen logically as the negations of the events which are *contingens ut in pluribus,* such as a raven *not* being black, but white (or yellow, or fuchsia). Such events which, though technically contingent, are extremely unlikely to happen are called *contingens ut raro*.

Finally, there is the third, middle class of contingent events, designating those events which can really, plausibly, and reasonably be considered to turn out in either of two ways, or *ad utrumlibet*. It is this category into which Bradwardine understands morally significant actions to fall. Such events are *really* free, in a sense, to turn out in either of two (or more) ways, like the flipping of a coin. However, in citing this example (the coin toss), it is important to bear in mind that what Bradwardine and other medieval thinkers have in mind when they consider *ad utrumlibet* contingents is not so much a question of equal probability, but rather, an event's not being constrained or compelled by other factors. So suppose, for instance, that I stoop to pick up a pebble from the beach on a summer holiday: considering that there are thousands of pebbles on the beach, and that there are any number of other actions I may have chosen to perform at that very moment (I might instead have kicked the pebble, or performed a somersault, or taken off at a run to get back home and continue writing my thesis), then probabilistically speaking, the

event in which I stoop at *that exact spot* to pick up *that very pebble* is extremely unlikely indeed (it may conceivably even be *statistically* impossible). But it is not an action which is in any way constrained or compelled by natural or metaphysical factors -- it is one which I am at perfect liberty to either perform or refrain from performing. And for these reasons, it is considered to be an *ad utrumlibet* contingent action.

Bradwardine assumes that all actions of moral significance fall into this middle, *ad utrumlibet* category of contingents. If human beings are to have free will, it must be because they can, in the future, will actions which are themselves contingent *ad utrumlibet*; thus human free will requires the existence of *ad utrumlibet* future contingents. But of course, a dilemma arises when such future contingent actions and events are considered in relation to God's omniscience, which includes knowledge of all future things: how can an act be truly free, or an event truly contingent, if its outcome is already known by God before it happens? This is the question which Bradwardine sets out to address in this treatise, and it is the solution he proposes that is the central subject of my investigations in this thesis.

What has been written to date

Bradwardine's *De futuris contingentibus* has received very minimal scholarly attention, so let me provide a brief summary of what has been written about this work in contemporary scholarship. In the 1930s, a fragmentary edition of the treatise was prepared by E.B.M. Xiberta.[8] This edition includes fragments making up less than fifteen percent of the work, making it very incomplete, but is the earliest modern reference to the work I have so far discovered. Heiko Oberman subsequently discussed the work briefly in his 1957 study of Bradwardine's

[8] E.B.M. Xiberta, O. Carm, "Fragments d'una questio inedita de Thomas Bradwardina," in *Festschrift für M. Grabmann* (Münster, 1935), pp. 1169 - 1180 in BB, Supplementvolume III, 2 (Publication from Cod. Vat. Lat. 813).

theology,[9] but as I will explain in chapter 3, his treatment is hindered by misunderstanding the structure of the treatise. No doubt his misunderstanding arose, at least in part, from the lack of any modern critical edition, apart from Xiberta's fragments.

A complete modern critical edition was finally supplied by Genest in 1979, accompanied by a helpful introduction.[10] Three years later, Calvin Normore addressed Bradwardine's approach to future contingents in his article on the topic in the *Cambridge History of Later Medieval Philosophy*.[11] However, it appears that at the time of writing, Normore was not yet familiar with the (then brand-new) edition by Genest, because he focuses his discussion of Bradwardine exclusively on *De causa Dei*, without mentioning even the existence of *De futuris contingentibus*. Given the extent to which Normore discusses Bradwardine's treatment of future contingents, it may appear to us that his neglect to consider the treatise explicitly on the topic is a grave omission; however, as Jennifer Ashworth has pointed out to me, it is quite possible that Normore's article was prepared before the edition became available, as the Cambridge History volume had a very long gestation.[12]

Genest again returned to the topic in 1992, this time in a volume discussing Thomas Buckingham's treatment of future contingents in contrast with that of Bradwardine;[13] but as with Normore's earlier article, the focus of Genest's 1992 treatment is *De causa Dei*. The *De futuris contingentibus*, the very work he edited thirteen years earlier, meanwhile, receives scarcely a mention. Finally, the last evidence of modern engagement with the treatise that I have been able to discover is an unpublished partial translation by Norman Kretzmann: at some point before his

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[9] Oberman 1957.
[10] Genest (1979), pp. 249 – 336.
[11] Calvin Normore (1982), "Future Contingents," in N. Kretzmann, A. Kenny, J. Pinborg (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Later Medieval Philosophy* (Cambridge: CUP, 1982), pp. 358 – 81.
[12] I have yet to learn from Normore directly whether he knew of the treatise at the time that he wrote the Cambridge History article, and would be interested to learn about this — and also about how he came to be interested in Bradwardine's views on the topic in the first place!
[13] Jean-François Genest (1992), *Prédétermination et liberté créée à Oxford au XIVe siècle: Buckingham contre Bradwardine* (Paris: J. Vrin, 1992).

death, Kretzmann began drafting a translation of the treatise into English; however, he only completed a fraction of the text (perhaps about fifteen percent[14]), and never wrote anything else on the topic.[15]

This small handful of sources represents the sum total of modern scholarship which has, to date, engaged in any way at all with this text — and with the exception of Genest's fine edition from 1979, none has done so in any very substantive way (indeed, in most cases, I mentioned them to point out their *lack* of engagement with this treatise). Perhaps the neglect of *De futuris contingentibus* would be justified if it was viewed simply as an earlier, less developed version of his arguments on future contingents, expressed more fully in *De causa Dei*; if *De causa Dei* simply restated and improved upon whatever was put forward in *De futuris contingentibus*, then it would make sense to focus on the former. But this is not the case, as we will discover in what follows, and touch on again in the conclusion.

Content of the treatise

The *De futuris contingentibus* of Thomas Bradwardine provides an apparently original account of future contingents, framed largely as a response to William Ockham's influential treatment of the same topic. But though Bradwardine's account shows, I think, potential for great interest as a unique contribution (whether or not it is ultimately successful) to the age-old problem of reconciling God's prescience with human free will, it has received almost no attention from contemporary

[14] Notice that this is about the same percentage as the Xiberta fragments; this leads me to wonder whether it might have been the Xiberta edition which Kretzmann was working from. However, as I have been unable to locate a copy of the Xiberta fragments myself, I have been unable to compare the portions included to either confirm or disconfirm this theory.

[15] Copies of this partial translation have circulated in unpublished form; my thanks are due Stephen Read for passing one along to me, which sparked my initial interest in this text. As I have said, Kretzmann's translation is only fragmentary. To address this deficit, I have drafted a complete translation of the text (re-translating even the parts already translated by Kretzmann, for the sake of consistency of style), which I hope might be useful to others in due course; portions of my translation are found throughout the body of this thesis, and in the appendix.

scholars, nor, it seems, from Bradwardine's own contemporaries and immediate successors.[16]

The form the treatise takes is probably that of a *reportatio* (i.e., a student's report of Bradwardine's lectures), and the evidence for this is largely stylistic: in many ways it seems to be a hastily-prepared work, with infelicities of style and grammar throughout, and an often haphazard organizational structure. Its mode of expression is also repetitive and formulaic, suggesting a lack of fluent ease with the Latin language. Genest agrees with the likelihood of this assessment, saying,

> La forme du texte est d'ailleurs celle d'une *reportatio*, comme le montrent les multiples répétitions, la syntaxe très lourde et souvent incorrecte, ainsi que les flottement qui sòbservent parfois dans le plan, notamment dans le découpage des objections et des réponses. (Genest 1979, p. 253)

On the other hand, there are also some indications that the work may have been directly prepared by Bradwardine himself: e.g., the text contains references to his own (lost) work *De peccato*, and self-deprecating phrases like, "sed hoc non dico asserendo, quia illam materiam non bene studui adhuc"[17] (DFC 53a), which would not seem to be in keeping with a report by a student of a Master's lecture. It is worth noting, though, that the assessment that the text is a *reportatio* need not be incompatible with Bradwardine having at some point looked the notes over himself, possibly adding a few editorial additions or corrections. It would not have been unusual for a master to check over a student's *reportatio* of his lectures.

Preparatory remarks about the problem

As we will explore in much greater detail in what follows, the problem of future contingents in the late medieval period is one which touches on many issues

[16] About this latter issue, a bit more will be said in the Conclusion.
[17] "But I do not say this as an assertion, because this matter has not been well-studied before now."

relating to epistemology (particularly the knowledge — and foreknowledge — of God), metaphysics (the nature of God's relationship with time, questions of what grounds contingency, causation and causal powers, etc.), human nature and the nature of free will, ethics (particularly the question of responsibility), logic and modality, and more. It is a multi-faceted problem, with many different possible approaches, from many different angles. In the course of this study, we will examine in some detail the approaches to this problem of four philosophers who set the stage for Bradwardine: Boethius, Anselm, John Duns Scotus, and William Ockham. Each of these four has a unique approach to the problem, relating to Bradwardine's own approach in different ways. Broadly speaking, we will find that the approaches of Boethius, Anselm, and Scotus are viewed sympathetically by Bradwardine, and even influence his own view in significant ways; the approach of Ockham, however, is taken by Bradwardine to be on entirely the wrong track, and demonstrating its shortcomings is among the primary purposes of his treatise.

We will find in Bradwardine's approach to the problem an attempted solution that draws on many elements of those he admires, while creatively employing an original application of a distinction in God's powers to try to explain the compatibility between God's foreknowledge and human freedom. The distinction Bradwardine makes use of is not *per se* original to Bradwardine, but the way in which he applies the distinction to solve this particular problem is, I argue, something that had not been attempted in a sustained way before.

By the end of this thesis, however, I will have argued that Bradwardine's solution, though interesting because of its uniqueness, is ultimately unsuccessful in solving the problem in a way that a philosopher like Bradwardine should find satisfactory. In his fervour to avoid the mistakes he sees present in Ockham's solution, he himself winds up falling into the trap of mistakes that are in fact the mirror image of Ockham's.

A note about the texts

In my presentation of Latin primary-source texts, I will not presume of the reader a facility with Latin, but neither will I presume a lack of interest in the original text. In the case of each quotation that follows, it is my aim to provide the reader, firstly, with clear, readable translations (of either my own or another's devising, as indicated by my notes), but also with easy access to the original Latin. In the case of short quotations in passing, the Latin text of the original will usually be included in a footnote (unless I am highlighting the use of a particular phrase or word in the original), so as not to disrupt the flow of the prose; but in the case of extended quotations inviting closer study, I will provide the Latin text directly below the translation, within the main body of text, to facilitate ease of comparison.

Chapter 1

Future Contingents Up to the 14th Century: Three Views

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to give an overview of each of three major solutions to the problem of future contingents preceding Bradwardine which form the groundwork for Bradwardine's own view. It is my view that two of these three influential positions — those of Boethius and Anselm — can be seen as springing from the same family tree of solutions to the problem. The third, that of John Duns Scotus, departs in marked ways from the dominant lineage, but is important to consider for its influence on Bradwardine. Bradwardine, I will argue, sees his own view as descending from the same line as that of Boethius and Anselm; however, he is also influenced in significant ways by the rather different approach of Duns Scotus. I do not intend for this collection I have chosen to be viewed as an exhaustive overview of the family tree of solutions to the problem of future contingents; indeed, there are many more minor branches to be explored. And in fact, I leave untouched in my treatment the view which is arguably the root of all that follow, namely, that of St Augustine.

The virtue of brevity necessarily requires the neglect of many figures of great interest and influence in their own right, but Augustine — because of his stature in the canon, and his well-known attention to this very matter — is likely the figure whose exclusion from this treatment requires the most argument. This choice on my part is down to at least three factors: firstly, as a study of the *medieval* development of the problem, Augustine belongs a little too much to the Classical world to neatly fit within that framework (indeed, if Augustine needs attention, then surely Plotinus, and Aristotle, do, too); secondly, it is in part *because* Augustine's solution is so well-known and well-studied that it hardly needs recounting in these pages; and

thirdly, Augustine's view is so quickly and thoroughly taken up, and so dramatically extended by Boethius, that to rehearse his view separately would seem almost an unnecessary redundancy.

I have already said that I see the views of Boethius and Anselm as forming a part of the same family tree. Indeed, the continuity of these solutions with one another, and Bradwardine's with them, is one of the key elements I intend this thesis to highlight. Thus, in moving from the study of one figure to the next, the reader should not be surprised to find substantial overlap from one view to the next. However, it is my aim to emphasize the *new* ways in which each thinker develops the ideas, and the *new* components added by each. Thus, as the lineage advances and new bloodlines are added along the way, we should not be surprised if we note subtly changing features gaining prominence as we progress chronologically. And in Duns Scotus, we will encounter an approach that is very different from the others.

1.1 - Boethius on Future Contingents

1.1.1 - Commentary on De Interpretatione

The first main discussion by Boethius on the issue of future contingents occurs in his commentaries on Aristotle's *De Interpretatione*.[18] Boethius wrote two such commentaries, but because the second commentary is the lengthier and more detailed of the two, I will confine my discussion to that one. In this work, Boethius seeks to address the perennial problem of Aristotle's treatment of tomorrow's sea battle. Aristotle says that statements about future contingents have a truth value, but have it indeterminately. What Aristotle means by this, however, apart from his denial that everything happens by necessity, is far from clear. One interpretation,

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[18] In Ammonius Hermiae, *On Aristotle's* On interpretation 9*, Ammonius (trans. by David Blank). With* On Aristotle's *On interpretation 9, Boethius: first and second commentaries (trans. by Norman Kretzmann); with essays by Richard Sorabji, Norman Kretzmann & Mario Mignucci*, (Ithaca, N.Y. : Cornell University Press, 1998); edition of Latin text Karl Meiser (ed.), *Anicii Manlii Severini Boetii Commentarii in librum Aristotelis Peri hermeneias* (Leipzig: 1877 - 80), 2 vols.

adopted by the Stoics in their (unfavourable) interpretation of Aristotle, is that Aristotle intends by this to abandon the principle of bivalence, thereby committing himself to the notion that statements about future contingent events are neither true nor false. Boethius rejects this interpretation, and proposes in his commentary that instead Aristotle means to say that statements concerning future contingent events *do* have a truth value, but one which is "indefinite and changeable":

> For Aristotle does not say this – that both are neither true nor false – but indeed that each is either true or false, but not definitely in the way that happens with past-tense sentences. But [Aristotle says] that in a certain way the nature of statement-making utterances is twofold. Some of them are such that not just are true and false found in them, but in them one is definitely true, the other definitely false. But in others, one is indeed true and the other false, but indefinitely and changeably – and this is a result of their nature, not our ignorance or knowledge.
>
> non enim hoc Aristoteles dicit, quod utraeque nec verae nec falsae sunt, sed quod una quidem ipsarum quaelibet aut vera aut falsa est, non tamen quemadmodum in praeteritis definite nec quemadmodum in praesentibus, sed enuntiativarum vocum duplicem quodammodo esse naturam, quarum quaedam essent non modo in quibus verum et falsum inveniretur, sed in quibus una etiam esset definite vera, falsa altera definite, in aliis vero una quidem vera, altera falsa, sed indefinite et commutabiliter et hoc per suam naturam, non ad nostram ignorantiam atque notitiam. (2 *In de interpretatione* 208:7 – 18, trans. Marenbon)

There is disagreement in the literature over how this is to be understood. Norman Kretzmann has proposed that statements about future contingent events have a peculiar "either-true-or-false" status up to the point at which they either do or do not occur.[19] So, for instance, the sentence, "The White House will be burned down on 24 August 1814," was, prior to 24 August 1814, either-true-or-false, but after the events of that day, it acquired the truth-value "True", and this truth-value henceforth

[19] Norman Kretzmann, "Boethius and the Truth about Tomorrow's Sea Battle," in Ammonius (1998), 29 - 37.

applies retroactively to all prior instances of the statement. As I understand Kretzmann's interpretation of Boethius, he would seem to have it that *before* 24 August 1814, the statement "The White House will be burned down on 24 August 1814" was either-true-or-false; but when the White House was, in fact, burned down on 24 August 1814, it became the case that the statement was always definitively True.

Apart from the peculiarity of a sentence having been either-true-or-false for all of history, and then suddenly becoming definitively true for all of history, Kretzmann's account seems to me to have the additional difficulty of not contradicting the Stoic account of Aristotle that Boethius seems to have been keen to refute. Indeed, asserting a sentence to have this "either-true-or-false" indefinite truth-value amounts to the same things as a denial of bivalence for future-tensed propositions concerning contingent events.

It is for these reasons that I prefer the account offered by John Marenbon, though as I mention below, even it does not seem to be an *entirely* satisfactory account.[20] Marenbon directs our attention to a later passage in which Boethius argues that for someone to say, "There will be a sea battle tomorrow," they speak falsely, even if there is indeed a sea battle the following day. This is because Boethius understands the statement, "There will be a sea battle tomorrow" to be equivalent to the statement, "There will *necessarily* be a sea battle tomorrow." What a person ought rather to say is, "There will be a sea battle tomorrow *contingently*." This is because the speaker should make clear that "it happens, if it happens, in such a way as it will have been able not to have happened."[21]

So a future-tensed statement about a contingent event that asserts a thing *will* happen (i.e., will happen necessarily) is always false; but a future-tensed statement about a contingent event asserting that the thing will happen *contingently*

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[20] John Marenbon, *Boethius*, in B. Davies (ed.) "Great Medieval Thinkers" series (Oxford: OUP, 2003), 37 - 41.

[21] ita evenit, si evenerit, ut potuerit non evenire. (2 InDI 212:14 - 15, trans. Marenbon)

may be true or false, albeit indefinitely. It remains unclear what, exactly, is meant by statement being true or false "indefinitely," but it seems to imply an ability for that statement's truth value to change up to the point at which it is either confirmed or denied by actual events. And I am not positive that Marenbon's interpretation, though indeed rather subtler and more nuanced than Kretzmann's, entirely avoids the need to reject bivalence, at least in any traditional form it may take. But it is perhaps for the reason of these difficulties that Boethius himself seems to have ultimately turned aside from the line of explanation pursued in the *De Interpretatione* commentary when he addresses related topics in later works. The primary instance of his later approach is to be found in *The Consolation of Philosophy*.

1.1.2 - The Consolation of Philosophy

In the fifth and final book of *The Consolation of Philosophy*, Boethius presents an account of God's knowledge of future things and human freedom that was to have immense influence on discussions of the topic for centuries to come.[22] This book of the *Consolation* concludes the lengthy discussion that has already taken place between Boethius (the character) and Lady Philosophy regarding fate and the highest goods of life, as he is "consoled" in his imprisoned condition. But in Book V, their conversation turns to questions of God's foreknowledge, and how human beings might still act freely, in spite of God's knowledge of their actions beforehand.

Discussion of "chance" (CP V.I)

The first part of their conversation is devoted to establishing that the only

[22] All page references to English translations of *The Consolation of Philosophy* (CP) in this section will be to the translation by Victor Watts (revised edition, London: Penguin, 1999). All translations are Watts's. All Latin page and section references are to the edition of H.F. Stewart, E.K. Rand, and S.J. Tester (SR&T), *Theological Tractates* (Cambridge,MA: Harvard University Press, 1973).

kind of chance there can be is the sort that happens when one's action brings about an effect that one did not intend (CP 117). The classic Aristotelian example used to illustrate this is that of a farmer who happens upon a treasure chest in the act of cultivating a field (*Physics II*, 4 – 5). The farmer did not begin digging with the intention of unearthing the chest; nor did the person who hid the chest intend for it to be found by the farmer. But this literal coincidence ("coincide-ance") of actions results in the "chance" discovery of the chest by the farmer.

This is the sort of "fortuitous" chance that was at work when I ran into a friend in line at a coffee shop, just after I had discovered that I was 25 cents short of the change I needed for my beverage. I did not intend to see my friend at the coffee shop; nor did my friend come to the coffee shop in order to bail me out of my short-changed predicament. But her happening to come for coffee at just the same time that I discovered my lack of change had the fortuitous result (for me, in any case) of saving me from an embarrassing situation. Neither of us intended the result that happened; but neither did the event happen randomly, without a cause.

This latter sort of "chance," of an event happening without any cause, is the sort that Lady Philosophy denies the existence of. This un-caused sort of chance would have been in evidence if my friend had materialized beside me out of thin air, or if one of the quarters in my pocket had magically duplicated itself, thereby making up for the missing 25 cents. Cause-less chance is rejected as nonsensical by Lady Philosophy; but she does concede that actions, performed with other intended purposes, may coincide in such a way that they produce unexpected, unintended, and perhaps even surprising or perplexing results.

Chance and free will (CP V.II - V.III)

Boethius' character interjects by voicing the concern that without "uncaused" chance, all things would be causally determined: "[I]s there room in this chain of

close-knit causes for any freedom of the will? Or does the chain of Fate bind even the impulses of the human mind?" (CP 118)[23] While Philosophy does not clearly indicate how the human mind is free from the "chain of Fate", she clearly asserts that all rational beings also have free will. But freedom is not equally distributed. In fact, the quality of freedom possessed by human beings is markedly inferior to absolute freedom, particularly if they fall into habitually sinful behaviour: celestial and divine beings possess clear sighted judgement, uncorrupted will, and the power to effect their desires. Human souls are of necessity more free when they continue in the contemplation of the mind of God, and less free when they descend to bodies, and less free still when they are imprisoned in earthly flesh and blood. They reach an extremity of enslavement when they give themselves up to wickedness and lose possession of their proper reason. (CP 118) In this, Boethius to a large extent follows Augustine, who contends that our wills are most truly free when they are ordered toward what is good and righteous, and that we undermine and in a sense surrender our own freedom when we choose to act evilly.[24] I hasten to add, though, that in Boethius' treatment, the view carries much stronger gnostic overtones, insofar as the spiritual is elevated as morally superior to the corporeal, and the corporeal is taken to be a deterrent to holiness.

According to Boethius, then, the human person's limited power to execute her will, hindered still further by the limitations a bodily existence brings, renders the quality of human freedom greatly inferior to that of purely spiritual beings (such as angels), and more inferior still to the purely spiritual and omnipotent being that is God. But Boethius goes a step further when he suggests that, in surrendering to sin, a person becomes even less free than they otherwise would have been. This theme of decreasing powers of freedom in sinful creatures is one that Anselm will later take

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[23] Sed in hac haerentium sibi serie causarum estne ulla nostri arbitrii libertas an ipsos quoque humanorum motus animorum fatalis catena constringit? (SR&T 390)

[24] Augustine of Hippo, *De libero arbitrio*, esp. books II and III. An English translation of this text can be found in Augustine, *On the Free Choice of the Will, On Grace and Free Choice, and Other Writings*, ed. and trans. P. King (Cambridge: Cambridge U P, 2010).

up and refine, as we shall see in a succeeding section.

But to Boethius, the character, the fact of free will seems to run contrary to the fact of God's foreknowledge, for “the two seem clean contrary and opposite” (119). He expresses the problem in the following way:

> If God foresees all things and cannot be mistaken in any way, what Providence has foreseen as a future event must happen. So if from eternity Providence foreknows not only men's actions but also their thoughts and desires, there will be no freedom of will. No action or desire will be able to exist other than that which God's infallible Providence has foreseen. For if they can be changed and made different from how they were foreseen, there will be no sure foreknowledge of the future, only an uncertain opinion; and this I do not think can be believed of God. (PC 119 – 20)

> Nam si cuncta prospicit deus neque falli ullo modo potest, evenire necesse est quod providentia futurum esse praeviderit. Quare si ab aeterno non facta hominum modo sed etiam consilia voluntatesque praenoscit, nulla erit arbitrii libertas; neque enim vel factum aliud ullum vel quaelibet exsistere poterit voluntas nisi quam nescia falli providentia divina praesenserit. Nam si aliorsum quam provisae sunt detorqueri valent, non iam erit futuri firma praescientia, sed opinio potius incerta, quod de deo credere nefas iudico. (SR&T 394)

Boethius is unsatisfied with accounts of this problem that seek to explain away the necessity inhering in the foreseen act by pointing out that God's knowledge does not cause an action to turn out in a particular way; rather, God knows a thing will turn out in a certain way, because that is the way it will turn out. Boethius' initial objection to this explanation is twofold: first, he does not think this explanation does away with the necessity of the event; and second, he thinks it implies that a creaturely action is the cause of a divine attribute.

In the first case, Boethius' character argues the following line: Suppose an

event happens, and God foreknows that it will happen as it does. Then even if God foreknows the event because the event will happen, it is still the case that, insofar as God foreknows the event will happen, the event must happen. Were it not to happen, then God's foreknowledge would have erred, which is impossible. Thus, Boethius argues, because the event cannot happen otherwise without leading us into an impossible situation, it therefore happens necessarily.

In Boethius' second objection to this response, he argues that to say God foresees an event because an event will in fact happen, is to say that the event is a cause of some knowledge in God. This implies that finite, creaturely acts cause knowledge in God – and hence, act on God in such a way as to cause some divine attributes. Since God is unchanging and unchangeable, and, furthermore, the cause of all created things, this reversal of causal powers, Boethius thinks, is absurd. We can no more be the cause of divine attributes than a pot can be a cause of its potter's attributes.

Modes of Cognition (CP V.IV - V.V)

Acknowledging the problems that Boethius' character identifies with this approach to the problem, Lady Philosophy states that, in fact, all previous attempts to tackle the problem have failed in one way or another. She attributes this to the failure of human beings ever to understand the way in which divine knowledge operates, and says that if that could be understood, then “all uncertainty would be removed” (CP 124). She then goes on to lay out a schematic hierarchy of types of knowledge, corresponding to a hierarchy of sentient beings.

At the bottom of the knowledge hierarchy is sense perception, which is a power possessed by animals which have no locomotive faculty: such creatures are able to see, feel, and hear what is present before them, but cannot abstract from that

perception, or call to mind perceptions not currently perceived.

Next up in the chain is the power of imagination, possessed by animals who can move themselves about. It is by this power that creatures remember past perceptions, and combine (re-member) and abstract from past perceptions to imagine or anticipate perceptions they have not yet had. For instance, a dog remembers that, in the past, the sound of his food hitting his dish in the next room preceded his finding food in his dish when he went to investigate; hence, when he next hears the same sound, he expects to find food in his dish, as he did before. Past experience trains the animal, in a non-cognitive way, to form strong associations between particular sets of circumstances, so that the animal reacts accordingly when he next encounters a similar set of circumstances. Note that, in this schematic, the imaginative power employs the lower power of sense perception in its operation, transforming sense perception to function in ways it could not have without the introduction of imagination.

Similarly, the human power of reason, which is the next step in the hierarchy of knowledge, employs the lower faculties of sense perception and imagination, but adds to these the power to abstract from these things to grasp universals. Through knowledge of universals, the human person is able to reason syllogistically. If I am correct in my assessment that Boethius' schema allows for a sort of inductive reasoning capacity in locomotive animals, then what distinguishes human reason from the animal sort is its deductive character. Human beings have the ability to abstract universal generalizations from observed phenomena, and from these deduce (syllogistically) to arrive at new general truths. From knowledge we have already acquired, we can arrive at other truths concerning things we have not directly learned or experienced; that is, we can arrive at knowledge by deduction. According to this view of knowledge, the human power of knowing is on an entirely different level from that of other animals, functioning in an entirely different way.

Similarly, God's power of knowledge is on another level again: Philosophy

instructs her pupil that God knows by way of “intelligence”, or intellection, a mode of knowing with a completeness and immediacy incomprehensible to us mere mortals. God's knowledge, Philosophy contends, is of a sort that enables “immediate” knowledge of things which, to us, are future (and therefore unknowable by us). But this knowledge operates in a way that does not make the things known by it necessary, at least not in an absolute sense. The fact that we cannot imagine how such a knowledge could operate only stands to reason:

> [H]uman reason refuses to believe that divine intelligence can see the future in any other way except that in which human reason has knowledge. This is how the argument runs: if anything does not seem to have any certain and predestined occurrence, it cannot be foreknown as a future event. Of such, therefore, there is no foreknowledge: and if we believe that even in this case there is foreknowledge, there will be nothing which does not happen of necessity. If, therefore, as beings who have a share of reason, we can judge of the mind of God, we should consider it most fitting for human reason to bow before divine wisdom, just as we judged it right for the senses and the imagination to yield to reason. (CP 131)

> Simile est quod humana ratio divinam intellegentiam futura, nisi ut ipsa cognoscit, non putat intueri. Nam ita disseris: Si qua certos ac necessarios habere non videantur eventus, ea certo eventura praesciri nequeunt. Harum igitur rerum nulla est praescientia, quam si etiam in his esse credamus, nihil erit quod non ex necessitate proveniat. Si igitur uti rationis participes sumus, ita divinae iudicium mentis habere possemus, sicut imaginationem sensumque rationi cedere oportere iudicavimus, sic divinae sese menti humanam submittere rationem iustissimum censeremus. (SR&T 418)

Philosophy in this way dismisses our inability to understand how knowledge of future events could not entail the necessity of these events: God's way of knowing these things is so entirely unlike our own – it transcends our own modes of thought so completely – that it is only to be expected that we cannot make sense of what this

sort of knowledge is like.

In fact, if we infer, from the way we know our own knowledge to operate, that God's foreknowledge of an event requires that event to happen necessarily, we have inferred improperly from our own mode of knowing to God's. We are only able to know that which is necessary (in the case of events, we are only able to know those things which have already happened – and are thus necessary); but we should not assume that the same is the case for God. This error would be analogous, on Boethius' hierarchical schema of knowledge, to a clam being unable to comprehend how a dog, say, might remember his master without his master's being present. A clam, having only the power to perceive things present to it, would be unable to grasp the power of memory possessed by the dog in virtue of the power of imagination. Similarly, a human being is unable to comprehend the sort of knowledge which enables God, by the power of God's intellect, to know future events with the same immediacy and completeness with which we know things present and past – nay, with an even greater immediacy and completeness than we could ever know any present or past event.

Eternity and the Nature of Necessity (CP V.V, 132 - 37)

Thus, Boethius the writer, through the voice of Lady Philosophy, lays the foundation for his dictum that the power of being known is not in the thing known, but in the knower: it is not because future events cannot be known that we do not know them, but because we are not the right sort of knowers. This conclusion leads Lady Philosophy to her final prose, a rapturous meditation on the way in which God's mode of knowledge reflects his mode of existence in eternity, on the nature of eternity, and how a proper understanding of eternity leads us to grasp, at least partially, the nature of God's foreknowledge. “Eternity … is the complete, simultaneous, and perfect possession of everlasting life,” Philosophy tells us (CP

132).[25] Thus, the philosophers who hold that the world is co-eternal with God are mistaken – even if, for the sake of argument, they are correct to hold that the world has no beginning (CP 133). For the world exists in and progresses through ordered time, possessing time only moment by moment, and passing out of each moment into the next. This is nothing like God's eternal existence, which completely, simultaneously, and perfectly possesses all of time.

As many have observed, the notion of eternity may be delineated in at least two ways. John Marenbon describes this delineation using the following effective terminology[26]: the first way, which he calls Timeless eternity (T-eternity), is a notion of that which exists without any extension or position in time; the second way, Perpetual eternity (P-eternity), applies to that which exists in every moment of time. P-eternity is further delineated into strong and weak forms: in the weak form, time has both a beginning and an end, whereas in the strong form, time lacks a beginning, or an end, or both. Whether Boethius has in mind T- or P-eternity in the above passage is not entirely clear, although there seems to me to be reason to prefer the possibility that T-eternity is intended. This is because Boethius does not point to God's extension or position in time, but rather to his perception and experience of it. In fact, it would seem that locating God in any particular place in time would render the "complete, simultaneous, and perfect possession" of all time impossible: God would only be able to possess time in this way if he transcends particular instants in time.

It is from this simultaneous and complete possession of all time that God's immediate knowledge of future events (or more precisely, events which are future *to us*) springs. And from here, a distinction of necessities is introduced, derived from

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[25] Aeternitas igitur est interminabilis vitae tota simul et perfecta possessio, quod ex collatione temporalium clarius liquet. (SR&T 422)

[26] John Marenbon, *Medieval Philosophy: An Historical and Philosophical Introduction* (London: Routledge, 2007), p. 53; Marenbon also discusses this topic, though without using the same terminology developed in *Medieval Philosophy*, in a number of other places, including his "Great Medieval Thinkers" study *Boethius* (see note above), pp. 135ff.

Arisotle[27]: on the one hand, “necessity” can be simple necessity (such as “all men are mortal”), and on the other, it can be conditional necessity (such as, “if you know that someone is walking, it is necessary that he is walking”). (CP 135, SR&T 428) Boethius, in the voice of Philosophy, concludes that God's foreknowledge of events only results in the conditional necessity of their occurrence. This conditional necessity of events (on the condition of God’s knowledge of them), however, does not make events simply necessary, any more than a person's walking becomes necessary by our observance of that person walking. It is conditionally necessary that, if we see her walking, then, necessarily, she is walking — because we could not have seen her walking if she was not walking! — but it is not on this account *simply* necessary that she is walking.[28]

It is tempting to interpret this distinction between conditional and absolute necessity as one of scope, and indeed, there are many historians of philosophy who have interpreted Boethius in this way.[29] Although this way of understanding Boethius’ distinction is passing out of favour, let us examine for a moment what it would mean for Boethius’ distinction to be one of scope. From around the 11th century on, we see with logicians like Peter Abelard a distinction between applying a predicate (like “necessary”) to the object of a sentence, and applying it to the sentence as a whole. Typically, this is described as the distinction between applying the predicate *de re* (concerning the *thing*, or the object, of the statement) and applying it *de sensu* or *de dicto* (concerning the (entire) statement). The reason it is tempting to read this distinction into Boethius’ argument is that the way he parses out the necessity inhering in a conditional statement of necessity, such as, “If I see a man walking, then he is necessarily walking,” sounds much like the distinction

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[27] See Watts' footnote, p. 135.
[28] It is useful to note that Boethius uses the words “see” and “know” almost interchangeably, particularly when speaking of God's foreknowledge/foresight.
[29] See D.P. Henry, *The Logic of St Anselm* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1967), p. 178; Richard Sorabji, *Necessity, Cause, and Blame: Perspectives on Aristotle’s Theory* (London: Duckworth, 1980), p. 122; C. Kirwan, *Augustine* (London: Routledge, 1989), pp. 96 - 98; Paul Spade in Kenny, *Oxford Illustrated History of Western Philosophy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press,1994), p. 72.

between *de sensu* and *de re* necessity: Boethius says that this statement is true, so long as we understand the necessity of the man's walking to be dependent upon our seeing him walk. This is, in a sense, much like a *de dicto* reading of the necessity of the conditional. It is not the walking which is, in and of itself, necessary, but the relationship between our seeing the man walk and his walking. The parallel is not precise, since we are not talking about necessity being applied to the copula versus the object of the sentence; but it nevertheless seems to be a case of defining the *scope* on which the predicate "necessary" operates.

Marenbon, however, has argued that such an interpretation is anachronistic. Marenbon does not believe that Boethius has in view anything like the later notions of scope or of *de re* and *de dicto* necessity.[30] Marenbon does not think that Boethius was conceptually equipped at this point to make these distinctions of scope. Furthermore, the imperfect parallel between the conditional statement of necessity and one involving the sort of distinction in scope picked out by Abelard, *et al*., under the monikers "*de re*" and "*de dicto*" is a difference of considerable substance. In order to translate the conditional statement of necessity into one to which the *de re*/*de dicto* distinction might apply involves a number of conceptual steps. The conditional statement is formed something like this:

[I see (a man is walking)] ⇒ [a man is NEC. walking]

What Boethius asserts is that the consequent of this statement is true if the antecedent is; but the necessity inhering in the consequent *depends* on the truth of the antecedent, and is therefore not necessary in an absolute sense.

We cannot directly apply the *de re*/*de dicto* distinction to such a sentence,

[30] Marenbon puts forward this view in numerous places, including Marenbon 2003 p. 139 - 42. For other rejections of the scope reading of Boethius' distinction, see Simo Knuuttila, *Modalities in Medieval Philosophy* (London: Routledge, 1993), pp. 60 - 61; H. Weidemann "Die Unterscheidung zwischen einfacher und bedingter Notwendigkeit in der *Philosophiae Consolatio* des Boethius," in *Philosophiegeschichte und logische Analyse: Philosophiegeschichte im Überblick*, ed. A. Newen and U. Meixner (Paderborn: Schöningh, 1998), pp. 195 - 207.

because this distinction only clearly applies to simple, atomic statements consisting of subject and object joined by a copula. The conditional sentence above is a compound of two such sentences. What we *may* analyze under this distinction, however, is what sense it is in which the consequent is true, given the truth of the antecedent. That is, assuming the antecedent ("I see a man is walking") is true, in what sense is the consequent ("A man is necessarily walking") true? Focusing our attention, therefore, on only the consequent —

A man is NEC. walking

— we may ask whether, given the truth of the antecedent, this statement is true in the *de re* sense, or the *de dicto* sense. In the former sense, we would be saying that his walking is in fact necessary; in the latter, that the whole statement ("A man is walking") is necessary. Those who have sought to locate in Boethius a scope distinction have tried to say that, according to Boethius, under the condition "I see a man is walking", the sentence "A man is necessarily walking" is true *de dicto*, but not *de re*.

However, I think it can be argued that, given Boethius' conditional necessity schema, this sentence is *also* true *de re*, as I now show. Boethius says that *given* the truth of the antecedent, the necessity of the consequent can be granted *relative* to the truth of the antecedent. But it is not just the case that the the antecedent, taken *de dicto*, is necessary: rather, the very object of that antecedent is necessary relative to the truth of the consequent. In other words, if it is true that I see a man walking, then relative to this truth, it is necessary that a man is walking; but even stronger than this, if I see a man walking, then relative to my seeing the man walk, that man's *walking* is necessary.

Perhaps another example would serve to clarify this point. Consider the conditional statement, "If the jellybean in my hand is red, then the jellybean in my hand is necessarily not blue." Now suppose that I really do take up a single, red

jellybean in my hand, rendering the antecedent true. Relative to the truth of the antecedent, we may consider the necessity of the consequent in two ways: in the first way (the *de dicto* or compound reading), we say that the whole statement, "The jellybean in my hand is not blue," is necessary; in the second way (the *de re* or divided reading), we say that the jellybean is *necessarily* not blue — in other words, that the "not-blue-ness" of the jellybean is necessary. Those who interpret Boethius as advancing a sort of scope distinction would say that he embraces the former, but not the latter, reading of the necessity of the consequent. However, I think that this is to miss the point altogether of Boethius' notion of conditional necessity, for given the truth of the antecedent, the consequent is necessary in all ways: in the case of this example, if the jellybean I hold in my hand is red, then its "not-blue-ness" *is* a necessary property of that jellybean, relative to the fact that it is red.

These examples serve to illustrate that Boethius' discussion of conditional necessity is *not* a distinction of scope. The necessity inhering in a consequent, *relative* to the truth of its antecedent, is a necessity which encompasses both the compound and divided senses of necessity. But conditional necessity, despite lacking perhaps the formal sophistication of a scope distinction, nevertheless provides a useful analysis whereby to understand the sort of necessity inhering in statements about the foreknowledge of God: a necessity not of the foreknown event itself, but only relative to the knowledge God has of it. As we will see in the following section, this idea will be picked up and refined by Anselm in his own analysis of the topic.

1.2 – Anselm on Future Contingents

We turn now to a discussion of Anselm of Canterbury's treatment of the topic of future contingents. It would seem that Anselm is among the most important and influential direct sources for Bradwardine's treatise, as is evident by the abundance

of references Bradwardine makes to Anselm's work, and by the uncharacteristically and overwhelmingly positive treatment Bradwardine gives his report of Anselm's view (all this will be discussed at much greater length in ch. 3, especially section 3.4). For this reason, in the context of understanding Bradwardine on future contingents, we ought to pay especially careful attention to Anselm's solution, and observe how one Archbishop of Canterbury played an important role of intellectual influence on his eventual successor.

1.2.1 - De concordia

One of Anselm's last works was a highly influential treatise dealing directly with the puzzles of future contingents, called *De Concordia Praescientiae et Praedestinationis et Gratiae Dei cum Libero Arbitrio*, or, "On the concord of God's foreknowledge, predestination, and grace with free choice."[31] The work is divided into three sections, and the title of the work suggests quite handily how this division breaks down: the first section defends the compatibility of human free will with God's foreknowledge; the second with predestination; and the third with God's grace. It is the first of these sections that is primarily relevant to this present study, since God's foreknowledge is the chief concern of Bradwardine's treatise. Accordingly, I begin my overview of Anselm's treatment of the topic of future contingents with a summary of his mature view as found in the *De Concordia* treatise.

Following in the pattern of Boethius' solution, Anselm's view exhibits two key elements: first, a recognition that God's mode of knowledge — and in particular, God's foreknowledge — must operate in a way quite different from our own, so that we cannot draw the inferences we are accustomed to draw between certain

[31] Throughout this section, references to the Latin text of *De Concordia* will be to the edition of F.S. Schmitt, in *S. Anselmi Opera Omnia*, (Edinburgh: Thomas Nelson & Sons, Ltd., 1940-1961), pp. 244 - 88 in the second volume; the complete edition of the *Opera Omnia*, excepting the 6th (and last) volume, is available online through the Intelex Past Masters Full Text Humanities library, crkn.nlx.com. All English translations of *De Concordia* cited in this section are those of Thomas Bermingham, in *Anselm of Canterbury: The Major Works*, ed. B. Davies and G.R. Evans (Oxford: OUP, 1998), pp. 435 - 74.

knowledge and necessity; and second, an understanding of God's timeless eternality (or "T-eternity"), such that all events that happen successively in time are simultaneously present to God. But Anselm adds to this a much more substantial and robust logical analysis of the interplay between God's foreknowledge and the contingency of acts and events than that supplied by Boethius. The puzzle, as Anselm lays it out, is that it would seem that "what God foreknows shall necessarily come to be in the future, while the things brought about by free choice do not issue from any necessity."[32] (1.1, 435) Yet, Anselm insists that in this work he will seek to "affirm the coexistence both of divine foreknowledge (which seems to require the necessary existence of future things) and of free choice (by which many things are believed to occur apart from any necessity),"[33] and upholding these two things, to discover whether their coexistence is truly an impossibility. (1.1, 435)

Anselm begins his treatment with a rehearsal of the position, perhaps most influentially expounded by Augustine, but articulated in Boethius' commentary on *De Interpretatione*,[34] that though God foreknows future free acts, God foreknows that they will happen freely:

> But if something is going to occur freely, God, who foreknows all that shall be, foreknows this very fact. And whatever God foreknows shall necessarily happen in the way in which it is foreknown. So it is necessary that it shall happen freely, and there is therefore no conflict whatsoever between a foreknowledge which entails a necessary occurrence and a free exercise of an uncoerced will. (1.1, 435 - 36)

> Sed si aliquid est futurum sine necessitate, hoc ipsum praescit deus, qui praescit omnia futura. Quod autem praescit deus, necessitate futurum est,

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[32] [Q]uae deus praescit, necesse est esse futura, et quae per liberum arbitrium fiunt, nulla necessitate proveniunt. (245)

[33] Ponamus igitur simul esse et praescientiam dei, quam sequi necessitas futurarum rerum videtur, et libertatem arbitrii, per quam multa sine ulla necessitate fieri creduntur. (Ibid.)

[34] By this I mean Boethius' assertion, discussed above, that properly speaking, it is never true to say of a future contingent event A, "A will happen," as though it will happen determinitely; rather, one ought to say, "A will happen contingently."

> sicut praescitur. Necesse est igitur aliquid esse futurum sine necessitate. Nequaquam ergo recte intelligenti hic repugnare videntur praescientia quam sequitur necessitas, et libertas arbitrii a qua removetur necessitas… (246 ll. 7 - 11)

It is thus concluded, on the basis of this, that it is not entirely accurate to assert simply that God foreknows that something will be, such as that I will sin (or not sin), but that we ought instead to assert, if we're to be precise, that "'God foreknows that I am going *freely* to sin or not.'"[35] (1.1, 436, emphasis mine.) If there is any necessity involved in our action at all on account of God's foreknowledge of our action, it is that it is necessary *that we act freely*.

