

I. The Nature and Importance of Free Will

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Introduction

Western philosophy has a long and venerable tradition of reflecting on the nature of free will. It is sometimes said that Augustine discovered the faculty of the will, and as a result inaugurated philosophy's fascination with issues related to free will.¹ While philosophers prior to Augustine clearly discussed the closely related issues of, for example, voluntariness and agency, one finds in Augustine a focus on a faculty distinct from reason the exercise of which is necessary for praise and blame that one would be hard-pressed to find in earlier thinkers. Augustine addressed the importance of free will in many of his works, including his famous *Confessions* and *City of God*, as well as in the earlier *On Free Choice of the Will*. And since Augustine's day, the vast majority of the great philosophers from the medieval and modern periods—Anselm, Aquinas, Ockham, Scotus, Descartes, Hobbes, Hume, and Kant, to name but a few—have written on free will. This trend continues into the contemporary philosophical literature; if anything, there is a more vibrant ongoing philosophical conversation about free will than ever. And there is no indication that this trend will change at any time in the near future.

But, as contemporary American political discourse indicates, the popularity of a topic doesn't always breed care or accuracy in the discussion of that topic. In a recent discussion of the importance of philosophical reflection on free will, Daniel Dennett says the following:

I recently confronted the question of why so many really intelligent people write such ill-considered stuff when the topic is free will. The answer ... is that in some inchoate way they sense—correctly—that it really matters, and they just don't want to contemplate the implications straightforwardly, in case the truth is too horrible to live with. This makes wishful thinking and other distortions of reason almost irresistible. If the arguments they are tempted by were somehow imbedded in less forbidding contexts, they would see through them in an instant. People don't do their best work when they think the stakes are astronomically high.²

¹ See, for instance, Michael J. Scanlon, "Arendt's Augustine," in *Augustine and Postmodernism: Confessions and Circumfession*, ed. John D. Caputo and Michael J. Scanlon (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005), 160. Copleston makes a more cautious claim in Frederick Copleston, *A History of Philosophy* (New York: Doubleday, 1993), volume II, 82.

² Daniel Dennett, "Some Observations on the Psychology of Thinking About Free Will," in *Are We Free? Psychology and Free Will*, ed. John Baer, James C. Kaufman, and Roy F. Baumeister (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 249.

Dennett's belief that 'the stakes are high'—that getting our beliefs with respect to free will *right* matters—is perhaps one reason that discussions of free will have been so prominent in philosophy the past few decades.

But free will is not thought to be important only in philosophical circles. The same is true of the related discipline of theology as well, as free will can be found to occupy an important, if not vital, place in a variety of theological perspectives. If one opens a book from contemporary theologians, one is almost certain to find at least some discussion of free will. Karl Barth, perhaps the most influential theologian of the past century, stresses the centrality of free will for the theological enterprise as follows:

Even though we stress ever so strongly that God's authority is finally at issue, the idea of a rigid causality arises. But this may not be. We are dealing with God's address to people. But people as such cannot be regarded as the effects of causes. When they are on their own and conscious of themselves they set themselves apart from and over against the nexus of cause and effect. They are not merely conditioned. They also condition. They think and will. What might come to them as mere authority and make them effects does not really come to them. It does not touch their humanity. We are saying that God's Word speaks to us. Here is an event that cannot take an automatic form. It has the form of a constraint that is possible and actual only in the sphere of freedom. The same is true when we say that someone believes and obeys. The compulsion here is obviously different from that of a rolling ball. It either takes place in freedom or not at all. We ultimately understand the concept of authority itself very poorly if we think of it only as a superior force and do not see that we have here the power of a command which can be heard and obeyed only in the sphere of freedom.³

Barth's stress of the centrality of free will for theology is by no means unique; one finds the same theme among many other disparate theologians—from Thomas Oden⁴ to David Burrell⁵; from Rowan Williams to John Milbank—and across the gamut of theological perspectives—from open theism⁶ to Reformed thought⁷; from neo-Thomism to Radical Orthodoxy. As even this all too quick discussion shows, free will is of interest to theologians. And one reason is that free will is central to key aspects of Christian theology. To take just one example, the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, which aims to "guard and present better the precious deposit of Christian doctrine" and to be "a statement of the Church's faith

³ Karl Barth, *The Göttingen Dogmatics: Instruction in the Christian Religion*, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1991), 251.