But though this is the first argument brought forward by Anselm, he seems not to be wholly convinced that it provides a compelling case for the compatibility of God's foreknowledge and human free will, or at least not on its own merits. In the voice of a potential objector, Anselm says,

> 'You do not yet remove from my will the weight of necessity when you say that it is necessary that I shall sin or not sin freely because God foreknows this. For necessity seems to imply coercion or prevention. So if it is necessary that I sin voluntarily, I conclude that I am compelled by some hidden power to will the sin; and if I do not sin, that I am prevented from willing to sin. Therefore it seems to me that it is by necessity that I sin, if I sin, or do not sin, if I do not.' (1.1, 436)

> Nondum aufers a corde meo vim necessitatis, cum dicis quia necesse est me peccaturum esse vel non peccaturum sine necessitate, quia hoc deus praescit. Necessitas enim videtur sonare coactionem vel prohibitionem. Quare si necesse est me peccare ex voluntate, intelligo me cogi aliqua occulta vi ad voluntatem peccandi; et si non pecco, a peccandi voluntate prohiberi. Quapropter necessitate videor mihi peccare si pecco, vel non peccare si non

[35] Non debes dicere: praescit deus me peccaturum tantum vel non peccaturum; sed: praescit deus me peccaturum sine necessitate vel non peccaturum. (246)

pecco. (246 line 25 - 247 line 4)

For the benefit, perhaps, of such an objector, Anselm goes on to defend the compatibility of God's foreknowledge and human free will in another, more original way. The new contribution that Anselm makes to this discussion is his development of the idea that when we say that God foreknows something, and then infer from that statement that that something will happen, we are not actually adding to our knowledge of the world by that inference. In fact, a statement such as, "God foreknows I will sin, therefore I will sin" amounts to a kind of tautology.

This explanation begins with a distinction of necessity, not unlike that employed by Boethius. The sort of necessity that inheres in the happening of an event, *given* God's foreknowledge of that event, is not the sort that either "compels [or] prevents the future existence or non-existence of anything."[36] (1.2, 437) By analogy, Anselm discusses the sort of necessity inherent in a statement such as, "A white things is white": the whiteness of many things which happen to be white (like a picket fence in my neighbourhood) is not necessary *per se*; but insofar as we identify a thing by its whiteness (calling it "A white thing"), in that respect, its whiteness is necessary. In other words, if a thing is white, then it cannot *not* be white, so long as it is a white thing (even if it *could* cease to be white — at which point we could no longer properly call it a white thing). The property of being white is necessarily part of what makes it a white thing, so long as it remains a white thing.

To say that a white thing is white adds nothing to our knowledge of the white thing, for if we understand rightly what a white thing is in the first place, we *know* already that it must be white. In this sense, and in this sense only, its whiteness is necessary.[37] In the same way, Anselm argues, in a statement that something

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[36] Sed haec necessitas nec cogit nec prohibet aliquid esse aut non esse. (249)

[37] cf. the discussion of conditional necessity in Boethius, in 1.1.2 above, wherein the truth of the conclusion — or in that case, the consequent — is necessary *conditional upon* the truth of the antecedent.

foreknown by God will happen — as when I say, “God foreknows that I will sin, so I will sin” — the conclusion adds nothing to the meaning of the antecedent, if the antecedent is rightly understood. God only foreknows those things which will in fact happen, so a statement that God foreknows something — like my sinning — can only be true if I will, in fact, sin. Anselm explains this as follows:

> [I]f one rightly grasps the meaning of the word *foreknown*, by the very fact that something is said to be foreknown, its future existence is declared. For it is not foreknown unless it shall actually be, since the object of knowledge is what is actually the case.
>
> So ‘If God foreknows something, then it happens necessarily’ is equivalent to ‘If it shall be, it shall be of necessity.’ Yet this sort of necessity neither compels nor prevents the future existence or non-existence of anything. . . . When I say ‘If a thing shall be, it shall be of necessity,’ the necessity does not precede but follows upon the assertion of the thing as a fact. . . . For this sort of necessity means nothing than that what shall be shall not be able at the same time not to be. (1.2, 437)

> Denique si quis intellectum verbi proprie considerat: hoc ipso quod praesciri aliquid dicitur, futurum esse pronuntiatur. Non enim nisi quod futurum est praescitur, quia scientia non est nisi veritatis. Quare cum dico quia si praescit deus aliquid, necesse est illud esse futurum: idem est ac si dicam: Si erit, ex necessitate erit. Sed haec necessitas nec cogit nec prohibet aliquid esse aut non esse. . . . Nam cum dico: si erit, ex necessitate erit: hic sequitur necessitas rei positionem, non praecedit. . . . Non enim aliud significat haec necessitas, nisi quia quod erit non poterit simul non esse. (248 line 5 - 249 line 9)

What Anselm would seem to be saying is that a statement such as “God foreknows that I will sin, so I will sin” is no less a tautology than is the statement “I will sin, so I will sin,” since God can only foreknow what will actually be (and likewise, anything that will be is foreknown by God). And just as it is true in such a case to say, “I will sin, so necessarily I will sin,” so it is true to say, “God foreknows that I will sin, so

necessarily I will sin."

But this kind of necessary truth of a tautological statement does not imply that the action of which it speaks is itself necessary, any more than the truth of the statement "I am a chorister, so necessarily I sing in choirs" implies that my singing in choirs is a necessary fact about me, but merely that my singing in choirs is necessary so long as I may rightly continue to call myself a chorister. The point, then, that Anselm primarily makes in *De Concordia* concerning the relationship between God's foreknowledge and future contingent actions[38] is that there is no reason to infer, from that fact that a future thing will necessarily happen relative to God's foreknowledge of it, to the conclusion that the future thing is thus necessary in itself. On the contrary, Anselm claims, God's foreknowledge causes no necessity in the thing considered in itself.

But how, we might wonder, can God fore*know* that which is contingent in the first place? Surely knowledge requires certainty, and certainty is not possible where uncertain things are concerned; and what could be more *un*certain than a contingent thing? Once again following Boethius' lead, Anselm appeals to the timeless eternity, or T-eternity, of God: God knows everything that will happen in time — past, present, and future — because all of created time is eternally present to God: "[E]ternity has its own unique simultaneity which contains both all things that happen at the same time and place and that happen at different times and places."[39] (1.5, 443) A particularly interesting bit of this discussion, that will have relevence in the next chapter as we consider Ockham's position, occurs in *De Conc.* 1.5: the question at hand is how passages of scripture should be understood which speak of God's foreknowledge and predestination of the blessed, such as this from the Letter

[38] It is worth noting that Anselm seems to imply in many places throughout the text that actions of the rational will are in fact the *only* events that are truly contingent (see, for instance, *De Conc.* 1.6), and indeed that only some of those — namely, those which are morally relevant, or those "without which people cannot attain salvation" — are worth considering in any detail in this treatise.

[39] Habet enim aeternitas suum simul, in quo sunt omnia quae simul sunt loco vel tempore, et quae sunt diversis in locis vel temporibus. p. 254

to the Romans, 8.29 - 30: “For those whom [God] foreknew he also predestined. . . . And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.”[40] (English Standard Version) On the face of such passages, it would seem that God’s foreknowledge makes it such that those foreknown by God are predestined, justified, and glorified *necessarily*, particularly, as Anselm points out, because St Paul’s verb tenses throughout the passage are past. The predestined, it would seem, *were* predestined from the beginning, and thus are necessarily predestined. Anselm argues, however, that St Paul’s use of the past tense is merely reflective of his lack of any tense adequate to God’s T-eternity:

> However, in order to show that he was not using those verbs in their temporal signification, St Paul described future happenings in the past tense. For, temporally speaking, God had not already called, justified, and glorified those whom he foreknew were yet to be born. We can therefore understand that it was for want of a verb signifying the eternal present that St Paul used verbs of the past tense. The reason is that things which are in the past in time are wholly immutable — like those in the present of eternity. (1.5, 443)

> Ut autem ostenderet idem apostolus non illa verba se pro temporali significatione posuisse, illa etiam quae futura sunt praeteriti verbo temporis pronuntiavit. Nondum enim quos praescivit adhuc nascituros iam temporaliter >>vocavit<<, >>iustificavit<<, >>magnificavit<<. Unde cognosci potest eum propter indigentiam verbi significantis aeternam praesentiam usum esse verbis praeteritae significationis; quoniam quae tempore praeterita sunt, ad similitudinem aeterni praesentis omnino immutabilia sunt. (254 ll. 16 - 22)

We have no verb tense corresponding to the eternal, so St Paul had to settle for a

[40] Romans 8.29 - 30 in full in the Vulgate, as quoted by Anselm in *De Conc.* 1.5: [29]nam quos praescivit et praedestinavit conformes fieri imaginis Filii eius ut sit ipse primogenitus in multis fratribus [30]quos autem praedestinavit hos et vocavit et quos vocavit hos et iustificavit quos autem iustificavit illos et glorificavit.

verb of another tense: and since, Anselm claims, the past tense best reflects the immutability of the eternal, the past tense is what St Paul chose.

De Concordia, then, provides us with an account of how the foreknowledge of God operates without causing necessity. The other side of the coin, though, is how the human will operates freely. In *De Concordia* itself, Anselm gives passing attention to this matter, but in doing so, primarily refers us to his earlier works on the topic (in particular, *De Veritate* (On Truth), *De Libero Arbitrio* (On Free Will), and *De Casu Diaboli* (On the Fall of the Devil)). In the next section, therefore, we consider Anselm's treatment of free will, and because of the attention of current scholarship, we do so with particular reference to *De Casu Diaboli*.

1.2.2 - De Casu Diaboli *and related works*

The historical discussion of future contingents is inextricably bound up with discussions of free will, and Anselm's case is no exception. Let me take the following paragraphs to explain why this connection is so strong. We have already rehearsed the problems that arises when future contingent events are considered in relation to God's foreknowledge of them. God's knowledge of how an event will turn out seems to result in a necessity for that event to occur — at the very least, a necessity of fixity, or of inevitability. We have seen above how Anselm seeks to address this aspect of the problem. But Anselm remains cogniscent of the fact that, despite his demonstration of the lack of necessity conferred on an event by God's foreknowledge of it, people may yet feel unconvinced of the freedom of their will in such circumstances. For there is still psychologically a strong tendency to feel that our actions, or indeed any future event, cannot be free if they are already known by God.

Perhaps that would not be such a problem, in and of itself: we could simply deny that any future events (or, in fact, any events at all, at any time) are contingent,

contenting ourselves with a determined order under the benevolent sovereignty of God. But if no event is contingent, then it would appear to be the case that any choice we make to act in a certain way is itself determined; and if it is determined, then it would appear that we do not will to act in that way freely. And if we do not freely will an action, then being held responsible for the action seems grossly unfair: how can we fairly be punished for an action that we could not have avoided, or rewarded for an action that we performed by no will of our own? When the punishments and rewards in question are amplified to the status of the infinite punishments and rewards meted out by God's Providence, the injustice of their being unmerited becomes all the more apparent![41]

There are a number of possible routes out of this dilemma, and the route that we saw investigated in the previous section was that of denying that knowledge entails necessity in a thing *per se*; but another possible route, and the one that is

[41] Some may be concerned that I am attributing more to human freedom than Christian orthodoxy in the Augustinian tradition may allow. It has even been suggested to me that to attribute such power to our own freedom commits the heresy of Pelagius. Indeed, there are certain strands of Christian thought — strands which gained much greater prominence during the Reformation, particularly in Calvinism, and which claimed an Augustinian heritage — which would have it that the only sort of freedom which we exercise is the freedom to sin (it should be noted, however, that it is entirely probable that Calvin's own emphases on this and many other points were far less extreme than those of this followers). Left to our own devices, we are, the Calvinists would have it, "totally depraved," and merit only damnation. It is only through the unearned act of God's grace that we are ever able to avoid sin. One can remember the nexus of tenets connected with this Calvinist teaching with the mnemonic "TULIP," learned by any child who participates in the Calvinist Cadet Corps or the Calvinettes, and a particularly apt mnemonic given the Dutch connection of many in the Reformed tradition: Total depravity (that apart from God's grace, we are utterly devoid of any goodness of our own), Unconditional election (that those whom God elects to be saved are chosen without any preceding condition), Limited atonement (that only some are elect to be saved), Irresistible grace (that those elected cannot but yield to the grace of God), and Perseverance of the saints (that those whom God elects will abide in God's grace to the end). Present in this collection of doctrines is indeed an Augustinian theme, namely, that of "prevenient grace" — that is, that God's grace precedes, or "goes before," any meritorious action we may perform, and thus it is properly God, not ourselves, who deserves primary credit for any ability we have to do good and resist evil. But *not* present in the Augustinian view, nor in the dominant orthodoxy of the Middle Ages (East or West), is the doctrine of total depravity. As image-bearers of God whose creation was affirmed as "good" by God himself, there remains something in the core of our being, *even* in our fallen state, corrupted as we are by sin, that desires God and God's goodness. The Law of God is "written on our hearts," and we remain free to heed it or to ignore it. To say that we are free in this way is not to deny the prevenience of God's grace in our choice to do good and resist evil; every good thing in creation is only so by the grace of God. But contra Calvin *et alia*, God's grace is not "irresistible." We are offered this grace as a free gift: it remains within our power, by our own freedom of will, to reject it. We are indeed "free creatures of an eternal God."

highlighted by Anselm in other places, is to undermine conventional notions of what free will consists in, and how it operates. A conventional argument about the puzzle of God's foreknowledge, free will, and responsibility may be rendered something like this:

P1. God knows all events, past, present, and future.

P2. Something that is known cannot be otherwise than as it is known.

C1. All events, past, present, and future, must happen just as they are known to happen by God.

C2. (Since all of my future actions are known by God) All of my future actions must happen just as they are known to happen by God.

P3. Freedom of will consists in being able to will to act in a variety of ways

C3. An action which must happen in a particular way is not free.

C4. My actions are not enacted freely. (C2 and C3)

P4. A person cannot be held responsible for (i.e., merit or demerit from) actions they were not free to choose.

C5. I cannot be held responsible for my actions.

P5. It is unjust to reward or punish someone for actions for which they are not responsible.

P6. God rewards and punishes me for my actions.

C6. God is unjust. XXX

We have already seen how Boethius finds his way out of this absurdity by complicating and therefore disputing P2, something which Anselm also did in *De Concordia*. But as we shall see, Anselm also complicates P3.

Anselm's treatment of free will is far from straight-forward. One can summarize fairly easily his definition of free will, which is that it is "the power to preserve rightness of will for the sake of that same rightness"[42]; but how does this definition help us to understand free will? Some contemporary scholars have been extremely critical of Anselm's definition. Sandra Visser and Thomas Williams, for instance, summarize potential problems with the definition as follows:

> From the point of view of contemporary metaphysics, this is one of the most unhelpful definitions imaginable. Does such freedom require alternative possibilities, for example? Is it compatible with causal determination? Is the exercise of such freedom a necessary and sufficient condition for moral responsibility? The definition sheds no light on these questions.[43]

Though some of the questions posed by Visser and Williams may be somewhat anachronistic, it may yet be worth considering Anselm's understanding of free will along these lines, for a contemporary philosopher, so it is certainly worth keeping these questions in the back of our minds. But though Visser and Williams are unconvinced that Anselm can give a consistent account of free will in light of these questions, I am persuaded by Tomas Ekenberg's more charitable (and more contextual) attempt to understand Anselm's account of free will.[44]

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[42] *De Libertate Arbitrii* 3, trans. Tomas Ekenberg. "Ergo quoniam omnis libertas est potestas, illa libertas arbitrii est potestas servandi rectitudinem voluntatis propter ipsam rectitudinem." This definition is repeated by Anselm on other occasions, also, including in *De Concordia* book I.
[43] S. Visser and T. Williams, "Anselm's account of freedom", in *The Cambridge Companion to Anselm*, ed. B. Davies and B. Leftow (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2004), 179.
[44] Tomas Ekenberg, "Voluntary Action and Rational Sin in Anselm of Canterbury," *British Journal for the History of Philosophy*, 24:2 (March 2016), 215-230.

Ekenberg's argument focuses on the discussion on *De Casu Diaboli* (On the Fall of the Devil) as a unique case study of Lucifer's sin to infer some particularly interesting consequences for Anselm's theory of the will. Ekenberg argues that Anselm's view of the rational will forms, historically, a unique midpoint between the Augustinian view and the later view characterized by figures such as John Olivi and Duns Scotus. Like Augustine, Anselm follows the notion that a sinful will, being evil, cannot in fact really have a cause or definite being. In this, Anselm adheres to Augustine's so-called "Great Chain of Being," wherein the being or existence of a thing increases proportionately to its goodness; thus we have God at the very top of the chain, possessing both infinite being and infinite goodness, until at the bottom, the chain vanishes into absolute nothingness, which is pure evil.[45] But unlike Augustine, Anselm argues that, as is particularly evident in the case of Lucifer's sin, our will to do evil, though it may not have a *cause*, exactly, must yet arise from some sort of rational process: it must be the case that the will resulting in an evil deed arises from a rational desire for something good (even if our desire for that thing is fundamentally in conflict with justice). And thus we see in Anselm the beginnings of a doctrine of duality of will, or double will, that would later be developed by Olivi and Duns Scotus.

In this way, then, Anselm examines both halves of the problem of future contingents as evident in the dilemma of God's foreknowledge and human free will: Anselm both provides an argument as to why God's foreknowledge entails no necessity in the things foreknown, and provides a non-trivial theory of the way in which free will operates.

1.3 - Duns Scotus

[45] The non-being of evil is largely Augustine's response to at least one aspect of the Problem of Evil: God is the creator of all that exists, and all that exists is truly good; but evil, being nothing, has no cause, and is therefore not something caused by God (and so not "God's fault," so to speak).

Scholarly discussion of John Duns Scotus' view of contingency was lively and controversial in the 1990s and in the early years of this century. Simo Knuuttila, in his overview of modal logic in the Middle Ages, put forward a highly influential thesis, attributing to Duns Scotus the seminal prototype of the concept he dubbed "synchronic contingency" (a term I will explain and discuss shortly).[46] Reception of this thesis has been mixed, with scholars such as Stephen Dumont, Scott Macdonald, and Calvin Normore variously offering criticisms, corrections, and refinements.[47] I will attempt in this section to outline the background of this discussion, laying out the basic aspects of Scotus' view on which all are agreed, and the received view prior to Knuuttila's controversial thesis; I will then outline Knuuttila's thesis, and summarize the responses it has received. Finally, I will summarize how Scotus' view of contingency allows him to develop a unique account of God's foreknowledge.

1.3.1 - Basic discussion of texts

In his 2003 article, Normore stated that because of the (then-) current state of manuscript and textual analysis, the trajectory of Scotus' writing was far from clear.[48] The dating of Scotus' works, and even the identification of a complete authentic corpus, was at that point quite uncertain, and Normore was therefore able to say very little about how Scotus' ideas of future contingents may or may not have developed over the course of his life. In the decade or more since, however, a great deal of scholarship, including new critical editions of several of Scotus' works, has advanced our understanding of the extent and chronology of Scotus' writings. This scholarship has primarily occurred under the auspices of the International Scotistic

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[46] S. Knuuttila, *Modalities in Medieval Philosophy* (London: Routledge, 1993).
[47] See, e.g., Stephen Dumont, "The origin of Scotus' theory of synchronic contingency," *Modern Schoolman* vol. 72, no. 2⁄3 (Jan/Mar 1995), 149 - 67; Scott MacDonald, "Synchronic Contingency, Instants of Nature, and Libertarian Freedom: Comments on 'The Background to Scotus' Theory of Will'," *Modern Schoolman* vol. 72, no. 2⁄3 (Jan/Mar 1995), 169 - 74; Calvin Normore, "Duns Scotus's Modal Theory", in *The Cambridge Companion to Duns Scotus* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2003), 129 - 60.
[48] Normore 129.

Commission of the Vatican, but also in the form of other independent research. Of particular interest are the *reportatio*, *lectura*, and *ordinatio*[49] on question I.39 of Peter Lombard's *Sentences*.[50] These works of veritable authenticity are presumed to have been written in the years just before Scotus died, and have a great deal to say on the topic of contingency in general, and future contingents in particular. Of especial interest to our current study, these works represent some of Scotus' most original — and controversial — statements on the topic. Furthermore, because of their late date, we can assume that these works represent his most developed and mature thoughts on the matter, and are thus representative of the view at which he ultimately arrived.

1.3.2 – Knuuttila on Scotus' Modal Theory

As early as 1982, Knuuttila began identifying Scotus as highly original and innovative in an aspect of his modal theory.[51] In the ancient and early-medieval period, Knuuttila identifies an approach to modality which does not permit contingency in anything *in the present moment*. This can be traced back to the Aristotelian doctrine of "the necessity of the present", which is to say that whatever is, when it is, necessarily is. On this model, the present time is "fixed", and thus unable to be otherwise, just as the past is. On some interpretations, at least, it would seem on this model that, because the present moment is necessary, our choices in

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[49] A clarification of terminology for non-medievalists: *reportatio*, *lectura*, and *ordinatio* are terms used to distinguish between three different genres of texts relating to the lectures of a master during the Scholastic period. A *reportatio* is a report of a lecture — essentially class notes — written by a student, but often examined and approved by the master; a *lectura* is the lecture notes of the master himself, not necessarily intended for public consumption; while an *ordinatio* is the polished, prepared work of the master, intended for distribution beyond the master's own university.

[50] John Duns Scotus, *The Examined Report of the Paris Lecture: Reportatio I-A*, vol. 2, ed. and trans. A.B. Wolter, O.F.M., and O.V. Bychkov (St Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute Publications, 2008); John Duns Scotus *Contingency and Freedom: Lectura I 39*, intro., trans., and commentary by A. Vos Jaczn *et al.* (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1994); *Ordinatio* in Ioannes Duns Scotus, *Opera Omnia*, ed. C. Balić (Civitas Vaticana: Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis, 1950 -).

[51] S. Knuuttila, "Modal Logic", in *The Cambridge History of Later Medieval Philosophy*, ed. N. Kretzmann, A. Kenny, J. Pinborg (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1982), 342 – 57.

that moment are also necessary.

In accordance with this Aristotelian notion, the rules for *obligationes* (i.e., obligational disputations — a late medieval logic game)[52] attributed to William of Sherwood stipulate that if a counterfactual proposition about the present time is put forward as possible, it must be denied.[53] To what extent these *obligationes* rules can be seen as reflective of philosophers' actual intuitions or commitments concerning the necessity of the present is debateable, but it nevertheless shows a certain degree of reticence to concede the possibility of alternatives to what is in fact occurring at the present moment.

Knuuttila contends that Duns Scotus radically breaks with the traditional view of modality in the present when he denies this rule of *obligationes*. In considering the *obligationes* rule which states, "Everything that exists, when it exists, exists with necessity,"[54] Scotus says,

> I say that the proposition "everything that exists, when it exists," etc., can be either categorical (or temporal) or hypothetical. If it is categorical, then this repetitive phrase 'when it exists' does not qualify all that is implied in this expression, but only 'existence,' and the sense of 'everything that exists, when it exists,' etc., is: 'every being, when it exists, exists as necessary or necessarily.' But if it is hypothetical, then that repetition 'when it exists' is a condition that qualifies the [whole] expression or the predicate, and the sense is: 'every being exists in a necessary manner — when it exists.' Hence, if you draw an inference to the case at hand, there is a fallacy of [confusing] the qualified and unqualified senses.
>
> [D]ico . . . quod haec propositio "omne quod est, quando est," etc. potest esse categorica sive temporalis vel hypothetica. Si sit categorica, tunc haec

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[52] For an outline of what *obligationes* are, see Paul Vincent Spade, "Medieval Theories of *Obligationes*," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (online), revised 2014.

[53] For a discussion of *obligationes* and counterfactuals, see, for instance, Paul Vincent Spade, "Three Theories of Obligationes: Burley, Kilvington and Swyneshed on Counterfactual Reasoning," *History and Philosophy of Logic*, vol. 3 (1982), 1 – 32.

[54] Omne quod est, quando est, necesse est esse. *Reportatio* I dist. 39, paragraph 45, p. 478 in Wolter & Bychkov.

> reduplicatio ‘quando est’ non determinat omne, quod est in compositione implicita, sed determinat tantum ‘esse,’ et est sensus: ‘omne quod est, quando est” etc., id est ‘omne ens, quando est, est necessarium vel necessario.’ Si autem sit hypothetica, tunc reduplicatio ‘quando est’ est modus determinans compositionem sive praedicatum, et est sensus: ‘omne ens est necessario quando est.’ Si ergo inferas ad propositum, est fallicia secundum quid et simpliciter. (*Reportatio* I dist. 39, par. 49, pp. 478 - 79 in Wolter & Bychkov)

In this way, Scotus explicitly denies — or at the very least, heavily qualifies — the *obligationes* rule, based on the dictum of Aristotle. What Scotus instead proposes is that things which happen contingently remain contingent, even in the very moment at which they are actualized. On Knuuttila’s reading, the idea that two opposite outcomes both remain possible in the moment that one of the two is actualized is a radically new idea, which he terms “synchronic contingency”.

Another way to conceive of the difference is this: on the one hand, we can consider two opposites to be possible, insofar as it is possible for the first to obtain at time t_1 and the other to obtain at t_2. What Scotus asserts, according to Knuuttila, is that at the very same time at which one of a pair of opposites is happening, the other remains possible in that moment. In other words, at the same time t_1, both **P** and ~**P** are possible. It is not just that **P** is happening now, and both **P** and ~**P** are now possible insofar as ~**P** might be the case at some future time; rather, though **P** is, in fact, happening now, it also *remains* possible that ~**P** *could be happening now instead*. It is this latter property, this possibility-to-be-at-the-very-same-time-that-the-opposite-is, that marks out Scotus' view as distinctly original. It is because of this possibility at the *same time*, with respect to the *same time*, that Knuuttila calls this sort of contingency “synchronic.”

It is worth noting that this conception of counterfactual possibility leads directly to a notion of possibility that is no longer tied, as the principle of plenitude might stipulate, to what in fact happens or is actualized in the world of our

experience. This leads to a distinction between what is actually, or naturally, possible, and what is (merely?) logically possible. For something to be logically possible, it need not be the case that it could actually be realized in the world. For possibility in terms of powers, by contrast, in the case of the present contingent event, because a particular event is occurring, its opposite could not *actually* happen in the present moment, by the fixity of events past and present — and thus its opposite could therefore not be "possible" in this sense. Logical possibility, however, seems only to require the absence of any contradiction if the opposite of what is actually the case is counterfactually asserted to be the case instead.

1.3.3 - Objections to Knuuttila's thesis

In the years since *Modalities in Medieval Philosophy*, three main objections have been leveled against Knuuttila's synchronic contingency thesis. The first comes from Calvin Normore, who criticises Knuuttila for being somewhat careless in his designation of Scotus' innovation being that of "*synchronic* contingency," and offers a refinement of the view which takes broader metaphysical considerations into account. The second is from Stephen Dumont, who identifies in the earlier writings of Peter John Olivi strong elements of Scotus' position, suggesting, therefore, that Scotus may not have been as original as Knuuttila supposes. And the third is that of Scott MacDonald, who doesn't see anything original in any of these 14th-century writings, and thinks, rather, that these ideas can be traced back at least as far as Augustine.[55] In this sub-section, I will outline each of these objections in turn,

[55] It has been suggested to me by Lorne Falkenstein that the idea of synchronic contingency might be traced yet further back, at least as far as the ancient skeptic philosopher Carneades, whose views on the matter may be found reported by Cicero in the *De fato*. There may indeed be an interesting line of inquiry to be found here. For the time being, however, I will not concern myself with pursuing the matter, both because I think too little can be gleaned from the extant texts to determine with much certainty what Carneades may or may not have thought on the matter; and because, even if Carneades did have a position very like that of Scotus, it most certainly would not have been known to either Scotus or his immediate predecessors.

together with my own responses.

Normore believes that Knuuttila has missed the mark in suggesting that Scotus' original contribution was a view of synchronic — or simultaneous — contingency *simpliciter*.[56] As Normore understands Knuuttila, he has claimed that Scotus thinks that the possibility of contradictories *in the same moment* applies not only to the present, but also to the past and future — *mutatis mutandi* for the appropriate verb tenses. Normore sees, rather, the relevant difference between Scotus and his predecessors to be a notion of the *present* being contingent. He thinks that medievals long before Scotus conceived of *future* events being contingent in a synchronic sort of way; furthermore, he points out that Scotus does *not* extend this notion of synchronic contingency to points in the past (an issue that I will return to at the end of 1.3), saying, "Moreover, although he rejects the necessity of the present, Scotus thinks that the past is necessary."[57] Normore therefore thinks that it is wrong to label Scotus' new conception as being that of synchronic contingency, since synchronic contingency is not a *new* notion with respect to future points in time, and is not accepted at all with respect to past points in time. Normore prefers rather to speak of Scotus' notion of the *contingency of the present*.

For my own part, I do not think that Knuuttila himself was guilty of more than sloppy diction in his discussion of Scotus' view. Nowhere does Knuuttila explicitly imply, by anything more than the unqualified phrase "synchronic contingency," that Scotus extended this notion to the past, or that he was original in its application to the future. However, in modern "possible world" notions of contingency, it is quite natural to speak of synchronic contingency applying to *all* points in time — past, present, and future. The semantics of possible worlds are closely connected to the notion of "logical possibility", which Scotus is widely held to have to have distinguished from natural possibility in an original way. Given the novelty of Scotus' distinction between what is *logically* possible, versus what is only

[56] Normore 2003, 157, footnote 3.
[57] Normore 2003, 136.

naturally possible, the connexion between this distinction and possible world semantics, and the fact that synchronic contingency *is* universally applicable in the realm of possible worlds speech, it may seem natural to infer from what Knuuttila does say that for Scotus, synchronic contingency applies to all points in time. Though it is possible to think that this may follow from Knuuttila's view, Knuuttila does not — and, I think, would not — make this explicit.

In large part, this is so because of the overwhelming textual evidence that Scotus considered the past to be necessary. In support of the view that Scotus, despite his belief in the contingency of the present, still believed the past to be necessary, Normore points to a number of passages, including the following from *Lectura* I.40, in which Scotus considers the following: "[W]hat passes into the past is necessary — as the Philosopher wishes in Book 6 of the *Ethics*, approving the saying of someone who says that, 'this alone is God not able to make: that which is past not be be past.'" Scotus replies, "To the first argument, when it is argued that that which passes into the past is necessary, it is conceded."[58] In this concession, Scotus makes plain his acceptance of the necessity of the past.

Despite the fact that Normore is wrong to attribute to Knuuttila the (clearly false) view that Scotus applied synchronic contingency to the past as well as the present and future, Normore is right to make this clarificatory correction to Knuuttila's use of the phrase "synchronic contingency". What is really at stake in Scotus' writing is a very specific case of synchronic contingency, namely, that in the moment of the present. Synchronic contingency in future moments was generally accepted by (non-determinist) philosophers prior to Scotus; and synchronic contingency of past moments was not accepted by Scotus (and was not even entertained as possible for some time after). It is misleading, therefore, to speak generally of Scotus having pioneered the notion of "synchronic contingency" in an unqualified way. It is far superior, being much more accurate, to speak of Scotus

[58] *Lectura* I, dist. 40, no. 9, trans. Normore (slightly altered for clarity).

putting forward the idea of a "contingent present."

Despite this, Knuuttila's language of "synchronic contingency" has predominated in the subsequent scholarly discussion. Dumont, MacDonald, Marenbon, and others have all taken on this language when speaking of Scotus' contribution (or lack thereof — as we will see discussed below) to the idea that alternative possibilities in the present moment are real possibilities. It is for this reason that, though I generally favour Normore's description of "contingency of the present," I will at times concede to using the term "synchronic contingency" — though it must in such cases be strictly understood to mean synchronic contingency *of the present*.

In addition to making this clarificatory point on terminology, Normore develops Knuuttila's analysis in a way that probes the metaphysical and causal, not just the logical, implications of (synchronic) contingency of the present. In particular, Normore examines in much greater depth the role played by "instants of nature" in Scotus' theory. In the traditional (Aristotelian) account of possibility, an event being possible requires the possibility of the current circumstances to change in such a way that the possible event occurs. This change requires the passage in time of a particular causal chain. What Scotus does to disrupt this picture is introduce the notion of something being *causally* prior to another thing, without necessarily being prior in time. He explains this by way of an appeal to *instants of nature*, as opposed to instants of time. As an example of something which is causally prior without being prior in time, consider a cannonball resting on a pillow[59]: though the cannonball's resting is *simultaneous in time* with the coinciding indentation in the pillow, the cannonball is *causally prior* to the pillow's indentation. Scotus would have it that we can understand the cannonball as occupying a prior instant of *nature*, if not of time. Thus, a causal relationship between two things need not be understood in terms of succession in time, but may be understood more

[59] I am grateful to Lorne Falkenstein for having suggested this example, which is Kant's.

abstractly as a succession in nature.

Dumont, on the other hand, has argued that Knuuttila is wrong to locate the beginnings of synchronic contingency in Scotus; he believes, rather, that these ideas can be seen in Scotus' predecessor, Peter John Olivi.[60] MacDonald, in response to Dumont, contends that this notion of synchronic contingency of present (and even past!) events has really been around for far longer than any of Knuuttila, Normore, or Dumont claim: he sees this going back at least as far as Augustine, who posits counterfactuals about man's fall, stating that it is possible that man could have not fallen — seeming to suggest that a counterfactual about a past event is possible even after it has already occurred.[61]

I would accept (as has Knuuttila, in later writing) that precursors to Scotus' theory can be detected in earlier sources, including Olivi. However, I think that MacDonald misses the significance of Scotus' development when he claims that the idea of synchronic contingency (at *all* times, even!) has been present in the primary literature as early as Augustine. What MacDonald fails to recognize is that, while people have always spoken in hypothetical counterfactuals about the past and present, the predominating model for understanding true contingency in the medieval tradition was the frequency model, without any strongly articulated sense that these counter-factuals spoken of had any actual power or potency to be. Of course we can *talk* of Adam not sinning; but there is no power by which that alternate reality can be realized. For Scotus, it is most relevant to consider this idea in a present instant: if at time t_1, I decide to reach for a cookie, then of course one could always talk hypothetically about my having decided *not* to reach for that cookie at t_1; but the revolutionary thing about Scotus' idea is that at t_1, the *very moment of my willing*, I yet had the actual *power* to will *not* to take the cookie. This, *pace* MacDonald, is far from having been a widely accepted notion prior to Scotus

[60] Dumont 1995.
[61] MacDonald 1995. I have already noted above the suggestion that Carneades may also have a view similarly robust.

(even if there may have been earlier hints here and there).

1.3.4 - Contingency of the Present and God's Foreknowledge

Scotus' synchronic view of contingency, or belief in the contingency of the present, allows him to lay out a new theory of God's foreknowledge that reconciles, he thinks, God's foreknowledge with human freedom. Firstly, contingency of the present allows for the possibility of contingency in the world, and in particular, contingency of human will and action. This is because Scotus believes that the only way for contingency to exist in the world is that the first act of creation must have been contingent. Otherwise, if the first act of creation were necessary, and all subsequent history an extension of that act by necessary causes, then all of created history would itself also be necessary. If, however, that first act of creation is contingent, then everything which follows from it — even if it follows by causal necessity — is also contingent. For this reason, Scotus stresses the contingency of the first act of creation. This act, however, is an act of God's will. In the moment that God wills creation into existence, it comes to be; but since Scotus requires that that act be contingent, it must be so *even in the very moment* of its creation. Thus, the contingency of the present allows God's present act of will to be performed contingently. Even in the very moment of willing creation into being, God *could* will otherwise.

But then God's act of creation involves choosing between a number of maximally consistent sets (which, in contemporary parlance, may be seen as equivalent to choosing among all "possible worlds"[62]). In this contingent act of the will, God is setting in motion all future acts of creation — both those which are (necessarily) causally determined, and those which happen by a free act of human or

[62] For discussion of the relationship between Scotus' account and contemporary possible worlds semantics, see Normore 2002, 154 - 55 (section V, "Possible Worlds"). Though Scotus did not explicitly speak of "possible worlds," there is good reason to think that possible worlds semantics would complement his views quite nicely.

divine will (in the latter case, we think particularly of instances of miracles). By knowledge of his own will, he knows what human creatures will be born and live in this created order; and by his intimate knowledge of the will of each person, he knows what choice they will make in any given circumstance.

And so, on Scotus' picture, God knows the future by a complete knowledge of the following three things: (1) All causally (naturally) determined events; (2) God's own will, which acts contingently; and (3) the will of all human creatures, which act contingently. But knowing any of these things in no way necessitates the contingent acts of the actors. So this morning, a Monday morning, I had two soft-boiled eggs for breakfast. God knew that I would have two eggs not through any special foresight of the actual event, but because he knows me, and knows me to be the sort of creature who would choose to have two eggs for breakfast this morning. This prediction on God's part, through God's knowledge of me, would be no great feat if it was the case that I ate two eggs for breakfast every day, or every Monday; if this was part of my daily or weekly routine, then my husband, or even a close friend, if she knew me well enough, would be able to make the same prediction through their knowledge of me and my breakfast preferences. But let's complicate this picture a little further: suppose it to be the case (as in fact it is) that it's rather unusual for me to have eggs for breakfast on a Monday; suppose, further, that I in fact usually have a pair of soft-boiled eggs for my Sunday breakfast. One might expect in such a case that God would mistakenly conclude, from God's knowledge of my *typical* behaviour, that I would not have eggs this morning. However, it happened that yesterday I slept late and did not have time for my usual Sunday breakfast ritual, so instead wolfed down a quick breakfast of toast and peanut butter before rushing off to church. But God knows my predilection for soft-boiled eggs, and my disappointment at not having had time for my usual Sunday breakfast; furthermore, God knows that I'm the sort of person who, relishing the comfort of weekly rituals (particularly where food is concerned), would go out of my way to make up for a missed treat. And so knowing all of this, God would know that I would take the next possible opportunity to eat a

pair of soft-boiled eggs for breakfast, and thus conclude that I would have two eggs for breakfast this Monday morning.

In summary, we have seen how Scotus introduced the new, important notion of contingency of the present; how this allows, through the contingency of God's creative act, for contingency in the world; and finally, how God's knowledge of all future events, including contingent events, relies on God's complete knowledge of the sorts of wills possessed by each of God's creatures.

1.3.5 - Contingency of the past?

One final word before moving on: I mentioned before that Scotus did *not* extend his ideas of synchronic contingency to the past, which is a fact that may strike contemporary philosophers as strange. In contemporary philosophy, we tend to conceive of the past as contingent quite easily. So let me explain an idea I have about why this may not have been the case for Scotus. My idea is this:

Taking *logical possibility* to simply be the absence of a contradiction, consider a contingent event **A** that happens at present time t*. Then the moment before **A** happened (let's call it t* - 1 — for the sake of argument, assume discrete units of time, call them moments, and assume they unfold sequentially like the integers), both **A** at t* and ~**A** at t* were possible. As we move into the moment t* and **A** happens, there is no contradiction in thinking about moment t*, and all moments leading up to it, as being exactly as they are with the exception that **A** is swapped for ~**A** at t*. However, **A** presumably has some necessary causal effects on the moment after its inception that ~**A** would not have — let's call the set of **A**'s necessary effects in the next moment Γ, and ~**A**'s effects Γ'. So let's say we're now in the moment after **A**'s inception, t* + 1. In the actual course of things, there is now this set Γ of things happening now, which would not be identical to the set Γ' that would be happening now had ~**A** happened at t* instead. So if we look back to t* and mentally swap **A**

for ~**A**, we wind up with a contradiction when we consider that moment together with all other moments, including the present — namely, ~**A** happening at t* contradicts the present state of affairs including the members of Γ rather than the members of Γ'. So while ~$\mathbf{A}_{t^*}$ *was* possible at t*, ~$\mathbf{A}_{t^*}$ is no longer possible at t* + 1 — at least, not without introducing the further modification which swaps the members of Γ for those of Γ' in t* + 1.

In other words, hypothesizing changes to past moments entails a contradiction with actual events of subsequent moments, whereas hypothetical changes in the present moment — assuming the changes are alternatives that were possible in the preceding moment — entail no such contradiction. This is why I think Scotus doesn't extend the principle of synchronic contingency to past moments of time.

Chapter 2

William Ockham on Future Contingents

Introduction

William Ockham is a major figure in the development of the discussion of future contingents, and his place in this thesis is particularly important because it is primarily to Ockham that Bradwardine responds.[63] Indeed, as direct contemporaries for several years at Oxford in the late 1310s and early 1320s, it is highly probable, perhaps almost certain, that Bradwardine and Ockham would have engaged one another intellectually in person during that time. Throughout his writing, Bradwardine is extremely critical of Ockham, and it would not be an exaggeration to assert that Ockham is Bradwardine's chief intellectual target. In his most famous work, *De causa Dei contra Pelagium*, Bradwardine explicitly links Ockham's philosophy to the ancient heresy of Pelagianism, denouncing Ockham and his followers in no uncertain terms as Pelagians. In the *De futuris contingentibus*, the earlier treatise that is the subject of this study, it is in the context of condemning Ockham's position that Bradwardine ventures his own solution. Ockham's position is also interesting and important from a contemporary standpoint, since there are a number of influential philosophers of religion — most notably, Marilyn McCord Adams (who, sadly, passed away just recently) and Alvin Plantinga — who have in recent decades taken up and defended versions of Ockham's solution to the problem.[64] This has generated some significant discussion in the contemporary literature for

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[63] I owe a great debt of thanks to Alexander Stöpfgeshoff for a series of conversations he and I had, during his time at Western in the winter of 2015, about William Ockham's view of future contingents, and Bradwardine's objections to the same. These conversations helped me immeasurably in forming my own understanding of Ockham's view, and contributed substantially to the shape and content of this and the next chapter.

[64] Adams has written on this topic many times and in many places, most notably in her translation (with Norman Kretzmann) of Ockham's primary treatise on the topic, *Predestination, God's Foreknowledge, and Future Contingents*, 2nd ed., trans. and ed. M. McCord Adams and N. Kretzmann (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1983); see also her enormous two-volume study of Ockham's philosophy, *William Ockham*

and against Ockham's solution and its merit as a viable solution. It is therefore important that we take time at this point to carefully consider Ockham's position, which is the chief aim of this chapter. I begin by outlining, very briefly and roughly, an account of Ockham's nominalism, which is important for understanding the subsequent discussion (2.1). I then lay out an exposition of Ockham's treatment of the problem, focusing primarily on his text, *De praedestinatione et de praescientia Dei et de futuris contingentibus* (On predestination, God's foreknowledge, and future contingents) (2.2).[65] I will then, in the final section, outline a number of potential objections to Ockham's theory, pointing out possible weaknesses and problems as I see them (2.3). This will all serve to set us up to observe Bradwardine's criticisms of Ockham's position in the following chapter.

2.1 - Ockham's Nominalism

It is going to help our understanding of what follows a great deal if we first take a brief diversion to discuss Ockham's understanding of the content of a proposition. In the late medieval period, there is a great deal of contention about how exactly propositions and their terms are to be understood, and in particular, what precisely they represent. I do not have space in my present study to explore this in any great precision or detail — indeed, many theses could be (and have been) devoted to this and closely related topics. But at the risk of trying to dissect the problem with too dull a knife, I will say that the disagreement may be broadly understood along the lines of nominalism versus realism, of both universals and the signification of terms. Ockham is widely recognized as a nominalist of a fairly

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(South Bend, Indiana: Notre Dame, 1987). William Lane Craig has provided a more succinct summary in *The Problem of Divine Foreknowledge and Future Contingents from Aristotle to Suarez* (Leiden: Brill, 1988), 146 - 68. For Plantinga's treatment of the topic, see Alvin Plantinga, "On Ockham's Way Out," *Faith and Philosophy: Journal of the Society of Christian Philosophers* 3 (July 1986), 235 - 69.

[65] William Ockham, *Predestination, God's Foreknowledge, and Future Contingents* (see previous note), "PPD" from henceforth. Unless an alteration is specifically noted, all direct quotations are from this translation, and sections are numbered according to the conventions of this edition.

thoroughgoing sort, explicitly rejecting the so-called "moderate realism" of many of his prominent contemporaries and proximate predecessors. Some scholars have even gone so far as to label Ockham an "extreme nominalist."[66] The "moderate realism" against which Ockham protests largely follows the tradition begun by Aristotle: this form of realism does not follow the Platonist doctrine that universals "really" exist as separate heavenly entities independent from the particulars that they inform, but it nonetheless maintains that universal properties really do exist and inhere in their particulars. It therefore ascribes a certain metaphysical reality and independence to these species and genera which we term "universals." Though there is variation in the exact expression and understanding of this doctrine, this basic principle — that universals are real — informs the understanding of many of the most prominent thinkers leading into the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries, including Thomas Aquinas and John Duns Scotus.[67]

Ockham's well-documented nominalism, therefore, stands at odds with many of his prominent contemporaries. Adams summarizes a central tenet of Ockham's approach, which she sees as continuous with that of Henry of Harclay,[68] in the following way: "Everything that exists in reality is essentially singular — i.e., logically incapable of existing in, as a constituent of, numerically many simultaneously."[69] Unlike Harclay, however, Ockham derives as a consequence that

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[66] Joseph A. Magno, "Ockham's Extreme Nominalism," *Thomist: A speculative quarterly* 43 (July 1979), 414 - 49.

[67] An eminently useful overview of the discussion of the problem leading up to the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, which particularly sets up Ockham's response to the same, can be found in Adams' important overview of the philosophy of Ockham, *William Ockham* (1987). In particular, chapter 1 ("The Problem of Universals," pp. 3 - 12), chapter 2 ("Universals Are Not Things Other Than Names," pp. 13 - 69), and chapter 4 ("Universals, Conventionalism, and Similarity," pp. 109 - 41) are helpful both in understanding Ockham's context, Ockham's rejection of the dominant view of his contemporaries, and Ockham's own nominalist response. Adams has also written a more concise overview of the topic in *The Cambridge History of Later Medieval Philosophy*, ed. Kretzmann et al. (Cambridge: CUP, 1982), "Universals in the early fourteenth century," pp. 411 - 39.

[68] Henry of Harclay was a student of Duns Scotus and near-contemporary of Ockham and Bradwardine at Oxford, where he served as University Chancellor for the last few years of his life until his death in 1317.

[69] Adams 1982, pp. 429 and 434.

"universals are nothing other than names."[70] This nominalism will help us later to understand some of Ockham's arguments, which are otherwise somewhat puzzling. In particular, it is a consequence of his anti-realism that, when it comes to understanding propositions, Ockham does not see the terms as representing anything more than the bare particulars to which they refer, whenever they are uttered.[71] A proposition does not take on any fixed existence of its own apart from the words uttered and their immediate referents.

Where this will become particularly relevant in the following discussion is understanding Ockham's interpretation of propositions as they relate to the passage of time. It may be generally assumed that when a proposition is uttered with a time referent, such as "Donald Trump is *now* the President-elect of the United States," or "*Yesterday*, Kelowna had its first snowfall of the year" (uttered at 10:08pm on Monday, 5 December, 2016), that the proposition automatically ever hereafter bears the meaning imposed by the referents at the time of its utterance. Thus the first proposition, for instance, is eternally equivalent to the proposition, "Donald Trump is the President-elect of the United States on Monday, 5 December, 2016, at 10:08pm," and by this token, is determinately true. But Ockham does not take propositions to have enduring referential content in this way. On Ockham's view, propositions never mean anything more than what the bare referents of the words themselves would imply at the moment of their utterance. Propositions are never more nor less than a string of words — words which name things, but which may name different things at different times, depending on the context. Thus, for Ockham, a proposition whose truth or falsity depends on a particular moment in time may change in truth-value as time elapses. "Donald Trump is now the

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[70] Adams 1982, p. 434 (this is similarly formulated in Adams 1987, p. 13). The primary sources supporting this understanding of Ockham on universals is chiefly to be found in his *Ordinatio* I, dist. 2, question 4 (*Opera Theologica* II, pp. 117ff), but is also supported by his commentary on Aristotle's *De interpretatione* (*Opera Philosophica* II, pp. 345ff).

[71] A classic text outlining Ockham's theory of propositions is that of Philotheus Boehner, O.F.M., "A Medieval Theory of Supposition," *Franciscan Studies* 18, no. 3 - 4 (September - December 1958), pp. 240 - 89.

President-elect of the United States" is true as I write this, but within a matter of weeks, when Trump (presumably) ceases to be President-elect and instead assumes the role of President, the proposition will correspondingly cease to be true. This is certainly an idiosyncratic way of understanding the truth of propositions over time, but it is an understanding which Ockham adheres to in a remarkably consistent way. And as we shall see in what follows, it is important for understanding much of what he says concerning God's foreknowledge of future contingents.

2.2 - Ockham's account of future contingents

Ockham's most sustained and focussed discussion of the topic of future contingents occurs in his treatise *On Predestination, God's Foreknowledge, and Future Contingents* (PPD), written sometime between 1319 (the year that Ockham completed his *Sentences* commentary) and 1324 (the year that Ockham was summoned before the Pope in Avignon to answer for charges of heresy; Ockham never again left the Continent after that point, and spent the remainder of his life embroiled in and writing about political controversies, both religious and secular, until his death in 1347).[72] Other relevant discussions of future contingents in Ockham's writing include portions of his *Sentences* commentary (his *Ordinatio* book I, distinctions 38 and 39), his commentary on Aristotle's *De interpretatione*, and his *Summa logicae*.[73] However, given that none of these forms as substantial a discussion as that found in PPD, I will primarily confine the discussion that follows to that treatise. This treatise is composed of five questions, the most substantial and significant of which is the second. In the three subsections which follow, therefore, I will first give a brief examination of what precedes Q. II (i.e., Q. I) (2.2.1); I will then give a much lengthier and more detailed treatment of the second question itself (2.2.2); and finally, I will briefly discuss those minor questions which follow Q. II,

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[72] Marilyn McCord Adams, introduction, PPD pp. 1 - 2.
[73] The relevant portions of all three of these works are included as appendices to PPD (see f.n. 3, above).

questions III through V (2.2.3). Before moving on to criticisms of Ockham's view (both my own in this chapter, and Bradwardine's in the next), I will briefly highlight corroborating evidence, from his *Ordinatio*, that Ockham's view of God's foreknowledge remained somewhat consistent across more of his philosophical output than just PPD (2.2.4).

2.2.1 - PPD Q. I

Ockham begins the treatise by addressing a question of predestination: are passive predestination (i.e., the condition of being predestined) and passive foreknowledge (i.e., the condition of being foreknown [to be saved]) "real relations" in the person who is predestinate and foreknown? (PPD Q. I A) Ockham maintains that answering such questions in the affirmative (as does Alexander of Hales[74]) leads to a contradiction, given the contingency of a person's predestinate state. Let me explain now where Ockham sees the contradiction.

By a "real relation," Ockham means something intrinsic to or inherent in the thing itself. So the question is something like, is the state of being predestined, or being foreknown to be predestined, something that is really intrinsic to the person herself?

> Regarding the subject of predestination and foreknowledge, it should be observed that those who suppose that passive predestination and passive foreknowledge are real relations in the [person who is] predestinate and foreknown have necessarily to admit contradictories. (PPD Q. I A, pp. 34 - 35. Text in square brackets supplied by Adams and Kretzmann)

> Circa materiam de praedestinatione et praescientia est advertendum quod ponentes praedestinationem passivam et praescientiam passivam esse respectus reales in praedestinato et praescito habent necessario concedere

[74] PPD p. 34, f.n. 2.

contradictoria. (*Opera Philosophica* vol. II, p. 507, lines 4 - 7)

Ockham argues in the negative, since, he contends, if being predestined, and being foreknown to be predestined, *were* real relations (or intrinsic) in the person, then it would seem to be the case that that person would have no power in themselves to act in a way that would undermine her predestinate state. Thus their predestination is necessary.

But being predestinate (or foreknown to be predestinate) Ockham takes to be a contingent fact about a person; and so Ockham takes it as a given that the predestinate person is yet *able* to reject salvation by her own freely chosen action. So it seems to Ockham that insisting on the real inherence of predestination in the person leads to the following contradictory absurdity: the predestinate person is only so contingently; so the predestinate person could, at some future time, willingly reject salvation by her own action; in such a case, the person would then be damned; but if her predestinate state was something really inherent in her nature, then she would then be both predestinate and damned, which is impossible.

A number of assumptions on Ockham's part combine to yield this somewhat puzzling result. Firstly, he takes it for granted that any particular person's predestinate state is contingent; in other words, there is no necessity that any particular person should be saved. This assumption is something which, though certainly a desirable position from a number of theological standpoints, is far from obvious. Secondly, he seems to be assuming a very particular view of contingency (different from either the Classical/Augustinian "principle of plenitude" or the logical contingency of Duns Scotus), whereby the contingency of an event is tied to the *power* of an agent to make it turn out differently. Both of these issues will be brought into greater focus as we examine Ockham's views in greater depth. For now, though, we will turn to a more detailed examination of the second question of the

treatise.

2.2.2 - PPD Q. II

The second question of PPD is, “In respect of all future contingents, does God have determinate, certain, infallible, immutable, necessary cognition of one part of a contradiction?” (PPD q. II A). It is perhaps surprising, as apparent from the way in which Ockham structures his response, that Ockham considers this to be, in fact, four separate questions: first, a question of the *determinacy* of God’s foreknowledge; second, the *certainty* and *infallibility* of God’s foreknowledge; third, the *immutability* of God’s foreknowledge; and fourth and finally, the *necessity* of God’s foreknowledge. This may surprise us, because we often assume (as most medieval thinkers certainly did) that these five properties of knowledge are interdependent, or logically equivalent, in such a way that an affirmative answer to one would imply all the others (and similarly, that the denial of one would entail the denial of the others).

If we follow Ockham as far as distinguishing among these four questions, however, we might be further perplexed by the fact that he does *not* distinguish between “certainty” and “infallibility” of knowledge (notice above that these two properties are lumped together as a single question). Is it not conceivable that certain knowledge may *not* imply infallible knowledge, or vice-versa — at least to someone who is so keen to push a distinction between, say, *immutability* and *necessity*, for instance? “Certainty” seems to imply a kind of secure awareness of one’s own knowledge that “infallibility” need not imply. A *certain* person not only knows something, but *knows* that she knows it! We could imagine, for instance, that someone has the power of always knowing things aright, but is not secure in the knowledge of that knowledge. Such a person might be said to be infallible, but not certain: she *knows* all things aright, but does not *know* that she knows them aright. It may perhaps be the case, though it is doubtful, that certainty of any particular

object of knowledge may imply infallibility of that knowledge. But regardless, Ockham, in any case, does not seem interested in this distinction, and perhaps Latin does not carry the connotation of second-order knowledge in the word "certain" that the English does. Granting, then, for the sake of argument, Ockham's division of the question, we come to his replies.

Q. II art. i: Is God's foreknowledge determinate?

Concerning the determinacy of God's foreknowledge of contingent propositions, Ockham affirms this position. In other words, Ockham affirms that there is some sense in which God's knowledge may be said to be determinately true, rather than than occupying some indeterminate middle-ground between truth and falsity. Ockham contradicts Aristotle, however, when he goes a step further to claim that even the contingent propositions themselves are determinate. At the heart of the controversy is a recasting of the nature of determinacy. Marilyn McCord Adams has characterized the distinction between Aristotle's and Ockham's conceptions of determinacy in the following way. Aristotle would describe determinacy of a proposition like this:

> D1 - The proposition "*x* is (or *was*, or *will be*) A at t_m" is *determinately true* [or *false*] at t_n, if and only if there is no potency in things at t_n for *x*'s not being (or *having been*, or *being going to be*) [or *for* x's *being* (*or* having been, *or* being going to be)] A at t_m.[75]

[75] This definition and those that follow are based on Adams' characterization in her introduction to PPD, pp. 6ff. For the sake of streamlining my own presentation, I am condensing her characterization of determinate truth and determinate falsehood into one, which, while adding to the number and complexity of nested brackets, I hope results in no substantial loss of clarity. I am also glossing over the distinction Adams makes between an *event* being determinate, and a *proposition about that event* being determinately true or false. It seems to me that this distinction is hardly necessary, since it is clear that a proposition concerning an event is determinately true *if and only if* the event it concerns is determinate (and similarly, a proposition is determinately false *iff* the "non-event" it concerns is determinate).

In other words, a proposition about a state of affairs — past, present, or future — is determinately true (or determinately false) at a *particular* time (now, for instance), if and only if there is no power *at that particular time* for the state of affairs to turn out otherwise.

On Aristotle's understanding of determinacy, a past event (like, say, the German invasion of Poland in 1939) is *determinate now*, because there is no power in things *now* for things to have turned out otherwise *then*. There is no way *now* for that past state of affairs to be reversed — Germany cannot *now* undo its 1939 invasion of Poland. What's done is done. It is because of the lack of any *power* in the present moment to undo things that happened in the past that Aristotle considered all past events to be determinate.

But if we consider future events from this Aristotelian framework, and in particular, future *contingent* events, we reach quite a different conclusion. For we consider events in the future to be contingent precisely because of the potential (or potency, or power) for them to happen or not to happen. Whether the flag will be raised on Parliament Hill tomorrow morning is a future contingent event, and at *this* point in time, there is the potential for it to either happen or not happen. For this reason, on Aristotle's account, tomorrow's flag-raising is *not* determinate right now: there is currently the "potency in things" for the flag to be raised or not. Tomorrow at noon, however (presuming the flag is, in fact, raised in the morning), tomorrow morning's flag-raising will no longer be indeterminate, because there will no longer be any "potency in things" for tomorrow morning's flag-raising not to have happened. This event will have become determinate. This illustrates the way in which the determinacy of an event may be time-sensitive: at certain points in time, an event may be indeterminate, and at others, determinate. In particular, a contingent event at a time t_n will be indeterminate at any point in time prior to t_n, but then determinate at any point after t_n.[76]

[76] Whether or not, on the Aristotelian understanding, an event occurring at t_n is determinate *at* t_n is a

Ockham, in marked contrast with Aristotle, would seem to want to characterize contingency in this way:

> D2 - The proposition "*x* is (or *was*, or *will be*) A at t_m" is determinately true [or *false*] at t_n, if and only if there is no potency in things at *some time* for *x*'s not being (or *having been*, or *being going to be*) [or *for* x's *being (or* having been, *or* being going to be)] A at t_m.[77]

Notice now that the determinacy of an event at a particular point in time *no longer* depends on the point in time at which the question is being considered. For an event to be determinate at a particular point in time, it is enough for there to be some point in time — *any* point in time, past, present, or future! — in which there is no potency in things for the event to turn out otherwise.

So Ockham, like Aristotle, would consider all past events to be determinate, since there is some point in time (namely, now!) at which there is no potency for those events to turn out otherwise (Germany cannot un-invade Poland in 1939, and thus this event is determinate). But Ockham's conception of determinacy leads to a radically different understanding from Aristotle's as to the determinacy status of *future* events.[78] By tomorrow at noon on Parliament Hill, there will be no longer be any "potency in things" for the morning's flag-raising *not* to have happened (assuming, of course, that it goes ahead as usual). In virtue of this lack of potency tomorrow at noon for it to happen otherwise, we *now* say that tomorrow morning's

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slightly more complicated question, but is usually answered in the affirmative (since, for instance, Aristotle assumes the principle of the "necessity of the present"). Simo Knuuttila has argued that a revolutionary aspect of Duns Scotus' philosophy is the denial of this statement (see 1.3 for a more detailed discussion).

[77] Modified from Adams, p. 10. Once again, I have collapsed the definitions of determinate truth and determinate falsity, and ignored the distinction between determinate events and determinate truth or falsity of propositions concerning those events.

[78] Ockham and Aristotle agree that present events are determinate, but as we see from their differing understandings of determinacy, their reasons for holding this to be the case differs. If Adams is correct in her characterization, for Aristotle, the determinacy of present events is because of the lack of potency *now* for things to turn out otherwise than they *are now* turning out; for Ockham, it is because of the lack of potency *at some time* (perhaps a future time) for things to turn out otherwise than they are now turning out.

flag-raising will happen determinately. It is enough for an event to be determinate at *some* time (even if that time is future) for it to be determinate at *all* times. And here's the rub: anything that has happened, or is happening, or will happen, has happened, or is happening, or will happen *determinately*. In other words, *everything happens determinately*.

There are two aspects of this conclusion to examine and clarify, both of which are highly relevant to Ockham's discussion and Bradwardine's subsequent criticisms: first, what does this entail about the epistemological status of propositions concerning events? and second, what does this entail about the necessity or contingency of events? To the first, it is obvious that, though all events (and hence propositions concerning them) may be determinate, it does not follow that we can know anything about them. Indeed, if Ockham is right, then there are vast swathes of determinate facts (namely, all those contingent things[79] that have yet to happen) about which we can have absolutely no knowledge whatsoever. But God, of course, is in an entirely different epistemological position than we are. God's knowledge is not limited by whether something happens to have already occurred or not. It is in this sense that Christians have spoken not only of God's *omni*science — God's knowledge of *all* things — but have included in that omniscience God's *pre*science, God's knowledge of *future* things. It should be clear, now, that if Ockham has no trouble calling future contingent events "determinate," then he will have no trouble calling God's knowledge of those events "determinate," either. Indeed, the only reason why anyone might hesitate to call God's knowledge determinate is the misgiving that that may make the objects of God's knowledge determinate, also (this is precisely the thrust of the objections with which Ockham begins the section). But if one is perfectly willing to grant the determinacy of events, then there is no longer any cause for hesitation about the determinacy of God's knowledge of them. In fact,

[79] You may be wondering at this point whether I am still justified in referring to "contingent things" at all: Can something which is determinate be, properly speaking, also contingent? As I will show in a moment, Ockham is adamant that it can.

Ockham would object to the very characterization of the issue as one of God's determinate knowledge "making" events determinate; rather, events just *are* determinate, in themselves, independently of God's knowledge of them. This, then, is his response to the first part of Q. II.

But as for the second issue — What does this entail about the contingency or necessity of events? — Ockham is keen to distinguish between determinacy and necessity. On Ockham's account, the determinacy of an event does not imply its necessity, though the necessity of an event does imply its determinacy. We will examine this distinction more deeply shortly, when we come to considering what Ockham means by *necessity* that makes it distinct from determinacy; but for now, it suffices to say that the determinacy of a future contingent event does not in any way affect its contingency. The raising of the flag tomorrow morning on Parliament Hill, though determinate and known by God determinately, is yet contingent: it *could* have been otherwise; God's knowledge *could* have been otherwise; the determinate truths associated with this event *could* have been otherwise. But the phrasing of this should raise our eyebrows a bit: when we say that a future event is contingent, do we mean to say that it could *have been* otherwise, or that it could *be* otherwise? This issue will be key to our discussion and subsequent objections, but for now, let's set it aside.

Q. II art. ii: Is God's foreknowledge certain and infallible?

Ockham maintains that God's foreknowledge is certain and infallible. Both of the objections Ockham presents at the beginning of the second article rest on rather obvious fallacies of modal logic. Since they are so similar in form, I will just briefly discuss the second objection and Ockham's reply. The objection runs as follows:

> If God cognized that I would sit down tomorrow, and it is possible that I shall not sit down tomorrow, suppose that in fact I shall not sit down tomorrow. Then it follows that God is deceived. Since what is impossible does not follow

> from the positing in fact of what is possible, "God is deceived" is not impossible. (PPD QII, art. ii C, p 56)

> [S]i Deus novit me sessurum cras, et possum non sedere cras, — ponatur in esse 'non sedebo cras' —, sequitur tunc quod Deus decipitur, quia ex positione possibilis in esse non sequitur impossibile; igitur haec 'Deus decipitur' non est impossibilis. (OP II, p. 522 lines 52 - 55)

This argument, like the others, rests upon a fallacy of modal inference. The objector is correct in general to state that "what is impossible does not follow from the positing in fact of what is possible"; however, if two or more of the premises of the argument are contradictory, or "incompossible," then of course any conclusion may follow. As Ockham explains (PPD Q. II art. ii D), the difficulty is that the first premise ("God cognizes that I will sit down tomorrow") and the third premise ("I will not sit down tomorrow") are "incompossible," or contradictory.

The objector may protest that the third premise must be permitted, since the second premise ("It is possible that I will not sit down tomorrow") would seem to require the ability to posit it. Indeed, there does intuitively seem to be some sense in which granting the possibility of an event seems to require the ability to grant the related assertoric proposition. If it is *possible* that it might rain this afternoon, then it seems we ought to be able to *suppose* that it will rain. Such a supposition is all well and good, except when other assertoric premises are involved that claim some sort of insight into future states. These include straightforward statements about future states ("It will not rain this afternoon"), statements that imply future states ("Peter is predestinate" — i.e., Peter *will* receive eternal blessedness),[80] and statements about God's foreknowledge. The reason these sorts of statements pose a problem for the arguments we are discussing is that they have the potential to contradict assertoric

[80] Concerning this category of statements, more will be said in short order (2.2.3).

suppositions based on statements of the possibility of something or other.

Let's consider this situation in a slightly different way (as with most things logical, there are many ways to skin this cat, and some ways may make more sense to one person than another). The premises of the objector's argument are as follows:

P1 - God foreknows that I will sit tomorrow.

P2 - It is possible that I will not sit tomorrow.

So suppose

P3 - I will not sit tomorrow.

The justification for allowing this third premise is that it is compatible with the second. And indeed, there is a certain sort of necessary relationship between the two, which is perhaps why our intuition might tend to deceive us as to the permissibility of the supposition. But as Ockham implicitly points out, it is not the case that P3 necessarily follows from P2, but rather, P2 from P3 (i.e., P3 ⇒ P2). And though P1 and P2 may be compatible, and though P2 and P3 are also compatible, P1 and P3 are not. And just because P3 ⇒ P2, this does not mean that something compatible with P2 can be posited alongside P3 ("For an antecedent can be inconsistent with something with which its consequent is not inconsistent"[81]). To posit P3 together with P1 and P2 is just as ridiculous as positing "Socrates is standing" alongside "Socrates is sitting" and "Socrates could stand," as though "Socrates is standing" and "Socrates is sitting" could happen simultaneously.[82]

Returning to an earlier issue, recall that (see the beginning of 2.1.2) Ockham has in this section conflated two properties that should perhaps be considered separately, namely, the *certainty* and *infallibility* of God's knowledge. It is perhaps

[81] PPD Q. II art. ii D, p. 58.
[82] Ibid.

the case that certainty of (all) knowledge would imply infallibility, but the converse does not necessarily hold. All of the objections which Ockham considers in this section seem primarily to address the *infallibility* of God's knowledge (establishing that God cannot be deceived), and not God's certainty (whether God *knows* that God knows). Perhaps, however, if we maintain that God has infallible knowledge of *all* things that can be known, this includes knowledge of the state of God's own knowledge — and hence, God must know that God knows (infallibly), and thus know all things with certainty.

Q. II art. iii: Is God's foreknowledge immutable?

Ockham spends considerable time addressing the question of the immutability of God's knowledge, and this is of particular relevance for our discussion because, as we shall see in the following chapter, it is one of Bradwardine's chief criticisms of Ockham that his account fails to account for the immutability of God's knowledge in particular, and hence undermines God's immutability in general. In this article, the objection/reply structure breaks down somewhat: rather than cataloguing the objections at the opening of the section, and then replying to each of them (as he has done up to this point), the article begins with three objections followed by three replies, and then four more objections are raised one at a time, with Ockham's reply directly following each one.[83]

Broadly speaking, the objections in this section are of two sorts. The first sort concerns the *content* of God's knowledge (what it is that God knows), and the second sort concerns the *amount* of God's knowledge (how much God knows, or whether the sum total of God's knowledge could ever increase or decrease). Even though Ockham addresses these questions the other way round, I will begin by

[83] I will follow Adams' and Kretzmann's convention of dividing this section into five "parts" — one part for the first three objections, and then four more separate parts for each of objections four, five, six, and seven.

discussing Ockham's responses to objections of the second sort, because the responses to these objections lead naturally into objections of the first sort.

Several of the objections posed (most obviously that of part 3) relate not so much to the *content* of God's knowledge, but the sheer *amount*. Recall the discussion of 2.1 about Ockham's nominalism as it relates to the truth-value of propositions over time. On Ockham's view, if states in the world change, then the truth-value of propositions concerning those states also changes. When a proposition *becomes* true (in the way, for instance, that the proposition "Sarah Rossiter is, at this moment, standing" becomes true in the moment when I rise to my feet), it would seem that God *acquires* knowledge in that moment, which has the net effect of *increasing* the amount of knowledge that God has. Conversely, when a proposition becomes false (as "Sarah Rossiter is, at this moment, standing" does in the moment that I sit back down), God seems to *lose* knowledge, *decreasing* the sum total of God's knowledge. In either of these cases, this seems to constitute a measurable change in God's knowledge, undermining God's immutability.

Ockham replies to these objections in a way that I will illustrate by imagining every proposition about every possible state of the universe being like a switch on a switchboard (the switchboard is, of course, my own image, but I think it faithfully conveys Ockham's idea). At any given moment, each switch is either on (true) or off (false). But each individual switch is related to a unique second switch representing its contradictory statement (i.e., its negation), such that whenever one switch is turned off, its contradictory switch is simultaneously turned on. So, for example, when I am standing, the "Sarah Rossiter is now standing" switch is turned on, but the "Sarah Rossiter is *not* now standing" switch is off. When I take a seat, the position of those two switches reverses. Because every proposition is paired with its contradictory in this way, it is always the case that precisely the same number of switches is turned on, because the moment any single switch is turned on, another is turned off, and vice-versa. God's knowledge, because it ranges over everything that

can be known,[84] can be viewed as containing every proposition on this universal switchboard that is marked "on." In other words, God's knowledge contains every possible true proposition about the state of the universe, past, present, and future. Ockham's point is that, the moment a proposition ceases to be true (and so is deleted from God's knowledge), it is replaced by its contradictory; likewise, whenever a proposition becomes true (and is added to God's knowledge), its contradictory becomes false and is removed. In this way, the *amount* of knowledge contained in God's intellect, assuming equal weight of individual propositions, remains stable.

All of this addresses one aspect of mutability, namely, that sort of change that manifests itself in an increase or decrease of size. Ockham maintains that God's knowledge is immutable in that respect. But this does not address what is perhaps the more pressing question of mutability, which pertains, not to the *amount*, but to the *content* of God's knowledge. Things change not only by becoming larger or smaller, but by becoming altogether different. Ockham's answer to this aspect of the question is not straightforward, and, in my estimation, not altogether clear (PPD Q. II

[84] This assumption, that God knows everything that *can* be known, is something that, for the moment, I will take for granted. In our present discussion, it is assumed that what *can* be known (by God, at least) includes all actual states of the World, past, present, and future. Some contemporary theologians and philosophers (Richard Swinburne is a prominent philosopher who springs immediately to mind; in the realm of popular theology, I think also of Rabbi Harold Kushner, author of *When Bad Things Happen to Good People*) have questioned this assumption, and in particular, the assumption that future states *can* be known at all, even by God. In this way, it is claimed that the problem of future contingents in relation to God's knowledge is resolved: the problem only arises when future contingents are considered relative to God's *fore*knowledge, and the claim is that such knowledge simply doesn't exist. It is, furthermore, claimed that the omniscience of God may be preserved, since God may still be held to know everything that *can* be known. What *can* be known, however, does not include future states. If one were to insist that God's omniscience ought to imply knowledge of *every*thing, whether it has already happened or not, the foreknowledge-denier would reply that that is setting the bar unreasonably high: if future contingent states are just such that they *cannot* be known, then why would we seek to attribute knowledge of them to God? God, like God's creatures, can only sit back and wait to see how the story of the World will unfold. In my estimation, this makes nonsense of any claim to faith in God's promises, including the uniquely Christian claim that through Christ's resurrection, all of creation is being redeemed to its ultimate state of perfect peace. If we refuse to grant, at least for the sake of argument, that God possesses foreknowledge, then we find ourselves in the purposeless, clockwork universe of the Deist. This would undermine central assumptions of medieval Christian philosophers like Ockham and Bradwardine, and put our conversation with such philosophers to an end.

art. iii, pt 1). But let us see if we can make some sense of it nonetheless.

It may help to begin by distinguishing further between two ways in which the content of knowledge may be said to change. On the one hand, knowledge may be said to change if the knower comes to have knowledge that she did not previously have, as when I learned the other day that the word *sepia* comes from the Greek word for cuttlefish, *σηπία* (cuttlefish were the Greco-Roman source of the reddish-brown ink). This sort of change in the content of knowledge is independent of facts in the world. The fact of the etymological history of "sepia" has been around since the beginning of its use in the English language, even though I only began to have knowledge of it recently. This sort of change in knowledge represents a change in me, since prior to my coming to have this knowledge, I was in ignorance of this etymological fact, while afterward, I was no longer in ignorance. This sort of change in knowledge is impossible for God, however, since God possesses knowledge of all knowable things. God cannot *learn* something that has been a fact for some time, since in virtue of its being a fact, God already knows it. So God's knowledge cannot be said to change in this way.

On the other hand, however, knowledge may be said to change if states in the world change such that a proposition that was at one time false becomes true, or vice-versa. For instance, suppose on 24 December the proposition "The queen will give her annual Christmas address tomorrow" is true (such that the queen does, in fact, give her Christmas address the next day). Then two days later, the same proposition is no longer true, for it is no longer the case that the queen *will* give her address *tomorrow*, but rather, that she *did* give her address *yesterday*. For a Being who infallibly knows all true propositions, this seems to imply knowledge of the proposition "The queen will give her annual Christmas address tomorrow" on 24 December, and an absence of that knowledge (or knowledge of its contradictory) on 26 December. Does this change in the content of knowledge constitute a change in the knower? About such propositions and their associated change, Ockham says,

> I maintain that just as such propositions can change from truth to falsity and vice versa, so God can at one time know such a proposition and at another time not, and know one after He did not know it, and not know after He did know, and know a proposition that He did not know earlier, without any change in Him as a result of a mere change in the creature or in known propositions of this sort . . . because *our* intellect can [do this] without any change in it. (PPD Q. II, art. iii, part 1 F)

> [D]ico quod sicut tales possunt mutari de veritate in falsitatem et e converso, ita potest Deus tales aliquando scire et aliquando non, et scire aliquam propositionem quam prius non scivit, sine omni mutatione sui, propter solam mutationem in creatura vel in propositionibus talibus scitis . . . quia hoc potest intellectus noster sine omni mutatione sui. (OP II p. 524 l. 121 - p. 523 l. 1)

Ockham appeals by analogy to the function of our own cognitive capacities. When facts in the world change such that propositions which were formerly true are no longer true, our knowledge about such facts change — or at least ought to change. If we were to persist in believing, on 26 December, that the queen would give her Christmas address tomorrow, this would represent a *deficiency* in our cognitive capacities. A change in the content of our knowledge, under such circumstances, indicates that our cognitive faculties are in fact functioning well. Likewise, if the content of God's knowledge was immutable in the sense that it *failed* to change to correspond with the changing states of the universe, this sort of immutability would not be a perfection in God's nature, but a defect.

But what does Ockham mean by this change in the content of our knowledge occurring "without any change in [our intellect]"? Perhaps he means that what is characteristic of our intellect is not so much *what* we know, but whether or not our knowledge is accurate. If we go from being *right* to being *wrong*, then our intellect has undergone substantive change. But if the content of our knowledge changes to

correspond with changing states in the world, then our knowledge remains correct (i.e., our knowledge remains knowledge, as opposed to becoming false opinion), and in this sense our intellect remains substantively the same. Whether this is what Ockham has in mind, however, is not entirely clear, and as Adams and Kretzmann point out, his own discussion and examples are frustratingly inadequate.[85]

Ockham does seem to give a second sort of reply to this question, which is also somewhat sketchy in its presentation, but which nonetheless also deserves mention, for it will particularly affect our subsequent examination of propositions relating to predestination and damnation. The suggestion seems to be that some propositions, at least, are implicitly keyed to correspond to a particular point in time, and that regardless of the verb tense in which the proposition is phrased (past, present, or future), it should be implicitly understood that it is speaking of such a point in time. So one way of resolving the issue of the apparent change that occurs between 24 December and 26 December with regard to the queen's 25 December address, is to think about the three statements, "The queen will give her Christmas address tomorrow" (uttered on 24 December), "The queen gives her Christmas address today" (uttered on 25 December), and "The queen gave her Christmas address yesterday" (uttered on 26 December), as all equivalent to the proposition "The queen gives her Christmas address on 25 December." In this way, when we hear on 24 December that the queen will give her Christmas address tomorrow, what we cognize is in fact equivalent to what we cognize when we hear on 26 December that the queen gave her Christmas address yesterday, namely, that time-independent assertion that the queen gives her Christmas address on 25 December. Understood in this way, it seems that our intellect does *not* change according to states in the world. Once again, however, this attempted reconstruction of Ockham's view cannot definitively said to be authentically "Ockhamist"; but in the absence of clarity in the source text, it is, perhaps, as good a guess as any other as to

[85] PPD p. 60, fn 80.

what exactly Ockham intends to say on the matter.

To summarize, Ockham's answer to the question regarding the immutability of God's knowledge is far from straightforward. He seems first to clear up many ways in which God's knowledge does *not* change: God's knowledge does not increase or decrease, and the content of God's knowledge does not change in the sense of learning about any persistent state of the World. But Ockham does concede that when states in the World change, God's knowledge of them changes accordingly. In fact, argues Ockham, if God's knowledge did *not* change according to changing states in the world, this would be a grave deficiency in God's knowledge (as it is in our own). Finally, Ockham also introduces discussion of the complications that arise with respect to the truth or falsity of propositions based on the tense in which they are uttered (past, present, or future); the exact thrust of this portion of his argument, however, remains obscure, and providing a satisfactory interpretation is inevitably a difficult business involving a fair bit of guesswork.

Q. II art. iv: Is God's foreknowledge necessary?

It is in this final article of Question II that Ockham's responses become particularly controversial. Indeed, it seems that as the subsections of the question progress, Ockham's position becomes increasingly unorthodox. In answer to the four questions posed — Is God's foreknowledge (i) determinate, (ii) certain and infallible, (iii) immutable, and (iv) necessary? — the expected canonical responses are yes, yes, yes, and yes! Ockham's responses, by contrast, boil down to something more like this: (i) yes (though perhaps not for the reasons one might think), (ii) yes, (iii) mostly (though not to the extent that it in fact becomes a defect in God's knowledge), and (iv) no, with qualification.

Ockham's response to the fourth question begins, in good scholastic fashion, with a distinction. Whether God's knowledge is necessary, argues Ockham, depends

on what exactly we mean by "necessary knowledge." There are two ways to understand this:

> [Understood] in the first way [it means] that God's knowledge whereby future contingents are known is necessary. And this is true, since the divine essence itself is one single necessary and immutable cognition of all things, complexes as well as non-complexes, necessary and contingent. [Understood] in the second way [it means] that by that knowledge future contingents are known necessarily. And in this way [His knowledge] is not necessary, nor need it be granted that God has necessary knowledge regarding future contingents; instead, [His knowledge regarding them] is contingent. (PPD Q. II, art. 4 L, p. 67)

> . . . uno modo, quod scientia Dei qua sciuntur futura contingentia sit necessaria. Et hoc est verum, quia ipsa essentia divina est unica cognitio necessaria et immutabilis omnium tam compexorum quam incomplexorum, necessariorum et contingentium. Secundo modo, quod per illam scientiam sciantur necessario futura contingentia. Et sic non est necessaria, nec debet concedi quod Deus habeat scientiam necessariam de futuris contingentibus sed potius contingentem . . . (OP II, p. 529 l. 262 - p. 530 l. 269)

In other words, if we are speaking about God's knowledge as such, in the *way* that it functions, this is necessary. It is necessary, for instance, that *if* a proposition is true, *then* God knows it. But in another way, we might say that the actual *content* of God's knowledge is necessary. This, thinks Ockham, is an invalid inference from the immutability of God's knowledge, for much of the content of God's knowledge is of contingent things, about which no *necessary* knowledge is possible. Instead, Ockham posits, God's knowledge of contingent things is itself contingent.

But how, we might wonder, is it possible to speak of *contingent knowledge* at all? Furthermore, how can Ockham simultaneously hold that God's knowledge is immutable *and* non-necessary? Further discussion of the first question will follow in a later section (2.2), so for now, I will primarily focus on trying to understand the

second issue. How is it that God's knowledge may simultaneously be said to be immutable — i.e., never changing — and yet *not* necessary?

It may be helpful for thinking of God's immutable-and-yet-non-necessary knowledge to consider by analogy something with a high degree of stability, which we would yet not consider to be necessary. Consider, perhaps, the Great Star of Africa diamond (Cullinan I), which is now set in the Royal Sceptre of the British Crown Jewels.[86] If we consider this stone from a relatively limited frame of time reference, then we may be inclined, at least in some senses, to consider the stone to be immutable. Indeed, nothing that I could readily apply — not fire, nor a sledgehammer, nor corrosives, nor brute strength — could in any way measurably or discernibly alter the stone. Throughout my lifetime (and that of my mother, and of my grandmother), the Great Star of Africa has remained perceptibly unaltered, and is likely to remain so for generations to come. But though the stone might therefore be said to be, at least in a limited sense, immutable, could it also be said to be necessary? Not at all, for its existence and its present state depend upon a long string of contingent events: that geological forces happened to combine in just the right way to produce such an enormous diamond in the first place; that further geological and meteorological forces combined to bring the stone to the earth's surface; that human society developed in such a way that diamonds are a highly prized mineral, and that economic incentives therefore compel people to go to great lengths to discover them; that the stone was in the particular river where a prospector happened to be panning for diamonds; that one particular diamond-cutter, rather than others, was commissioned to divide and cut the stone, and that he happened to have eaten just the right sort of breakfast to provide the inspiration for the particular division and cut that he chose; etc., etc., etc. All of these

[86] I suspect a much better analogy than the one I provide here could be drawn from the physical or chemical sciences, in which I am not sufficiently well-versed to competently draw an example for myself. If the reader so desires, she may think instead of any phenomenon which is the case, which always has been the case, and which always will be the case, so long as time endures — but which need not be as it is, and which may just as well have been otherwise.

contingent factors and more contributed to the present state of the Great Star of Africa diamond.

That the Great Star of Africa is how it is and not otherwise is therefore a contingent matter, despite its (relative) immutability. In a similar way, Ockham would have it that, although God's knowledge is immutable (in a much more robust sense than the Cullinan I diamond), God's knowledge might have been otherwise than it is. Contingent factors (namely, the contingent events in the world) contribute to God's knowledge being as it is. Because many of the things that God knows could be otherwise than they are, God's knowledge could be otherwise than it is. What this means is that, though God's knowledge is unchangingly as it is — i.e., immutable — it is nevertheless non-necessary, at least in the sense that it *could have been* otherwise.

We could, if we like, push the analogy a little further to illustrate the sense in which God's knowledge *is* necessary, and thus understand the distinction Ockham is making between the senses in which God's knowledge is and is not necessary. Though many properties of the Cullinan I are contingent (its particular size, cut, setting in the British Royal Sceptre, location in the Tower of London, etc.), insofar as it is a diamond of remarkable purity, it has also a number of necessary properties: for instance, that it is composed of crystallized carbon, that it has a hardness of ten on the Mohs scale, that it refracts light just as it does, etc. Indeed, I may look at any diamond in the world, including the ones (miniscule by comparison) on my own finger, and assert the same of them. Diamond, *qua* diamond, necessarily possesses these properties; these are what make it diamond. Absent any of these things, and it would cease to be the mineral that we call diamond.[87] Similarly, we might say that

[87] I am, obviously, glossing over the entire discussion in the 20th-century literature about whether the names we apply to particular elements and compounds in our world could be meaningfully applied to substances in another world which share all perceptible properties of a substance in our world, but have a different chemical composition (I am thinking here primarily of Saul Kripke's important work, *Naming and Necessity* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard UP, 1980), and the discussion it engendered). For instance, if we came across a substance in another world that was wet, transparent, non-viscous, odourless, tasteless, and perfect for quenching our thirst — that is to say, in all perceptible

God's knowledge is, by definition, the sort of knowledge that knows everything true. So if a proposition is true, it is *necessarily* the case that God knows it. This is a necessary property of God's knowledge, and in this sense, God's knowledge can be said to be necessary. In other words, there are aspects of God's knowledge that are necessary with respect to objects in the world. Insofar as things in the world are as they are, it is necessary for God to know them. But that does not make God's knowledge necessary *per se*, because those events in the world could have been otherwise, and hence God's knowledge of them could have been otherwise.

In this way, Ockham denies the necessity of God's knowledge, while affirming both its immutability and its perfect consistency with the truth about the world. God's knowledge is non-necessary precisely because events in the world are non-necessary. *Had* things been other than they are (and the property of something to be such that it could-have-been-otherwise is precisely what it means, on Ockham's model, for it to be contingent), then God's knowledge would correspondingly have been otherwise than it is. So it would be nonsense, thinks Ockham, to assert that God's knowledge is necessary. Necessity is not a perfection of knowledge, because knowledge that was necessary could, on account of its necessity, fail to correspond in appropriate ways to the contingent reality of the world around us. Ockham does not see any inconsistency at all between the assertion that God is unchanging, eternal, and immutable, with the claim that God's knowledge is not necessary, for something can be ever-unchanging, and yet, still, could have been otherwise.

We should find this claim somewhat novel and surprising in a medieval context, for it directly contradicts the long-standing "Principle of Plenitude." This is the notion that everything that *can* happen, will indeed happen — given sufficient

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ways identical with the substance we call "water" in our world — but happened not to be H_2O (i.e., happened not to be composed of molecules with that particular structure), could (or would) we call this substance water? Here, for the sake of illustrating my point, I take for granted the (controversial) hypothesis that there is necessarily a strictly one-to-one correspondence between substances which appear identical by all physical measures we might apply, and their chemical makeup.

time. On this view of contingency, a state of affairs is contingent if at some point in time — assuming time stretches infinitely far forward — that state of affairs is realized. We have here the nub of the revolution in thinking of contingencies largely begun by Duns Scotus (see again the discussion in 1.3). Previously in the medieval period, it had been generally assumed that if a state of affairs could never be realized, even in infinite time, then it is for this reason an impossible state. And thus, conversely, its contradiction is necessary. How does this relate to Ockham's view of God's knowledge? Well, suppose that some contingent event, like the Great Fire of London, actually takes place. Then because it took place, it is true to say that, for instance, "The Great Fire of London destroyed a great part of London in 1666." Because this event actually happened, God necessarily knows it. And indeed, because God (presumably) by God's foreknowledge knew that fire would destroy large parts of London in 1666, God has known this for all eternity. And because it will henceforth always be the case that a large part of London was destroyed by fire in 1666, it will *always* be the case that God knows this. So according to the Principle of Plenitude, it is *necessary* that God knows that a great fire destroyed much of London in 1666, since it never has been and never will be otherwise, even if time continues on infinitely long. Because it is *never* the case that God did not (or will not) know that there was a Great Fire in London in 1666, it is, according to the Principle of Plenitude, *impossible* for God not to know that there is a Great Fire in London in 1666. It therefore follows from this principle, not only that God necessarily knows this fact (because it is a true fact about the world), but that God's very knowledge that there was a Great Fire in 1666 is in itself necessary. This, however, is the very inference which Ockham denies.