⁴ Thomas Oden, *The Structure of Awareness* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1969).

⁵ David Burrell, *Learning to Trust in Freedom: Signs from Jewish, Christian, and Muslim Traditions* (Scranton, PA: University of Scranton Press, 2010).

⁶ See, for instance, David Basinger, *The Case for Freewill Theism: A Philosophical Assessment* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity-Pr, 1996). and John Sanders, *The God Who Risks: A Theology of Divine Providence* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1998)..

⁷ See, for instance, Paul Helm, *The Providence of God* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993).

and of catholic doctrine,"⁸ affirms not only that God has free will⁹ but that various aspects of creation have it as well, describing both humans and angels as "intelligent and free creatures."¹⁰ But while it affirms the reality of free will and its relation to other theological issues like human nature, sin, and redemption, the *Catechism* does not provide a philosophical account of what free will is. For that is not a task of the theological enterprise, but of philosophy.

Of course, theology's interest in free will is not unconnected with philosophy's interest in the same issue. Many of the issues which motivate interest in free will are the same across both disciplines—issues of responsibility, desert, punishment, meaning, autonomy, value, etc.... But, in an unfortunate trend that has been noted by others, too often the practitioners of these two disciplines have not interacted in the ways that their shared interests would suggest would be beneficial. In a recent book on the intersection of analytic philosophy and theology, Michael Rea describes the situation as follows:

Many theologians have very different ideas from analytic philosophers about how theology (and philosophy) ought to be done, and about the value of analytic approaches to theological topics. Whereas philosophy in the English-speaking world is dominated by analytic approaches to its problems and projects, theology has been dominated by alternative approaches... . The methodological divide between systematic theologians and analytic philosophers of religion is ripe for exploration. It is of obvious theoretical importance to both disciplines, but it also has practical importance The problem isn't just that academics with different methodological perspectives have trouble conversing with one another. Rather, it is that, by and large, the established figures in both disciplines don't even view mutual conversation as worth pursuing. They ignore one another. They (implicitly or explicitly) encourage their students to ignore one another And the divide only grows.¹¹

Rea intends his volumes to be part of an interdisciplinary conversation about the value of analytic philosophical work on theological topics. Such a project is, of course, not new. Similar previous projects include Eleonore Stump and Thomas Flint's *Hermes and Athena: Biblical Studies and Philosophical Theology*.¹² The present project is intended to be in the same vein.

⁸ *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2nd ed. (New York: Doubleday, 2003).

⁹ See, for instance, *ibid.*, paragraphs 295, 96, and 310. paragraphs 295, 296, and 310.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, paragraph 311. For more on humans having free will, see also paragraphs 307, 357, 387, 397, and 1730-1748. For more on the angels having free will, see paragraphs 391 and 392. More precisely, the *Catechism* follows Augustine in holding that 'angel' is "the name of their office, not of their nature. If you seek the name of their nature, it is 'spirit'; if you seek the name of their office, it is 'angel': from what they are, 'spirit', from what they do, 'angel'" (*ibid.*, paragraph 329.).

¹¹ Michael C. Rea, "Introduction," in *Analytic Theology: New Essays in the Philosophy of Theology*, ed. Oliver D. Crisp and Michael C. Rea (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 1f.

¹² Eleonore Stump and Thomas P. Flint, eds., *Hermes and Athena: Biblical Theology and Philosophical Theology* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1993).