Simply because something is never (or never will be), in fact, the case, Ockham denies that it follows that it is impossible for that thing to be. Even if something never *in fact* transpires, even in the whole history of the world, Ockham maintains that it *could have* been otherwise, and in this sense, that the event may yet be contingent. This is precisely the situation we're dealing with with respect to

God's knowledge of contingent events.

In sum, then: to the four subquestions of Q. II, Ockham (1) *affirms* that God's knowledge is determinate, but does so because of his unconventional view that all events of the actual world — past, present, *and* future — are determinate themselves; (2) *affirms* that God's knowledge is certain and infallible, that is, that God never errs; (3) *affirms* that God's knowledge is immutable, or is at least, no more mutable than knowledge, rightly-operating, must be in order to appropriately track with the changing circumstances of the world; and (4) *denies* that God's knowledge is necessary, at least in the sense that the particular content of God's knowledge is no more necessary than the events which are the subject of that knowledge.

2.2.3 - PPD Q. III - V

After dealing with the questions of the determinacy, certainty and infallibility, immutability, and necessity of God's knowledge in Q. II, Ockham turns in Questions III, IV, and V to issues surrounding the application of these principles to specific theological issues, and in particular, the predestination and damnation of individual human beings.

The nub of Ockham's account consists in positing that many statements which appear, by their present or past tense constructions, to be about one particular point in time, are in fact statements about quite another point in time.[88]

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[88] In the wake of Adams' rediscovery of this position of Ockham's, there has been considerable ink spilt by contemporary philosophers of religion debating the effectiveness of this view in resolving the problem of God's foreknowledge and human freedom. Adams herself has at various points defended versions of Ockham's argument, and I have mentioned already Plantinga's main article on the topic, in which he (favourably) presents his own interpretation of Ockham's understanding of tenses; William Lane Craig is another defender of Ockhamist positions on propositional contingency and tense; see Craig, *Divine Foreknowledge and Human Freedom* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1990). Against these favourable interpretations of Ockham's position, however, have been the criticisms of John Fischer ("Freedom and Foreknowledge," Philosophical Review, 92 (January 1983), pp. 67–79), William Hasker (*God, Time, and Knowledge* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989)), and Linda Zagzebski (*The Dilemma of Freedom and*

Such statements include those such as “Peter is predestinate” and “Judas was damned.” In the first instance, we have a present-tensed statement, which we therefore assume to be about a present state of affairs; but Ockham would have it that, since being predestinate is a fact that is made true or false by a future state (namely, receiving, at the last, either eternal blessedness or damnation), this sentence is in fact a statement about the future. “Peter is predestinate” may therefore be considered as equivalent to the statement, “Peter will receive eternal blessedness.” Similarly, the second statement, “Judas was damned,” despite appearing to be a statement about the past, is also in fact about the future, since Judas’s damned state *then* depends on his receiving, at the last, the punishment of eternal damnation.

This discussion is confused in English by the fact that “damned” may function as either an adjective, or a passive verb, or a past participle. In the discussion above, I intend by “Judas was damned” to indicate the Latin phrase “*Judas erat damnatus*.” In Latin, the adjective *damnatus* specifically designates the state of being damned — so a *damnatus* is a person with the property of being damned at the last (in the same way that a predestinate is a person with the property of being saved at the last). The statement “Judas was damned” is ambiguous in English, however, between at least three readings: (1) Judas was a person who will be damned at the last (the adjectival reading); (2) Somebody (else) damned Judas in the past (passive reading); and (3) Judas was damned, but has ceased to be so in the time since (past participle reading). In this discussion, (1) is the primary sense in which the statement should be taken, though (3) enters into the discussions somewhat (though when that reading occurs, it will be made quite clear by the discussion surrounding it). (2) will never be the reading intended.

So Ockham would have it that statements depending on a future contingent outcome for their truth or falsity, even though they may be present or past tensed in

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Foreknowledge (New York: OUP, 1991)), among others.

grammatical construction, should be considered in the same way as future contingent statements. The apparently present-tensed statement "Peter is predestinate" is considered as equivalent to the future contingent statement "Peter will receive eternal blessedness." Similarly, the apparently past-tensed statement "Judas was damned" should in fact be read as equivalent to the future contingent statement "Judas will receive eternal damnation."

To use a non-theological example, we can consider the way we describe someone who is expected to graduate as a "graduand." To say, for instance, that "Theodora is a graduand" is to say "Theodora will graduate"; just as in the above eschatologically-minded examples, this apparent present-tense claim in fact boils down to a statement which is future and contingent. One may be inclined to object that this example is complicated by the fact that to be a *graduand* implies that one has already done all that is required for the conferral of a degree, and only awaits receiving the degree. I think that this actually strengthens the analogy, and highlights a key aspect of calling someone "predestinate": everything required for her salvation has already been done (disanalogously, though, what is required has been done primarily by Christ, rather than the person herself); however, the predestinate is still in a time of waiting for ultimate blessedness, which is the ultimate fulfilment of that salvific work. The predestinate person is living in the same sort of in-between, proleptic,[89] or what theologians sometimes call the "already-but-not-yet" time that the graduand occupies. Everything required has been accomplished, but the ultimate conferral of the prize (be it a degree or the beatific vision) is yet to come.

But one may be wondering at this point: What is the point of transforming past- and present-tensed statements into future-tensed claims? The significance of this move is the way it affects the truth and modal status of such statements. Because Ockham is working under the Aristotelian assumption that the past and the

[89] Thanks are due to the Rev'd David Tiessen for reminding me of this word when I was casting about for it.

present are necessary because of their fixity, or inability to change, were these statement to in fact be about the present or the past, their truth (or falsity) would imply their *necessary* truth (or falsity). By insisting that they are in fact statements about future contingent events, he is preserving the contingency of the statement, because of the indeterminate status of things which are future.[90]

Turning, then, to questions of God's foreknowledge, Ockham employs a similar strategy. About any future contingent event E, it may be said that "God foreknows E" or that "God foreknew E." The statement "God foreknows E" appears grammatically to be in the present tense, and likewise "God foreknew E" appears to be past-tensed. However, because of the dependence of both of these statements on E (which is, by assumption, future and contingent), Ockham would have it that these statements are in fact themselves future and contingent in some relevant sense. In fact, this extension of future contingency goes beyond the mere statement, but to God's knowledge itself: God now knows, presumably, what I will contingently choose to eat for breakfast tomorrow. But since the subject of that knowledge is future and contingent, God's knowledge of it is itself, in some sense, future and contingent.

In this way, then, Ockham provides an answer to the question of how God can foreknow our actions, and yet our actions still remain contingent: God's foreknowledge does not *determine* our future actions, since he argues that our future actions were already determined in the first place (and thus, for Ockham, determinacy seems to be beside the point); God's foreknowledge of our future actions does not make them any less contingent, since he argues that God's foreknowledge is itself contingent; and finally, Ockham gives an indication of how it is that God's foreknowledge is contingent, by analogy with the implied future-tense of grammatically present-tense statements such as "Peter is predestined." It remains

[90] Compare this assumption with the position of Duns Scotus, discussed in 1.3: while affirming the necessity of fixity of the past, Scotus denies the necessity of the present. Ockham clearly does not follow Scotus on this point, which is perhaps surprising given that Ockham follows in the Franciscan intellectual tradition which was at this point heavily influenced by Scotistic thought.

to be discussed whether Ockham is truly justified in simultaneously maintaining that future actions may be simultaneously determinate *and* contingent — or whether such contingency can be truly called "freedom": but this discussion will happen in more depth in section 2.3.

2.2.4 - Ordinatio *I.38*

Before turning to criticisms of Ockham's position, I will just briefly note another work, earlier than PPD, in which Ockham makes statements similar to those found in PPD. Though the discussion is much more terse, and in ways much more hesitant, we find already in Ockham's *Ordinatio* commentary on the *Sentences* hints that he was beginning to develop the notions of Divine foreknowledge and contingency that are given a much fuller and more confident treatment in PPD. In his treatment of the 38th distinction of Book I of Peter Lombard's *Sentences*, Ockham begins with a statement that may make us think he had not yet developed his view of future contingents in relation to God's foreknowledge in any detail:

> Therefore I reply to the question that it has to be held without any doubt that God knows all future contingent facts evidently and with certainty. But to explain this evidently, and to express the manner in which He knows all future contingent facts, is impossible for any intellect in this life.

> Ideo dico ad quaestionem, quod indubitanter est tenendum, quod Deus certitudinaliter et evidenter scit omnia futura contingentia. Sed hoc evidenter declarare et modum quo scit omnia futura contingentia exprimere est impossibile omni intellectui pro statu isto.[91]

Despite this rather unsatisfactory statement about the *way* in which God knows

[91] Philotheus Boehner, O.F.M., ed. & trans., *Ockham: Philosophical Writings* (Edinburgh: Nelson, 1957), p. 133. This volume contains a number of excerpts from across Ockham's philosophical writing, organized thematically and presented in Latin-English parallel format.

future contingents, and despite Ockham's repeated subsequent claims not to know how this is possible — "The manner in which he knows them, I, however, do not know"[92]; "this conclusion cannot be proved by any *a priori* natural reason possible to us"[93] — he nonetheless goes on to offer thoughts about the nature of God's knowledge of future contingent facts:

> But for certain members of the Faculty of Arts it must be pointed out that no matter how much God knows about all future contingent facts, and as to which side of a contradiction will be true and which false, nevertheless the proposition "God knows that this side will be true" is not a necessary but a contingent proposition. This means that no matter how true the proposition "God knows that this side of the contradiction will be true" may be, nevertheless it is possible that this never was true.

> Verumtamen pro aliquibus artistis est sciendum, quod quantumcumque Deus sciat de omnibus futuris contingentibus, quae pars erit vera et quae falsa, tamen haec non necessaria: "Deus scit, quod haec pars erit vera," immo haec est contingens in tantum, quod quantumcumque sit vera: "Deus scit quod haec pars contradictionis erit vera," tamen possibile est, quod haec numquam fuit vera.[94]

Though Ockham seems to have added this note near the end to satisfy some particular concern of his superiors ("for certain members of the Faculty of Arts…"), it clearly articulates the position that he would come to state much more stridently and self-assuredly in PPD, namely, that God's knowledge of contingent things is itself contingent. And this, as we have seen, in itself marks a decisive break with Anselm, Aquinas, and other authorities on the subject, for whom the necessity of God's knowledge is doctrine.

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[92] *Sed modum exprimere nescio.* Ibid.
[93] *Ista conclusio, quamvis per rationem naturalem nobis possibilem et a priori probari non possit…* Ibid., p. 134.
[94] Ibid.

2.3 - Problems with Ockham's model

I will turn to Bradwardine's objections to Ockham (which are different from the ones I raise below) in the following chapter. In this section, though, I would like to consider first some epistemological questions (and potential problems) that are raised by Ockham's apparent solution to the problem of future contingents (2.3.1), and then turn to questions about the logical implications of Ockham's solution, and in particular, the implications of his redefinition of determinacy (2.3.2). I will then, finally, consider whether Ockham's model is in fact compatible with the view that God, though timelessly eternal, acts in the world (2.3.3).

2.3.1 - Epistemological objections

Ockham's solution has hinged on the idea that God's knowledge of contingent facts is itself contingent. In this way, he avoids the dilemma that God's knowledge of an event necessitates that event to happen, since nothing contingent necessitates anything at all (or at least, does not necessitate it any more strongly than relative to, or conditional upon, itself; see Boethius' discussion of conditional necessity, towards the end of 1.1.2). The first concern I have with this view is that I am not sure that contingent knowledge can really be said to be knowledge at all, or at least not knowledge consistent with the dominant medieval understanding of what constitutes true knowledge. It lies beyond the scope of my current project to give an extensive account of late medieval theories of knowledge; however, I shall give a cursory sketch just sufficient to suggest that its lack of consistency with Ockham's position merits our attention, and — if your epistemological disposition is, like mine, at all similar to Ockham's contemporaries, which I do not presume that it is — our

concern.[95]

Most late-medieval Scholastic thinkers had very robust criteria for what attributes belief must possess to attain the status of true knowledge. The classic formulation of knowledge as "justified true belief" characterizes the dominant theory of knowledge in the late medieval period quite well, and the medieval criteria for what constitutes "justification" is generally quite strong indeed by dominant contemporary standards. Correspondingly, many medieval thinkers had an extremely modest estimation of whether and to what extent human beings can hope to attain true knowledge of things, and medieval thought is marked throughout by a strong sense of epistemic humility.[96] In a few cases, this led to outright skepticism (in the cases, for instance, of Henry of Ghent and Nicholas of Autrecourt).[97] Given the high standard of justification demanded for certainty, it is hardly surprising that at least a few medievals despaired of the possibility of having any knowledge at all. For most medieval thinkers, however, what saved them from complete skepticism concerning human knowledge was a confidence in something like Augustine's idea of "divine illumination": despite our limited and impoverished capacities for understanding, we are able to have some degree of certainty in our ability to grasp at

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[95] Adams (1987) gives a much more extensive and penetrating overview of this topic in the final chapter of the first volume of *William Ockham*, entitled "Certainty and Scepticism," pp. 551 - 629. In this chapter, Adams provides a persuasive argument for the thesis that the dominant theory of knowledge in the early fourteenth century was in fact a broadly skeptical one, when considered with respect to its high degree of epistemic uncertainty from a human standpoint. Thus she argues, *pace* the predominant assumptions of historians of medieval philosophy earlier in the twentieth century (led, chiefly, by Etienne Gilson), that when considered in this light, then Ockham — far from being the chief representative of medieval skepticism — in fact provides a remarkably *anti*-skeptical theory of knowledge. Also useful in this discussion is Henrik Lagerlund (ed.), *Rethinking the History of Skepticism: The Missing Medieval Background* (Leiden: Brill, 2009), a collection of essays which trace many of the major movements in medieval epistemological developments. Particularly relevant to the issues at hand is the essay in that volume by Claude Panaccio and David Piché, "Ockham's Reliabilism and the Intuition of Non-Existents," pp. 97 - 118.

[96] I often think, for instance, of Anselm of Canterbury's prologue to the *Proslogion*, with his famous phrase — borrowed partly from Augustine — *Neque enim quaero intelligere ut credam, sed credo ut intelligam*, "Neither do I seek to understand in order that I might believe, but rather, I believe in order that I might understand."

[97] For a broad overview of skepticism in the medieval period, see Henrik Lagerlund, "A History of Skepticism in the Middle Ages," in *Rethinking the History of Skepticism* (see note above), pp. 1 - 28, esp. pp. 14ff.

least fragments of true knowledge because of the illumination given to us by God in our reasoning faculty; this faculty is further aided, on occasion, by direct divine revelation of truth, in which we can have complete confidence because of its source and its coherence with reason.[98] By and large, though, because the degree of certainty we can generally attain is quite small, the amount of knowledge we can hope to attain is comparatively miniscule.

Contrasted with the generally low estimation medieval thinkers had of the human capacity for knowledge, however, is an extremely high view of the knowledge of God, both in terms of what God knows (i.e., everything), and the degree of certainty with which God knows it (i.e., absolute). God's knowledge, from the perspective of these thinkers, must be certain, immutable, infallible, and necessary in at least some sense, for God's knowledge encompasses not only all that is, but *why* and *how* it is, and God can never be deceived (and thus can never have knowledge which turns out to be false). This sort of knowledge at least appears to be so robust that it *cannot be otherwise*: to speak of this knowledge as contingent, as does Ockham, seems anathema to this robust sense of the sheer thorough-going-ness of the knowledge of God, and indeed, seems to strike at the very character of God as one whose very essence is necessary. Certainly, many philosophers, particularly those in the tradition of Classical Theism, have assumed that necessity is also a property of knowledge itself — or at least, of knowledge belonging to God. And though we shall not come to a proper examination of Bradwardine's views until the next chapter, it is worth noting here that the necessity of God's knowledge is certainly the assumption that Bradwardine is working with in his own arguments against Ockham, and he spells it out explicitly, citing Anselm as his authority:

In the same way, necessary knowledge and necessary will are more perfect

[98] I am here presenting this position in broadly Thomistic terms, which more or less describe, with minor variance and difference in emphasis, the epistemological position of the vast majority of late medieval philosophers. At the end of his life, St Thomas famously said that his entire life's work of philosophy was "but straw": this captures well, perhaps, the epistemic humility of the medievals, recognizing that all that we can know in this life amounts to mere bits and fragments of the truth — like straw, it has substance, to be sure, but it hardly amounts to anything at all.

> than contingent knowledge and contingent will, just as necessity is in itself more perfect than contingency. Necessary knowledge of a thing and necessary will are therefore attributed to God. The antecedent holds, since contingency includes potency [or potential, or capacity], and consequently imperfection. The consequence holds according to Anselm.
>
> Item necessaria sciencia et necessaria voluntas perfectior est sciencia contingenti et voluntate contingenti, sicut necessitas simpliciter perfectior est contingencia. Igitur necessaria sciencia rerum et necessaria voluntas est attribuenda Deo. Antecedens patet, quia contingencia includit potenciam et per consequens imperfectionem. Consequencia patet per Anselmum. (DFC 33a)

The "imperfection" of contingency, if ascribed to the knowledge of God, would seem to undermine the perfection of God's knowledge, and thus the perfection of God's *esse*. To Bradwardine and many of his contemporaries, this is an entirely unacceptable consequence. Likewise, we should wonder exactly what sort of knowledge God's foreknowledge might amount to if it is contingent as Ockham claims.

2.3.2 - Logical objections

In the discussion immediately following, I take it to be not entirely settled that something can be simultaneously *determinate* and *contingent*; or at the very least, that determinacy seems to undermine freedom to a significant extent. This is clearly an extremely contentious claim, and one that remains hotly contested in the contemporary literature. Ockham would seem to be defending a position not unlike the contemporary "compatibilist" claim that an act can be simultaneously determined and free.[99] I do not intend here to make any definitive claims about the

[99] On this topic, much more will be said in the final chapter.

truth or falsity of this position, as an exploration of this question would take us far afield from the primary focus of this thesis. But whether or not this position is genuinely tenable, it is certainly open to dispute, and it is in this disputed realm that I raise the following criticisms. They are, I think, issues that require at least a more thorough defense on Ockham's part.

In light of the context above, a problem with Ockham's account is that, though he may have successfully created a model on which God's foreknowledge does not imply the *necessity* of human action, he has not entirely done away with the problem. Rather, Ockham has pushed the problems of *necessity* relating to God's foreknowledge onto his uniquely-defined concept of *determinacy* (recall Ockham's departure from the Aristotelian concept, as explained in 2.2.2). Though future things may not be *necessary* on Ockham's interpretation, they *are* determinate. In fact, for Ockham, everything that has happened, is happening, or will happen is determinate, in virtue of the fact that at *some* moment of time (namely, after it has already happened), it has no power to be otherwise. This means that every past, present, or future state is determinate, which is a view of strong determinacy far more radical than anything Aristotle would have suggested. Under Ockham's interpretation, we no longer need to deal with the problem of whether the *necessity* of God's knowledge entails the necessity of human action (since Ockham does not claim that God's knowledge of our actions is necessary at all). But it seems that to claim that our future actions are determinate (as Ockham does) still undermines our freedom, at least if considered in a certain way.

The pertinent question for Ockham becomes, if God *determinately* knows that we will act in a particular way, and that act is itself determinate, can that act truly be said to be contingent, or more importantly, free? And if so, in what sense is such a future action free? Is it simply in the sense of logical contingency, in that there is no inherent contradiction in supposing that I don't act that way? or do I actually possess some sort of power to act otherwise? And if only the former, what does this

actually say about my freedom to act otherwise? The logical possibility of acting otherwise does not obviously seem to entail a very real sort of freedom to actually do so. But if we are speaking of the latter sort of contingency, as defined by powers, can any such power be a *real power to act* if my action is already determined? Even if, at t_1, there is some sense in which I have the *power* to act otherwise at t_2 than I in fact will act, if my action at t_2 is already determined, then that power I possess can never actually be realized. If a power is not realizable, then it seems peculiar to consider it to be a *real* power in things. And thus the determinacy of an action would seem to imply, at least in the most practical sense, that that action is in fact not free, since I have no realizable power to act otherwise.

Arguably, this lack-of-power-to-act-otherwise constitutes a sort of necessity, which Ockham denies. And so we are led directly to the question of how Ockham conceives of necessity. If Ockham defines *determinacy* as that which, at any point in time (before, during, or after it happens), has no power in itself to be otherwise, what then does he consider *necessity* to be? Is it a powers view, such as what defined determinacy under Aristotle's model — that which has no power *now* to be otherwise than it is — or is it a logical necessity model — that which, the denial of which leads us into a logical contradiction? Ockham appears not to have provided a satisfactory account of what necessity is, but I think it is most plausible to suppose that what he intends by necessity is what Adams has described as Aristotle's view of determinacy. This reading would be consistent with Ockham's adherence to the doctrine of the necessity of the present and past, for it is precisely in the present moment, when a contingent event is actualized, that it loses its power to be otherwise. Indeed, a "logical necessity" view, which would say that something is necessary if its denial leads to a contradiction, would *not* seem to imply that the present is necessary. I have argued already (see 1.3) that it is precisely his adoption of the *logical* notion of necessity that allows Duns Scotus to assert that the present remains contingent (because in the present moment, it involves no contradiction to suppose that something could turn out otherwise); but as I argued, logical necessity

understood in this way does not allow Duns Scotus to extend that inference to events in the past (contrary to most contemporary understandings of the contingency of past events in terms of possible worlds), because supposing that a *single* event turned out otherwise would entail a contradiction with all events that causally followed it. Because the notion of logical necessity *does* seem to imply the contingency of the present (if not of the past, also), and because Ockham denies, contra Duns Scotus, that the present is necessary, I think it can be safely concluded that Ockham could not consistently ascribe to a notion of necessity as logical necessity. I therefore conclude that Ockham must have in mind a time-dependent, powers view of necessity, on which the necessity of an event is defined something like this:

> N: An event *x* is *necessary* at *t* if and only if there is no (real, realizable) power at *t* for *x* to be otherwise.

It should be apparent, then, that on this reading of Ockham, what Ockham takes as *necessity* is what Aristotle (according to Adams) took to be *determinacy*. (See definition D1 in 2.2.2, which is based on Adams' Aristotelian definition of determinacy.)

But if this is Ockham's view of necessity, then it seems very hard to account for the fact that he simultaneously claims that God's present knowledge of future contingent events is contingent. If God's present knowledge is contingent, it would seem, it must be the case that there is some real (or realizable) power for God's knowledge to be otherwise than it is. Ockham would have it that this power for God's knowledge to be otherwise than it is rests in the fact that the subject of God's knowledge yet has power to be otherwise (insofar as it is contingent), and thus — since God must necessarily know all things that are true — if it *were* the case that the subject of God's knowledge turned out otherwise than God currently knows it to be, it *would be* the case that God's knowledge would be other than it is. It would

therefore appear that Ockham claims that there really is power for God's knowledge to be otherwise than it in fact is, since there really is power for its subject to turn out otherwise than it in fact will. The trouble with this is that God knows these things *now*. Despite Ockham's claim that statements about God's knowledge of future states are in some sense future, it is obviously the case that they also make statements of fact about the present, namely, that God *now* knows something particular in the future. We know this to be a statement of fact about the present, because it presupposes that God can act on that knowledge in the present. But this is something that we will explore in more detail in just a moment.

2.3.3 - God's action in the world

Ockham denies Duns Scotus' claim that the present is contingent. Indeed, Ockham seems to embrace the Aristotelian doctrine of the necessity of the present (and, by extension, the necessity of the past). How, then, can Ockham posit that God's present knowledge of future things is contingent? As we have already discussed (2.2.3), Ockham tries to mitigate this dilemma by claiming that God's knowledge of future contingent events only *appears* to be present-directed. A claim such as, "God knows that I will work on writing my thesis tomorrow" appears to be a statement about God's *present* knowledge, and so would seem to be a statement that is *necessarily* true or false, because it is about the present; but Ockham would claim that by virtue of the fact that it concerns something future and contingent (much like the statement, "Peter is predestinate"), it should actually be considered as a future contingent statement. I object, however, that this in fact undermines the idea that God *has* knowledge *now* of that future contingent event. If God's knowledge, *now*, of that future contingent event (that I will work on writing my thesis tomorrow) has any real clout, it must be the case that God really *has* knowledge *now* about that future state. And if that present knowledge is contingent, it, being present,

contradicts the presupposition that present things are necessary.

One may think that Ockham would wish to respond that this can be accounted for because of God's timeless eternity. Ockham certainly believes that God is eternal; but like Scotus, Ockham does not conceive of God's eternity as an existence timelessly apart from the created order, but rather, as the idea that God endures throughout the succession of time.[100] Thus, Ockham does not allow himself recourse to the idea of God's eternity to explain the puzzle of God's contingent knowledge. Furthermore, regardless of whether one posits God to exist in or apart from the succession of time, it remains the case that God works and enacts promises *in* time. For example, God promised Abraham, at a particular point in time, that he would be the father of a great nation; that promise was fulfilled, at a particular later point in time, with the birth of Isaac, and consequently the beginnings of the Israelite people. Thus, we can speak of the point in time *when* God made the promise (a promise that was dependent upon God's knowledge of the promise's eventual fulfilment), a point in time at which God *had* knowledge of when and how the promise would be fulfilled.

God's promise to Abraham was not arbitrary or vague, like the promise of a Chinese fortune cookie or a horoscope, for which any number of ordinary and very likely-to-happen things might be interpreted as the "fulfilment" of the promise. Indeed, when Abraham — because his very old wife was obviously barren — attempted to take matters into his own hands and conceived a child by his concubine, God clearly indicated that *that* child was not the fulfilment of the promise Abraham had been given. God knew the details of how God's promise to Abraham would be fulfilled, and some of those details were humanly impossible — such as the conception of a child by a woman whose days of fertility were long gone. And of course, Sarah's advanced age was not the only limiting factor: St Paul jokes that

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[100] Craig 1988, p. 146. Included in the endnotes of Craig's volume is also to be found a useful snap-shot summary of Ockham on time and eternity, drawing on the doctoral thesis of Adams (*The Problem of God's Foreknowledge and Free Will in Boethius and William Ockham*, Cornell University, 1967).

Abraham himself was “as good as dead” (Hebrews 11.12). But from an impotent old man and an old woman many years past child-bearing years, God promised that a child would be born. The future contingent event of Isaac’s birth at some particular point in time was known by God at the time of God’s promise-making, otherwise God would not have been warranted in making the promise that God made.

If we are to accept that, whether or not God’s own existence is timeless, God acts in time-bound creation, then it must make sense, at least relative to that creation, to speak of God knowing or acting *now*, or *in the past*. It is, after all, relative to time-bound creation that we speak in the Aristotelian framework of the present and past being necessary. It would thus seem that if God *now* has knowledge of some future contingent event, that knowledge — if not the event itself — is necessary by virtue of being *now*. (Thus the whole problem!) The problem of God’s action in time is made even more robust when we consider the earthly life of Jesus Christ, God incarnate. Even if the Godhead inhabits timeless eternity, at least in general, not only does God *act* in time-bound creation, but the Second Person of the Godhead *dwells bodily* in time-bound creation. A Nazarene man is born at a *particular, identifiable* time in Classical history (ca. 4 B.C.), when the power of the Roman Empire is approaching its height, and this man lived out his earthly life over a period of 33 Earth-years before being subjected to Roman execution on a cross ca. 30 A.D. The claim of Christians, including Ockham and Bradwardine, is that this man *is* the eternal God: whether or not God himself exists timelessly, dwelling beyond our order of created time and space, transcending the entire created order, all of time eternally present to God by a mode of knowing unfathomable to mere time-trapped creatures — yet, this God acts in time to announce and to bring about God’s own promises at particular, identifiable historical moments (“In the days of Herod, king of Judea,” for instance (Luke 1.5)). The tension between the timeless eternity of God and the action of God in time is starkly illustrated by the doctrine of the Incarnation.

Thus, if Ockham explicitly ascribes to the doctrine of the necessity of the

present, we must hold him to account if he is to also claim that the knowledge God *presently* has is contingent, if the subject of that knowledge is contingent. It does not seem to me that Ockham has provided a satisfactory account of how these notions can be reconciled.

Conclusion

Having now surveyed in some depth Ockham's approach to the problem, and considered a few possible objections to his approach, we will turn in the next chapter to an introduction to Bradwardine's text, and discover his own reasons for rejecting Ockham's solution.

Chapter 3

Bradwardine's Treatise, Part I:

The Rejection of the Ockhamist Solution

Introduction

We have now examined in some detail the solutions of four major figures — Boethius, Anselm, Duns Scotus, and Ockham — to the problem of future contingents. It is in light of these positions that we turn finally to the titular subject of this dissertation, which is the early treatise of Thomas Bradwardine called the *De futuris contingentibus* (On future contingents; DFC henceforth).[101] We begin our examination of the DFC in this chapter with a discussion of the structure of the treatise, which is complicated by the fact that there has been some misunderstanding on this front present in the literature on the treatise (3.1). We will then turn to a summary of the first half of the treatise itself (3.2), with especial attention given to Bradwardine's criticism of Ockham's view as it appears in that section (3.3). These tasks completed, we will be ready to move, in the next chapter, to an examination of Bradwardine's own solution to the problem.

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[101] Thomas Bradwardine, *De futuris contingentibus* (ed. J.-F. Genest), *Recherches Augustiniennes* vol. 14 (1979), 280 – 336. This edition is immediately preceded by Jean-François Genest's immensely informative introduction (ibid., 249 - 279). The mid-twentieth-century literature on Bradwardine, including Heiko Oberman's volume *Archbishop Thomas Bradwardine: A fourteenth century Augustinian* (Utrecht: Kemink & Zoon, 1958) and Genest's introduction, informs me that there also exists an earlier, fragmentary edition of DFC by P. Bartomeu-Maria Xiberta, published in 1935, but I have not seen this edition for myself (in any case, Genest reports that Xiberta's edition covers less than 15% of the text. Genest 1979, 249). From Genest's description of the Xiberta extracts, though, I suspect that this may have been what Norman Kretzmann was working from when he drafted a translation of fragments of the text (the quantity of text included — "moins de 15%" — would seem, at any rate, to be about the same). It was, incidentally, Stephen Read who first shared Kretzmann's fragmentary translation draft with me, and this document sparked my initial interest in this text.

3.1 - Structure of De futuris contingentibus

Before moving on to the explicit arguments set forward by Bradwardine, it will be worth our taking a bit of time to understand the general structure of this little-studied treatise. Indeed, as we shall see, it is partly because of misunderstandings of the structure of DFC that its significance in the history of discussions of future contingents has been overlooked before now. The treatise breaks down broadly into two halves: in the first half, Bradwardine examines and critiques a number of approaches to the problem of future contingents put forward by others; in the second half, he lays out his own solution, and responds to possible objections. But due to textual issues that will be discussed below, even this basic structure has been misunderstood by some, and consequently the content of the second half has not consistently been recognized as even presenting an original solution to the problem of future contingents at all. In this section, then, I will describe the structure of the treatise (3.1.1), and then highlight and discuss the textual problem that I think has led to a misunderstanding of this structure (3.1.2).

3.1.1 - The De futuris contingentibus*, Parts I & II*

The *De futuris contingentibus* is comprised of two main parts:

Part I (DFC 3a - 40g)

After a brief introduction, in which Bradwardine outlines the problem of reconciling the existence of future contingents with God's prescience, Bradwardine lays out nine solutions to the problem that have been put forward by various philosophers (DFC 3a - 40g). In this part of the treatise, Bradwardine systematically considers each of these nine opinions, and in scholastic fashion, considers arguments in favour of and opposed to each one. In the following two sections (3.2.

and 3.3), I will provide a summary of these positions and Bradwardine's treatment of them, with special attention (3.3) to the lengthy discussion Bradwardine undertakes of Ockham's position.

Part II (DFC 41 - 63)

After having outlined the solutions of others, and in most cases, his criticisms of the same, Bradwardine turns in the second part to a presentation of his own solution, addresses objections possible objections to the same, and explores his solution's application to various related questions (DFC 41 - 63). We will not take up a discussion of this section until the following chapter, with an analysis in the final chapter.

3.1.2 - A textual problem

Despite this seemingly straightforward two-part division of the text, a confusion that has arisen with regard to the structure at the point of transition between the two. This confusion is the result of the fact that just prior to the *responsio propria*, Bradwardine introduces this second portion of the treatise by a restatement of the question at hand. But in restating the question, the text phrases it in a way that is subtly – but significantly – different from the question with which the treatise began. The treatise opens with the question, "Whether God has foreknowledge of all *ad utrumlibet* future contingents";[102] at this point, however, when we expect him to provide his own response to the initial question, he instead restates the question as, "Whether *Christ, who is* God, has foreknowledge of all *ad utrumlibet* future contingents" (emphatic italics added).[103]

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[102] *utrum Deus habeat prescienciam omnium futurorum contingencium ad utrumlibet.* (Heading at the beginning of at least two MSS (Troyes and Vatican), preceding what Genest numbers as paragraph 1.)
[103] *utrum Christus qui est Deus habeat prescienciam omnium futurorum contingencium ad utrumlibet.*

With the addition of three words ("*Christus qui est*"), the initial question becomes an entirely different – though related – question: this latter question highlights problems relating to the nature of the Incarnation, and the complex relationship between Jesus Christ's divine nature and human nature, rather than just the puzzles relating to God's foreknowledge and future contingents. This latter question echoes those of a long tradition of questions about the knowledge of the incarnate Christ, from the third book of Peter Lombard's *Sentences* to the *Tertia Pars* of St Thomas's *Summa Theologiae* (particularly questions 9 through 12[104]). What complicates the question of Christ's knowledge is his simultaneous, complete possession of both divine and human natures. For by his divine nature, it would seem that Christ would possess all the knowledge (including the foreknowledge) of God; but by his human nature, it would seem that such complete and total knowledge is impossible. Thus, the question of Christ's knowledge, and for the case in question, his foreknowledge, is far more complicated than the more basic question of God's foreknowledge (to be sure, I recognize the irony of calling the latter question "basic").

Genest suggests that the formulation at the beginning of the *responsio propria* ("Whether Christ, who is God, has knowledge of all *ad utrumlibet* future contingents") may indicate that the whole question of the treatise really arose in connection with Christ's knowledge, and may be connected with Adam Wodeham's lectures on the subject in Oxford in 1331 - 32.[105] Genest thinks this indicates that the question Bradwardine is *really* concerned with is that of Christ's knowledge. But there are reasons, I believe, to question this conclusion. In particular, if

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(DFC 41)

[104] For a sense of the complexity of this question, the articles in these sections include, for instance, "Did Christ have any knowledge besides the Divine?" (Q. 9 art. 1); "Did he have any acquired knowledge?" (Q. 9 art. 4); "Did the soul of Christ know all things in the Word?" (Q. 10 art. 2); (on infused knowledge) "Did Christ know all things by this knowledge?" (Q. 11 art. 1); "The comparison of this knowledge with the angelic knowledge" (Q. 11 art. 4); (on acquired knowledge) "Did Christ know all things by this knowledge?" (Q. 12 art. 1); "Did he advance in this knowledge?" (Q. 12 art. 2); "Did he learn anything from man?" (Q. 12 art. 4); etc.

[105] Genest, p. 254.

Bradwardine's main concern is the knowledge of Christ, as Genest speculates, it should strike us as extraordinarily strange that so little of the subsequent discussion has anything to do with the particularities of the knowledge of the incarnate Word. With only a few isolated exceptions, the discussion concerns the knowledge of God more generally; if Bradwardine really intended to speak of Christ's knowledge, then surely this would have been brought forward more explicitly, since the issues surrounding Christ's knowledge are so very different from and very much more complicated than those of God's knowledge in general. This is because, while much of God's foreknowledge might be explained by appeal to God's inhabiting an eternal moment which transcends time, if we speak of the person of Jesus Christ, we are necessarily speaking of God inhabiting time and space and thus bound by those things. If Christ is fully God, then our set of problems surrounding God's knowledge becomes complicated even further by the fact that we seem to be positing simultaneously that God transcends time — and in this way possesses perfect and complete knowledge of all events in time, past, present and future — and that God dwells fully in time. Without straying into one or another trinitarian heresy (particularly tempting here are modalism and tri-partism), it is very difficult to see how these two ideas might be reconciled. It would therefore be passing strange if a treatise supposedly devoted to the problem of "Whether Christ, who is God, has knowledge of all *ad utrimlibet* future contingents" did not, in fact, address any of these pressing problems relating to that question.

Similarly, if this is taken to be the introduction of a *new* question, it is puzzling that what follows does not address this second question in any way (except insofar as it relates to the first). Additionally, this reading does not seem to make good sense of what is actually happening structurally with the treatise: if the treatise did break into two parts, addressing two distinct questions, then it seems that Bradwardine will never have given his own positive account in response to the first question within the section concerning that question, while failing also to address the features of the second question which distinguish it from the first. Indeed, as I

have been implying from the start, the overall structure (which, despite Genest's conclusions to the contrary, is supported by Genest's editorial presentation) seems to frame what follows as Bradwardine's solution to the original question; for it is to this question that his response most readily applies, and it does not in any way treat the particular problems of the question of Jesus' foreknowledge and the Incarnation.

On my view, it seems safe, therefore, to conclude that the second half of the treatise, like the first, is concerned with the question of "Whether God has foreknowledge of all *ad utrumlibet* future contingents." On this view, then, the addition of "*Christus qui est*" in the second instance of the question is an error, whether due to a copyist, or to a student's faulty transcription (as the work we have does seem to be a *reportatio*), or perhaps even to Bradwardine's own slip of the tongue.[106] Perhaps a more thorough investigation of this portion of the extant manuscripts (something which I have been unable to undertake myself) would yield useful clues on the matter, but as the scholarship currently stands, the reasons for this error remain something of a mystery. What does seem clear, however, is that throughout the treatise, Bradwardine is addressing the problem of God's knowledge of future contingents, and does not seem concerned with the related particulars regarding the knowledge of the Incarnate Jesus Christ.

I draw attention to this textual point because I think it is because of this that Heiko Oberman has misunderstood the structure of the treatise, which substantially confuses his interpretation. Oberman takes the second statement of the question to be introducing a second part of the treatise on the separate question of Christ's foreknowledge.[107] From what I have argued above, however, I believe that Oberman

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[106] Richard Moll has quite validly objected that this conclusion seems somewhat backwards: in particular, it glosses over the fact that, from a text-editing perspective, much more authoritative credence ought to be to the main body text than to editorial headings; the "Christus qui est" appears in the main body of text, while the appearance of the question without those words appears in an editorial heading, which is presumably a later addition. Moll may very well be right that my conclusion is ill-founded from a textual-historical perspective; however, even if it is indeed the case that the inclusion of "Christus qui est" was intentional on Bradwardine's part, it remains a serious puzzle why his subsequent discussion does little to address the particularities of that question.

[107] Oberman, pp. 107 ff, especially p. 111. I should note here that we ought not to be too harsh in our

is mistaken in his assessment of the work's structure as two distinct questions. I think also that Genest is mistaken in supposing that the main aim of the entire treatise is the treatment of the question of Christ's knowledge. In sum, it seems to me to be far more sensible to treat the entire treatise as a continuous treatment of the first question, and the addition of the words "*Christus qui est*" as a textual error.

3.2 - The nine opinions

Now that we have an idea of the overall structure of the DFC, we are ready to turn to a summary of the first part, in which nine "opinions" are examined by Bradwardine and, in almost every case, dismissed. For the most part, I will be quite brief, pausing over only a couple which merit further examination. And I will save discussion of the eighth opinion — that of Ockham — 'til the next section (3.3). This cursory summary may strike the reader as a frustrating offering of mere "teasers," without much in-depth investigation of their merit or broader implications. But I feel that presenting them in this way is in some ways necessary and unavoidable in the current project: presenting each view, however briefly, seems necessary for an adequate summary of an almost unknown work; and doing so with brevity and terseness is unavoidable if we are not to become too distracted from the main thrust of the project.

Something that may be useful to keep in mind when considering these views is the spectrum I laid out in the main Introduction of solutions to the problem of future contingents, from a denial of free will (Determinism) on the one end, to a denial of God's foreknowledge (Open Theism) on the other. For at least some of the

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judgment of Oberman's scholarship on this account: at the time of the publication of his book on the theology of Bradwardine, no edition of the complete DFC existed, and he had to rely on the very incomplete publication by E.B.M. Xiberta, O. Carm, "Fragments d'una questio inedita de Thomas Bradwardina," in *Festschrift für M. Grabmann* (Münster, 1935), pp. 1169 - 1180 in BB, Supplementvolume III, 2 (Publication from Cod. Vat. Lat. 813). It is quite understandable, therefore, that he did not have an accurate understanding of the overall structure of the work.

solutions that follow, it is useful to consider how they might map onto this spectrum.

Opinions 1 & 2

The first opinion which Bradwardine considers (DFC 3a - 8g) is that nothing is future. This is supported by a sophistical argument that the future is nothing (because it does not presently exist), and so by inversion, nothing is future. But this, Bradwardine argues, is not consistent with our own experience of the passage of time. We experience time as successive, and perceive our own present to have been future to time past; that time which stands in the same relationship to our present as our present stands to the past is simply what we mean by future. To say that nothing will be future does not bear out our own experience of times past.

The second opinion (DFC 9a - 9d) concedes that there are future things, but as the first opinion claims that future things are nothing, the second claims that future things have no power. In virtue of their lack of power, the second opinion asserts that future things have no power for being, or becoming, and are hence unable to be. Bradwardine responds, by appeal to Anselm, that it is not through a thing's own power that it comes to be in the first place, but rather by *God's* power: so a thing's powerlessness to bring itself into being is irrelevant, since no-one claims that that is the power that brings it about, anyway.

Opinion 3

The third opinion (DFC 10 - 12) expresses what Bradwardine takes to be Aristotle's opinion, as made clear by one of the few explicit attributions Bradwardine cites among the nine opinions ("Et hoc patet per Philosophum…", or, "And this holds according to the Philosopher…"). This opinion is clearly an interpretation of Aristotle's view as laid out in the *De interpretatione*, which

Bradwardine summarizes as putting forward the view that future contingents are not determined, and thus that propositions concerning them have no determinate truth value, so are neither true nor false. It is interesting to compare this interpretation to the contested interpretation of Boethius, discussed in 1.1.1; and also to that of Ockham, discussed in 2.2.2. (Doing so will uncover subtle differences in possible interpretation that may affect our evaluation of the charity of Bradwardine's criticisms of the opinion.) Among Bradwardine's objections to this claim is that it would make nonsense of claims of God's foreknowledge, since God could not have determinate knowledge of things that were not determined. Bradwardine says that on this account, the only sort of foreknowledge God might have is that "under a disjunction" (i.e., the knowledge of the tautology, "A will happen or A will not happen"), but "any idiot knows in that way!"[108]

Opinions 4 & 5

The fourth opinion (DFC 13a - 15c) is somewhat peculiar, and a bit difficult to parse out: according to this opinion, things which are going to be, *begin* at a certain point to be going to be. In other words, future things were not going to be from eternity, but only from a certain point in time. But Bradwardine does not think this makes a whole lot of sense: suppose some future thing, A, begins to be going to be at some future point in time. Then is it not the case *now* that A will begin to be going to be in the future — and hence, does it not follow that even now (and from eternity!), A is going to be? Furthermore, if something begins to be going to be at a certain point in time, then wasn't there an earlier point in time at which that beginning began to be going to be? And prior to that, would there not have been a beginning for *that* beginning? And so on *ad infinitum*. All in all, though, it is not entirely clear to me what the upshot of this opinion is: in what way does it attempt to resolve any

[108] Similiter sic sequitur quod Deus nihil presciret nisi sub disjunctione, et sic scit quilibet ydiota. (DFC 11c)

of the problems inherent in future contingents? It is also not an opinion that I recognize as having actually belonged to anyone in particular, despite Bradwardine's confusing suggestion that Aristotle defends the position (as well as its refutation — DFC 13c, 14a). In any case, an investigation of this confusing position — though certainly beyond the scope of our current endeavour — may be worth further study.[109]

The fifth opinion (DFC 16a - d) is the rather impious suggestion that God does not in fact have any foreknowledge of future contingents. This, Bradwardine claims — by an obscure reference to a work on dreams which he calls *De sompno* [sic] *et vigilia* — is implicitly affirmed by Averroes (DFC 16b). Bradwardine defers his reply to this opinion until after his own discussion, in which he will make clear how it is that God in fact *does* have knowledge of future contingents.

Opinion 6

The sixth opinion (DFC 17 - 19) is the classic Anselmian-Augustinian view (attributed by Bradwardine to Anselm) that, by virtue of God's transcendence of time, all of time — past, present, and future — is present to God. God's transcendence of time is a result of time being a part of the created order; time did not pre-exist the creation of the universe, on this view. Thus, what is future for us is not future for God. Because of this, God's knowledge of what is future to us is not, in relation to God, *fore*knowledge at all, since it is only knowledge of what is present to God. Thus, it is claimed on this view that there is nothing about this sort of knowledge that results in any compulsion for something to turn out as it is known — no more than our knowledge of what is present to us adds any compulsion for something to turn out as it does.

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[109] In particular, it may be fruitful to consider this question in relation to Bradwardine's own treatise on beginning and ceasing, *De incipit et desinit*, ed. L.O. Nielson, in *Cahiers de L'Institut du Moyen-Âge Grec et Latin*, vol. 42 (1982), pp. 47 – 83.

We have already discussed the view of Anselm in great detail (1.2), so I will not say much more about it here. Interestingly, though, while Bradwardine *does* put forward a couple of objections to this opinion, all are immediately given responses. Unlike all other opinions of the first section, this one ends not with a *sed contra* argument, but a *respondetur* (DFC 19). It would seem, therefore, that Bradwardine does not, in fact, reject this opinion. As we will see when his own argument unfolds, it seems as though Bradwardine takes his own solution to the problem of future contingents to be an elaboration upon, or a refinement of, this sixth opinion. This supports my argument that Bradwardine's own solution ought to be understood as following in a lineage of positions that includes that of Anselm.

Opinions 7 (& 8) & 9

The seventh opinion (DFC 20) is one which Bradwardine claims to find too preposterous, "so entirely contrary to both philosophy and theology," that it does not even merit a response: it is the view that nothing is contingent, but that everything happens by necessity. Although Bradwardine does not make the attribution, a view like this has been attributed by several scholars to Averroes. Despite Bradwardine's emphatic insistence that necessitarianism is entirely untenable as a philosophical or theological position, as we shall explore in the following chapter, it may be the case that Bradwardine's own view strays alarmingly close to this position. Perhaps, in his adamant dismissal of this position, the Profound Doctor doth protest too much.

The eighth opinion (DFC 21 - 38g) is that which receives Bradwardine's greatest attention by far: it is the opinion of Ockham, which we will examine in much greater depth, along with Bradwardine's objections, in the next section (3.3).

The ninth and final opinion (DFC 39 - 40g), unattributed by Bradwardine, claims that those future things which God explicitly foretells (in prophecy, promises, and the like) are necessary, but all other things are not. Bradwardine has two main

objections to this claim. Firstly, he takes it to be the case that, even if God does not explicitly foretell something, that God *could* foretell that thing if God so wished (since God freely spoke everything into being, and has complete knowledge of all things that will be); thus it would appear to follow that *everything* could be necessary. Bradwardine seems then to follow a line of reasoning consistent with an S5 modal system, concluding that if it is *possible* for something to be necessary, then it *is* necessary. So this leads to the result, already rejected in the seventh opinion, that everything is necessary. Furthermore, this position would seem to reverse the causal relationship between what is foretold and the foretelling: things do not happen, argues Bradwardine, because they have been foretold, but rather, something may be foretold *because it is going to happen*. He illustrates his point with the prophecy of Isaiah that "a virgin shall conceive and bear a son": Jesus was not born of a virgin *because* Isaiah prophesied that he would be; rather, Isaiah prophesied a virgin birth *because* that was the way in which Jesus would be born (DFC 40g).

Analysis

With this ninth opinion, Bradwardine concludes his survey of responses to the problem of future contingents. We may notice gaps in Bradwardine's survey: most notably, perhaps, there is no explicit discussion of any opinion that seems to be like that of Duns Scotus (see 1.3). (I will claim shortly that a strongly possible reason for this absence in the survey is that Scotus' view is one which Bradwardine himself will pick up and elaborate upon in his own *responsio propria*.) But as has been noted already (see the Introduction), in our consideration of a spectrum of views on the problem of future contingents and God's foreknowledge, there are two extreme possible solutions, while all other solutions try to avoid falling into either extreme: on the one extreme, the problem is solved by rejecting the existence of future contingents, in one of various forms of determinism or necessitarianism. The trouble with this extreme is that it would seem, at least on the face of it, to

undermine human free will. On the other extreme lies the denial that God does, in fact, know all things future. (In contemporary theology, this sort of solution arises in the context of what has been called "Open Theism", as influentially espoused by the late Clark Pinnock, Canadian Protestant theologian at McMaster University.[110] Among philosophers of religion, this position has been vigorously embraced by, e.g., William Hasker,[111] and aspects of Open Theism's particular criticisms of Classical Theism can be seen already in, e.g., Alvin Plantinga.[112] The direct denial of God's foreknowledge is also strongly present throughout the work of Richard Swinburne, and is, in fact, among the more controversial of Swinburne's theistic claims.[113]) However, this opposite extreme undermines God's omniscience.

Despite the fact that Bradwardine's list of nine opinions is not at all comprehensive, we should note that both of these two extreme solutions can be identified among them. Necessitarianism, which is the seventh listed, is simply dismissed as "opposed to philosophy as much as to theology." (DFC 20) We also see a denial of the existence of future contingents in the first opinion, which not only rejects the contingency of future things, but even their very existence! (DFC 3ff) On the other extreme, something like "Open Theism" is found in the third opinion, purportedly Aristotle's, which says that of a future contingent A, God only knows that A will be or A will not be. (DFC 10ff)

But none of these eight opinions is really Bradwardine's chief target in this project of his. For that, we must turn to his treatment of Ockham's position.

3.3 - Bradwardine's case against Ockham

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[110] See, e.g., Clark Pinnock, *The Openness of God* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1994); and *Most Moved Mover: A Theology of God's Openness* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 2001).
[111] William Hasker, *Foreknowledge, Evil, and the Openness of God* (London: Routledge, 2004).
[112] Alvin Plantinga, "On Ockham's Way Out," *Faith and Philosophy* vol. 3 (1986), pp. 235 - 69. Reprinted in Thomas V. Morris, ed., *The Concept of God* (Oxford: OUP, 1987), pp. 171 - 200.
[113] Richard Swinburne, *The Coherence of Theism*, revised edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993).

Bradwardine's objections to Ockham's solution to the problem of future contingents in *De futuris contingentibus* fit within his broader anti-Ockhamist project, a project which is seen most explicitly in the thousand-page anti-Pelagian polemic of the next decade, *De causa Dei*. In the *De futuris contingentibus*, however, his objections to Ockham arise in the context of his refutations of nine separate solutions to the problem of future contingents. As we have seen, these nine solutions range from a statement denying God's foreknowledge (the fifth opinion, DFC 16a ff.), to a statement of absolute determinism (the seventh opinion, DFC 20). Almost all of the nine opinions receive brief, terse replies, some of which have been summarized above; but to the eighth, Bradwardine devotes fifteen or more pages of text. This eighth position is that of William Ockham.

Bradwardine's concentrated attention on this one view seems not to spring so much from finding it a particularly difficult or subtle position to reject, but rather, from an impulse to show us just how entirely bad the view really is. It seems, therefore, that in Ockham's theory, we discover the primary motivation for Bradwardine's treatise – and that is to offer an alternative to the solution of his Oxford adversary. One way of understanding Ockham's position that helps us to understand Bradwardine's deep suspicion of it is to observe that it seems that, for Ockham, what is most important in his development of a solution is the preservation of the true contingency of future events. That future contingents are truly contingent is, as it were, taken as a given, and the rest of the account developed accordingly to correspond with this fact. In a certain way, it seems that Ockham's position unfolds around the central tenet of future contingents, such that he is saying, "In light of this, what is to be said of God's knowledge of future contingents?"

From this perspective, it seems that, concerning any future contingent event A, Ockham would have it, concerning God's knowledge of A, that, because A is contingent, God's knowledge of A is also contingent. Ockham's claim is that knowledge of future events cannot be ascribed the same properties as knowledge of

present or past events. Because the subject matter of the knowledge in question is future and contingent, Ockham would have it that God's knowledge of these things is itself future and contingent in some special sense. Through this assertion, Ockham blocks the conclusion that God's foreknowledge of A entails the necessity of A: for if God's knowledge of A is future and contingent, we cannot ascribe to it the sort of necessity generally thought to inhere in past and present knowledge. Since the knowledge itself is not necessary, it therefore does not in any way follow that its subject, A, is necessary. But to make this work, it was necessary for Ockham to deny necessity of God's knowledge. And thus, Bradwardine summarizes Ockham's view by saying, "something is going to happen contingently *ad utrumlibet*[114] and is foreknown by God in this present instant, but . . . it is possible, even for this present instant, that it could not be going to be, nor foreknown by God."[115] As has just been discussed in the preceding section, this solution raises some important epistemological and logical problems. But despite these other issues, as we shall see, what Bradwardine is primarily concerned with are the ways this solution seems to undermine the absolute omniscience of God.

3.3.1 - Bradwardine's case

Bradwardine makes his case against Ockham in the eighth section of the nine purported solutions and rebuttals that he considers (DFC 21 - 37g). He summarizes Ockham's position in the following way:

> The eighth opinion posits that something is going to happen contingently *ad utrumlibet* and is foreknown by God in this present instant, but that it is possible, even for this present instant, that it could not be going to be, nor foreknown by God – nay, even more, that at no time was it ever going to be,

[114] More about this phrase — which means something like "in either way" — and my reasons for leaving it untranslated can be found in the first footnote of the appendix, as well as in the introduction, p. 4ff.
[115] aliquod est futurum contingens ad utrumlibet et prescitum a Deo in isto instanti presenti, et quod tamen possibile est pro isto instanti presenti quod non sit futurum nec prescitum a Deo… (DFC 21; this passage will be quoted more fully in just a moment).

nor [was it] foreknown by God.

> Octava opinio est que ponit quod aliquod est futurum contingens ad utrumlibet et prescitum a Deo in isto instanti presenti, et quod tamen possibile est pro isto instanti presenti quod non sit futurum nec prescitum a Deo, ymmo quod nunquam fuerit futurum nec prescitum a Deo. (DFC 21)

It must be noted that Bradwardine does not explicitly name Ockham as the originator of this view — indeed, few of the nine opinions, except the third (Aristotle) and the sixth (Anselm),[116] are given an explicit attribution.

At least two clues let us know that it is Ockham's position that Bradwardine has in his sights in the eighth opinion. Firstly, the characterization fits at least a certain interpretation of Ockham's position, and is consistent with Bradwardine's own characterizations of Ockham's position in later writing: future contingents are known by God in a way that is contingent, and thus in such a way that those events could yet turn out not to happen. In such a case, then God will not have known them to be going to be, since they would not have happened, which seems to be what is expressed in the passage above. Secondly, this is the opinion which receives Bradwardine's most sustained attack by far, indicating Bradwardine's intense interest in replying to this particular opinion. Given Bradwardine's evident interest in refuting Ockham's position on future contingents in later writing (notably, the *De*

[116] The sixth opinion (DFC 17) is attributed by Bradwardine to Anselm, though Genest has suggested that this opinion is perhaps more accurately Boethian: "La sixième opinion, qui remonte à Boèce, mais que Bradwardine place ici spécialement sous le patronage de s. Anselme, soutient que la connaissance que Dieu a de l'avenir n'est pas à proprement parler une prescience, les futurs étant présents à l'éternité divine." (Genest, 263) I am not convinced that Genest is correct to trace this view to Boethius rather than Anselm. Indeed, the sixth view seems certainly to reflect the view defended by Anselm in *De concordia*, and though Boethius gestures toward a model of this sort, his view is much more concerned with an understanding of the way in which God's knowledge *differs* from our own so as to make God's foreknowledge of our actions non-compelling (why "Goddes worthy forwityng" does not "streyneth me nedely for to doon a thyng," as Chaucer would put it), and his discussion of conditional necessity. If I were to point to anyone as a precursor to Anselm in the view that God foreknows all things in virtue of their being eternally present to God, I would pick out Augustine, not Boethius. But about this, more will be said in the following chapter.

causa Dei), it should not be surprising that his preoccupation with this position began somewhat earlier, and is evident in this work. Genest agrees with the identification of the eighth view as Ockham's, and also agrees with the assessment that this opinion is the real target of Bradwardine's treatise, saying that "the principle target for Bradwardine is clearly the eighth opinion, in which we recognize the Ockhamist theory of future contingents."[117]

We have examined already, in the preceding chapter, a number of potential problems with Ockham's solution, but Bradwardine's objections are somewhat different than those outlined previously. To summarize Bradwardine's reply, his chief complaint against Ockham's solution is that attributing to God knowledge that is contingent undermines God's immutability. Contingent knowledge, at least on Bradwardine's understanding of contingency, must be knowledge that could come into or out of existence: for God to have such knowledge would imply that God might know A at time t_1, and cease to know A at t_2. Loss of knowledge seems, to Bradwardine, to constitute a substantial change in the knower, leading to the unacceptable consequence that God is mutable.

For instance, the first objection Bradwardine levels against Ockham's position runs as follows:

> But against this, consider the following: it follows that it is possible that something would be going to be that is not now going to be. This consequent is false, since, if it were so [the following argument could be made]: Suppose that it is now that instant [in the future], and [suppose] that A would [happen]; it may then be argued as follows: A is now going to be, and previously A was not going to be, therefore it is changed from not-going-to-be to going-to-be; and it is not changed because of a change in itself (since it did not exist before now); it is therefore the case that, if A is changed, it is because of a change in something else. This consequent is false, since in the same way that it has just been argued concerning possibility that A can be changed from not-going-to-be to going-to-be, so too could it be argued

[117] "Mais la cible principale de Bradwardine est évidement la huitième opinion, où l'on reconnaît la théorie ockhamiste des futurs contingents." (Genest 263)

> concerning [A's] essence.
>
> Sed contra sic : sequitur quod possibile est quod aliquod sit futurum quod nunc non est futurum. Consequens est falsum, quia, si sic, ponatur illud instans in esse, et sit A, et arguitur sic : A est futurum nunc, et prius non fuit futurum, igitur mutatur de non futuro ad futurum; et non sic mutatur propter mutacionem in seipso, cum non sit adhuc ; igitur oportet quod, si A mutatur, sit propter mutacionem in alio. Consequens est falsum, quia sic arguitur de possibili quod A potest mutari de non futuro ad futurum sicut arguitur de inesse. (DFC 22a)

If it were the case, argues Bradwardine, that something could come to be that was previously not going to be, as would seem to follow from Ockham's claim that God's foreknowledge is contingent, then *something* must change between the time when the thing was not going to be and the time that it came to be, *other than the thing itself*. This is because prior to the thing's coming to be, nothing of it exists *to* undergo change. We see in this objection premonitions of things to come: for in what "other" thing might that change occur than God?

The connexion to God's mutability is drawn out more strongly in the second objection, several paragraphs later:

> Secondly, [one objects] to the principal [argument] in this way: If God has foreknowledge of *ad utrumlibet* future contingents, it follows that God can will and promise the opposite of what is now known, promised, and willed by him. This consequent is false, since in this way God could be changed with respect to knowledge, will, and promises, which is contrary to what is said in Malachi 3 [v. 6]: "I am the LORD, and I do not change"; and so it follows that [if] it will not be just as God has promised or has willed it to be, then God is changed.
>
> Secundo ad principale sic : si Deus habet prescienciam futurorum contingencium ad utrumlibet, sequitur quod Deus potest velle et promittere

> oppositum nunc sciti, promissi et voliti ab eo. Consequens est falsum, quia sic Deus potest mutari de scitis, volitis et promissis, quod est contra illud Malachie 3: « Ego Dominus et non mutor »; et ita sequitur quod non erit sic sicut Deus promisit vel voluit fore, igitur Deus mutatur. (DFC 23a)

Bradwardine is arguing that God's foreknowledge, as understood by Ockham, leads to the consequence that key aspects of God's nature — namely, God's knowledge, God's will, and God's promise-making — are mutable. This is so because, Bradwardine reasons, on Ockham's model, things may turn out otherwise than they were at one point going to turn out. So suppose at time t_1, some future event A was not going to happen. Then at t_1, God knew that A would not happen, perhaps willed that A would not happen, and perhaps even promised that A would not happen. But because of A's contingency, Bradwardine's Ockham may suppose that A *does* in fact happen, say at time t_2. Were A to happen at t_2, after it had been the case at t_1 that A was not going to happen — along with God's corresponding knowledge, will, and perhaps even promises — then at t_2 God's knowledge, will, and promises are substantially different, and consequently, God will have changed. This, as Bradwardine attests, is contrary not only to the Classical or Neoplatonist notions of God, but to the character and person of God as presented in the Jewish and Christian canons of Scripture.

We next come to a series of objections relating directly to God's promises as revealed in prophecy, which Bradwardine frequently refers to as "seeing in the Word," i.e. seeing what is revealed by the second Person of the Trinity, identified throughout Scripture as the Wisdom, Word, or *λογος* of God.[118] These objections also

[118] The identification of the Word of God with the second Person of the Trinity is very ancient in the Christian tradition, tracing its origin at least as far back as St John's Gospel of the first century, with the famous opening prologue, "In the beginning was the Word (*λογος*), and the Word was with God, and the Word was God . . . . And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us." (John 1.1, 14a) St John appears to be quite deliberate in his appropriation of the term *λογος*, which has a rich philosophical history reaching back to the Presocratics, from Heraclitus onward. Christian commentators on Old Testament texts, following John's lead, quickly came to identify instances of God's speech acts (e.g., in the creation narratives) and references to "the word of God" or "the word of the LORD" (e.g., Gen. 15.1, Is. 55.11), as

deal explicitly with problems relating to the predestined and the reprobate.

> Thirdly, [it may be objected] in this way to the principle [argument]: if whatever is going to be can be not going to be, then it follows that, with respect to the future, it cannot be something revealed in the Word [i.e., by God]. This consequent is false, but the consequence holds, since if it were so [that whatever is going to be can be not going to be], it would follow that what has already happened can have not happened, [so for example] someone who died in mortal sin can have not died in mortal sin, and so also someone who died in a state of grace can have not died in a state of grace, and so also a damned person can not ever have been damned, and a saved person can not ever have been saved. This consequent is therefore false. But the consequence holds: I suppose that A sees in the Word [i.e., has a vision from God] that B is about to be, and that it would be expected, under penalty of mortal sin, that A would foretell and affirm what A sees in the Word, and [would foretell] nothing other than what A sees in the Word. Then suppose that A foretells that B is going to be, and that through [sharing] this prediction and through obedience [A] is saved, and otherwise [A] is not [saved]. Then it may be argued as follows: it is possible for B not to happen, therefore it is possible for [A] not to have foretold that B was going to be; and consequently, if [A] is saved precisely because of [A's] foretelling, it is possible for [A] not to have been saved. And so the proposition follows, namely, that the past can not be the past [i.e., can not have happened], and other things of this sort, since if B is not going to be, [A] did not see in the Word [that] B is about to be going to be, and consequently, [A] did not foretell it to be so, nor, consequently, was [A] saved because of this [foretelling]; therefore, etc.

> Tercio sic ad principale : si quodlibet futurum potest non esse futurum, igitur sequitur quod de futuris non potest esse aliqua revelacio in Verbo.

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well as to "the wisdom of God" (e.g., Prov. 8), with the second Person of the Trinity, incarnate in Jesus. Instances of God granting revelation to prophets and patriarchs (e.g., "The word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision …") are interpreted throughout the Christian tradition as instances of the acts of God the Son. In the medieval tradition, this was often depicted quite literally in artistic representations of Old Testament revelation: for example, in depictions of Moses hearing God speak to him in the burning bush, the face of Jesus is often to be seen in the burning bush (examples can be found in medieval books of Hours, in Eastern iconography, and in Western stained glass; very often, the image is of Christ as an infant in the arms of his Mother). Given this strong precedent, it is not surprising that Bradwardine and other medieval writers refer to true prophesy as "vision in the Word," or "seeing in the Word," despite the odd ring it has for us.

> Consequens est falsum et consequencia patet, quia si sic, sequitur quod preteritum potest non esse preteritum, et qui decessit in peccato mortali potest non decessisse in peccato mortali, et sic de illo qui decessit in caritate potest non etc., et sic dampnatus potest nunquam fuisse dampnatus et salvatus nunquam fuisse salvatus. Consequens est falsum, igitur. Hec consequencia patet, posito quod A videat in Verbo B fore et quod precipiatur sub pena peccati mortalis quod predicet et affirmet illud quod vidit in Verbo, et non aliud vel alia quam omnia illa que videt in Verbo. Tunc ponatur quod A predicet B fore futurum, et quod pro illa predicacione et obediencia salvetur et aliter non. Tunc arguitur sic : possibile est B non evenire, igitur possibile est ipsum non predixisse B fore futurum ; et per consequens, si salvetur pro illa predicacione precise, possibile est ipsum non esse salvatum. Et sic sequitur propositum, scilicet quod preteritum potest non esse preteritum et hujusmodi, quia si B non est futurum, ille sic non vidit in Verbo B fore futurum, et per consequens non sic predixit, nec pro isto salvatur per consequens; igitur etc. (DFC 24a)

This is a long and somewhat confused objection, and to understand it rightly, I think it is best to read it as a series of interrelated arguments. Firstly, there is a repetition of the first objection (that Ockham's view leads to the contradictory result that something that is going to happen will not happen), with a number of specific examples relating to the salvation and damnation of particular people. Secondly, there is a largely implicit argument that, because of the contradiction of the first objection, prophecy and revelation from God would be impossible on Ockham's model. This is because God's revelation, and subsequent prophetic acts, depend for their veracity upon what is foretold actually occurring. If something that is going to happen does not happen, then no true revelation or prophesy concerning that thing can properly be given. Thirdly and finally, these two arguments are combined in a rather unintuitive way, so that the second leads to a very particular example of the first: suppose that some particular prophet's salvation *depends upon* her faithfully reporting what God supernaturally reveals to her about the future. Then if prophecy is not possible, she will be unable to make the prophetic reports upon which her

own salvation depends! And so it follows that although it is the case (by assumption) that she is saved in virtue of her obedience to God's revelatory demands, she is unable to prophesy, and thus it contradictorily follows that she is not saved.

Another thirteen major objections follow, but of these, only a few bring substantially new elements to bear on the discussion. We will briefly consider two more objections, for they pertain specifically to the question of whether *necessity* is a perfection in God or not. Because this issue was so important in our discussion of Ockham's model of God's foreknowledge, Bradwardine's response to this issue bears examination. The first of these objections is the twelfth, in which Bradwardine affirms the necessity of God's knowledge as a perfection in God. We have discussed already the dominant medieval assumption that in virtue of God's perfection, God's knowledge is necessary, and we have seen the way in which this assumption is exemplified in Anselm's writing. Bradwardine shares this assumption, and, in his own arguments against Ockham, he spells it out explicitly, citing Anselm as his authority:

> In the same way, necessary knowledge and necessary will are more perfect than contingent knowledge and contingent will, just as necessity is in itself more perfect than contingency. Necessary knowledge of a thing and necessary will are therefore attributed to God. The antecedent holds, since contingency includes potency [for the opposite], and consequently [potency for] imperfection. The consequence holds according to Anselm.
>
> Item necessaria sciencia et necessaria voluntas perfectior est sciencia contingenti et voluntate contingenti, sicut necessitas simpliciter perfectior est contingencia. Igitur necessaria sciencia rerum et necessaria voluntas est attribuenda Deo. Antecedens patet, quia contingencia includit potenciam et per consequens imperfectionem. Consequencia patet per Anselmum. (DFC 33a)

Bradwardine unequivocally denies Ockham's claim that necessity does not in itself constitute a perfection of God. But he does not address Ockham's concerns about immutable knowledge in fact being faulty knowledge (more on this shortly in 3.3.2).

However, Bradwardine does address, and at length, the concern that God's necessity might in some way impinge upon God's freedom of will. This is the topic of the fourteenth objection, which begins in this way:

> Similarly, if necessity were excluded from God's volition, this would be mostly due to freedom of choice. But this necessity is in no way incompatible with free choice; therefore, because of this, it ought not to be excluded from the will of God, as far as his internal and external actions. This is less the case in speaking of freedom for contradictories *ad utrumque partem* [i.e., the freedom to act in either of two ways], since this sort of freedom is not held by God, nor by the blessed; therefore, it follows that necessity ought in no way to be excluded from God in his action, since that power for contradictories is not part of freedom, nor does it pertain to freedom, according to what Anselm indicates by saying: "Who is more free? God and the blessed ones, who cannot sin and can [only] not sin, [are more free than us by] our freedom, by which we can sin and not sin." It therefore follows that necessity, but not coercion, is compatible with true liberty, since coercion is not compatible with God.
>
> Item si necessitas in volicione Dei excluderetur, hoc maxime foret propter libertatem arbitrii ; sed illa necessitas in nullo repugnat libero arbitrio ; igitur propter hoc non debet excludi a voluntate Dei quoad operaciones ejus ad extra et ad intra. Minor patet loquendo de libertate contradictionis ad utramque partem, quia illa libertas non est ponenda in Deo nec in beatis ; igitur propter illam in nullo debet excludi a Deo necessitas in sua actione, quia illa potestas contradictionis non est pars libertatis nec pertinet ad libertatem, secundum quod innuit Anselmus dicens : « Qui liberior est ? Deus et beatus, qui non possunt peccare et possunt non peccare, an [*correxi*: quam] libertas nostra qua possumus peccare et non peccare? ». Igitur sequitur quod cum vera libertate stat necessitas, sed non coactio, quia hec sibi repugnat. (DFC 35a, correction Genest's; internal quotation from Anselm's *De libertate arbitrii* I (Schmitt edition, vol. I, p. 208))

Bradwardine emphasises the Anselmian doctrine that true freedom of choice, or free will, is not the "freedom for contradictories" by which we are free to act in either of two ways (e.g., to sin or to refrain from sinning); if this were the case, then God and the blessed ones are *less* free than we, since they lack even the ability to sin, and this conclusion seems preposterous. Rather, freedom of choice is most perfectly exercised in choosing to perform virtuous acts. We are most free, not when we exercise our freedom to choose between opposing courses of action, but when we freely chose to act in accordance with virtue, for it is in choosing to act virtuously that we become most truly ourselves, and hence most free. In this way, Bradwardine thinks that Ockham is on entirely the wrong track in denying the necessity of God's will and knowledge, and indeed, of God's very essence.

3.3.2 - Analysis of Bradwardine's case

It may be the case that Bradwardine's criticisms of Ockham betray significant misunderstandings of Ockham himself. As we have already seen (in 2.2.2, Q. II art. iii), Ockham denies, at least in general, that God is mutable, and denies that any claim about the contingency of God's knowledge necessarily results in saying that God is mutable. For Ockham does not think that mutability necessarily follows from contingency. To see this, it may be helpful to consider the difference as one between mutability as the *capability to change*, and contingency as the *capability to be different*. What I mean by this is that when we assert that something is mutable, we are claiming something about its ability to change over time; so, for instance, to say that a ball of playdough is mutable is to claim that it may be substantially different at one time, t_1, than it is at another time, t_2 (perhaps at t_1 it was a non-descript blob of dough, and then between t_1 and t_2 I transform the dough into a scale model of Notre Dame Cathedral, complete with flying buttresses). To assert that something is contingent, however, is a much weaker claim: the thing in question may not be

mutable in the sense that it could undertake substantial change from t_1 to t_2; but we may yet claim that that thing *could have been otherwise* than it is. In this case, that it is now such as it is, is not something that can change at any time in the future; but that it is now such as it is, *could* have been otherwise, had the events leading up to this point been otherwise than they were. (Think of something like the Cullinan I diamond, which is — at least in relative terms — immutable, but is not necessary, since it *could* have been otherwise than it is. See p. 74ff)

On the face of it, then, Bradwardine's claims that the contingency of God's knowledge would result in the mutability of God do not seem to cohere with Ockham's own account. However, if we consider more deeply the implications of Ockham's position, we may perhaps see some deeper inconsistencies that make his claims less tenable. It seems to be the case that Ockham considers God's knowledge to be contingent at least in the sense that it *could have* been otherwise than it in fact is. But as we discussed in the previous chapter (2.3.2), it is at least difficult, if not impossible, to reconcile this view simultaneously with the view that the present is necessary. With respect to God's knowledge, if God *now* knows that on Friday I will contingently drive to my grandparents' cottage, then Ockham's claim that God's knowledge of that event is contingent would seem to entail that God's knowledge *could* be otherwise than it in fact is; but this would seem, at least on the face of it, to stand in direct contradiction with the idea that because God knows it *now*, God's knowledge *couldn't* be otherwise than it is: something that is true *now* must be true necessarily.

The logical problems of trying to maintain, as Ockham does, that God's knowledge of future contingent events cannot properly be said to be something about the present (but rather, that this knowledge is itself future and contingent in some special sense) lead to serious problems when we come to consider how God might actually enact God's will in the world. And as we have seen, these are precisely among the issues that Bradwardine raises in his criticisms (as, for example,

in the concerns he raises about prophecy and God's promises; though we did not explicitly consider them above, some objections also consider Christ's actions in the world). So it seems as though, despite Ockham's protestations that his theory does *not* imply the mutability of God, Bradwardine is correct to criticize Ockham for a model of God's knowledge that undermines God's immutability.

However, an aspect of Ockham's argument that Bradwardine fails to adequately address is this: Ockham makes the point that, when it comes to knowledge, immutability may actually be seen, at least from a certain vantage point, as an *im*perfection (see 2.2.2, Q. II art. iii). So on the one hand, Ockham argues that the contingency of God's knowledge does not actually imply that God's knowledge is mutable; but on the other, he argues that, at least in a certain sense, we may not even *want* to affirm the immutability of God's knowledge, since immutable knowledge may in fact be *bad* knowledge. After all, circumstances in the world change constantly, so if our knowledge does not also change accordingly to accommodate changes in the world around us, we will be left with false knowledge. It *used* to be the case that George W. Bush was the president of the United States of America. When, in 2001, I *knew* that George W. Bush was the American president, that piece of knowledge stood me in good stead. But if *today* I persisted in the knowledge (or, perhaps to speak more precisely, the *belief*) that Bush is the American president, then no amount of protestation about the perfection of immutable knowledge would make me correct.

In order for my knowledge to track true states in the world, it must be the case that the content of my knowledge changes along with states in the world. Though Bradwardine does not seem to explicitly address this problem, it seems likely that he has in mind one of two conceptions of God's immutable knowledge. Either (a) he conceives of the content of God's knowledge as being, in a sense, time-tracking, so that God doesn't know, for instance, "Sarah will drive to her grandparents' cottage tomorrow" (which, even assuming I do, is a statement that

will become false after today); but rather, what God knows is, "Sarah drives to her grandparents' cottage on Friday, 12 June, 2015" (which, assuming I do, remains true tomorrow and any day thereafter); or (b) this is a context in which Bradwardine *does* appeal to the timeless eternity of God, so that God's knowledge cannot be properly said to change, since change requires the passage of time and God is not subject to time. These two possible interpretations may be seen, in fact, as potentially complementary: if we may conceive of the possibility, in any case, of human knowledge operating in the sort of time-tracking manner just described (and which I also described in 2.2.2), and thus not *really* changing even when the tenses of the propositions used to describe that knowledge do change, how much more might such a mode of knowing be ascribed to a timelessly eternal God? In fact, this may be precisely the key for unlocking the puzzle of reconciling the ideas of God both inhabiting an eternal present, and acting in time (discussed at greater length in 2.3.3): though all of time is simultaneously *present* to God, it may yet be present to God as time-indexed. Though the assassinations of Julius Caesar and John F. Kennedy may be simultaneously present to God in eternity, they may be present to God in such a way that God's contemplation of the one *includes* an awareness of its having happened two millennia before the other. God does not simply know, "Julius Caesar is assassinated," and "John F. Kennedy is assassinated," but rather, "Julius Caesar is assassinated (15 March 44 B.C.)," and "John F. Kennedy is assassinated (November 22 1963 A. D.)" (or whatever these date markers might be in the Divine, rather than Gregorian, calendar — perhaps indexed from the beginning of the created order?). God's simultaneous knowledge of the two events need not imply a mistaken belief that they happen simultaneously in the world. In fact, it need no more imply this result than *my* simultaneous knowledge of Julius Caesar's and J.F.K.'s assassinations implies that I think they happened simultaneously (clearly, I do not).

Considered in this way, it may seem more plausible to suppose that God's knowledge is immutable in a way that does not constitute an imperfection in God's knowledge (as Ockham claims that it might), since on this view, God's knowledge

would never change in the eternal present, without the immutability of God's knowledge constituting an imperfection in that knowledge. God's knowledge, on this account, would always accurately track true states of the world, without ever changing. Furthermore, while all of time is simultaneously present to God, every moment of time is present to God far more fully than it is to creatures who inhabit time. For as time- and space-bound creatures, every moment of time is a fleeting instant, never present for more than the instant in which it occurs. As soon as we are aware of it, it is past, and we cannot retrieve it to take a closer look; nor can we be aware of what passed in the moment in any place but the immediate surroundings present to our senses. But for God, each moment is always present, and his contemplation includes every detail of that moment in every place in the universe. The infinite vastness of every moment is present to God in God's eternal contemplation. In this way, not only is all of time simultaneously present to God in the infinite moment of eternity, but every moment of time is more completely present to God than it is even to the creatures who inhabit it. As St Peter writes, "with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day" (2 Pet. 3.8).

Augustine gives a familiar analogy to describe God's simultaneous survey of all of time: God's foreknowledge, he says, is like that of a person at the top of a high hill overlooking a road, who can simultaneously survey the road behind and before the wayfarers who walk along it. The wayfarers may only be able to see a short distance ahead — especially if the road is particularly hilly or winding — but the person who watches from the hill (and presumably has very good eyesight, or maybe a pair of binoculars) will be able to see what they will encounter ahead of them on the road before they get there — a gang of highwaymen, perhaps, or a wounded rabbit, or a patch of wild raspberries by the side of the road, or a sudden precipice. This analogy is of course imperfect, since while the person on the hill may be able to anticipate some of the pleasures or dangers the wayfarers will encounter, she cannot know the details of these encounters (she may know they will find a

wounded rabbit in their way; but will the wayfarers try to help the rabbit? or put it out of its misery, then stew it for dinner?); indeed, it is even impossible for her to know that the wayfarers *will* necessarily encounter the things she sees at all (perhaps the highwaymen will murder and rob them before they even reach the raspberries; or perhaps they will suddenly turn back the way they came). But overlooking these shortcomings, the analogy can perhaps be pressed further in a certain respect to illustrate the point I am making above: the onlooker *simultaneously* sees, say, a wounded rabbit and a patch of raspberries along the road. But just because she sees them simultaneously does not mean that she supposes the wayfarers will *encounter* them simultaneously. Rather, she sees that one comes before the other along the road, and — assuming the wayfarers' speed is steady — she may even be able to tell approximately when each encounter will occur.

What I have presented above goes beyond what Bradwardine himself explicitly asserts or argues. However I think this represents a plausible model of the way in which God foreknows events in the created world, compatible with what Bradwardine *does* assert, which explains both (a) how God can have knowledge of future things without necessitating their occurrence (by appeal to God's transcendence of time), and (b) how it is that God can yet know the sequence in which events occur for creatures, despite God's simultaneous purview of these events. It seems, I think, to be a model which is compatible with Bradwardine's criticisms of Ockham, and to which Ockham has denied himself access. For if Ockham is correct that aspects of God's knowledge and will are contingent, then it is not possible for God to exist in an eternal realm apart from time. For recall that according to Ockham's powers conception of contingency and necessity (which I have already explained above must be the view of modality with which Ockham is operating), for something to be contingent, there must be some prior time at which there existed the power for that event to occur, and also the power for that event not to occur. In the case in question — namely, the knowledge of God — it would therefore need to be the case that if God's knowledge of a thing is contingent, it is

because there is some power for it to either turn out or not to turn out. But this power is not possible if God transcends time, for in such a case there can be no *temporally prior* states of God, with powers for opposites. Thus, while the timelessly eternal model of God's foreknowledge assists Bradwardine in making his own case against Ockham, it is not a model to which Ockham can appeal for any help.

This view — that Ockham denies the *timeless* eternity of God — is supported by William Lane Craig, who states,

> For Ockham the relationship between God's foreknowledge and future contingents was a literally conceived concern, for he held that God's eternity was not a state of timelessness, but that God, though immutable, endures throughout all past, present, and future time, which arises from the order of succession among changeable things. (Craig, *The Problem of Divine Foreknowledge and Future Contingents from Aristotle to Suarez* (Leiden: Brill, 1988), 146)

In making this claim, Craig is apparently relying on the work of Marilyn Adams in her doctoral dissertation, *The Problem of God's Foreknowledge and Free Will in Boethius and William Ockham* (Cornell University, 1967). This interpretation of Ockham's view of eternity seems consistent with what I have observed of his thought, and supports my analysis above.

It may even be argued that the Ockhamist view expressed in the eighth opinion constitutes a sort of outright *denial* of God's foreknowledge, and thus also a brand of Open Theism: so claims Heiko Oberman, certainly, who thinks that this brand of "foreknowledge" amounts to little more than a kind of "passive waiting" on the part of God.[119] This interpretation is, I think, supported by Bradwardine's own criticisms. (DFC 21ff)

As I bring this chapter to a close, I would just like to highlight once again the

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[119] Heiko Oberman, *Archbishop Thomas Bradwardine, a Fourteenth-Century Augustinian: A study of this theology in its historical context* (Utrecht: Kemink & Zoon, 1957), p. 109.

significance of Ockham’s view in relation to the DFC treatise: Bradwardine's excessive attention to this one view, in comparison with the eight others, seems not to spring so much from finding it a particularly difficult or subtle position to reject, but rather, from an impulse to show us just how entirely bad the view really is. It seems clear, therefore, that in Ockham's theory, we find the primary motivation for Bradwardine's treatise: to offer an alternative to the solution of his Oxford adversary. Thus, we will turn in the fourth chapter to Bradwardine’s own solution to the problem.

Chapter 4

Bradwardine's Treatise, Part II:

Responsio Propria

Introduction

We are now halfway through our examination of Bradwardine's DFC. In the previous chapter, I laid out the two-fold structure of the treatise, and walked through a summary of the nine positions which Bradwardine engages in the first half. I paid by far the greatest attention, however, to the position which clearly corresponds to Bradwardine's interpretation of Ockham; the opprobrium with which Bradwardine considers this view is abundantly clear, and thus his motivation for writing the treatise is identified — namely, to correct the error, as he sees it, of Ockham's solution. In what follows below, I turn to giving a detailed explication of Bradwardine's own arguments as presented in the treatise (4.1). This is followed by a discussion of how Bradwardine's solution represents, as I claimed at the outset, a continuation, in a sense, of the views of Boethius, Anselm, and Duns Scotus, but also the ways in which Bradwardine's view develops this trajectory of solutions in ways original to him (4.2, 4.3, and 4.4).

4.1 - The Responsio propria

Having laid out the structure of the treatise as a whole, we come now to discussing the content of the second half, for it is here that we find the most interesting and original suggestions of this work. As we shall see, Bradwardine presents a solution to the problem of future contingents which places a particular and unique emphasis on a distinction in God's power. For this reason, we will first spend some time understanding the distinction itself and its history (4.1.1 and

4.1.2), before attempting to understand how it aids Bradwardine in forming a solution to the problem (4.1.3). I argue that, though Bradwardine is by no means original in his formulation of this distinction, he *is* original in the application of the distinction to this particular problem.

4.1.1 - God's absolute vs. ordained power

The heart of Bradwardine's own solution begins with a distinction between God's absolute and ordained power.

> One replies by drawing a distinction regarding power, or what is possible, in that it is of two sorts; for one sort is absolute, the other ordained. And I [now] explain what I mean by absolute power and by ordained power. Absolute power is that [same] ordained power; but it is absolute power insofar as it is undetermined relative to each part of a contradiction. And ordained power is that [same] power, insofar as it is determined relative to only one (or the other) part of a contradiction.

> Respondetur distinguendo potenciam, seu possibile, eo quod duplex est, quia quedam est absoluta, quedam ordinata ; et expono quid intelligo per potenciam absolutam et per potenciam ordinatam. Potencia absoluta est illa potencia ordinata, sed tamen est potencia absoluta ut indeterminata est ad utramque partem contradictionis; et potencia ordinata est illa eadem ut est determinata ad alteram partem contradictionis tantum. (DCF 42f)

God's absolute power is distinguished from his ordained power; but Bradwardine is quick to clarify that he does not mean that God has two separate, distinct powers. Rather, "absolute" and "ordained" are two ways of talking about God's one power. We may now be inclined to ask, what is it that constrains God's ordained power? Relative to which "part of a contradiction" is it determined? We discover the answer to this question in what immediately follows:

> And absolute power in the superior cause — namely, in God — is his ordained power, not insofar as it is ordained relative to only one (or the other) part of a contradiction, but as it is infinite and not determined or ordained relative to one (or the other) part [of a contradiction]. And his ordained power is [his] absolute – that is, infinite – power, not as undetermined relative to one (or the other) part of a contradiction, but as determined in virtue of his justice, and his mercy, and his will – for example, for producing something besides himself, immediately or mediately, or for saving [a person].
>
> Et potencia absoluta in causa superiori, scilicet in Deo, est potencia sua ordinata non ut est ordinata ad alteram partem contradictionis tantum, sed ut est infinita et non determinata vel ordinata ad alteram partem . Et potencia ejus ordinata est potencia absoluta, scilicet infinita, et non ut indeterminata ad alteram partem contradictionis tantum, sed ut determinata per suam justiciam et misericordiam et voluntatem, ut ad producendum aliquid ad extra, immediate vel mediate, vel ad salvandum. (DCF 42f)

What constrains God's ordained power and makes it distinct from God's absolute power are the dictates of God's will (I take it that God's justice and mercy are functions of God's will, so listing them separately is somewhat redundant on Bradwardine's part[120]). So we might perhaps conceive of this distinction as saying that God's one power operates in two distinct modes: on the one hand, God's power is able to operate with complete and unrestrained freedom, and in this sense we speak of God's absolute power; but on the other, God submits God's power to the dictates of God's will, doing only that which God wills, and nothing more – in this

[120] Here we run straight up against a variation of the Euthyphro dilemma: is something good (or just, or merciful) because God wills it, or does God will it because it is good (or just, or merciful)? Regardless of which way the causal implication runs, however, it may be agreed (or at the very least, granted for the sake of argument) that the extension of the set "what-God-wills" is contained within the set "what-is-good" (and "what-is-just," and "what-is-merciful"). By implying that the containment relationship runs in the direction I've just indicated, I've perhaps tipped my own hand; but it makes no critical difference to my argument if it were to run the other way, or if the sets were considered to be identical. And so I stand by my point that Bradwardine's list is redundant.

sense, we speak of God's power being ordained, or ordered, by God's will.

Let me illustrate this by analogy with the power of a chess-player to move playing pieces. Absolutely speaking, the player has it within her power to move a knight wherever she pleases — from b1 to g8, say. But why confine her movements to the board, even? She could take the piece and place it on top of the refrigerator, or put it in an envelope and post it to Australia. All of these possibilities lie within her power, considered absolutely. But when her power is considered with respect to the game of chess — the power of the chess-player *qua* player of chess — her options become considerably more limited: that knight at b1, for instance, can only be moved to a3, c3, or d2 — and to these spaces only if they are unoccupied by another of her own pieces, and only if it doesn't leave her own king in check. For as long as she is playing chess, her power is *ordained* by the rules of the game of chess. The analogy between this situation and the powers of God is strengthened by the fact that playing chess is something that the player has *chosen* to do. Knowing the rules of chess, she has deemed it right and good to surrender her extensive powers of moving game pieces wherever she might please, and to order them in accordance with those prescribed, limited, finite movements allowed by the rules of the game. She has *ordered* her power in accordance with her *will*.