Philosophical Theology

As mentioned in the previous section, this book stands at the intersection of philosophy and theology. Perhaps the most common type of project at this intersection is what is known as natural theology. Natural theology's name can be misleading, for it sounds like what is being done is a kind of theology, not philosophy. But natural theology is better understood to be primarily philosophical rather than theological for it is, most generally, the attempt to establish truths about God or other theological matters on the basis of natural human reason, unaided by revelation. Natural theology is commonly understood along the lines of an Aristotelian demonstrative science. In an insightful article on philosophical theology, Scott MacDonald describes this understanding of natural theology as follows:

Conceiving of natural theology as a kind of demonstrative science allows us to characterize it precisely: it consists of truths about God which are either (1) self-evident or evident to sense perception or (2) derived by deductively valid proofs the (ultimate) premisses of which are evident in one of these two ways.... Demonstrative science's great power, however, is purchased at a price. A demonstrative science possesses the virtues of rigor, objectivity, and certainty only because its criteria for admissible data and methods are very strict: the resources available to demonstrative scientists include only evident truths (their data) and deductive argument forms (their method). For this reason, we might call the sort of natural theology that adopts the restrictions of demonstrative science strict natural theology.¹³

This is not a work in what MacDonald calls strict natural theology. In what follows, I do attempt to prove the existence of God, nor use the tools of philosophy to demarcate the nature of such a being. Instead, I will assume a particular theological framework and attempt to show how recent work in the metaphysics of free will can help elucidate and defend various aspects of that theological framework. As with most contemporary philosophical theology and analytic philosophy of religion, the present volume assumes a Christian theological framework.¹⁴ More specifically, I take as a serious desideratum being able to affirm traditional Christian theological doctrines. Though many of these doctrines (e.g., the Trinity, the Incarnation, the atonement) will not be directly relevant to the coming chapters, other

¹³ Scott MacDonald, "What Is Philosophical Theology?," in *Arguing About Religion*, ed. Kevin Timpe (New York: Routledge, 2009), 20.

¹⁴ For a good discussion of the historical reasons for the centrality of Christianity in contemporary philosophy of religion, see the "Verdicts on Analytical Philosophy of Religion" by Harriet Harris and Christopher Insole and "The Value and Christian Roots of Analytical Philosophy of Religion" by Richard Swinburne in Harriet A. Harris and Christopher J. Insole, eds., *Faith and Philosophical Analysis* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2005). and Nicholas Wolterstorff, "How Philosophical Theology Became Possible within the Analytic Tradition of Philosophy," in *Analytic Theology: New Essays in the Philosophy of Theology*, ed. Oliver D. Crisp and Michael C. Rea (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

orthodox Christian theological claims will be quite relevant (e.g., that God not be the author of sin given His essential omnibenevolence, that God is a personal agent capable of acting, that humanity is created in the *imago dei*, etc...). I will not, however, argue for these doctrines. Rather, my primary task is to give a philosophically coherent defense of various theological doctrines according to that general framework using recent work in the metaphysics of free will.

The present volume is thus a work of what is often called philosophical theology: “the application of the techniques of philosophical analysis to the central doctrines of the Christian faith.”¹⁵ Philosophical theology, as I understand the phrase, is broader than what MacDonald above defined as strict natural theology. Like MacDonald, I do not question the possibility or success of strict natural theology. But, as MacDonald points out, “even if strict natural theology represents an appropriately philosophical manner of reflection on theological matters, it is a mistake to think of it as the only sort of theological reflection open to philosophers.”¹⁶ Whereas one task of philosophy is justification—“establishing the truth of certain [philosophical] propositions, thereby providing us with epistemic justification for and securing the rationality of our believing”¹⁷—another of its appropriate roles is what MacDonald calls clarification. The philosophical theologian engaged in clarification is

not primarily concerned with the epistemic justification of [a particular view]. She is concerned instead with understanding, developing, systematizing, and explaining it. It is possible for her to do all these things without raising the issue of its truth or her justification for holding it. The fact is that a very large part of philosophy has nothing directly to do with the truth or justification of certain theories or propositions clarification of theological matters is a legitimate task for the philosopher. Philosophers have not only a justificatory but also a clarificatory role to play in theology. Moreover, given that the nature of clarificatory activities is such that one can engage in them without regard to the epistemic status of the theories one takes up, it follows that there can be no epistemic restrictions of any sort on the kinds of issues open to philosophical clarification.... [The philosophical theologian] can legitimately undertake the investigation of not only the question of God’s existence and attributes—issues associated with traditional natural theology—but also doctrines such as trinity, incarnation, and atonement—traditional paradigms of doctrines inaccessible to natural