Of course, God's absolute power extends considerably beyond those of the chess-player. While the chess-player could move a piece to anywhere within her limited reach, or perhaps toss it a few dozen metres or pop it in the post (where it might continue to be moved a while longer by other human beings), God could, conceivably, transport the piece absolutely *anywhere* in the universe in the blink of an eye.[121] God's absolute power, with respect to all things created and uncreated, is

[121] I am assuming, at least for the time being, that violating physical laws (such as those that would dictate that the maximum speed of an object in space is that of light) does not entail any *logical* contradiction, and thus lies within the absolute power of God. However, the question of whether violating physical laws constitutes a logical violation (by considering that action in light of the equilibrium of the physical universe) is not one that will be tremendously relevant to my discussion, and so if the reader disagrees with my assessment, I would ask that she simply concede this point for the sake of argument.

limited only by logical possibility, while those of any finite creature operate under considerable physical limitations. But on this score, Bradwardine has more to say, and his intuitions may surprise us (I begin with a recap of what we have just read, because the context is important):

> And absolute power in the superior cause — namely, in God — is his ordained power, not insofar as it is ordained relative to only one (or the other) part of a contradiction, but as it is infinite and not determined or ordained relative to one (or the other) part. And his ordained power is [his] absolute – that is, infinite – power, not as undetermined relative to one (or the other) part of a contradiction, but as determined in virtue of his justice, and his mercy, and his will – for example, for producing something besides himself, immediately or mediately, or for saving [a person]. *And it may be said in the same way of power in an inferior cause* – namely, [power in] a creature (which is not now, but can be in the future; or which is now, and can do something in the future) — similarly to the distinction just made regarding power in the superior cause, God. For there are two sorts of power in an inferior cause: [its] absolute [power] is that which in itself is not determined relative to being, rather than relative to not being, as long as [the being or not being] is future, or relative to producing something in the future or not producing it as long as it has not been produced; and [its] ordained power is that by which it is ordained relative to only one (or the other) part of a contradiction, [whether] by the superior cause, God, or by an inferior cause, a creature.

> Et potencia absoluta in causa superiori, scilicet in Deo, est potencia sua ordinata non ut est ordinata ad alteram partem contradictionis tantum, sed ut est infinita et non determinata vel ordinata ad alteram partem . Et potencia ejus ordinata est potencia absoluta, scilicet infinita, et non ut indeterminata ad alteram partem contradictionis tantum, sed ut determinata per suam justiciam et misericordiam et voluntatem, ut ad producendum aliquid ad extra, immediate vel mediate, vel ad salvandum. *Et similiter dicitur de potencia in causa inferiori*, scilicet creatura, que non est sed potest esse in futurum , vel quod est et potest aliquid facere in futurum , sicut nunc distinguitur de potencia in causa superiori, scilicet Deo ; quia in causa inferiori duplex est potencia, scilicet absoluta, que de se non est determinata

> plus ad esse quam ad non esse quamdiu est futurum , vel ad producendum aliquid in futurum vel ad non producendum quamdiu non est productum ; et potencia ordinata est illa qua ordinatur ad unam partem contradictionis tantum, per causam superiorem, scilicet Deum , vel per causam inferiorem, scilicet creaturam. (DCF 42f, emphasis added)

Not only is Bradwardine urging a distinction between the absolute and ordained powers of God, he is proposing a similar distinction in creatures. But how is this to be understood? It seems, I think, that Bradwardine is proposing that according to their absolute power, even creatures would be constrained by nothing "relative to being," or in other words, that creatures are not, absolutely speaking, constrained by their being *creatures*. It would seem, then, that it is within the absolute power of a creature to do anything that is not contrary to logical possibility — that is, anything that God could do, absolutely. This conclusion should surprise us, for it means that the absolute power of a creature is on a level with that of the all-powerful God. The key difference between creaturely power and divine power thus lies in the difference between their relative ordained powers. For God's ordained power is ordered, or constrained, by God himself; whereas creaturely ordained power is ordered not by the creature (or at least not primarily by the creature), but by everything around the creature, also: physical laws, the limitations of bodies, and so on, each of which is ordained by God. This renders the ordained power of the creature immeasurably inferior to that of God.[122]

[122] Lorne Falkenstein has suggested that I may be guilty of over-reading this passage, and taking it to imply a vastly greater sense of absolute power *in a creature* than it in fact does. On Falkenstein's reading, all that is meant by "absolute power" in a creature is the power to exercise its own will in matters, uninhibited by opposing forces (God, or other creatures). To be undetermined "relative to being" refers to the being or not being of the thing freely caused. As I re-read the passage in this light, I take his point that it may not be implying something quite as strong as I take it to; but I still find it more natural to read the "being" relative to which the power is undetermined as the creature's, rather than the caused thing's, being. Either way, however, it will make little difference to my subsequent argument.

4.1.2 - History of the distinction prior to the 14th Century

A very extensive study of the history of making this sort of distinction of God's power is given by Lawrence Moonan.[123] We should note that Moonan — rather eccentrically — chooses to render the distinction between *potentia absoluta* and *potentia ordinata* as that between "option-neutral power" and "option-tied power." He argues that by doing so, he frees the terms from the baggage that phrases like "absolute power" (suggesting a sort of despotism), "ordinate power" (suggesting the possibility of *in*ordinate power), and "ordained power" (which sounds arbitrary) have collected.[124] However, no other scholars have, to my knowledge, followed Moonan's usage. Furthermore, apart from being cumbersome, it seems to me that to render *absoluta* and *ordinata* as "option-neutral" and "option-tied" is to impose an interpretation on the terms that strays a substantial way from being a straightforward translation. Translation is always a tricky balance between literal rendering and interpretation; but while I think Moonan is broadly correct in his interpretation of the sense that these terms come to have in their medieval use, I think that by actually translating the terms in this way, he tips the balance too far toward the interpretive side. Particularly given that he purports to be tracing a history of these terms and their use up to the thirteenth century, by translating the terms which are the object of his study in this loaded way, he winds up, in a small way, at least, begging the question. For my own part, I prefer, therefore, to adhere to more common translation practices: for *potentia absoluta*, I use "absolute power"; for *potentia ordinata*, I use "ordained," "ordinate," and "ordered power," more or less interchangeably.

The distinction between God's absolute and ordained power is one that arises primarily in logical, disputational contexts. Moonan points to the difficulty of

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[123] Lawrence Moonan, *Divine Power: The Medieval power distinction up to its adoption by Albert, Bonaventure, and Aquinas* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994). Rather frustratingly, this book contains no bibliography; all sources must be gleaned from footnotes throughout the body of the text.
[124] Ibid., pp. 18 - 19.

discovering the true "source" of the powers distinction in such a context:

> The very nature of dialectical debate makes it hard to identify authorship of dialectical devices: 'Dialectic is a coorperative and progressive polemic — a polemic not between persons, but between theses and counter-theses. Theses are not personal property, nor arguments.' It is for such reasons, incidentally, that anyone hoping for a unique and correct answer to 'Who invented the Power Distinction?' may have to remain disappointed.[125]

It is therefore not entirely clear with whom the power distinction originates. What is clear is that it arose in the context of dialectical debates as a particular way of dealing with Aristotle's *Secundum Quid* fallacy, and that it was firmly embedded in common philosophical use by Bradwardine's time.[126] I will shortly return to a discussion of more particular instances of the distinction's historical use, but first, before we become too sidetracked, we should return to Bradwardine to see how, exactly, he employs this distinction.

4.1.3 - How the Distinction Solves the Problem

In the following passage, Bradwardine addresses an argument that rests on the assumption that if A is a future contingent, then it is the case that "A can be not going to be"; and this, then, is equivalent to the statement "that A will not be is possible":

> Now in reply to the proposition at issue [namely, the statement: "A can be not going to be, and God foreknows that A will be; therefore that A will not be is possible", where A is some future contingent], I say that A can be not going to be in virtue of absolute power, whether of the superior or of an inferior cause. For that A is going to be or not going to be is in no way incompatible with such a power in the superior or in an inferior cause. If, however, one is

[125] Ibid., pp. 327 - 28; internal quotation G. Ryle, "Dialectics in the Academy," in G.E.I. Owen (ed.), *Aristotle on Dialectic: The Topic, Proceedings of the Third Symposium Aristotelicum* (Oxford, 1968), p. 76.
[126] Ibid., pp. 328 - 29.

> speaking of the ordained power of the superior or of an inferior cause, in that case one says that A (or any future thing) cannot be not going to be. For if by that power A can be not going to be, it follows that God can be deceived and can err, and that his knowledge can be mistaken, and that he can say what is false and a lie — if God has predicted, mediately or immediately, that A is going to be.

> Nunc ad propositum, dico quod A potest non fore de potencia absoluta tam cause superioris quam inferioris, quia A fore vel non fore in nullo repugnat tali potencie in causa superiori vel inferiori. Sed loquendo de potencia ordinata cause superioris et inferioris, sic dicitur quod A non potest non fore nec aliquod futurum, quia si illa potencia A potest non fore, sequitur quod Deus potest decipi et errare, et falli potest ejus sciencia, et potest falsum dicere et mentiri si Deus predixit A fore mediate vel immediate. (DFC 42g)

We now see the use to which Bradwardine puts the distinction between God's absolute and ordained power. Bradwardine proposes that God's foreknowledge is enacted by his ordained power[127]; relative to this power, Bradwardine concedes, what God knows will be, necessarily will be. However, it is not necessary relative to his absolute power, and so, absolutely or logically speaking, future contingents which God foreknows remain contingent despite his knowledge of them. In this way, Bradwardine claims to resolve the apparent tension between God's foreknowledge, and the creature's ability to act freely. God knows my future acts by virtue of his ordained foreknowledge, and relative to this ordained power, I am constrained to act as God foreknows; but in an absolute sense, I am yet free to act otherwise.

Bradwardine goes on to reply to the person who objects that this still boils

[127] It is, perhaps, a little bit difficult to understand what it means for a sort of knowledge to be "enacted" through a particular sort of power, and it may indeed be the case that there exists a better way of expressing this than I have yet discovered. In using this expression, I am doing my best to convey the sense in which God's (fore)knowledge relates to the powers distinction. The most natural way in which I can understand this, is that any capacity we have — whether for thinking, acting, perceiving, etc. — must be empowered in order to operate. And so when I say that, according to Bradwardine, God's foreknowledge is "enacted" by God's ordained power, what I mean is that God's ordained power is that which allows God's capacity for foreknowledge to operate.

down to determinism. The objector says, “Since in respect of ordained power A cannot be going to be, A cannot be going to be”. But Bradwardine insists that, since A can be with respect to absolute power, we properly draw the conclusion that A can be (the same inference does not hold in the case of ordained power). (DFC 43a-b.)

Let's take as an example to illustrate this my taking a train to London, England, from Cambridge, as I did once to present a preliminary version of the central arguments of this thesis. The day before I went to London, presumably, God foreknew that I would take the 10:15 train from Cambridge to London. Now, thinking about this then-future event apart from God's knowledge of it, there is nothing about it which is necessary; any number of things may have prevented its occurrence. I may have been running late and missed the 10:15 train; I may have tripped on the platform, fallen on the tracks, and been run over by the train; I may have decided that my paper was not ready for presentation, and ashamed to show my face, have stayed in bed that morning. However, Bradwardine would have it that, insofar as God foreknew I'd take the 10:15 to London, and relative to the ordained power by which God enacted that knowledge,[128] it was necessary that I catch the 10:15 train. But lest he be accused of determinism, Bradwardine would swiftly add that this necessity was not absolute: it remained a possibility, at least in an absolute sense, that God could have suspended his ordained power, and by his absolute power have made it otherwise.[129]

We thus see how Bradwardine’s account makes use of the distinction between God’s absolute and ordained power to explain how God might have

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[128] See previous footnote.

[129] Something that remains somewhat unclear here, and something about which I have yet to gain certainty from the text of DFC itself, is in what sense Bradwardine means to imply that God’s absolute power could have been enacted rather than God’s ordained power. Does he simply mean that things *could have* been ordained differently, such that something else *could have* been brought into being; or does he mean that, even in the current ordering of creation, God could enact alternative outcomes by somehow asserting God’s absolute power in the present order? I’m inclined to think it more likely that he means something like the former, rather than the latter; but I have not yet fully established this or not from my reading of the text. It is, however, an important question, and one worthy of further consideration.

knowledge of our actions without necessitating those actions. Discovering whether Bradwardine's account is ultimately coherent, and whether it ultimately avoids being deterministic in its zeal to preserve the perfect foreknowledge of God, will be the main task of the fifth and final chapter. What I hope to argue in the remainder of this chapter, however, is that Bradwardine's use of this distinction in the context of future contingents is original to him.

It may be objected that the distinction between the ordained and absolute powers of God is not original, for it can be seen already in the writing of Scotus and, as Moonan shows, it is in extensive use even earlier than that. Let me be clear, therefore, that it is not my claim that the distinction between God's absolute and ordained power is by any means an invention of Bradwardine's: Scotus, for instance, expressed the distinction by saying that through his absolute power, God is able to do anything that is logically possible; God constrains his power, however, by his own will, to operate within the bounds of the naturally possible, and thereby ordains, or orders, his power. But Scotus was in this case discussing the logically possible versus the naturally possible. What I argue, rather, is that though Bradwardine is not original in making this distinction, he is original in the use to which he puts it, as we shall see as he develops his argument further. Thus, it is not my claim that Bradwardine is the first to make use of this distinction *simpliciter*, but rather, that he is the first (and perhaps the only) to make use of it in this particular context, to explain the compatibility of God's foreknowledge and the contingency of some future things.

It must be noted, however, that there are a few earlier sources that gesture in the direction of this use, as outlined in Moonan's history. In particular, there are a few instances to be noted of this and similar distinctions being made in discussions of a particular case of future contingents, namely, that of the final state of particular souls. Throughout the Middle Ages, the ultimate beatitude of St Peter, and the ultimate damnation of Judas Iscariot, are taken to be prototypical examples of future

contingent events about which we *know* the truth value — i.e., we know as theological certainties that Peter is saved, and that Judas is damned, despite neither of these future events being necessary in themselves. Thus, statements such as "Peter is damned" and "Judas is saved" are taken to be counterfactual statements about future events, statements which we know to in fact be false and contrary to the will of God, despite neither being a strictly impossible event considered in itself.

Thus we see, for instance, something very similar to Bradwardine's use of the power distinction in a discussion concerning damning Peter and saving Judas in William of Auxerre (d. 1231).[130] Rather than talking about this things being possible or impossible relative to God's ordained or absolute power, however, William talks about them being possible *de potentia* of God, but not *de justitia* of God (that is, possible with respect to God's power, but not with respect to God's justice).[131] Likewise, the Dominican Hugh of St Cher (d. 1263) makes use of a similar distinction in his framing of the problem, but speaks of the distinction as that between God's *potentia absoluta* and God's *potentia conditionata* (that is, between God's absolute and conditional power) when speaking of God's ability to damn Peter and save Judas.[132] In each of these cases, while coming close to the distinction in a way similar to Bradwardine, the distinction is ultimately articulated in slightly different terms, and with different implications. Furthermore, it is important to note that, while these cases consider a particular special case of future contingents, they do not extend the solution to future contingents more generally.

Two examples of the use of the distinction which come rather closer to Bradwardine's (but again, only in the very particular case of damning Peter and saving Judas) are to be found in the *Summa* of the English Franciscan, Alexander of

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[130] William of Auxerre, *Summa aurea*, ed. Ribailler, I (1980), 212

[131] Moonan, pp. 69 - 71.

[132] This discussion occurs in Hugh of St Cher's commentary on the *Sentences*, *I Sent.*, d. 42, q. 1, edited by E. Randi and published as "Potentia dei conditionata: Una questione di Ugo di Saint Cher sull'omnipotenza divina (Sent. I, d. 42, q. 1)," in *Rivista di storia della filosofia*, 39 (1984), pp. 521 - 36; discussed in Moonan, pp. 116 - 17.

Hales (d. 1245), and the *Sentences* commentary of a philosopher of substantially greater historical import, Albert the Great (d. 1280), the teacher of St Thomas Aquinas. Alexander explicitly uses the language of *potentia absoluta* and *potentia ordinata* in his discussion of the topic in his *Summa Theologica*.[133] Alexander's discussion is brief, and once again, the powers distinction is only applied to this particular example, not to future contingents in general, but it is nonetheless worth noting. A little later, Albert employs a very similar distinction (which he puts as that between *potentia absoluta* — absolute power — and *potentia relata ad ordinem sapientiae* — power relative to the ordinances of wisdom) in his own discussion of damning Peter and saving Judas in his *Sentences* commentary.[134]

A final noteworthy instance of a pre-Bradwardinian use of the distinction in the context of future contingents comes in the Franciscan St Bonaventure's (d. 1274) mention — and immediate critique — of a view which sounds very much like Bradwardine's. Bonaventure reports an opinion using the distinction, but immediately criticizes its use in his reply: "This distinction does not seem appropriate, because God can do nothing that he cannot do *ordinate*. For to be able to do something *inordinate* is not-being-able (*non posse*), like being able to sin, and being able to lie."[135] It is not clear whose view Bonaventure is reporting, but it sounds very much like a prototype of Bradwardine's own. What is perhaps more interesting than the report itself, however, is Bonaventure's critical response, variations of which will be taken up when we come to a critical examination of Bradwardine's position in chapter 4. In what remains of this chapter, however, I return to the three views with which I began this study to explore the relationship of each with the position of Bradwardine.

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[133] Alexander of Hales, *Summa Hales*, 1: 220 - 21; discussed by Moonan, pp. 140 - 41.
[134] Albert the Great, *I Sent.*, d. 42c, art. 3, ed. Borgnet, 26; 381b; mentioned by Moonan pp. 169 - 70.
[135] Bonaventure, *Op. theol. Sel.*, Quaracchi edition (1924) 1: 778a, p. 618; mentioned by Moonan, p. 202.

4.2 - Bradwardine and Boethius

In chapter 1, we examined three positions on the problem of future contingents (those of Boethius, Anselm, and Duns Scotus) which I claimed to have a particularly significant relationship with Bradwardine's own solution as forebears in a sort of family tree of related solutions to the problem of future contingents. In this and the following two sections, I will examine this claim by looking at each position and its relationship to Bradwardine's in turn. We begin now with discussion of Bradwardine's solution as it relates to that of Boethius.

4.2.1 - The similarities of Boethius and Bradwardine

Bradwardine's solution to the problem bears certain resemblances to Boethius' famous solution. Namely, both solutions rest on recasting our understanding of God's mode of knowledge. Boethius, as we have seen (1.1), appeals to a mode of knowing in God that is as mysterious to us as our mode of understanding and knowing is to, say, a clam. God's mode of knowing, for Boethius, is fundamentally above, beyond, or higher than our mode of knowing, and hence is ultimately fundamentally mysterious to us. Thus, Boethius claims, we can make some sort of limited sense out of how God might possess knowledge of the future that does not necessitate the things that God knows, in part, at least, because God does not know things in the same way that we do.

Bradwardine similarly makes the move of seeking to explain the compatibility of God's foreknowledge with freedom by appeal to God's mode of knowing. Bradwardine argues that God knows future contingent events by means of a particular sort of power — namely, God's ordained power — and thus claims that by confining God's power of foreknowledge to the realm of God's ordained power, our freedom to act is still preserved in an absolute sense (i.e., relative to God's absolute power). Relative to God's ordained power, by which God knows our future

actions, these actions are constrained by God's knowledge of them; but because God's ordained power is only part of the story of God's power, relative to God's power *absolutely* speaking, our actions are not constrained. Hence, divine foreknowledge is claimed to be preserved alongside human freedom to act.

In both cases, then, this compatibility of God's knowledge of our future actions with the freedom of those same actions is explained by direct appeal to the *way* in which God knows.

4.2.2 - Differences

But this account perhaps glosses over some of the more pronounced differences between the two solutions. In particular, while Boethius makes his appeal to the way in which God knows, that mode of knowing remains fundamentally unexplained to us. We are given logical reasons to think that such a mode of knowing might be possible — reasons why God's necessary knowledge of an action does not make that action necessary, *per se*, any more than because I am sitting I am necessarily not standing makes my not standing necessary *per se* — but apart from some vague and undeveloped gestures toward what Anselm would more explicitly work out by appeal to God's timeless eternity, we are given no idea of the *mechanism* whereby God's non-necessitating foreknowledge might work. In the end, it is primarily a mystery explained by analogy (God's knowledge is to ours as our knowledge is to that of animals). Bradwardine, by contrast, seeks to provide a more complete explanation of *how* it is that God's knowledge of our actions need not necessitate those actions. It is because of the *power* by which God enacts God's foreknowledge (i.e., ordained) that there is a sense (i.e., absolute) in which our actions remain free.

4.2.3 - A development of Boethius?

Despite these differences, however, it is possible to view Bradwardine's solution as a development compatible with Boethius. On this view, it would appear that where Boethius provides the basic framework within which to understand God's foreknowledge in relation to human freedom, Bradwardine provides a fuller account of the mechanics undergirding the view. Boethius gives us reasons for believing that the reconciliation of God's foreknowledge with human freedom might be possible: He makes arguments which claim to demonstrate no necessary contradiction between the two notions, opening the possibility of conceiving of God's foreknowledge operating in a way quite unlike our own mode of knowing, and pointing out the lack of any *logical* necessity entailed in things by God's knowledge of them. But he does not in any way indicate *how* such a knowledge might operate, or at best gestures toward the Anselmian notion (also present to some degree in Augustine) that God's timeless eternity privileges God to a perspective, inconceivable by us time-bound creatures, free from the constraints of time and space. However, Boethius' explication of God's foreknowledge as possible because of God's eternality (*De consolatione Philosophia* Book V, prose VI) is relatively sketchy and incomplete, leaving us yet with little sense of *how* God's foreknowledge operates in a way that does not necessitate the things foreknown.

Bradwardine, by contrast, seeks to provide an account which helps us to understand how exactly this non-necessitating foreknowledge of God is possible. Whereas Boethius allows us to contemplate the mere *possibility* of such knowledge in God by appeal to analogy (the analogy of our knowledge as compared to that of a non-rational animal, or analogous ways of grasping at the notion of all of eternity being present to God), Bradwardine seeks to give an account of the mechanism whereby such knowledge comes to pass. Bradwardine does not seek merely to show us by way of various analogies that it is not inconceivable that God's foreknowledge of things does not compel the objects of God's knowledge to come about; but rather,

Bradwardine offers a theory of the way in which such knowledge is possible. He seeks to give an explanation of the exact sense in which we can claim freedom of action, despite God's knowledge of that action before we do it.

In doing so, however, Bradwardine does not contradict Boethius' premises. Nothing in Bradwardine's solution undermines the central premise that God's mode of knowing is essentially different from and transcends our own. His solution also invokes the Boethian distinction between absolute and conditional necessity. But Bradwardine seeks to explain in more detail how, exactly, those differences in God's knowledge from our own operate. I think, therefore, Bradwardine's solution can be understood as a possible development of, or elaboration of, that of Boethius.

4.3 - Bradwardine and Anselm

We have observed already the influence exhibited by Anselm on Bradwardine's summary of alternative solutions to the problem of future contingents. The opinion of Anselm, we have seen, is one of the few to receive an explicit attribution. More importantly, however, of the nine opinions put forward, Anselm's is the only one that does not appear to be rejected outright. We see this structurally from the fact that in the objections and responses to the Anselmian view, every objection posed receives a response. Since every objection raised seems to be dealt with, and since the section concludes with a defense of the view, rather than an attack (which is the way in which all other sections conclude), it seems that Bradwardine is ultimately seeking to defend Anselm's view as correct.

Furthermore, in the objections and responses that follow the *responsio propria*, Anselm is perhaps the most-cited authority after Holy Scripture. Again and again, Bradwardine supports his arguments by making reference to works of Anselm, particularly the *De concordia* and the *De casu diabolo*.

But if Anselm's work has so much purported influence on Bradwardine's account, are we able to discern marked similarities between Anselm's account and Bradwardine's? Is the content of the two accounts really very similar at all? In what follows, I will examine, firstly, the ways in which Bradwardine and Anselm's respective accounts really seem not to have anything to do with one another at all; I will them propose a way in which these views might be reconciled as compatible with one another, arguing in particular that Bradwardine intended for his view to be compatible with that of Anselm.

4.3.1 - The divergence of Bradwardine's view from Anselm's

On the one hand, it may not appear at first blush that Bradwardine's view and Anselm's have much in common at all. In fact, the two seem to be focusing on different things entirely. Anselm's solution to the problem of reconciling God's foreknowledge and human freedom rests on an examination of the nature of time itself, and God's relationship to it. It is only because of God's transcendence of time, according to Anselm, that God has knowledge of things that are, to us, future. God surveys the whole expanse of time in a moment, from the perspective of eternality; God simply "sees" all of history spread out before God. Thus, Anselm's solution relies on a particular understanding of the nature of time, on the one hand, as created by God and fundamentally relative to the perspective of the being experiencing it; and of eternity, on the other, as that timeless existence in which God dwells, but from which God is able to observe all at once the entirety of created time.

By contrast, in the present treatise, Bradwardine seems hardly at all interested in the nature of time or perspectives of time. Though Bradwardine picks up Anselm's solution in his summaries (3.1), and speaks of the relativity of perspectives of time when he does, notions of time do not explicitly enter Bradwardine's discussions of his own solution. Instead, his focus is exclusively on

the operation and interaction of God's power and knowledge. It seems conceivable, in fact, that on Bradwardine's solution, God may *not* in fact transcend time. Bradwardine's solution is consistent, it seems, with a notion of God that constrains God within the bounds of time. If God's knowledge operates in a way entirely unlike our own (as Boethius suggests), then it does not seem impossible to imagine that God could *know* future things while being situated in a particular place in time. In such a case, Bradwardine would offer a solution to the problem of how such knowledge of the future does not dictate the events of the future, despite God's knowledge *in time* of things future even to God. I should clarify at this point that I am *not* proposing that Bradwardine *does*, in fact, deny God's transcendence of time; I am merely pointing out that his solution is not inherently inconsistent with a view that fails to ascribe transcendence of time to God.

4.3.2 - Consonance between Bradwardine's view and Anselm's

As when we considered Bradwardine's view in relation to that of Boethius (4.2), it seems to me that the key to understanding the relationship between Anselm's and Bradwardine's view is understanding the respective modes in which their solutions operate. In the preceding section, I argued that, while Boethius' solution offers us reason to think that Divine foreknowledge does not necessitate determinism, Bradwardine offers us an explanation of *how* such non-determining Divine foreknowledge actually operates. The difference between Bradwardine's view and Anselm's, however, is somewhat more subtle. For in this case, we have in a sense two separate examinations of the "*how*" of God's foreknowledge: both Bradwardine and Anselm seem to be offering explanations of how God's foreknowledge does not necessitate future events, Anselm by appeal to a particular view of time and God's eternality, and Bradwardine by an examination of God's power and the way in which that power operates.

However, as was the case with Boethius, it seems to me that the different approaches employed by Anselm and Bradwardine can be reconciled when considered as ways of examining two different aspects of the problems that arise from the puzzles surrounding God's foreknowledge. Anselm provides us with a particular picture of God's relation to creation, one that focuses on the grand-scale, cosmic make-up of the universe. All that is created exists within the framework of time; indeed, time itself is of the order of creation. God, however, is metaphysically prior to the created order, if not temporally prior (since temporal priority makes little sense apart from a notion of time). Anselm is painting a broad sweeping picture of the cosmos, created and Divine, and shaping our understanding of the relationship between the two.

Bradwardine, by contrast, focuses instead on the very nature and operations of God. Bradwardine's analysis of the operation of God's knowledge is independent of the created order. Rather than examining God's knowledge in relation to that of God's creatures, Bradwardine seeks to describe God's knowledge by an examination of God's self. Put another way, Bradwardine's analysis of how God knows future things is independent of the created order in which those future things exist. Whether or not anything future exists, God knows what God knows by virtue of God's ordained power. Even if, *per impossibile*, time and the material universe it accompanies had *not* been created, this is the way in which God's knowledge would operate.

But simply because Anselm and Bradwardine focus on God's knowledge from quite different perspectives, this does not mean that their explanations are incompatible. As was the case in the previous section (Bradwardine and Boethius, 4.2), it is possible in this case, I think, to maintain that both Anselm's position and Bradwardine's may be compatibly maintained — even as, for instance, it may be compatibly maintained that "red" is the colour which reflects light of about wavelength 700 nanometres, on the one hand, and that "red" is passionate, fiery, and

the colour of a flamenco dancer's skirt, on the other. Each philosopher is seeking out different sorts of causes in his respective explanation of how, precisely, God's foreknowledge (especially of human action) does not compel (those actions). While I'm not sure that one can really separate the sorts of causes that Anselm and Bradwardine identify in the manner of Aristotle's four causes — as it seems that both Anselm and Bradwardine are concerned with the efficient cause, in a sense, of God's foreknowledge — we may yet recognize that they are looking to different aspects of a causal explanation.

Indeed, I think it may be fairly asserted that Bradwardine, at least, perceives his solution as being compatible with Anselm's in this way. Our strongest clue to this fact is the way in which Bradwardine handles Anselm's view in the expositional section. Recall that Bradwardine lays out a total of nine views on the question of future contingents before moving on to his own solution. Of these nine, his treatment of the sixth view (which he — rather unusually — explicitly attributes to Anselm) is unique: whereas with all the other eight views, his scholastic-style objection-and-response section of arguments, for and opposed, invariably ends with a sound denunciation of the view, when it comes to the *sixth* view, he concludes the section with a whole series of arguments in *support* of the view. This fact, coupled with Bradwardine's frequent citation of Anselm throughout the remaining corpus — and particularly throughout his defense of his own solution — would seem to indicate not only Bradwardine's high regard for Anselm and his work, but his strong agreement with what Anselm thinks on the matter.

4.4 - Comparisons with Scotus' solution

We have now examined the relationship, and likely consonance, between Bradwardine's view and both Boethius' and Anselm's. In both cases, I made fairly similar arguments about their compatibility and complementarity. And, indeed, I

think it may be quite easily seen that Boethius' and Anselm's respective solutions to the problem of future contingents are compatible with one another: Anselm's view would appear to be a direct development of Boethius' hint that God's non-necessitating foreknowledge is possible because of God's transcendence of time. Thus the views of Boethius, Anselm, and Bradwardine together constitute a sort of family tree of solutions, each one descending from those previous.

In the case of Duns Scotus, the situation is perhaps a little bit different. This is because Scotus departs from the views of his predecessors in rather dramatic fashion by explicitly denying the timeless eternity of God, and Bradwardine does not follow Scotus on this count. In fact, the primary point of contact, or at least that of particular interest, between Scotus' thought and Bradwardine's solution to this problem lies not in Scotus' treatment of future contingents, *per se*. Instead, we observe as Bradwardine's primary "Scotusian" influence, if I may be permitted the neologism, an aspect of Scotus' thought that never explicitly comes to bear in Scotus' own treatment of the problem of *future* contingents in relation to God's foreknowledge. It is Scotus' development of the distinction between God's absolute and ordained power that will exercise such a profound influence on Bradwardine's solution to the problem of future contingents in the treatise at hand; but in Scotus' own work, this distinction plays no role whatsoever in his treatment of future contingents. In what follows, I will first briefly talk about the role the distinction *does* play in Scotus' writing; I will then discuss how Bradwardine appropriates the distinction in an entirely new way (highlighting once again the particular uniqueness of Bradwardine's DFC solution in this respect); and finally, I will discuss whether Bradwardine's reappropriation of Scotus' distinction in the context of future contingents is compatible with Scotus' own solution to the problem of future contingents as we saw laid out in 1.3.

4.4.1 - Scotus on Absolute and Ordained Power

Scotus employs the distinction between God's absolute and ordained powers, but he does so in a somewhat different context than does Bradwardine. In Scotus' case, the distinction arises (in the *Ordinatio* I.44) when he comes to consider whether God could have created the world in a way other than God in fact did, or whether God could act in a way other than God does. He rephrases the Lombard's question — "whether God could have made things better than he did"[136] — and instead asks the question, "Could God have made things otherwise than he has ordered them to be made?"[137] We might almost wonder if rephrasing the question in this way does not somewhat beg the question, for by posing it in terms of God's ordinance, it leads him directly to his own response, which is to make a distinction between God's ordained and absolute power:

> I reply: in every agent acting intelligently and voluntarily that can act in conformity with an upright or just law but does not have to do so of necessity, one can distinguish between its ordained power and its absolute power. The reason is that either it can act in conformity with some right and just law, and then it is acting according to its ordained power (for it is ordained insofar as it is a principle for doing something in conformity with a right or just law), or else it can act beyond or against such a law, and in this case its absolute power exceeds its ordered power.

> Respondeo: In omni agente per intellectum et voluntatem, potente conformiter agere legi rectae et tamen non necessario conformiter agere legi rectae, est distinguere potentiam ordinatam a potentia absoluta; et ratio huius est, quia potest agere conformiter illi legi rectae, et tunc secundum potentiam ordinatam (ordinata enim est in quantum est principium exsequendi aliqua conformiter legi rectae), et potest agere praeter illam legen vel contra eam, et in hoc est potentia absoluta, excedens potentiam

[136] "utrum Deus potuit res melius fecisse quam fecit." *Ordinatio* I.44, in John Duns Scotus, *Duns Scotus on the Will and Morality*, selected and trans. with introduction by A. B. Wolter, O.F.M. (Washington D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1986), 254-55. Translations throughout this section are Wolter's, unless otherwise noted.

[137] "utrum Deus possit aliter facere res quam ab ipso ordinatum est eas fieri." Ibid.

ordinatam.[138]

Indeed, according to Scotus, not only God, but every free agent has this ability to either act in accordance with some rule, or against it, and in this sense has both power to act ordainedly, or absolutely.[139]

In the case of God, however, the relationship between his ordained and absolute power is somewhat different from our own, since whereas constraints on our own power are largely imposed by external ordinances, it is God who constrains the ordering of God's power by God's own will. Thus for us creatures, it is not in fact possible for our absolute power to extend beyond our ordained power, since the limits of our ordained power are not set by us; in the case of God, however, God *could have* ordained God's power differently, and thus *could have* acted or created otherwise:

> [W]henever the law and its rectitude are in the power of the agent, so that the law is right only because it has been established, then the agent can freely order things otherwise than this right law dictates and still can act orderly, because he can establish another right or just law according to which he may act orderly.

> [Q]uando in potestate agentis est lex et rectitudo legis, ita quod non est recta nisi quia statuta, tunc potest aliter agens ex libertate sua ordinare quam lex illa recta dicet; et tamen cum hoc potest ordinate agere, quia potest statuere aliam legem rectam secundum quam agat ordinate.[140]

Scotus concludes that God is in fact able, absolutely speaking, to have established his

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[138] Ibid.
[139] "Et ideo non tantum in Deo, sed in omni agente libere — qui poetest agere secundum dictamen legis rectae et praeter talem legem vel contra eam — est distinguere inter potentiam ordinatam et absolutam." Ibid.
[140] Ibid., 256-57.

ordinances in any way that does not entail a contradiction: God could have ordained things to be other than God did — and in such a case, since God's ordinances would have been different, God's actions, though inordinate with respect to our present state, would have been ordinate with respect to that alternative state.

Since, however, God in fact established God's ordinances in the way that God did, God cannot — or perhaps it might be more correct to say, *would* not — now act in a way contrary to God's own ordinances. The division of powers, as Richard Cross puts it, "is just a convenient way of stating that God can do more than he has actually done"; however, "anything that God *does* is brought about by his ordained power. It is a mistake to suppose that Scotus holds God's absolute power to be some kind of executive power capable of overruling the ordained power."[141] This becomes clear in the way Scotus expresses what it *would have* been like if God *had* ordained an alternative order to our present one:

> I say, therefore, that God can act otherwise than is prescribed not only by a particular order, but also by a universal order or law of justice, and in so doing he *could still act ordainedly*, because what God could do by his absolute power that is either beyond or runs counter to the present order, he could do ordainedly.

> Dico ergo quod Deus non solum potest agere aliter quam ordinatum est ordine particulari, sed aliter quam ordinatum est ordine universali — sive secundum leges iustitiae — *potest ordinate agere*, quia tam illa quae sunt praeter illum ordinem, quam illa quae sunt contra ordinem illum, possent a Deo ordinate fieri potentia absoluta.[142]

Had God ordained an order other than the order God *in fact* ordained, then all of his actions would be ordained according to *that* order.

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[141] Richard Cross, *Duns Scotus*, in the *Great Medieval Thinkers* series (Oxford: OUP, 1999), 59. (Cross's emphasis.)
[142] Duns Scotus, 258-59, emphasis added.

But although God can only *actually* act in accordance with God's ordained power, Scotus yet prescribes remarkable freedom to God's power absolutely speaking, as we see in the following passage:

> God, therefore, insofar as he is able to act in accord with those right laws he set up previously, is said to act according to his ordained power; but insofar as he is able to do many things that are not in accord with, but go beyond, these pre-established laws, God is said to act according to his absolute power. God can do anything that is not self-contradictory or act in any way that does not include a contradiction (and there are many such ways he could act); and then he is said to be acting according to his absolute power.

> Deus ergo, agere potens secundum illas rectas leges ut praefixae sunt ab eo, dicitur agere secundum potentiam ordinatam.; ut autem potest multa agere quae non sunt secundum illas leges iam praefixas, sec praeter illas, dicitur eius potentia absoluta: quia enim Deus quodlibet potest agere quod non includit contraditionem, et omni modo potest agere qui non includit contradictionem (et tales sunt multi modi alii), ideo dicitur tunc agere secundum potentiam absolutam.[143]

Absolutely speaking, then, God's power extends to anything at all that does not entail a contradiction, even though God's *actual* power only extends as far as God has ordained.

This, then, gives us a fairly good understanding of Scotus' understanding and use of the Divine powers distinction, and one can see from the passages quoted how important this distinction might be for Scotus' explanation of the way in which logical necessity and metaphysical necessity are distinguished from one another. What is chiefly notable for our purposes, however, is what the discussion is *not*: the context in which Scotus discusses the distinction and makes use of it for his own purposes is not at all related to his discussion of future contingents and God's

[143] Ibid., 256-57.

foreknowledge. Instead, it is a discussion about God's ability to have acted differently than God did *in the past*.

4.4.2 - Bradwardine's Appropriation of the Distinction

Bradwardine, as we have seen (4.1), makes use of this distinction between God's ordained and absolute power in a key way in his own solution, and in so doing, he is applying this distinction in a context quite unlike that of Scotus. Indeed, it is my contention that Bradwardine is in fact relatively unique among medieval authors in his application of the distinction between absolute and ordained Divine power specifically to the problem of God's foreknowledge and future contingents. Though others before and after him speak of this distinction in other contexts, I have been unable to discover any that do so directly in the context of the problem of future contingents (at least not beyond the passing mentions in the "damning Peter and saving Judas" discussions mentioned above). This makes this treatise a particularly interesting piece in the history of the future contingents discussion, being as it is something of an anomaly.

Even in Bradwardine's own later writing on the topic, he does not revisit this distinction in any pertinent way. Indeed, the account of future contingents implicitly present throughout the *De causa Dei* corpus is virtually indistinguishable from that of Scotus. The uniqueness of Bradwardine's solution in this particular work, of course, raises some intriguing questions: how widely read was this treatise, and did it have any broader influence in Bradwardine's own time, or that immediately after him? Why did other figures, like Scotus, who were already quite keen to apply the distinction between God's absolute and ordained power in other contexts, not do so when speaking of the problem of future contingents? Why does Bradwardine himself abandon the approach in subsequent treatments of the same topic? We will not, in our present study, find satisfactory answers to all of these questions, but they

will be treated in more detail in the final chapter and conclusion.

4.4.3 - Scotus' and Bradwardine's Solutions Compared

If, as we have seen, Bradwardine's solution relies on appropriating a Scotist distinction, but one which Scotus himself never exploited for these purposes, then we might quite justifiably wonder whether Bradwardine's Scotist-flavoured solution is in fact compatible with Scotus' own solution to the problem. Does the distinction which Scotus develops, but never uses for this purpose, actually benefit the topic of future contingents, or does it constitute an unnecessary obfuscation? These and other questions will be more thoroughly addressed in the following chapter. In the meantime, however, I shall say just a few words about the relationship between Scotus' solution and that of Bradwardine in the DFC.

It seems to me that Scotus' and Bradwardine's solutions are in fact quite complementary. Indeed, they may reflect, in a way, two sides of the same coin — Scotus emphasizing the primacy of the will, and God's knowledge of his own will, while Bradwardine emphasizes God's knowledge, and that knowledge as ordained by the will. It seems to me, therefore, that it may be possible for Scotus' and Bradwardine's accounts to be reconciled to form a single, unified account of God's foreknowledge and human free will.

What might this unified account look like? Well, suppose it is the case that in any given moment, it is truly the case that I can either perform action *A* or *not-A*, because in either case, no contradiction follows. Presume furthermore, as Scotus would seem to have it, that God knows, before I perform either action, which I will choose, simply by his complete and perfect knowledge of me and my will. Does God's knowledge of that action make it any less free? Scotus' response is that God's knowledge of my action does not compel my action in any way, since his knowledge was based on a knowledge of my will and what action I would freely perform, given

the sort of person I am, with the sort of will I possess, and so it remains logically possible that I could have acted otherwise than I in fact did. Bradwardine, on the other hand, would say that just because God knows I will perform action *A* (or *not-A*) does not compel my action, because that knowledge of God operates according to God's ordained power; and thus, relative to God's absolute power, I remain free. It would seem a reasonable consolidation of these two views to posit that God knows *what* I will will before I actually will it, by virtue of his knowledge of my will, *and* that that knowledge proceeds under the auspices of God's ordained power. In this way, Scotus' insistence on the contingency of my action is preserved, since not only is there no contradiction in supposing that I act otherwise than I do (so there is no logical necessity that I act as I do); but also, no necessity proceeds from God's foreknowledge of my action, since that foreknowledge is enacted according to God's ordained power, and so relative to God's absolute power it remains possible for me to act otherwise.

Chapter 5

Critical Evaluation of Bradwardine's Solution

Introduction

In this final chapter, which is comparatively brief, I will concern myself with a critical evaluation of Bradwardine's solution to the problem of future contingents. In particular, I will examine whether Bradwardine's solution successfully resolves the apparent logical conflict between simultaneously holding that God foreknows all things, and that human beings exercise free will, ultimately concluding that it does not. To this end, I will first consider a sort of schematic of ideas to systematically categorize strategies for solving the problem (5.1); I will then consider what a successful solution to the problem ought to achieve, and how this is to be understood in light of the schematic (5.2); I will then explain how Bradwardine's solution fails to be successful in this way (5.3).

5.1 - The problem and its solutions

In this section, I will first spend some time highlighting the exact points at which the "problem" of future contingents arises and discussing its variants, with special attention to the problem related to the so-called argument for "theological fatalism," since this is the primarily relevant context for our present study (5.1.1). We have, in ways, already assumed and touched on much of what will be laid out in this section, but it is helpful at this point to revisit the problem itself, and to lay it out in a systematic way. I will then outline the main families of solutions to the problem represented in the historical discussion, dividing these families of solutions into two broad categories: the compatibilist solutions (5.1.2), and the incompatibilist

solutions (5.1.3).