¹⁵ Brian Hebblethwaite, *Philosophical Theology and Christian Doctrine* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2005), 2. Alvin Plantinga similarly describes philosophical theology as “a matter of thinking about the central doctrines of the Christian faith from a philosophical perspective; it is a matter of employing the resources of philosophy to deepen our grasp and understanding of them” (Alvin Plantinga, “Christian Philosophy at the End of the Twentieth Century,” in *The Analytic Theist: An Alvin Plantinga Reader*, ed. James F. Sennett (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998), 340.). Plantinga goes on to say that “theologians don’t seem to be doing the work in question. I therefore hope I will not be accused of interdisciplinary chauvinism if I point out that the best work in philosophical theology—in the English speaking world and over the past quarter of a century—has been done not by theologians but by philosophers” (ibid., 341.).

¹⁶ MacDonald, “What Is Philosophical Theology?,” 20f.

¹⁷ Ibid., 23.

reason. When the philosopher takes up these kinds of issues with the aim of articulating and developing them, probing their internal coherence, joint consistency, and systematic connections, and exploring their relations to other theological and nontheological doctrines, she will be engaged in appropriately philosophical reflection on specifically Christian theological matters.¹⁸

The present book is a work of clarification, so understood.

Not only does the present work make theological assumptions, but it also makes philosophical assumptions. (Insofar as all theology makes theological assumptions and all philosophy makes philosophical assumptions, I'm in good company here.) Most notably in this regard, I will not argue that free will exists.¹⁹ Rather, assuming the existence of free will, I will explore how free will relates to central doctrines in Christian theology. And while I will be building upon my previous work on free will, I hope that much of what I have to say here will not be of interest only to those who share my view about the nature of free will. I think that with some modification, much that I argue for in this volume could also be endorsed by those who take a different view about the nature of free will. Nevertheless, at various parts of the discussion to follow, I will assume not only that free will exists but also what I take to be the correct view about what it is like. For that reason, it will be worthwhile to spell out the broad strokes of that view at the beginning of the present work.

The Nature of Free Will: Source Incompatibilism

In previous work, I articulated and defended a view of the nature of freedom which is called 'source incompatibilism.'²⁰ The name is taken from two central controversies in the contemporary philosophical literature on free will. The first controversy focuses on which of two dominant general conceptions of the nature of free will gets to the heart of the matter. According to the first of these, which has received the majority of the attention in the literature, free will is primarily a function of being able to do otherwise than one in fact does. For example, you have free will with respect to reading this book if you could have read a different book or even refrained from reading anything at all, say by going for a walk. According to the second approach, free will is primarily a function of an agent being the source of her actions in a particular way. On this approach, you read this book of your own free will

¹⁸ Ibid., 24f.

¹⁹ For some of the issues involved in arguing for the existence of free will, see Kevin Timpe, "The Metaphysics of Free Will," in *Continuum Companion to Metaphysics*, ed. Neil A. Manson and Bob Barnard (forthcoming).