5.1.1 - The problem and its variants

In the context at hand, future contingents are a *problem* because their existence seems to lead to the contradictory convergence of two theses. I focus here on the problem as it arises in a theistic context, but it is worth noticing that a completely parallel problem arises in the materialist context of causal determinism.[144] Firstly, it is taken as a necessary consequence of God's omniscience that God's knowledge extends to all things, not only past and present, but also future. In a particularly Christian theistic context, the power of God to enlighten prophets concerning future events would seem to confirm this supposition concerning God's omniscience. When this belief is taken together with the authoritative tradition of scriptural statements like the following, the impetus for adhering to belief in God's foreknowledge becomes yet stronger: "Lord, let me know mine end, and the number of my days" (Ps 39.5); "Before a word is on my tongue, O Lord, you know it altogether" and "Your eyes saw my unformed substance; in your book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there was none of them" (Ps 139.4, 16); "'I know the plans I have for you,' declares the Lord" (Jer 29.11). But we also have strong motives — motives to do with ideas of responsibility, justice, reward and blame, as well as the almost irresistible conviction of our own subjective psychological experience — to believe that there are at least some matters over which we exercise choice and activities of the will that may be

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[144] A good place to start for contemporary discussions of causal determinism is the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* article on the topic by Carl Hoefer, "Causal Determinism," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Spring 2016 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2016/entries/determinism-causal/>. For a discussion of the compatibilist position between causal determinism and free will, see Michael McKenna and D. Justin Coates, "Compatibilism," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Summer 2015 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2015/entries/compatibilism/>; for arguments opposed, see Kadri Vihvelin, "Arguments for Incompatibilism," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Fall 2015 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2015/entries/incompatibilism-arguments/>.

truly said to be uncoerced and free. It is these instances of perceived free will that give rise to some of the most compelling instances of what we wish to believe, in any case, to be examples of future contingents. That tomorrow I sin in some particular way, or act meritoriously in some way, I wish to believe are events over which I have some control, and are thus able to turn out or not turn out according to the dictates of some power that I possess in myself. (More on the relationship between free will and responsibility will be said shortly.)

In her *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* article on foreknowledge and free will, Linda Zagzebski provides a schematic for analysing the problem of future contingents — more specifically, the problem of understanding God's foreknowledge in relation to those future contingents tied to human free will — and its various solutions that I think, while not perfect in every respect, will be helpful for us in our own analysis of Bradwardine's solution.[145] The structure that she lays out for analysing the problem and the various approaches to its solution is usefully systematic, and though my own analysis and conclusions differ from hers in several ways, in much of what follows, I am indebted to the structure and framework for analysis that she provides.

I will begin, therefore, by recounting the problem in the rough form that Zagzebski uses. Zagzebski outlines the problem in the form of an argument for "theological fatalism," the premises of which she delineates in a way similar to the following, where *P* is some action that will happen in the future, resulting from the choice of a created agent (the same argument applies, mutatis mutandis, to such events in the present)[146]:

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[145] Linda Zagzebski, "Foreknowledge and Free Will", The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Summer 2016 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2016/entries/free-will-foreknowledge/>.

[146] For the purposes of the present section, I am setting aside an important point of Zagzebski's: she highlights that it is the *infallibility* of God's knowledge that makes the problem such a pressing one. The issue of the degree of justification which a true belief requires to constitute knowledge, at least in a medieval context, is one which I took up in greater detail already in the second chapter. Zagzebski is quite right to take into account the fact that, particularly in a contemporary context, quite a low

P1. Yesterday, God knew *P*.

P2. If something happened in the past, it is necessary in the sense that it is fixed.

P3. God's knowledge yesterday of *P* is necessary in the sense that it is fixed. (P1 and P2)

P4. Necessarily, if God knew *P* yesterday, then *P* (since God's knowledge is infallible).

P5. If *a* is necessary in the sense that it is fixed, and necessarily ($a \Rightarrow b$), then *b* is necessary in the sense that it is fixed. (Transfer of necessity principle)

P6. So *P* is necessary in the sense that it is fixed. (P3, P4, and P5)

P7. If *P* is necessary in the sense that it is fixed, then the agent who will bring about *P* cannot do otherwise than bring about *P*.

P8. So the agent cannot do otherwise than bring about *P*. (P6 and P7)

P9. If an agent cannot do otherwise than she does, she does not act freely.

C. The agent who will bring about *P* will not do so freely. (P8 and P9)

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standard of justification is generally required for something to be considered to be "knowledge" in some kind of meaningful sense, at least when speaking of human knowledge. But in the present discussion, this point is less important for three reasons: firstly, it is not at all clear to me that contemporary notions of what might constitute adequate justification are reflective of the historical context at hand. While perhaps nothing quite so strong as *a priori* deduction may be required, certainly something stronger than, say, a report from an authority is necessary for something to be considered sufficiently "justified" as to be knowledge. Secondly, knowledge requires that the subject of its belief be *true*: if what the supposed knower knows turns out not to be the case, then this demonstrates that the belief, being untrue, was never knowledge at all. It therefore seems exceedingly strange to me that knowledge — either God's or man's — might ever be fallible. Fallible knowledge that turns out to be false simply isn't knowledge at all, but merely false belief. And thirdly and finally, the distinction, even if it is valid, seems irrelevant in the present context precisely because it is God's knowledge that is at issue, so whatever disagreements may exist in the contemporary literature about whether and to what extent human knowledge may be fallible, these disagreements presumably cease to be relevant when we speak of the knowledge of an infallible God.

I have modified Zagzebski's presentation of the argument and terminology in a number of minor ways (for instance, Zagzebski uses a term "now-necessary," which I take to mean the necessity of fixity, or something very like it — though I find the terminology "now-necessary" to be misleading, because it seems to apply more strongly to events in the past than those in the present, or "now"), but none of these alterations change the substance of her presentation. What we have, then, is an argument that seems to show that, if we accept that God foreknows all things, it follows that human beings can never act freely (and by extension, that future contingents do not exist).

Calvin Normore argues that future contingents actually give rise to at least three distinct, though interrelated, problems.[147] Normore distinguishes among (1) the problem of reconciling the principle of bivalence (that every proposition is either true or false) with the existence of future contingents; (2) the problem of reconciling foreknowledge in general with the existence of future contingents; and (3) the problem of reconciling the foreknowledge of God in particular (in all of God's infallibility, immutability, and impassibility) with the existence of future contingents. I am unconvinced that the distinction between (2) and (3) is an altogether useful one, since foreknowledge of the infallible sort that gives rise to the problem is only relevant with respect to the foreknowledge of God (either God's own foreknowledge, or God's foreknowledge as prophetically revealed to human beings). We in our creaturely way may presume to have knowledge about what will or will not happen, but our knowledge of such things is in no way presumed to be infallible, and thus there is no contradiction with supposing that things may turn out otherwise than we suppose that they will.

Perhaps the problem of our apparent lack of freedom would not be so

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[147] Calvin Normore, "Future Contingents," in N. Kretzmann et al. (eds.) *The Cambridge History of Later Medieval Philosophy* (Oxford: OUP, 1982), pp. 358 - 59.

troubling were it not also closely linked with intuitions about responsibility and justice, rewards and punishments. I do not take for granted that freedom — in particular, freedom for contradictories — is a necessary condition for responsibility; indeed, as we will shortly examine in greater detail, many have given arguments to the contrary. But there is an undeniably strong intuitive pull toward the conclusion that justice in reward and punishment requires responsibility on the part of those being rewarded or punished for their actions; and that responsibility requires that the agents be relevantly free in their action; and that relevant freedom includes the freedom to act otherwise. All of these assumptions will come to be questioned in what follows.

However, it appears to be the case, by the terms of the argument above, that since God knows all future human actions, those actions cannot really turn out otherwise. As I have said, perhaps this in itself would not be so very troubling: what does it really matter to my lived experience of freedom that God may have already known the outcome of my choices before I make them? But this only seems to be of little importance when considering the quantitative *bulk* of human choices, not those which are qualitatively most important. For it is arguably the case that most possible future contingents are of little or no moral consequence in and of themselves, and whether or not these things are foreknown or determined by God would appear to be neither here nor there; but when it comes to the morally significant choices of human beings, that these choices are truly contingent — and thus truly free — would appear to have monumentally important consequences. Indeed, it appears to be a necessary consequence of the doctrine of hell (i.e., the doctrine that eternal separation from God — with or without other punishments and tortures, depending on whether one consults Dante or other theologians on the matter — awaits those who utterly reject God by their actions in this life), taken together with the justice of God, that human beings must accept or reject God freely and of their own volition. For if the choice is compelled, then punishment for such a choice would seem supremely unjust (just as we would consider those forced into

illegal actions while under bondage to be victims, rather than perpetrators, of crime). Of course, justice in meting out consequences for actions would presumably extend to rewards as well as punishments; but it is perhaps less upsetting to think that some may receive an unmerited reward, than it is to think that some may receive an undeserved punishment (particularly when contemplating punishments of extreme intensity and eternal duration).[148]

So having outlined some of the main ways in which future contingents pose a problem, we turn in the next subsections to a systematic overview of the main strategies solutions to the problem have followed. When this task is completed, there will follow an examination of what would be required of a true *solution* to this problem, in order that we may then judge Bradwardine's solution against that measure.

In order to avoid the troubling conclusion of this fatalist argument, a number of strategies may be advanced. The argument itself appears valid in form, and so a rational person must either find fault with one or more of its premises, or accept the truth of its conclusion. Zagzebski has broadly delineated between two sorts of approaches to the problem, in a way that will be helpful for us in our own analysis[149] : on the one hand, there are approaches that attempt to uphold both of the seemingly contradictory pillars of God's foreknowledge together with human freedom. These are the approaches which, on account of their attempt to show the compatibility of God's foreknowledge with human free will, are termed "compatibilist" (or perhaps we might want to say more precisely in our present context, "theological compatibilist"). On the other hand, in the face of the argument for theological fatalism, some have either accepted its conclusion (that we do not possess freedom

[148] Though Jesus' parable of the labourers in the vineyard (Matthew 20) might seem to undermine this notion, as well: in the parable, all the labourers, regardless of whether they worked a full day, a half day, or even just the last hour of the day, receive a full day's wages. This "unmerited reward" for those who worked only a very little time outrages those who had laboured the full day in their sense of justice. (cf. Matthew 20)

[149] Zagzebski 2016.

of action or will), or rejected its first premise (that God foreknows anything). Either or both of these commitments may be rejected without an outright rejection of the existence of God, though to be sure, a rejection of either commitment is bound to substantially impact the way in which one conceives of God. (Some, indeed, have rejected the foreknowledge of God by rejecting the notion of any kind of god at all; and others the existence of freedom on the part of human beings by adhering to a doctrine of strict causal determinism or one of its variants. But these sorts of positions are not relevant to our present discussion, focussed as it is on the theistic context of Bradwardine and his interlocutors.) These approaches are termed "incompatibilist," since they view the doctrines of divine foreknowledge and (human) freedom as incompatible, and rather than try to maintain the two commitments, they reject one or the other.

I will argue shortly that the incompatibilist approaches should not be considered "solutions" to the problem, per se, relying instead on a kind of cop-out that avoids the problem in the first place. But before doing that, I will briefly outline the main families of solutions as Zagzebski sees them.

5.1.2 - Compatibilist solutions

The compatibilist solutions as a group comprise a number of families of solution strategies, which I will outline in turn below.

The first family of solutions are those which follow along the lines of the majority interpretation of Aristotle's discussion of tomorrow's sea battle in *De interpretatione* IX: these solutions deny that a proposition concerning a future contingent event can have any truth-value at all, and thus deny the principle of bivalence at least with respect to propositions about certain future things. In so doing, they undermine the very definitions of terms in the argument as laid out above: *P* was defined to be some future contingent event *which happens*, assuming

from the outset that there is a truth to be known about *P*. Zagzebski calls this the Aristotelian approach, but it is possible that Boethius also held a similar view — or at least defends something like it in his commentary on the *De interpretatione* (as discussed in 1.1).[150]

The second family of solutions, which has by far the most illustrious and influential heritage in the Western Latin tradition, is that characterized by a rejection of the first premise of the theological fatalist argument — but not on the grounds that God doesn't *know* the relevant future contingent fact, but on the grounds that, as an eternal being beyond temporal existence, it is improper to speak of God as knowing something *yesterday* (or today, or tomorrow). Thus, the natural inferences we may wish to make about necessity inhering in certain things in virtue of their being past fail to apply when speaking of God, because God is beyond the temporal indicators of past, present, and future. Zagzebski calls this the "Boethian solution," and we have already seen that Boethius did indeed gesture toward something like this (see 1.1); but we have also seen that the position was already proposed prior to Boethius by Augustine, and was later much more robustly developed by Anselm (1.2), and so I would be much more inclined to call this the Augustinian/Anselmian position. We have seen already what a profound influence this solution had throughout the Middle Ages and on Bradwardine's own solution, and its legacy continues to this day. Eleonore Stump and Norman Kretzmann, for instance, have stalwartly defended the position in the realm of contemporary philosophy of religion, and younger scholars in the field — myself included — continue to find the position attractive and defensible.[151] But a number of very influential philosophers of religion have also criticised this position over the last several decades, and these critics include Nicholas Wolterstorff, Richard Swinburne,

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[150] Among contemporary proponents of this approach are J.R. Lucas, *The Future: An Essay on God, Temporality, and Truth* (London: Blackwell, 1989); and David Kyle Johnson, "God, Fatalism, and Temporal Ontology," *Religious Studies*, 45 (2009) no. 4, 435–54.

[151] See, e.g., Eleonore Stump and Norman Kretzmann, "Eternity," *Journal of Philosophy*, 78 (August 1981), 429–58; Michael Rota, "The Eternity Solution to the Problem of Human Freedom and Divine Foreknowledge," *European Journal for Philosophy of Religion*, 2 (2010) no.1, 165–186.

and Zagzebski herself.[152]

Next is the position of William Ockham, which we have already spent a great deal of time examining. Ockham's solution, attributing a certain sort of contingency even to past things which themselves pertain to future contingents (such as propositions like "Peter was predestinate" — recall that, in terms of tense, the proposition appears to be about the past; but Peter's predestinate state is really about the future — namely, his ultimate future state of beatitude), would seem to undermine all of the second, third, and fourth premises of the argument for theological fatalism. We have already seen the way in which Marilyn McCord Adams incited a sort of rediscovery and revival of Ockham's position (see chapter 2). Alvin Plantinga defended what might be seen as a sort of version of Ockhamism in his 1986 paper, "On Ockham's Way Out,"[153] and a few others, including William Lane Craig, have ventured defenses of their own.[154] But many others have been severely critical of this approach, for reasons that should by this point be apparent (see chapter 2.3, and Bradwardine's criticisms in chapter 3).[155] Zagzebski puts forward a criticism, perhaps not highlighted in my own discussion before, that Ockham's solution seems to be guilty of ad hockery: for what exactly is it about God's past knowledge that makes it a special case exempting it from the same sort of necessity as other past things?[156] I am not convinced, however, that Zagzebski's accusation is apropos, since Ockham does not seem to see God's past foreknowledge as a unique case of apparently-past-tense things to which the usual sorts of tense conditions do not apply, but, rather, as something that is of a kind with a whole class of other sorts

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[152] See, e.g., Nicholas Wolterstorff, "God Everlasting," *God and the Good: Essays in Honor of Henry Stob*, C. Orlebeke and L. Smedes (eds.) (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975); Richard Swinburne, *The Coherence of Theism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977); Linda Zagzebski, *The Dilemma of Freedom and Foreknowledge* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991). Other criticisms come from, e.g., Clark Pinnock, but his position will be addressed in more particularity a little further on.
[153] Alvin Plantinga, "On Ockham's Way Out," *Faith and Philosophy*, 3 (1986) no. 3, 235–269.
[154] E.g., William Lane Craig, *Divine Foreknowledge and Human Freedom* (Brill's Studies in Intellectual History 19. Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1990).
[155] See, e.g., John Martin Fischer, "Ockhamism," Philosophical Review, 94 (January 1985): 81–100; William Hasker, *God, Time, and Knowledge* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989).
[156] Zagzebski 2016.

of apparently-past-tense things which actually concern the future (see 2.2.3 for a more detailed discussion of this).

Molinism — following Luis de Molina — forms another family of solutions, arguing that God possesses a so-called "middle knowledge" concerning a class of propositions which have been termed "counter-factuals of freedom." In the contemporary literature, this view has been defended by William Lane Craig, in a lengthy exchange between him and William Hasker.[157] In essence, what Molinism argues is that God does not have direct infallible knowledge of our future actions — but he has direct infallible knowledge of the sorts of people we are and the ways in which we would act under particular hypothetical circumstances. This move is supposed to preserve the contingency of those actions, but I see no way around the fact that this solution seems to merely re-frame the problem in slightly different terms; because not only can God infallibly infer from God's knowledge of me and my hypothetical actions to knowledge of what I will, in fact do, but God is also directly responsible for creating me as I am, with the character and inclinations that I have, and so if God knows how I will act in a particular hypothetical situation because of his knowledge of me, it would seem that God is indirectly responsible for all of my actions because of God's creation of me.

The final family of solutions (not necessarily disjoint from other families) is that which calls into question premise nine: that genuine alternative possibilities are required for an agent to act freely. Zagzebski attributes this view to Augustine, who does accord the greatest degree of freedom to the blessed, who cannot but act righteously. But I think we once against see this idea developed much more

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[157] See, e.g., William Lane Craig, "Robert Adams's New Anti-Molinist Argument," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* (54 (1994) no. 4: 857–861); and "On Hasker's Defense of Anti-Molinism," *Faith and Philosophy* (15 (1998) no. 2: 236–240) for Craig's defenses of the view. See, e.g., William Hasker, *God, Time, and Knowledge* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989); "Middle Knowledge: A Refutation Revisited," *Faith and Philosophy* (12 (1995) no. 2: 223–236); "Explanatory Priority: Transitive and Unequivocal, a Reply to William Craig," *Philosophy and Phenomological Research* (57(1997) no. 2: 389–393); and "Anti-Molinism is Undefeated!" *Faith and Philosophy* (17 (2000) no. 1: 126–131) for Hasker's arguments to the contrary.

thoroughly by Anselm, as Tomas Ekenberg has shown.[158] It is worth noting here the active and controversial debate that continues to this day about the complex relationship between freedom of will, determinism, and moral responsibility. Among the most significant developments in the contemporary debate are those which (perhaps not unlike Anselm) provide arguments in support of the thesis that alternative possibilities are not required for a person to be exercising freedom in a way that entails personal responsibility. In his seminal article of 1969 entitled "Alternate Possibilities and Moral Responsibility," Harry Frankfurt argues that responsibility for an action does not require genuine alternative choices by appeal to a thought experiment like the following:[159] suppose Alfred intends to shoot Claudia; suppose, furthermore, that Bertha, a mad neuroscientist who has it in for Claudia, wants to ensure that there is no way for Alfred to mess up the job. Bertha secretly sedates Alfred and implants a device in his brain that will allow her to *force* Alfred to shoot Claudia if, at the crucial moment, he gets cold feet. Now suppose that Alfred, after forming the intention to shoot Claudia, actually does so of his own volition, so that Bertha has no need to activate her brain-implant device. In this situation, Alfred *could not do otherwise* than shoot Claudia; and yet, since the action was carried out under his own volition and in accordance with his own intention, it nevertheless seems reasonable to attribute to Alfred moral responsibility for his action.

Such a view would seem to cohere well with the view of freedom suggested by Augustine and developed much more fully by Anselm. Recall that Anselm argued that the most truly free beings are those which *cannot but* avoid sin and act with perfect goodness.[160] Thus, the blessed in heaven, whose wills are united with God's in such perfect sanctity that it has become an *impossibility* that they should sin are

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[158] See, e.g., Thomas Ekenberg, *Falling Freely* (Dissertation,Uppsala University, 2005); "Free Will and Free Action in Anselm of Canterbury," *History of Philosophy Quarterly*, 22 (2005) no. 4., 301 - 18.
[159] Harry Frankfurt, "Alternate Possibilities and Moral Responsibility," *Journal of Philosophy*, 46 (December 1969), 829–839.
[160] Recall (from 1.2.2) that Anselm defines free will as the "the power to preserve rightness of will for the sake of that same rightness" — and thus, those beings are most free who never fail to preserve rightness for its own sake.

seen by Anselm to be the ones who are most truly free, for their freedom to act is unencumbered by conflicting desires and impulses to depravity. But despite the fact that alternative courses of action are not open to them, because their wills are in such complete conformity with what is good and righteous, they are themselves actively willing those righteous acts that they do. And so it appears that they are exercising the sort of freedom that entails responsibility on Frankfurt's model.[161]

5.1.3 - Incompatibilist solutions

I spoke earlier of there being two extreme solutions possible to the problem of future contingents and God's foreknowledge, and these two form the poles of the incompatibilist approaches: on the one extreme, the problem is solved by rejecting the existence of future contingents. This amounts to determinism, and (at least on most understandings) may lead to the outright denial of human free will. On the other extreme lies the denial that God does, in fact, know all things future. In contemporary theology, this sort of solution arises in the context of what has been called "Open Theism", as influentially espoused by the late Clark Pinnock, Canadian Protestant theologian at McMaster University.[162] Denials of God's foreknowledge can also be seen quite explicitly in the thought of Richard Swinburne.[163] However, this approach undermines God's omniscience (this is because it thereby makes his foreknowledge either non-existent, or fallible), which has almost always been among the properties that Christians have traditionally ascribed to God.

5.2 - What constitutes a true solution?

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[161] For a much more in-depth discussion of the relationship between Frankfurt's views and Anselm's, see Ekenberg 2005b.
[162] Clark Pinnock, *The Openness of God* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1994); *Most Moved Mover: A Theology of God's Openness* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 2001).
[163] Swinburne 1977.

In what follows, I will explain what I think a true solution to the problem ought to achieve, and why I think the incompatibilist solutions fail to obtain this end. I will also explain why it is that some of the apparently compatibilist solutions — and particularly, the Ockhamist solution — despite appearances to the contrary, in fact boil down to an incompatibilist approach and therefore fail as solutions. I will then, briefly, provide reasons why I think that the Augustinian/Boethian/Anselmian approach — by appeal to the timeless eternity of God — is the most promising path to a true solution and an authentically compatibilist understanding of the relationship between the foreknowledge of God and human freedom of will and action.

5.2.1 - What a solution is not

The problem of future contingents, and in particular, the problem of divine foreknowledge and free will, is a problem precisely because there is an apparent conflict between two important commitments which many people throughout history (and in our present day) wish to hold. A solution to the problem that is successful, then, must maintain both of these commitments. A so-called solution to the problem that simply sets aside one or the other or both of these commitments has not actually resolved the problem, but has merely dismissed it.

It is for this reason that I do not admit the incompatibilist solutions outlined above as true solutions to the problem. The problem is one of reconciling two apparently contradictory commitments, and so simply discarding one of the commitments to resolve the conflict does nothing to reconcile the two to one another. It is not enough for the success of a solution to be simply internally *consistent*; it must also simultaneously uphold the foreknowledge of God, and the freedom of the human will, and uphold both of these things in as robust a sense as possible. To say that one has solved the problem, merely by discarding one or the

other of these two tenets, is like claiming to have saved a troubled marriage by killing off one of the spouses.

Let me be clear, however, that I do *not* mean by this to suggest that incompatibilist positions are untenable philosophical positions *per se*. If a philosopher is *not* committed to either or both of the premises that (1) God possesses foreknowledge of all things, and that (2) human beings exercise free will, then there is no reason at all for her to be concerned about maintaining either or both premise. In fact, given the great difficulty faced by anyone who *does* try to maintain (1) and (2), it is quite reasonable indeed to conclude that either or both of (1) and (2) is untenable. But for the philosopher who is *willing* to part with (1) or (2), the *problem* of future contingents in relation to the foreknowledge of God does not exist, or at least, does not exist in nearly so robust a way as it does for the philosopher to takes *both* (1) and (2) to be intractable commitments. Such a philosopher is just not the sort of person for whom the problem is, well, much of a problem to begin with. The problem is such only for those whose pre-existing commitments make it *impossible* to reject either premise (1) or premise (2). This is all I mean when I say that the incompatibilist fails to solve the problem: that the sort of solution the incompatibilist offers is not the sort that would satisfy the philosopher for whom the problem really exists, because such a person is *unwilling to concede* either (1) or (2) in the first place.

Now, I also believe it to be the case that many attempts to provide a compatibilist solution fail in the same way, because they are in fact thinly-veiled *in*compatibilist approaches. In particular, and as I have already discussed at length in chapter 2, Ockham's solution strays too far, in my view, towards a denial of God's foreknowledge. At the very least, Ockham's solution reduces God's foreknowledge to something far less robust than the tradition is committed to maintain. God's foreknowledge, as Ockham would have it, is so reduced as to seriously call into question that God's immutable and impassible nature. However, as I will soon

discuss in 5.3, it seems likely to me that Bradwardine's solution — which Bradwardine understood as an answer to the error of Ockham's — strays too far the other way, and ultimately ends up denying human beings any meaningful freedom of will.

5.2.2 - The promise of the Anselmian approach

In my own view, the approach to the problem which appears to offer the most promise as a genuine solution — in that it maintains a robust notion of both God's foreknowledge and of human freedom, and that it seems rationally compelling and internally consistent — is that of Augustine, Boethius, and Anselm (and of course, many others). This is the approach which relies on an appeal to the atemporal eternality of God to explain how God's knowledge of all things, past, present, and future are not thereby made necessary because of God's knowing them. It seems to me that this approach does the best job of any of them in maintaining a firm commitment to the notion that God knows — really *knows* — my future actions, whilst also maintaining that those future actions, and the choices and willings relating to them, are really *mine*, and are really free. It also seems to me that, by introducing an additional plane of existence, as it were, in which our normal notions of necessity relative to the passage of time fail to apply, this approach offers a solution which is rationally tenable. Granted, this very move of introducing an additional plane of existence, while providing a rational way out of the problem, introduces complexities that are extremely difficult to fully grasp: for how can we, as beings whose only experience of the world is in time, even begin to understand what timeless existence might mean, or how logic applies in such a realm? But is not an adequate reason, in my view, to reject the approach.

Some object to this approach because it seems hard to understand how a timelessly eternal God might relate to the world in time. If all of time is

simultaneously present to God, how is it that God can know in what sequence events happen, with respect to God's creatures? And thus, how can God decide to intervene in events at a particular point in time, and not another? As I have made plain before, however, I think this objection is laid to rest by analogy: insofar as I know about past events, they are equally and simultaneously present to me; but this does not mean that I perceive them as simultaneous with each other, and I am able to understand a sequential order to them (Julius Caesar was assassinated prior to the birth of Mohammed, which was prior to the Norman invasion, which was prior to the French Revolution, which was prior to the election of Donald Trump, for instance). In the same way, God's simultaneous perception of all created time does not mean that God is unable to understand that there is a sequence in events.

Others, such as Zagzebski, object that God's eternal knowledge of the future makes the things known no less necessary than would God's knowledge in time of the future.[164] But this objection erroneously presumes to think about timeless eternity *as though* it is just like the past. In reality, a true understanding of timeless eternity and its relationship with modality is impossible to fully grasp except by analogy, precisely because our entire experience is "en-timed." We may catch fleeting glimpses of what timelessness is through the lense of theoretical physics or transcendental meditation, perhaps, but we cannot wholly escape our created, embodied experience in time to wholly understand what this plane of existence is like.

We have seen already, in the preceding chapter, that Bradwardine views his own solution as lying in the lineage of the Anselmian approach, and indeed, Bradwardine seems truly committed to the timeless eternality of God and sees his own solution as a development of this approach. However, as we will see in the next section, Bradwardine's solution fails to truly follow in the spirit of Anselm *et alia*: in Bradwardine's attempt to develop the approach of Anselm, he takes a tack that lands

[164] See, e.g., Zagzebski 2016.

him in the incompatibilist trap of determinism.

5.3 - Shortcomings of Bradwardine's solution

As an internally logically consistent interpretation of the operation of God's foreknowledge in relation to future contingents, Bradwardine's solution seems quite satisfactory in many ways. It makes a certain logical sense that if God's foreknowledge operates by God's ordained power, then it is only relative to that power that the things foreknown are necessary. This leaves open the possibility that some future things may be contingent absolutely speaking, or relative to God's absolute power. (This comes very close, theoretically, to a doctrine of possible worlds contingency: taking just the actual world, as ordained by God, all things must happen as they happen, and so seem to be necessary in that respect; but it *could* have been the case, absolutely speaking, that an alternative world was actualized by God, and in that alternative world, some things might have worked out differently.) But as I have argued in the section above, it is not sufficient for a solution to merely be consistent to truly be a viable solution to the problem at hand. If it is to really solve the *problem* of the apparent contradiction of God's foreknowledge and human freedom, then a true solution must necessarily avoid denying either God's foreknowledge or human freedom.

Bradwardine's solution comes as a response to Ockham's, which Bradwardine identifies — rightly, I think — as having sacrificed a robust understanding of God's omniscience for the sake of preserving a particularly robust understanding of freedom of the human will: in the troubled marriage between divine foreknowledge and human freedom, Ockham has killed off God's foreknowledge in an attempt to save the marriage. But has Bradwardine, in his own solution, successfully avoided sacrificing the other spouse, namely, free will? As I argue in what follows, I do not think that he has.

I spoke earlier of incompatibilist approaches encompassing two polar extremes of rejecting one or the other of the two central tenets that form the core of the problem: the first, what I've anachronistically called “Open Theism,” is the result of discarding in one way or another the centrality of God’s omniscience; the second, and what most would conventionally call determinism of one stripe or another, involves the rejection in some way of the freedom of human beings in will and/or action. It is the latter of these two incompatibilist traps in which, I contend, Bradwardine finds himself ensnared. In avoiding Ockham’s Scylla of Open Theism, he has instead landed in the Charybdis of determinism.

In particular, if Bradwardine is to save human freedom, there seems to me to be something a bit backwards about his account: surely, if we are at all concerned to preserve freedom of the will, it is relative to God's ordained power that we would really want to be free, since it is this ordained power which operates according to the constraints of God's justice, mercy, etc. Freedom in an absolute, or logical sense, seems hardly to be freedom at all, since what good is it in a created order that is subject to God's ordered power? In other words, if the world as created by God is fashioned and governed exclusively according to God’s ordained power, then God’s absolute power seems almost not to matter for any practical purpose. What I mean by this is that, despite the existence of absolute power to act otherwise, any action God *does* perform is by means of God’s ordained power; and thus God’s absolute power apart from what God ordains never has any bearing on the actual course of events in the world. But if God’s absolute power does not matter, practically speaking, then neither does freedom relative to that power.

For suppose it is foreknown by God that a person will die apart from his grace and so be damned: Bradwardine may contend that, absolutely speaking, it is possible that she will seek God's grace and so be saved (even though she in fact doesn't); but given that it is actually the case that God foreknows that she will be damned, it is, with respect to God's ordained power, necessary that she be damned; and since it is

only by this ordained power that God actually operates, this seems to be the only power that really matters with respect to our actual freedom. It may be the case that it is logically possible that our damnandus (damnanda?) will amend her life in accordance with God's grace, and so be saved; but on her way to the hell fires, it will be small comfort to know that she was free to be saved, logically speaking!

Bradwardine's employment of the distinction of powers, rather than solving the problem, simply puts the problem in slightly different terms. While previously, the concern was how, relative to God's power and omniscience *simpliciter*, we might truly exercise freedom, now the concern is how we might be said to be truly free given that our actions are necessary relative to God's ordained power. Indeed, it seems to me that, for all practical intents and purposes, for one's actions to be necessary relative to God's ordained power is precisely for them not to be free. This is because, though God nevertheless has absolute power relative to which the action is non-necessary, God's ordained power is the only power that God ever, in fact, exercises, and so in a very strong sense, it is the only power that really matters. For how can a power that is never employed, and that we know never *will* be employed, make any difference to the true and practical freedom of an action?

Much earlier, in the introduction and again in chapter 4, I introduced the analogy of a game of chess to illustrate the difference between God's ordained and absolute power. Allow me now to return to that analogy. If you and I are playing chess — that is, playing by the rules of the game — then whatever power or freedom we may have in an absolute sense for moving pieces becomes irrelevant within the constraints of the chess game. If I decide I want to move my pawn from A2 to C2 (i.e., sideways), you will cry, "You can't do that!" And it is no matter that, in an absolute sense, I *can* do that — I have it within my absolute power to do that. It's not even worth the grammar pedant's quibble that what you *really* meant is that I *may* not do that: so long as I am playing chess, in a very strong sense, I *cannot* move my pawn sideways. So long as we are playing chess, and so long as I wish to

continue in the game, there are very real and very definite constraints on the way in which I may move pieces. My power is ordained by the rules of the game. If I violate any one of these rules in virtue of my absolute power, then I am no longer playing chess at all. With respect to the game of chess, my absolute power for moving pieces wherever I please really *doesn't matter*; the *only* relevant power I have is that ordained by the rules of the game.

In the solution Bradwardine creates for us, God's created order is, if you will, a chess game on a grand scale (though please don't push this analogy farther than I intend!). It seems, however, that in Bradwardine's view, it is a game in which the players only ever have one choice of move. Every move is forced, and any sense of choice we have is mere illusion. Recall in particular that Bradwardine explicitly states that, *relative to God's ordained power, our actions are necessary*:

> Now, to the proposition [wherein A is some future contingent event that in fact will happen], I say that A could not happen according to absolute power . . . since for A to happen or not to happen would in no way contradict such a power . . . . **But in speaking of the ordained power . . . it is said in this way that neither A, nor any other future thing, cannot not happen**, since if by that power A could not happen, it would follow that God could be deceived and err, and his knowledge could fail, and he could speak falsely and he could lie, if God predicted, mediately or immediately, that A will happen.
>
> Nunc ad propositum, dico quod A potest non fore de potencia absoluta . . . quia A fore vel non fore in nullo repugnat tali potencie . . . . **Sed loquendo de potencia ordinata . . . sic dicitur quod A non potest non fore nec aliquod futurum**, quia si illa potencia A potest non fore, sequitur quod Deus potest decipi et errare, et falli potest ejus sciencia, et potest falsum dicere et mentiri si Deus predixit A fore mediate vel immediate. (DFC 42g, emphasis mine.

> Omitted are repeated instances of the phrase, "in causa superiori vel inferiori," a secondary distinction which is irrelevant to our current discussion.)

In stating that a future thing *cannot not* happen, Bradwardine is making a fairly explicit statement about the *necessity* of the event, at least relative to God's ordained power.

It is my contention that to be necessary relative to God's ordained power is tantamount to being necessary *simpliciter*, given that God's ordained power is the only power that matters relative to us. For if God never acts contrary to God's ordained power — i.e., if every action of God, throughout eternity, is enacted according to God's ordained power — then anything necessary relative to that perpetually-realized power is, if not necessary absolutely speaking, at least *contingens ut in pluribus* — or technically contingent, but never not the case. It is certainly not contingent *ad utrumlibet*, as it would seem Bradwardine wishes to claim. This seems to imply that by all relevant measures, our actions are determined in quite a strong sense. And so it appears that Bradwardine's attempt to provide a compatibilist solution in the line of Anselm fails, and what he has instead produced is an incompatibilist version of determinism.

Conclusion

Summary

In this thesis, I have provided an introductory study of Bradwardine's *De futuris contingentibus*, a work which provides a version of his solution to the problem of divine foreknowledge and human free will. This study required, firstly, the examination of the positions of three major figures whose solutions shaped and influenced Bradwardine's own: in Boethius' position, we observed the first of the solutions appealing the a difference in the operation of God's knowledge from our own. Boethius argues that it is primarily because God's knowledge operates on a plane higher than our own that we cannot understand how its operation does not necessitate its future objects. Also present in Boethius' solution, albeit subtly, is the suggestion that God's timeless eternity enables this non-necessitating knowledge of things to come. In Anselm's position, we saw a much fuller development of the notion of God's timeless eternity, together with a more robust discussion of how the entire expanse of created time — past, present, and future — might be simultaneously present to God, with a simultaneity that does not obscure succession in God's sight. In Anselm's position, we also encountered a version of free will that might allow for freedom despite the lack of alternatives. The view of Duns Scotus fits less neatly into the trajectory begun by Boethius and Anselm, in that it did not require (and indeed, Scotus elsewhere flatly denies) the presumption of God's timeless eternity; with Scotus, we saw instead a new engagement with the notion of contingency which pushed the parameters that dominated medieval assumptions up to that point. This is coupled in Scotus' thought, in a way that is perhaps not entirely seamless, with an understanding of God's foreknowledge relying on God's knowledge of God's own will. As subsequent chapters showed, the positions of all

three of these figures have a role to play in Bradwardine's own solution.

This thesis required, secondly, that we take significant time to understand the position of Bradwardine's chief intellectual adversary, William Ockham. Ockham's view, like that of Scotus (his fellow Franciscan) did not rely upon (and in fact, rejected outright) any notion of God's timeless eternity. Instead, Ockham developed a complex understanding of modality and verb tense which led him to the conclusion that our future free acts are not necessary, despite being known by God, because *God's knowledge of them* is not necessary. I responded to Ockham's position with a discussion of my own, centring on the nature of knowledge and what sense can be made of this notion of "contingent knowledge." I also engaged some logical difficulties that seem to me to spring from Ockham's notion, and discussed whether Ockham's solution does not just push the problem onto determinacy, rather than necessity, in his newly-defined set of terms.

I was then ready, thirdly, to introduce Bradwardine's treatise itself, beginning with Bradwardine's consideration of other solutions to the problem. Naturally, we paid by far the greatest attention to Bradwardine's rejection of the Ockhamist position, since this is clearly the position that is of greatest importance for Bradwardine in his efforts to provide an alternative solution. But Bradwardine's objections to Ockham were mostly quite different from my own, focusing on the danger, as he sees it, for Ockham's notion of contingent divine foreknowledge to undermine the immutability and omniscience of God. Bradwardine was very concerned that Ockham's preoccupation with human freedom led him into a heretical neglect of these central attributes of God, as the tradition of Classical theism would have it. In his own solution, therefore, Bradwardine seeks to restore a robust, Classical sense of the sovereignty of God, with full authority, power, and autonomy, expressed in the perfections of omniscience, omnipotence, and immutability. Bradwardine embraces the Boethian/Anselmian notions of the timeless eternity of God, and adapts the Scotistic distinction between the absolute

and ordained power of God to serve his purposes in explaining how it is that God can have knowledge of our actions without necessitating them. He does this by saying that God's foreknowledge operates through the *ordained* power of God, and thus human actions foreknown in this way are only necessary ordinately speaking; relative to God's absolute power, however, they remain free and undetermined.

Finally, I analyzed the merit of Bradwardine's solution, relating it to a schematic of possible solutions. I broadly laid out the main families of solutions within the two categories of compatibilist and incompatibilist solutions, and then argued that the incompatibilist positions — though tenable positions in their own right — fail to really be solutions to the problem of divine foreknowledge and free will in a true sense, because they are only acceptable as solutions to the kind of person for whom the problem would never have truly existed in the first place. The problem arises only for the person for whom God's foreknowledge of all things and human freedom are both deep, unavoidable commitments that *cannot* be discarded. I then argue that some solutions which aim to be compatibilist inadvertently erode the foundation of one or the other of these two commitments, and thus ultimately wind up being incompatibilist solutions despite themselves. Ockham's solution, I contend, is one such solution, since it weakens the sense in which God foreknows anything to the point where it seems almost to be nothing more than a kind of "passive waiting," as Oberman expressed it. So Ockham ultimately winds up undermining his commitment to God's foreknowledge. Bradwardine, however, in his enthusiasm to avoid the apparently heretical pitfalls of Ockham's solution, commits this opposite error: the notion of freedom that Bradwardine preserves is one that is so weak as to ultimately boil down to determinism. And thus Bradwardine, too, winds up an incompatibilist, despite himself.

Remaining questions

There are a number of remaining avenues of enquiry relating to the *De futuris contingentibus* that I have been unable to explore in the course of this thesis study. One of these questions is that of the relationship between Bradwardine's solution to the problem as presented in the *De futuris contingentibus*, and some years later, in the much more well-known work *De causa Dei*. For it seems that in that latter work, the division of God's power ceases to play a central role (or any role at all) in Bradwardine's treatment of God's foreknowledge and human freedom. He does retain in that work a very robust sense of the sovereignty and power of God, placing secondary importance on whether or not human action can really be free under such circumstances.[165] But when it comes to actually giving an account of divine foreknowledge and human freedom, it winds up coming across in a way that seems not unlike the solution of Scotus, with a strong dose, too, of Anselmian emphasis on the eternity of God.[166] Absent is the creatively original approach of the DFC, employing the divine powers distinction. So a major question for further inquiry is, why did Bradwardine not maintain the division in God's power as a useful mechanism for dealing with the problem of divine foreknowledge and human freedom when he came to address the problem a second time? A fuller answer would require a much more careful study of DCD and other works of Bradwardine's than I am presently able to provide, but I would at this point hazard a guess that it may have been the case that Bradwardine came to recognize the weaknesses of his first solution. Perhaps he came to realize that to posit that we are only free relative to God's absolute power in fact undermines our freedom in a very significant way. So perhaps DCD is, among other things, an attempt by Bradwardine to provide a better answer to the problem than he had in his previous treatise on the topic.

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[165] Bradwardine's strong emphasis on the sovereignty of God has been seen by some scholars — among them, Oberman and Leff — to prefigure similar emphases in the writings of some early reformers, most notably John Calvin.

[166] *De causa Dei* itself is a very large, intimidating tome, available only in a difficult-to-read seventeenth-century edition (or one of its reprints). I do not pretend to have read through it in its entirety myself yet; however, a snapshot summary of Bradwardine's treatment of the topic of future contingents in the DCD is given by Calvin Normore in "Future Contingents," in Kretzmann et al. (eds), *The Cambridge History of Later Medieval Philosophy* (Cambridge: CUP, 1982), 358 - 81, esp. 374 - 75.

A second significant question that arises from this study is that of the historical reception, transmission, and influence of the work. There are many clues that Bradwardine's writing was influential and well-known in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Oberman and Leff trace the likely influence that Bradwardine had on theological developments leading up to the great rift in the early-sixteenth-century Church which we call the Reformation. In particular, these scholars trace a line of intellectual influence connecting Bradwardine with none other than John Calvin. My own favourite piece of evidence of Bradwardine's influence, however, is the following passage from Geoffrey Chaucer's "The Nun's Priest's Tale" in *The Canterbury Tales* (the translation below is my own, with no effort made to preserve the original metre or rhyme in any way):

> But I ne kan nat bulte it to the bren,
> As kan the hooly doctour Augustyn,
> Or Boece, or the Bisshop Bradwardyn,
> Wheither that Goddes worthy forwityng
> Streyneth me nedely for to doon a thyng, -
> "Nedely" clepe I symple necessitee;
> Or elles, if free choys be graunted me
> To do that same thyng, or do it noght,
> Though God forwoot it, er that I was wroght;
> Or if his wityng streyneth never a deel
> But by necessitee condicioneel.
>
> But I cannot sift it [as wheat] to the bran
> As can the holy Doctor [of the Church], Augustine,
> Or Boethius, or the Bishop Bradwardine:
> Whether God's worthy foreknowledge
> Compels me by need to do a thing —
> By "need" I mean simple necessity —
> Or if free choice might be granted to me
> To do or not do that same thing,
> Although God foreknew [my choice] before I was even made;
> Or if God's knowledge does not compel anything
> Except by conditional necessity. (lines 474 - 84)

The very fact that Chaucer is mentioning Bradwardine by name — in the same breath, even, as such illustrious greats as Boethius and Augustine — indicates that Bradwardine must have been something of a household name, even a couple of decades after his death. Yet more remarkable, though, is the context in which Chaucer mentions Bradwardine, for the very topic being alluded to is that of the *De futuris contingentibus*, namely, divine foreknowledge and human freedom![167] There can be no clearer evidence than this passing mention in Chaucer's hugely popular poem that Bradwardine's attempts to tackle to problem of divine foreknowledge and human freedom were widely known, at least among the educated.