²⁰ See, for the fullest treatment, Kevin Timpe, *Free Will: Sourcehood and Its Alternatives* (London: Continuum, 2008). The next few paragraphs are taken, with minor adaptation, from chapter 1 of this work.

if nothing outside of you is the ultimate cause of your action or choice. Both of these notions can be seen in the following passage taken from Robert Kane:

We believe we have free will when we view ourselves as agents capable of influencing the world in various ways. Open alternatives, or alternative possibilities, seem to lie before us. We reason and deliberate among them and choose. We feel (1) it is “up to us” what we choose and how we act; and this means we could have chosen or acted otherwise. As Aristotle noted: when acting is “up to us,” so is not acting. This “up-to-us-ness” also suggests (2) the ultimate control of our actions lie in us and not outside us in factors beyond our control.²¹

The vast majority of the contemporary free will literature focuses on the first of these two approaches, so much so that John Martin Fischer sometimes speaks of this as being the traditional view:

“Traditionally the most influential view about the sort of freedom necessary and sufficient for moral responsibility posits that this sort of freedom involves the availability of genuinely open alternative possibilities at certain key points in one’s life.”²² In contrast, a smaller percentage of the extant literature focuses primarily on the issues of “source,” “ultimacy,” and “origination” that are at the heart of the second approach to free will. In what follows, I will call the first of these approaches—the conception that free will is primarily a matter of having alternative possibilities—the “alternative possibilities approach.” Similarly, I will call the second of these approaches to the nature of free will—that free will is primarily a matter of our being the ultimate source of our choices—the “sourcehood approach.” As Kane suggests, I think that most of us think about free will along the lines of one or the other, or both, of these conditions. However, I think that there are good reasons for preferring the latter approach to the former, insofar as what is most important about a free choice or action is how that choice or action actually came about rather than what could have happened.²³

The second controversy, and the one that has garnered the majority of attention in the contemporary philosophical literature, is the relationship between free will and determinism—what Robert Kane calls “the Compatibility Question.”²⁴ Most often, the kind of determinism at issue in addressing the Compatibility Question is causal determinism. Causal determinism is the thesis that the course of the future is entirely determined by the conjunction of the non-relational past and the laws of nature. Most philosophers agree that whether or not causal determinism is true is a contingent matter;

²¹ Robert Kane, *A Contemporary Introduction to Free Will* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 6. See also Robert Kane, “Introduction: The Contours of Contemporary Free Will Debates,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Free Will*, ed. Robert Kane (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 10. for a similar discussion.

²² John Martin Fischer, “Recent Work on Moral Responsibility,” *Ethics* 110(1999): 99.

²³ Those interested in arguments for preferring a source based rather than alternative possibilities based approach to free will are referred to my Timpe, *Free Will: Sourcehood and Its Alternatives*, particularly chapters 4, 5, and 7.

²⁴ Kane, “Introduction: The Contours of Contemporary Free Will Debates,” 9.

that is, causal determinism is neither necessarily true nor necessarily false. If this is so, whether or not causal determinism is true becomes an empirical matter, to be discovered by investigating the way the world is, not through philosophical argumentation. This is not to deny that the truth of causal determinism would have metaphysical implications; rather, the point to note here is that if the truth of causal determinism is a contingent truth about the way the world actually is, then presumably scientific investigation should give us insight into this matter. Let us say that a possible world is causally deterministic if causal determinism is true in that world. There are two ways that a world could fail to be causally deterministic. First, if the laws of nature in that world were probabilistic, then such a world would not be deterministic in this manner. Second, if there are entities within a world that are not fully governed by the laws of nature, then even if those laws are themselves deterministic, that world would also not be deterministic.²⁵ Is causal determinism true in the actual world? I do not know, though I'm inclined to say that it is not. Following Randolph Clarke, I would say "perhaps the best that can be said . . . is that . . . there is no good evidence that [causal] determinism is true."²⁶

Theological determinism, as distinct from causal determinism, is an account of divine providence. According to theological determinism, God's willing an event to happen is both necessary and sufficient for that event occurring. The first part of theological determinism (i.e., "God's willing an event to happen is necessary for that event occurring") means that no event happens without God's willing that particular event to happen. The second part of this doctrine (i.e., "God's willing an event to happen is sufficient for that event occurring") means that nothing else is needed in addition to God's will to guarantee or ensure that the event in question happens. In other words, if God wills a particular event, nothing else can prevent that event from occurring. It could be that both forms of determinism—causal and theological—are true; it could be that God determines all events via causal determinism. But it should be clear from this description that the truth of causal determinism would not entail the truth of theological determinism, nor vice versa. If, for example, causal determinism were true but God did not exist, then theological determinism would be false. Similarly, it could be the case that theological determinism be true yet causal determinism be false.

²⁵ Even if the fundamental physical particles of the universe (say, quarks), are indeterministic, it still may be that the only indeterminism is on the scale of microparticles and that macro-objects themselves obey deterministic laws. If this is the case, then causal determinism as defined above is, strictly speaking, false, but it is "nearly" true. That is, we could replace determinism with near determinism, "the thesis that despite quantum indeterminacy, the behaviors of all large physical objects—including all human actions—obey deterministic laws." See Ted Honderich, *How Free Are You?: The Determinism Problem* 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), chapter 6. In what follows, I will not explore this possibility and will ignore this complication.

²⁶ Randolph Clarke, "Libertarian Views: Critical Survey of Noncausal and Event-Causal Accounts of Free Agency," in *The Oxford Handbook of Free Will*, ed. Robert Kane (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 377.

Returning then to the relationship between free will and determinism that is at the heart of the Compatibility Question. The two possible answers to this question provide a helpful way to differentiate two of the main positions regarding free will. Compatibilists answer the Compatibility Question in the affirmative, believing that agents could have free will even if either causal or theological determinism were true. In other words, the existence of free will in a possible world is compatible with that world being deterministic. It is for this reason that the position is known as “compatibilism” and its proponents are called “compatibilists.” According to the compatibilist, it is possible for an agent to be determined in all her choices and actions and still make at least some of her choices freely. Incompatibilists, on the other hand, answer the Compatibility Question in the negative. According to incompatibilists, the existence of free will is logically incompatible with the truth of determinism of either sort. If a given possible world is deterministic, then no agent in that world has free will for that very reason. Furthermore, if one assumes that having free will is a necessary condition for being morally responsible for one’s actions, then the incompatibility of free will and determinism would entail the incompatibility of moral responsibility and determinism.

I turn now to the relationship between the dispute between source-based and leeway-based approaches mentioned earlier and the Compatibility Question. The distinction between the two approaches to the nature of free will is orthogonal to the debate between compatibilists and incompatibilists regarding whether or not the truth of determinism would *per se* preclude agents from having free will. One can find compatibilists as well as incompatibilists working primarily within the alternative possibilities approach, as well as both compatibilists and incompatibilists working primarily within the sourcehood approach. I have elucidated these options at greater length elsewhere,²⁷ and the central argument of that work was that some version of source-based incompatibilism is true. According to this view, what is most important for an agent’s free will is the agent being the source of her actions in a certain way and that being this sort of source for one’s actions requires determinism—both causal and theological—to be false. The first use of the term source incompatibilism to describe this view appears to be Michael McKenna’s 2001 article “Source Incompatibilism, Ultimacy, and the Transfer of Non-Responsibility.”²⁸ But the view is older than its name. One can find a source

²⁷ See Timpe, *Free Will: Sourcehood and Its Alternatives*, especially chapters 1, 4, and 7. For a similar discussion of the distinction between source-based incompatibilist views and leeway-based incompatibilist views, see Derk Pereboom, “Source Incompatibilism and Alternative Possibilities,” in *Moral Responsibility and Alternative Possibilities: Essays on the Importance of Alternative Possibilities*, ed. Michael McKenna and David Widerker (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2003).