Despite this evidence that Bradwardine was famous for his work on the topic, I have found little evidence to suggest that the *De futuris contingentibus* treatise in particular was much read or imitated. Much further textual and paleographic study of Bradwardine's contemporaries and immediate successors would be necessary to establish with any greater degree of certainty the kind of direct influence the treatise may have had; but the immediate evidence would appear to point to the influence being very slight. There seem to be few surviving manuscripts, for one thing; and for another, I have not so far discovered any evidence of the characteristic element of the DFC's solution — namely, the reliance on the divine powers distinction — being reported or taken up by any subsequent philosophers of the fourteenth century. There are two main possibilities that I can see as to why this might be: it may be the case that this was a text that simply failed to gain a critical-mass following, and so was forgotten about (certainly, its stylistic shortcomings would not have made it an easy, accessible text for students or other masters of arts hoping to read up on current ideas); or perhaps it was read by some, even circulated for a time, but not taken up by anyone because its shortcomings as a

[167] If ever my research is accused of being dry and irrelevant to today's young people, I pull out this reference in Chaucer. I call it my pop-culture tie-in — because really, how much more hip does it get than Chaucer?

coherent account were too apparent.

These speculations, however, are based on far too little evidence, as yet, to make any certain pronouncements. Indeed, it may even turn out that further study yields evidence of the text having had a greater influence among Bradwardine's contemporaries and immediate successors than I currently believe there to be. Regardless of the text's influence, however, there remains much of inherent interest about it; and despite the ultimate failure of the solution it offers to the problem of divine foreknowledge and human freedom, it yet provides an intriguing case-study of a creative attempt by a fourteenth-century philosopher to craft a new solution to a perennial problem of philosophy, and a unique window into the early thought of the *Doctor Profundus*.[168]

[168] *Doctor Profundus* ("the profound doctor") is the epithet by which Bradwardine was known to subsequent generations of medieval scholars.

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Appendix

DE FUTURIS CONTINGENTIBUS[169]

Utrum Deus habeat prescienciam omnium futurorum contingencium ad utrumlibet.[170]

1. Quod non, quia sid posset sciencia Dei falli et mutari. Consequens est falsum, quia sic Deus posset decipi. Illud sequitur quod illa contingencia ad utrumlibet sunt necessaria. Consequens est falsum.

2a. Ad oppositum questionis arguitur: nullum contingens ad utrumlibet est quod non scit, igitur etc. Antecedens probo, quia si detur oppositum et sit A illud futurum contingens ad utrumlibet quod non

ON FUTURE CONTINGENTS[169]

Whether God has foreknowledge of all ad utrumlibet[170] *future contingents.*

1. [It may be argued] that [God does] not, since it would then be possible for God's knowledge to be mistaken and to be changed. The consequent is false, since then God could be deceived. It follows from this that these contingent things are necessary. [This] consequent is false.

2a. In opposition to the question it may be argued: no contingent thing is such that [God] does not know [it], therefore, etc. I prove the antecedent: [Proof:] if the opposite is granted – so that A is some future contingent thing that God does not

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[169] The Latin text is transcribed from the complete edition prepared by Jean-François Genest in "Le *De futuris contingentibus* de T. Bradwardine," *Recherches Augustiniennes* vol. 14, 249 - 336. The paragraph numbering is also that of Genest. Unless noted otherwise, I have adhered to Genest's editorial decisions throughout. Because I am not including Genest's editorial notes, no copyright infringement is entailed by this use. In continental Europe (which is where the edition was created), critical editions are only covered by copyright for thirty years — it is now thirty-seven years since this edition was published — and in Canada, only the critical apparatus of an edition (not the text itself) is ever covered by copyright. (See Thomas Margoni and Mark Perry, 'Scientific and Critical Editions of Public Domain Works: An Example of European Copyright Law (Dis)Harmonization', *Canadian Intellectual Property Review* 27, no. 1 (2011): 157–170.) The translation is entirely my own. I have completed a draft translation of the entire treatise, but in the interest of space, am only including excerpts in the present document (the entire treatise, in the present format, is over one hundred pages in length).

[170] "*Ad utrumlibet*" is a virtually untranslatable term which designates those contingent things which are really likely to turn out one or the other of two (or possibly more) possible ways; it is used in contrast with *ut in pluribus* and *ut in paucioribus* or *ut raro* contingencies, which are events which, though technically contingent, are practically speaking almost certain to happen (or not to happen, respectively). Throughout the remainder of the text, I will typically leave *ad utrumlibet* untranslated, or even omit it in the English entirely, unless a point is being made which rests on the distinction between *ad utrumlibet*, *ut in pluribus*, and *ut in paucioribus*/*ut raro* contingencies. Some other translators of medieval sources have rendered the phrase "indefinite contingency" or "contingency (-) in (-) either (-) of (-) two (-) ways"; I find the former imports too much technical baggage which may or may not be present in the original context, while the latter is extremely cumbersome. In almost all instances of its use in this text, plain old "contingency" will do the job just fine.

scit, et arguitur sic: A erit quia est futurum, igitur Deus sciet A esse quando erit actu existens; et non per ipsum A hoc sciet, quia sic sciencia sua acquireretur sibi ex nobis[171]; igitur sequitur quod sciet A esse quando erit per essenciam suam hoc representantem sibi quando A erit; et si sic, igitur sequitur quod essencia sua non representat A esse, nec fore, nec preteritum esse nunc, et postea representabit A esse; et sic sequitur quod essencia sua mutatur. Consequens est falsum.

know – it may be argued as follows: A will be, since it is future, thus God will know A to be when A does in fact exist; and he will know this not through A itself, since then his knowledge would itself be acquired from us[171]; it therefore follows that God will know A to be when it is represented to God through God's own essence when A will exist; and if so, then it follows that God's essence does not now represent A to be, nor to be going to be, nor to have been, and yet later it represents that A is; and so it follows that God's essence is changed. [This] consequent is false.

2b. Similiter sic: sequitur quod essencia divina non representaret res esse naturaliter, sed voluntarie. Consequens est falsum, quia si voluntarie, igitur prius voluit essenciam suam sic illam rem representare sibi per aliam mensuram; et cum non sit major racio quare prius per aliam mensuram quam ab eterno, sequitur quod ab eterno hoc representavit; et habetur propositum.

2b. Similarly, then: it follows that the divine essence would not naturally represent that a thing is [i.e., through the nature of the divine essence], but wilfully [through its will]. [This] consequent is false, since if it were wilful, then it previously willed its own essence, so that thing represents itself by means of another measure; and since there is no more reason why [this should happen] first through another measure than from eternity, it follows that this representation is from eternity; and we have the proposition.

2c. Confirmatur, quia aliter aliquando esset magis sciens et aliquando minus, scilicet quando scit rem esse quam prius quando non scit rem esse; et sic aliquando erit magis perfectus, aliquando minus perfectus. Consequens est falsum.

2c. [This] is confirmed, since otherwise [God's] knowledge would at one time be greater and at another time less; indeed, God would at one time know something to be that he did not know to be at a prior time; and so God would at one time be more perfect, and at another time less perfect. This consequent is false.

2d. Similiter sequitur quod A non cadit sub providencia Dei et conservacione sua. Consequens est falsum. Et similiter, si A sit aliquis

2d. It similarly follows that A [i.e., a future contingent thing] does not fall under the providence and keeping of God. [This] consequent is false. And similarly, if A were

[171] Here, it is assumed that A is some action of the (human) will, and so this is why God's knowledge would be "acquired from us."

homo, sequitur quod aliquis homo potest esse de numero electorum qui ab eterno non fuit electus. Consequens est falsum. Et sic de reprobatis.

to be some person, it follows that a person who was not elect from eternity, could be numbered among the elect. [This] consequent is false. And so too [with a person who is] among the reprobate.

2e. Similiter sequitur quod Deus non ageret ad productionem A, vel sequitur quod si agat, agit necessario ad productionem; quia, si libere agat ad productionem A, igitur, quando A non fuit, cognovit A fore, et pari racione ab eterno cognovit A fore.

2e. It similarly follows that God does not act to produce A, or it follows that if God did so act, God would act necessarily to produce [A]; because, if God were to freely act to produce A, then when A did not exist, God would have been aware that A was going to exist, and by similar reasoning, God would have been aware from eternity that A was going to be.

2f. Item Deus scit multa futura, quia omnes operactiones nostras bonas et malas, quia aliter non sciret illas premiare et punire; sic pari racione scit omnia futura. Antecedens patet, quia prophete sciebant multa futura, igitur et Deus, quia aliter non foret Deus perfectissimus qui potest esse.

2f. In the same way God knows many future things, because [God knows] all of our good and bad deeds, since otherwise he would not know which to reward and which to punish; and so by the same reasoning, God knows all future things. [This] antecedent holds: since prophet[s] know many future things, therefore also so does God, since otherwise God would not be the most perfect being that can be.

2g. Similiter sequitur quod non debemus Deum racionabiliter orare pro futuris.

2g. It similarly follows that, rationally, we ought not to pray to God for future things.

2h. Similiter sic sequitur quod homo purus plura scit quam Deus scit, quia futura.[172]

2h. It similarly follows, in another way, that a [being that is] purely human knows more than God knows, since [the person knows] future things.[172]

2i. Similter sequitur quod Deus potest decipi et errare credendo illud non esse quod est, quia non

2i. It similarly follows that God can be deceived and err by believing that something does not exist which does, since he does not have knowledge, at the time

[172] In this reductio argument, Bradwardine seems to mean that even non-divine human beings have knowledge of some things in the future (by means of anticipation, inductively learned by experience): when I see a dark storm cloud approaching, I know that it will rain. So if God truly knows nothing that is future, then he would know even less than his creatures.

habet scienciam, quando non est, de illo non esse.[173]

2j. Similiter sequitur sic quod illud psalmi esset verum ad litteram: "Non videbit Dominus, nec intelliget Deus Jacob" (Ps. 93.7).[174]

<Prima opinio>

3a. In ista questione est una opinio que ponit quod nihil est futurum. Quod probatur sic: futurum nihil est, igitur, per conversionem, nihil est futurum. Antecedens patet, quia futurum distinctum contra presens nulla res est.

...

4. Sed contra istam opinionem arguitur sic: hec opinio destruit illam opinionem que ponit tria tempora, scilicet preteritum, presens et futurum. Similiter dyalecticam, que ponit futura contingencia ad utrumlibet, et scienciam naturalem, que ponit plura evenire a casu, et medicinam et astronomiam, que docent judicare de futuris, et propheciam et revelacionem, que sunt de futuris. Hec igitur opinio est falsa. Respondetur igitur ad argumenta.

...

<Secundo opinio>

9a. Secunda opinio in ista questione est quod aliquod est futurum, sed illud non potest esse,

that it does not exist, of that non-existent thing.[173]

2j. It similarly follows, in another way, that this Psalm would be true when it says: "The Lord will not see, nor will the God of Jacob understand" (Ps. 93/94.7).[174]

<First opinion>

3a. Concerning this question, there is an opinion put forward that nothing is future. This is proven as follows: the future is nothing, and therefore, by conversion, nothing is future. The antecedent holds, since the future is distinguished from the present [by the fact that] nothing [future] is.

...

4. But against this opinion it may be argued as follows: this opinion destroys that opinion which holds [there to be] three times, namely, past, present, and future. By a similar logic, which holds there to be future contingents; and natural knowledge, which holds many things to come about by chance; and medicine and astronomy, which show how to determine future things; and prophecy and revelation, which are about future things. This opinion is therefore false. The argument is therefore answered.

...

<Second opinion>

9a. The second opinion on this question is that something is future, but cannot exist, since the future, when it is yet nothing, does

[173] I take this to be an argument from God's immutability.
[174] This passage, in context, represents the false boast of an evildoer.

quia futurum, cum nihil sit, non habet aliquam potenciam et ita non habet aliquod posse.

b. Sed respondetur cum Anselmo quod aliquid dicitur posse esse respectu hujus verbi “esse”, non quia ipsum potest esse per potenciam suam, sed per aliam potenciam, et ita mundus potuit esse antequam fuit. Et ita est in proposito.

c. Sed contra : tunc eadem racione potest vere concedi quod dominus potest edificare domum, quia alius potest edificare domum. Consequens est falsum.

d. Respondetur negando consequenciam, sed tamen posset esse sic universaliter: domus potest esse, igitur aliquis potest facere quod domus sit.

<Tercia opinio>

10. Tercia opinio est quod hec est vera : 'aliquod futurum ad utrumlibet est futurum vel non futurum”, ut accipitur in sensu composito, sed hec: “aliquid est futurum”, similiter hec : “aliquid non est futurum”, nec est vera, nec faIsa, quia nulla talis in sensu divisa de futuro est vera vel falsa. Et hoc patet per Philosophum, qui dicit quod de futuris contingentibus non est veritas determinata. Et per consequens nulla talis in sensu divisa est vera vel

not have any power, and so does not have any ability.

b. But one responds along with Anselm that something is said to be able to exist with respect to this word “to exist,” not because it itself is able to exist through its own power, but through the power of another; and so the world was able to exist before it was made. And so it is in the proposition.

c. But against this: by that same reasoning it could be truly conceded that the Lord is able to make the Lord, since another [thing] can make the Lord. This consequent is false.

d. One responds by denying the inference made — the Lord is able to exist, therefore something else is able to make it that the Lord would be — even though it still can still be so universally.

<Third opinion>

10. The third opinion is that this is true: “Some *ad utrumlibet* [contingent] future thing is going to be or is not going to be,” when taken in the compounded sense, but this sentence: “Something is going to be”, and similarly this sentence: “Something is not going to be”, is neither true, nor false, since no such [proposition] concerning the future is true or false in the divided sense. And this holds through [the teaching of] the Philosopher, who says that, concerning future contingents, truth is not determined. And consequently, no such [proposition] is true or false in the divided sense, since [for] every true thing it is true that it is, and for

falsa, quia omne verum est verum quod est, et omne tale est determinate verum etc.

11. Sed respondetur primo racioni huic, et post arguetur contra opinionem istam : quia Philosophus non vult per hoc plus habere nisi quod nulla talis est nobis nota esse vera loquendo naturaliter, eo quod potest esse et non esse et contingens est. Sed non vult dicere quod hec non est vera : “aliquid est futurum” nec “aliquid non est futurum” tum quia secundum Philosophum de quolibet quod est, erit vel fuit dicitur affirmacio vel negacio et de nullo eorum ambo[175] ; igitur, cum plura erunt que non sunt, sequitur propositum quod hec est vera : “aliquid est futurum”.

…

c. Similiter sic sequitur quod Deus nihil presciret nisi sub disjunctione, et sic scit quilibet ydiota ; igitur.

…

<Quarta opinio>

13a. Quarta est opinio que ponit aliquid esse futurum ad utrumlibet, sed illud non semper fuit vel est futurum, sed quod potest incipere esse futurum ; quia aliquod potest esse quod non erit, igitur aliquid potest esse futurum quod non est nunc futurum.[176] Et sit illud A et

every such thing, it is determinately true, etc.

11. But one replies to this first argument (and will afterwards argue against this opinion) because the Philosopher means by that no more than that no such [proposition] is known to us to be true (naturally speaking), in that it can be and not be and is contingent. But he does not want to say that neither “Something is going to be” nor “Something is not going to be” is true, because according to the Philosopher concerning whatever is, will be, or was, it may be asserted in either the affirmative or in the negative, but never both[175]; therefore, since many things will be that do not [now] exist, it follows that the proposition “Something is going to be” is true.

…

c. It similarly follows that God would foreknow nothing, except under a disjuntion – and any idiot knows in that way! Therefore, [etc.].

…

<Fourth opinion>

13a. The fourth opinion is the one that supposes something to be an *ad utrumlibet* future [contingent], but that it was not always or is [not always] going to be [a future thing], but rather, that it can *begin* to be going to be; since something *is able* to be that will not be, therefore something *can* be future[176] that is not currently future. Let

[175] Here Bradwardine asserts the principle of bivalence and the law of the excluded middle.
[176] Or “going to be,” similarly throughout.

arguitur sic : A potest esse futurum et A non est nunc futurum, igitur A potest incipere esse futurum. Consequencia patet per exposicionem de li ' incipit '.

...

14a. Sed contra per Philosophum : " Non refert dicere per millesimum annum aliquid esse futurum vel quantumcumque tempus". Igitur futurum non incipit esse futurum.

b. Item si aliquod futurum aliquo tempore incipiat esse futurum, sit gracia exempli quod A futurum incipiat esse futurum in B tempore vel instanti, et arguitur sic : A incipit esse futurum in B instanti futuro, igitur A erit futurum in B instanti futuro, et si sic, igitur A non incipiet (or "incepit") esse futurum in B futuro. Sic arguitur de quolibet instanti futuro et tamen post nunc A est futurum, et sic arguitur quod A nunquam incipit [esse futurum] vel incipiet esse futurum.

...

<Quinto opinio>

16a. Quinta est opinio quod aliquid est futurum contingens ad utrumlibet, sed illud non prescitur a Deo, quia si sic, sciencia Dei potest falli et Deus potest decipi, quod est falsum.

b. Confirmatur per Commentatorem in *De sompno* [sic] *et vigilia*, quod sompnia vera non

such a thing be A, and argue as follows: A can be future, and A is not currently future; therefore, A can *begin* to be future. The consequence holds by the definition of the word "begin".

...

14a. But against this, according to the Philosopher, "It doesn't matter [whether] you say a thousand years, or however much time, for something to be future". Therefore something that is going to be does not begin to be future.

b. Similarly if something future *begins* to be future at some point in time, consider the example that A, a future thing, begins to be future at the time or instant B, and then argue as follows: A begins to be future at the future instant B, therefore A will be future *at* the future instant B; and if this is so, then A does not begin to be future at the future [instant] B. If so it is argued from whatever future instant, and at each subsequent one, A is going to be. And so it is argued that A never begins, nor will begin, to be future.

...

<Fifth opinion>

16a. The fifth is the opinion that something is an *ad utrumlibet* future contingent, but that thing is not foreknown by God, since if it were, God's knowledge could fail and God could be deceived, which is false.

b. This is confirmed by the Commentator in the treatise *On sleeping and waking*, that dreams are not really in us except for those

sunt in nobis nisi de illis que accidunt in majori parte, et ideo non de futuris contingentibus ad utrumlibet.[177]

...

d. Sed ad ista argumenta respondebitur post, dicendo ad questionem.

<Sexta opinio>

17. Sexta est opinio que ponit quod nihil est Deo futuram, licet plura sint futura in propriis naturis ; et hec est opinio Anselmi, qui dicit quod Deus non habet proprie prescienciam aliquarum rerum ab eo scitarum, eo quod omnia futura sunt sibi presencia.

...

<Septima opinio>

20. Septima opinio est que ponit quod nihil est futurum contingens ad utrumlibet, sed omnia que eveniunt, necessario eveniunt. Sed ista opinio est tam contra philosophiam quam theologiam, ideo hic illa non reprobatur.

<Octava opinio>

21. Octava opinio est que ponit quod aliquod est futurum contingens ad utrumlibet et prescitum a Deo in isto instanti presenti, et quod tamen possibile est

that happen for the most part [or which usually occur], and therefore do not concern *ad utrumlibet* future contingents.[177]

...

d. But this argument will be dealt with after we have discussed the question.

<Sixth opinion>

17. The sixth is the opinion that holds that nothing is future for God, although it allows that many things would be future with respect to their own natures; and this is the opinion of Anselm, who says that God does not properly have foreknowledge of anything that is known by him, since all future things are present to him.

...

<Seventh opinion>

20. The seventh opinion is that which posits that nothing is an *ad utrumlibet* future contingent, but that all things that happen, happen of necessity. But this opinion is so entirely contrary to both philosophy and theology, that it will not be refuted here.

<Eighth opinion>

21. The eighth opinion posits that something is going to happen contingently *ad utrumlibet* and is foreknown by God in this present instant, but that it is possible, even for this present instant, that it could

[177] The significance of this reference, and how it relates to the opinion at hand, is obscure to me.

pro isto instanti presenti quod non sit futurum nec prescitum a Deo, ymmo quod nunquam fuerit futurum nec prescitum a Deo.

not be going to be, nor foreknown by God – nay, even more, that at no time was it ever going to be, nor [was it] foreknown by God.

22a. Sed contra sic : sequitur quod possibile est quod aliquod sit futurum quod nunc non est futurum. Consequens est falsum, quia, si sic, ponatur illud instans in esse, et sit A , et arguitur sic : A est futurum nunc, et prius non fuit futurum, igitur mutatur de non futuro ad futurum; et non sic mutatur propter mutacionem in seipso, cum non sit adhuc ; igitur oportet quod, si A mutatur, sit propter mutacionem in alio. Consequens est falsum, quia sic arguitur de possibili quod A potest mutari de non futuro ad futurum sicut arguitur de inesse.

22a. But against this, consider the following: it follows that it is possible that something would be going to be that is not now going to be. This consequent is false, since, if it were so [the following argument could be made]: Suppose that it is now that instant [in the future], and [suppose] that A would [happen]; it may then be argued as follows: A is now going to be, and previously A was not going to be, therefore it is changed from not-going-to-be to going-to-be; and it is not changed because of a change in itself (since it did not exist before now); it is therefore the case that, if A is changed, it is because of a change in something else. This consequent is false, since in the same way that it has just been argued concerning possibility that A can be changed from not-going-to-be to going-to-be, so too could it be argued concerning [A's] essence.

…

…

23a. Secundo ad principale sic : si Deus habet prescienciam futurorum contingencium ad utrumlibet, sequitur quod Deus potest velle et pramittere oppositum nunc sciti, promissi et voliti ab eo. Consequens est falsum, quia sic Deus potest mutari de scitis, volitis et promissis, quod est contra illud Malachie 3° [Malachi 3.6] : « Ego Dominus et non mutor»; et ita sequitur quod non erit sic sicut Deus promisit vel voluit fore, igitur Deus mutatur.

23a. Secondly, [one objects] to the principal [argument] in this way: If God has foreknowledge of ad utrumlibet future contingents, it follows that God can will and promise the opposite of what is now known, promised, and willed by him. This consequent is false, since in this way God could be changed with respect to knowledge, will, and promises, which is contrary to what is said in Malachi 3 [v. 6]: "I am the LORD, and I do not change"; and so it follows that [if] it will not be just as God has promised or has willed it to be, then God is changed.

...

24a. Tercio sic ad principale : si quodlibet futurum potest non esse futurum, igitur sequitur quod de futuris non potest esse aliqua revelacio in Verbo. Consequens est falsum et consequencia patet, quia si sic, sequitur quod preteritum potest non esse preteritum, et qui decessit in peccato mortali potest non decessisse in peccato mortali, et sic de illo qui decessit in caritate potest non etc., et sic dampnatus potest nunquam fuisse dampnatus et salvatus nunquam fuisse salvatus. Consequens est falsum, igitur. Hec consequencia patet, posito quod A videat in Verbo B fore et quod precipiatur sub pena peccati mortalis quod predicet et affirmet illud quod vidit in Verbo, et non aliud vel alia quam omnia illa que videt in Verbo. Tunc ponatur quod A predicet B fore futurum, et quod pro illa predicacione et obediencia salvetur et aliter non. Tunc arguitur sic : possibile est B non evenire, igitur possibile est ipsum non predixisse B fore futurum ; et per consequens, si salvetur pro illa predicacione precise, possibile est ipsum non esse salvatum. Et sic sequitur propositum, scilicet quod preteritum potest non esse preteritum et hujusmodi, quia si B non est futurum, ille sic non vidit in Verbo B fore futurum, et per consequens non sic predixit, nec pro isto salvatur per consequens; igitur etc.

...

24a. Thirdly, [it may be objected] in this way to the principle [argument]: if whatever is going to be can be not going to be, then it follows that, with respect to the future, it cannot be something revealed in the Word [i.e., by God]. This consequent is false, but the consequence holds, since if it were so [that whatever is going to be can be not going to be], it would follow that what has already happened can have not happened, [so for example] someone who died in mortal sin can have not died in mortal sin, and so also someone who died in a state of grace can have not died in a state of grace, and so also a damned person can not ever have been damned, and a saved person can not ever have been saved. This consequent is therefore false. But the consequence holds: I suppose that A sees in the Word [i.e., has a vision from God] that B is about to be, and that it would be expected, under penalty of mortal sin, that A would foretell and affirm what A sees in the Word, and [would foretell] nothing other than what A sees in the Word. Then suppose that A foretells that B is going to be, and that through [sharing] this prediction and through obedience [A] is saved, and otherwise [A] is not [saved]. Then it may be argued as follows: it is possible for B not to happen, therefore it is possible for [A] not to have foretold that B was going to be; and consequently, if [A] is saved precisely because of [A's] foretelling, it is possible for [A] not to have been saved. And so the proposition follows, namely, that the past can not be the past [i.e., can not have happened], and other things of this sort, since if B is not going to be, [A] did not see in the Word [that] B is about to be going to be, and consequently, [A] did not foretell it

to be so, nor, consequently, was [A] saved because of this [foretelling]; therefore, etc.

…

…

33a. <Duodecimum ad principale>. Item necessaria sciencia et necessaria voluntas perfectior est sciencia contingenti et voluntate contingenti, sicut necessitas simpliciter perfectior est contingencia. Igitur necessaria sciencia rerum et necessaria voluntas est attribuenda Deo. Antecedens patet, quia contingencia includit potenciam et per consequens imperfectionem. Consequencia patet per Anselmum.

33a. <The twelfth argument to the first.> In the same way, necessary knowledge and necessary will are more perfect than contingent knowledge and contingent will, just as necessity is in itself more perfect than contingency. Necessary knowledge of a thing and necessary will are therefore attributed to God. The antecedent holds, since contingency includes potency [for the opposite], and consequently [potency for] imperfection. The consequence holds according to Anselm.

…

…

35a. <Quartum decimum ad principale.> Item si necessitas in volicione Dei excluderetur, hoc maxime foret propter libertatem arbitrii ; sed illa necessitas in nullo repugnat libero arbitrio ; igitur propter hoc non debet excludi a voluntate Dei quoad operaciones ejus ad extra et ad intra. Minor patet loquendo de libertate contradictionis ad utramque partem, quia illa libertas non est ponenda in Deo nec in beatis ; igitur propter illam in nullo debet excludi a Deo necessitas in sua actione, quia illa potestas contradictionis non est pars libertatis nec pertinet ad libertatem, secundum quod innuit Anselmus dicens : « Qui liberior est ? Deus et beatus, qui non possunt peccare et possunt non peccare, an [quam?] libertas nostra qua possumus peccare et non peccare? ».

35a. <The fourteenth argument to the first.> Similarly, if necessity were excluded from God's volition, this would be mostly due to freedom of choice. But this necessity is in no way incompatible with free choice; therefore, because of this, it ought not to be excluded from the will of God, as far as his internal and external actions. This is less the case in speaking of freedom for contradictories ad utrumque partem [i.e., the freedom to act in either of two ways], since this sort of freedom is not held by God, nor by the blessed; therefore, it follows that necessity ought in no way to be excluded from God in his action, since that power for contradictories is not part of freedom, nor does it pertain to freedom, according to what Anselm indicates by saying: “Who is more free? God and the blessed ones, who cannot sin and can [only] not sin, [are more free than us by] our freedom, by which we can sin and not sin.” It therefore follows that necessity, but not coercion, is compatible

Igitur sequitur quod cum vera libertate stat necessitas, sed non coactio, quia hec sibi repugnat.

with true liberty, since coercion is not compatible with God.

…

…

<Nona opinio>

<Ninth opinion>

39. Alia est opinio in ista questione, quod illa sunt necessaria que Deus predixit fore, sed alia futura non.

39. Another opinion regarding this question, [holds] that those things which God predicted would happen are necessary, but other future things are not [necessary].

40a. Sed quia verbum Dei extrinsecum,[178] tum mediate vel immediate dictum, non plus obligat Deum ad aliquid faciendum vel non faciendum quam Verbum ejus intrinsecum, igitur sequitur, cum Deus ab eterno dixit omnia futura fore Verbo intrinseco, sequitur quod omnia futura sunt necessaria, vel quod illa futura non sunt necessaria que Deus dixit verbo extrinseco mediate vel immediate.

40a. But since the extrinsic[178] word of God, once it has been declared mediately or immediately, no more obliges God to make or not make something than does his intrinsic Word, it therefore follows that, when God spoke all future things into being from eternity by the intrinsic Word, then all future things that God spoke by the extrinsic work, mediately or immediately, would be necessary.

…

…

g. Item super illo verbo : «Ecce virgo concipiet» etc., dicit glosa quod hoc non est ut Christus impleret prophecias, sed e contrario quod ideo erant prophetata quia Christus erat sic facturus; igitur sequitur quod prophecia vel verbum extrinsecum non est causa rerum futurarum, sed e contrario etc.

g. Similarly, on this passage -- “Behold, a virgin shall conceive”, etc. -- it says in the gloss that this is not in order that Christ would fulfil the prophecies, but rather the contrary, that they were prophesying in this way because Christ was to be born in this way; it therefore follows that the prophecies or the extrinsic word are not the cause of the future things, but rather the contrary, etc.

[178] In distinguishing between the extrinsic and intrinsic Word of God, I take Bradwardine to be making a distinction between God’s spoken word, outwardly declared, and the Wisdom or Word of God that is the Second Person of God’s own Triune self.

<Responsio propria ad questionem>

41. Nunc respondetur ad questionem qua queritur utrum Christus, qui est Deus, habeat prescienciam omnium futurorum contingencium ad utrumlibet, dicendo quod sic ; et ad principalem racionem, quando arguebatur sic : igitur habet scienciam omnium futurorum contingencium ad utrumlibet, concedo consequenciam et consequens.

42a. Sed contra : sic aliqua forent contingencia ad utrumlibet.

b. Respondetur concedendo conclusionem .

c. Contra: sic igitur sciencia Dei potest falli et per consequens Deus potest falli et decipi et errare.

d. Respondetur consequenciam negando et conclusionem quoad omnes partes ejus. Et cum arguitur contra sic : A est aliquod futurum contingens ad utrumlibet quod Deus in illo instanti presenti prescit fore, et arguitur sic : A non erit et Deus prescit A fore, igitur Deus prescit aliquod fore futurum quod non erit, et per consequens quod non est futurum, et per consequens Deus errat illa presciencia, et per consequens decipitur et sua sciencia fallitur : antecedens est possibile et consequencia est bona, igitur et consequens est possibile, --- respondetur negando antecedens.

<The proper response to the question>

41. Now to respond to the question that was asked, whether Christ, who is God, has foreknowledge of all *ad utrumlibet* future contingents, I say that it is so; and to the first argument, when it is argued in this way — "therefore he has knowledge of all *ad utrumlibet* future contingents" — I concede the consequence and the consequent.

42a. But against this: if this were the case, there would be some *ad utrumlibet* future contingents.

b. One responds by conceding the conclusion.

c. Against this: if this were the case, it would follow that the knowledge of God could fail, and consequently, God could fail and be deceived and err.

d. One responds by denying the consequence and the conclusion in all of their parts. And when it is argued against this in the following way — "Suppose A is some *ad utrumlibet* future contingent that God in this instant foreknows what will happen, then this follows: A will not be, and God will foreknow A to be future, therefore God foreknows something to be future that in fact will not be, and consequently [God knows something] that is not in fact future, and consequently God errs in this foreknowledge, and so is deceived, and is failed by his knowledge: the antecedent is possible and the consequence is good, so therefore the consequent is possible" — one responds to this argument by denying the antecedent.

e. Contra : A potest non fore et Deus prescit A fore, igitur A non fore est possibile.

e. Against this: A could not be going to be, and God might foreknow A to be going to be; therefore it is possible for A to not be going to be.

f. Respondetur distinguendo potenciam, seu possibile, eo quod duplex est, quia quedam est absoluta, quedam ordinata ; et expono quid intelligo per potenciam absolutam et per potenciam ordinatam. Potencia absoluta est illa potencia ordinata, sed tamen est potencia absoluta ut indeterminata est ad utramque partem contradictionis; et potencia ordinata est illa eadem ut est determinata ad alteram partem contradictionis tantum . Et potencia absoluta in causa superiori, scilicet in Deo, est potencia sua ordinata non ut est ordinata ad alteram partem contradictionis tantum, sed ut est infinita et non determinata vel ordinata ad alteram partem . Et potencia ejus ordinata est potencia absoluta, scilicet infinita, et non ut indeterminata ad alteram partem contradictionis tantum, sed ut determinata per suam justiciam et misericordiam et voluntatem, ut ad producendum aliquid ad extra, immediate vel mediate, vel ad salvandum. Et similiter dicitur de potencia in causa inferiori, scilicet creatura, que non est sed potest esse in futurum , vel quod est et potest aliquid facere in futurum , sicut nunc distinguitur de potencia in causa superiori, scilicet Deo ; quia in causa inferiori duplex est potencia, scilicet absoluta, que de se non est determinata plus ad esse quam ad

f. One replies by drawing a distinction regarding power, or what is possible, in that it is of two sorts; for one sort is absolute, the other ordained. And I [now] explain what I mean by absolute power and by ordained power. Absolute power is that [same] ordained power; but it is absolute power insofar as it is undetermined relative to each part of a contradiction. And ordained power is that [same] power, insofar as it is determined relative to only one (or the other) part of a contradiction. And absolute power in the superior cause — namely, in God — is his ordained power, not insofar as it is ordained relative to only one (or the other) part of a contradiction, but as it is infinite and not determined or ordained relative to one (or the other) part [of a contradiction]. And his ordained power is [his] absolute – that is, infinite – power, not as undetermined relative to one (or the other) part of a contradiction, but as determined in virtue of his justice, and his mercy, and his will – for example, for producing something besides himself, immediately or mediately, or for saving [a person]. And it may be said in the same way of power in an inferior cause – namely, [power in] a creature (which is not now, but can be in the future; or which is now, and can do something in the future) — similarly to the distinction just made regarding power in the superior cause, God. For there are two sorts of power in an inferior cause: [its] absolute [power] is that which in itself is not determined relative to being, rather than relative to not being, as long as [the being or not being] is future, or relative to

non esse quamdiu est futurum , vel ad producendum aliquid in futurum vel ad non producendum quamdiu non est productum ; et potencia ordinata est illa qua ordinatur ad unam partem contradictionis tantum, per causam superiorem, scilicet Deum , vel per causam inferiorem, scilicet creaturam.

producing something in the future or not producing it as long as it has not been produced; and [its] ordained power is that by which it is ordained relative to only one (or the other) part of a contradiction, [whether] by the superior cause, God, or by an inferior cause, a creature.

g. Nunc ad propositum, dico quod A potest non fore de potencia absoluta tam cause superioris quam inferioris, quia A fore vel non fore in nullo repugnat tali potencie in causa superiori vel inferiori . Sed loquendo de potencia ordinata cause superioris et inferioris, sic dicitur quod A non potest non fore nec aliquod futurum, quia si illa potencia A potest non fore, sequitur quod Deus potest decipi et errare, et falli potest ejus sciencia, et potest falsum dicere et mentiri si Deus predixit A fore mediate vel immediate.

g. Now in reply to the proposition at issue [namely, the statement: “A can be not going to be, and God foreknows that A will be; therefore that A will not be is possible”, where A is some future contingent], I say that A can be not going to be in virtue of absolute power, whether of the superior or of an inferior cause. For that A is going to be or not going to be is in no way incompatible with such a power in the superior or in an inferior cause. If, however, one is speaking of the ordained power of the superior or of an inferior cause, in that case one says that A (or any future thing) cannot be not going to be. For if by that power A can be not going to be, it follows that God can be deceived and can err, and that his knowledge can be mistaken, and that he can say what is false and a lie — if God has predicted, mediately or immediately, that A is going to be.

43a. Sed contra : quia de potencia ordinata A non potest non fore, igitur A non potest non fore.

43a. But against this: since in respect of ordained power, A cannot be not going to be, then A cannot be not going to be.

b. Respondetur negando consequenciam et consequens, quia de potencia absoluta tam cause superioris quam inferioris A potest non fore, et sequitur : de illa potencia A potest non fore, igitur A potest non fore.

b. One responds by denying the consequence and the consequent, since in respect of the absolute power of the superior cause – as much as for the inferior cause – A *can* be not going to be, and so it follows: according to that power, A can be not going to be; therefore, A can be not going to be.

…

63. . . . Et sic patet quod potencia libera libertate contradictionis est in quolibet viatore ; que quidem potencia, licet non determinetur ad actum priusquam habet actum naturaliter per seipsam, nec per aliquam causam creatam, tamen determinatur ad actum suum prius naturaliter per Deum. Qui est benedictus in secula [seculorum].[179] Amen.

Explicit Bradwardus de futuris contingentibus.

…

63. . . . And it shows in this way that free power, [in the sense of] freedom of contradictories, is in any wayfarer; and this power is a certain power, not determined to act before it naturally has an act by itself, nor by another created cause, yet naturally determined to its own act in the first place by God – Who is blessed for ever and ever, world without end.[179] Amen.

Here ends Bradwardine on future contingents.

[179] While not a literal translation, this reflects the traditional English rendering of "saecula saeculorum," as in the final line of the *Gloria Patri* ("Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost … and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.").

Curriculum Vitae

Sarah Hogarth Rossiter

Education

PhD, University of Western Ontario (2017)
Philosophy
Supervisor: Henrik Lagerlund
Dissertation Title: *Foreknowledge, Free Will, and the Divine Power Distinction in Thomas Bradwardine's* De futuris contingentibus

BSc (Hons.), University of Western Ontario (2008)
Honours Specialization Mathematics, Minor Philosophy
With Distinction

Area of Specialization

History of Medieval Philosophy

Areas of Competence

Logic
Philosophy of Religion

Teaching

Instructor, Philosophy 230 – Introduction to Philosophy, The King's University, Edmonton (Winter 2016)

Instructor, PHILOSOP 2250 – Introduction to Logic, UWO (Summer 2015)

Instructor, PHILOSOP 1000E/1300E – Introduction to Philosophy/Introduction to Philosophy and Critical Thinking, Brescia University College (Fall/Winter 2014/15)

Instructor, PHILOSOP 2020 – Basic Logic, UWO (Fall 2011)

Tutorial Leader, PHILOSOP 1200 – Reasoning and Critical Thinking, UWO (Fall/Winter 2009/10)

Guest Lecturer, introductory course on philosophy of religion, Concordia University of Edmonton; "Richard Swinburne's Theodicy" (Winter 2016)

Guest Lecturer, a graduate course on philosophical theology, Concordia University of Edmonton; "Proofs for God's Existence: Aquinas' Third, Fourth, and Fifth Ways" (Fall 2015)

Guest Lecturer, PHILOSOP 3012F – Medieval Philosophy, UWO; 2 lectures, "Proofs for God's Existence: Anselm, Aquinas, and Scotus" (Fall 2012)

Teaching Assistant and Guest Lecturer, PHILOSOP 2661F – Philosophy of Religion, UWO (Fall 2010)

Teaching Assistant, PHILOSOP 2250 – Introduction to Logic, UWO (Fall 2012)

Facilitator, Logic Competency Exam Study Support Group for PhD students, UWO (Winter 2014, Summer 2014)

Private tutor, high school- and university-level mathematics (2004 - present)

Other Academic Employment

Content developer, PHILOSOP 1200 -- Reasoning and Critical Thinking, online course, with Drs Chris Viger and David Bourget, UWO (Summer/Fall 2014)

English-language copy editor for *Sourcebook for the History of the Philosophy of Mind*, ed. Simo Knuuttila, Dordrecht: Springer, 2014 (July 2010 – August 2011)

Research Assistant, literature overview for the project "Separability and Unity of Parts of the Soul in Aristotle," with Dr Devin Henry, UWO (Winter 2012)

Awards and Distinctions

Harold Johnson Memorial Prize in Medieval Philosophy (2010, '12, '14, '15)
Ontario Graduate Scholarship (with distinction) (2013)
Research Assistant Scholarship, University of Helsinki (2010, '11)
CGS Michael Smith Foreign Study Supplement (2011)
Canada Graduate Scholarship (2010 – 2013)
Ontario Graduate Scholarship (2010, declined)
N. American Society for Social Philosophy Graduate Student Award (2010)
Graduate Entrance Scholarship (2009)
NSERC Undergraduate Summer Research Award (2006; offered '07, declined)
Honor Robinson-Hair Memorial Scholarship in Mathematics (2004, '05, '06)
Mervyn Wass Scholarship in Mathematics (2006/07)
Albert O. Jeffrey Scholarship in Mathematics (2006/07)
UWO In-Course Scholarship Year IV (2006/07)

Conference Presentations and Talks

‘Duns Scotus and the Necessity of the Past’ — Western Canadian Philosophical Association; Edmonton, Alberta, October 2016.

(Commentator) ‘Comments on Tanner Walsh’s “Reconstructing Molinism”’ — Annual meeting of the Canadian Society of Christian Philosophers at FHSS Congress; Ottawa, Ontario, June 2015.*

(Commentator) ‘Comments on Cecilia Li’s “Epicurus on Friendship”’ – Annual meeting of the Canadian Philosophical Association at FHSS Congress; St Catharines, Ontario, May 2014.*

‘Thomas Bradwardine’s Account of Future Contingents’ – Annual meeting of the Canadian Philosophical Association at FHSS Congress; St Catharines, Ontario, May 2014.

‘Modality and Thomas Bradwardine’s Account of Future Contingents’ – Annual meeting of the Society for Ancient Greek Philosophy and the Society for the Study of Islamic Philosophy and Science; New York, New York, October 2013.

(Commentator) ‘Comments on Ian Wilks’ “Peter Abelard and St Thomas Aquinas on Moral Intention”’ – Annual meeting of the Canadian Society of Christian Philosophers at FHSS Congress; Victoria, British Columbia, June 2013.* (Read in absentia by Dennis Hudecki.)

‘Thomas Bradwardine on Future Contingents’ – Annual meeting of the British Society for the History of Philosophy: The Actual and the Possible; York, England, April 2013.

‘Formalizing the Modal Logic of Thomas Bradwardine’ – The Arché research group at the University of St Andrews; St Andrews, Scotland, March 2013.*

‘Thomas Bradwardine's Account of Future Contingents’ – Tri-annual meeting of Medieval Philosophy in the UK; The Warburg Institute, London, England, February 2013.*

‘The Modal Logic of Thomas Bradwardine and the Problems of Formalism’ – Annual Western Ontario Colloquium in Ancient and Medieval Philosophy: Modal Logic and Modalities in Ancient and Medieval Philosophy; London, Ontario, October 2012.*

‘Was Thomas Bradwardine a Modal Voluntarist?’ – Annual International Congress for Medieval Studies; Kalamazoo, Michigan, May 2012.

‘Vision of All Things in Christ: The unwitting centrality of Malebranche's

Christology for “Vision of all things in God”’ – Annual meeting of the Canadian Society of Christian Philosophers at FHSS Congress; Fredericton, New Brunswick, June 2011.

‘Charles Darwin's Reading of Sir John Saunders Sebright’ – Annual meeting of the Canadian Society for the History and Philosophy of Science at FHSS Congress; Fredericton, New Brunswick, May 2011.

‘The Value of Community Membership’ – Annual meeting of the North American Society for Social Philosophy; Toronto, Ontario, July 2010.

*Invited (non-refereed)

Other Academic Activities

Research abroad:

Research term at the University of Cambridge, working with Prof. John Marenbon, Trinity College (January – March 2013)

Visiting student at the University of Cambridge, working with Prof. John Marenbon, Trinity College (January – March 2011)

Professional service:

Treasurer, the Canadian Society of Christian Philosophers (2013 - present)

Reviewer, the Canadian Society of Christian Philosophers annual meeting (2014, ’15, ’16, ’17)

Reviewer, UWO Philosophy of Logic, Mathematics, and Physics annual graduate student conference (2012, ’13, ’14)

Conference organizer, the Western Ontario Colloquium in Ancient and Medieval Philosophy, “Modality and Modal Logic in Medieval Philosophy” (2012)

Professional memberships:

Canadian Philosophical Association

Canadian Society of Christian Philosophers

Languages

Fluency — English

Reading proficiency — Medieval Latin, French