²⁸ Michael McKenna, “Source Incompatibilism, Ultimacy, and the Transfer of Non-Responsibility,” *American Philosophical Quarterly* 38(2001): 40.

incompatibilist view proffered at the beginning of the twentieth century by F. H. Bradley.²⁹ But the view can be found much earlier within a Christian theological context. There is considerable debate about whether Augustine was an incompatibilist or a compatibilist,³⁰ but his endorsing a source-based approach is fairly clear from his discussion in *On Free Choice of the Will*.³¹ So, if those who take Augustine to be an incompatibilist are correct, he was a source incompatibilist. But source incompatibilism is clearly endorsed by the medieval philosophy and theologian Anselm of Canterbury. It is undisputed that Anselm was an incompatibilist.³² But, as a number of recent studies make clear, he also adopts a source-based approach:

Anselm rejects the notion that one must be able to act in ways other than they do in order to be free. If freedom had to be defined in these terms, then God, the good angels, the blessed in heaven, the bad angels, and the damned in hell could not be free since they lack this ability to do otherwise. God, the good angels, and the blessed cannot bring about evil while the bad angels and the damned cannot bring about the good. In the medieval theological tradition, God is perfectly good so it is not possible for God to will or perform evil. Medieval theologians also argued that rational beings (human beings, angels) admitted into heaven are confirmed in the good in such a way that they are unable to choose what is bad, while rational beings who are sent to hell are confirmed in evil in such a way that they are unable to choose what is good. But Anselm believes that all of these individuals act freely even though they cannot act in ways other than they do. This is especially the case for God, who is the freest of them all. Therefore, Anselm argues freedom cannot consist in the ability to do otherwise; another account of freedom must be developed.³³

²⁹ F. H. Bradley, "The Vulgar Notion of Responsibility in Connection with the Theories of Free-Will and Necessity," in *Ethical Studies* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1927).

³⁰ For arguments that Augustine was a compatibilist throughout his career, see Lynne Rudder Baker, "Why Christians Should Not Be Libertarians: An Augustinian Challenge," *Faith and Philosophy* 20(2003). and Christopher Kirwan, *Augustine* (London: Routledge, 1989). Though it is less clear, Thomas Holtzen also appears to interpret Augustine as a compatibilist in his Thomas Holtzen, "The Therapeutic Nature of Grace in St. Augustine's *De Gratia Et Libero Arbitrio*," *Augustinian Studies* 31(2000). For arguments that Augustine was consistently an incompatibilist, see Eleonore Stump, "Augustine and Free Will," in *The Cambridge Companion to Augustine*, ed. Eleonore Stump and Norman Kretzmann (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).; Thomas Williams, "Introduction," in Augustine, *On Free Choice of the Will*, trans. Thomas Williams (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 1993), xi-xix., John Davenport, "Aquinas's Teleological Libertarianism," in *Analytical Thomism: Traditions in Dialogue*, ed. Craig Paterson and Matthew Pugh (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2006). Others argue that Augustine was initially an incompatibilist and then became a compatibilist as a result of his conflicts with Pelagius and Julian; see James Wetzel, *Augustine and the Limits of Virtue* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992). and Roland Teske, "On the Free Choice of the Will, on Grace and Free Choice, and Other Writings," *Notre Dame Philosophical Reviews*(2010), <http://ndpr.nd.edu/review.cfm?id=21809>. I am inclined to endorse this third position, though nothing in the present paper hang upon that endorsement.

³¹ Augustine, *On Free Choice of the Will*.

³² See, for example, Sandra Visser and Thomas Williams, *Anselm* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), chapter 11.

³³ Colleen McClusky, "Medieval Theories of Free Will," *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*(2007), <http://www.iep.utm.edu/freewi-m/>. See also Katherin A. Rogers, *Anselm on Freedom* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008).

A number of the issues mentioned here will be addressed in following chapters. My point at present is simply to show that the approach that I'm adopting here (and that I've argued for elsewhere) is not without pedigree in the history of Christian theology. Of course, competing accounts of the nature of freedom have their own pedigrees as well. But every project has its limitations, and one limitation of the present project is that I do not engage these other pedigrees at length.

The account of free will that Anselm endorsed, and that I defended in my previous book, is a version of what Dean Zimmerman has more recently called 'virtue libertarianism'. Zimmerman describes the view as follows:

According to virtue libertarianism, (i) we sometimes bear moral responsibility for choices we make even when our doing so is not a base case of free choice; what matters is whether the choices spring from genuinely moral virtues and vices. As a consequence, (ii) God could often, when it serves his purposes, override our freedom without jeopardizing the chief good for which freedom is given. So long as frequent genuinely free choices are made, God's occasionally determining what we will choose would not seriously undermine the role of freedom in securing the possibility of moral growth.³⁴

But Zimmerman goes on to connect an agent's free will with her moral character:

Libertarians think that, if all of our choices were determined by prior states of the universe, or divinely determined by God, we would never freely choose to act in one way rather than another. For us, at least, the 'base case' of a free action must be one in which the choice so to act was the outcome of an indeterministic process. The reason libertarians care about whether free choices of this sort occur is *not* that they think that such choices are always important, in and of themselves. Free choices between trivial alternatives would not be very valuable. Even free choices between momentous alternatives can seem insignificant, in the larger scheme of things, if they have no connection with the formation of character. Imagine a free agent, torn between noble and base desires, sometimes freely choosing the good, sometimes the bad. And suppose further that a good or bad choice never makes it easier to choose the good or the bad on further trials. The agent may be choosing freely on each occasion, but she cannot undergo anything like moral growth—if her character improves or declines, the change is not due to the normal sort of moral improvement or deterioration for which we often praise and blame one another. Freedom is needed primarily as a necessary condition for other moral goods. The highest such good is the very possibility of creatures capable of displaying moral virtues—hard-won habits due, at least in part, to a lifetime of free choices.

Choices made because of a genuinely moral virtue (as opposed to a merely excellent disposition) redound to the credit of the agent even when the virtue is so

³⁴ David Zimmerman, "An Anti-Molinist Replies," in *Molinism: The Contemporary Debate*, ed. Ken Perszyk (New York: Oxford University Press, forthcoming), 26 in manuscript. Actually, this isn't quite true, insofar as in my 2009 I am committed only to incompatibilism, and not the existence of free will. However, insofar as my task in this volume is primarily clarificatory, rather than justificatory, I will here be assuming the existence of free will.

ingrained to make the choice, now, inevitable. Likewise, *mutatis mutandis*, for choices rendered inevitable by vices. Strictly speaking, such choices and action are not freely taken—i.e. they are not examples of the base case of indeterministic, free choosing. Still, if an agent is an uncoerced expression of character traits for which one is responsible, the action is one for which we should hold a person responsible. We might even want to say that such actions and choices are ‘freely undertaken’ in the sense that they are the expression of a character formed by a history of freely chosen action, despite the fact that the agents no longer have a choice about their behavior in these circumstances. Still, libertarians will think actions free in this broader sense could not occur without, somewhere down the line, free choices in the narrower sense—instances of the base case of freedom, requiring indeterministic circumstances.... Instances of the base case of free choice are valuable primarily because each one plays a small role in making long-term moral growth a possibility for creatures like us.³⁵

One of the issues that I hope to make clear in the following chapters is just how important the connection between an agent’s free choices and her moral character is. In fact, this connection is important—to some degree or other—for each of the issues that I discuss in the following chapters.

The Issues

The plan for the remainder of the work is as follows. In chapter two, I explore the relationship between free will and the good. This was a common connection made by the medieval. However, the majority of contemporary philosophical work on free will avoids any explicit connection between free choice and ‘the good’ or even ‘the perceived good’, instead preferring the language of ‘reasons’, ‘explanation’, and sometimes ‘teleology’. I show how this language is not as far removed from the medieval approach as is sometimes assumed. I also argue that the most plausible accounts of free will will involve a close connection between an agent’s free will and at least the perceived good, if not the actual good. (The degree of overlap between what the agent perceives as good and what is actually good will depend, to a large degree, on the moral character of the agent in question.)

The remaining chapters all take as their beginning point apparent puzzles within Christian theology related to free will:

- How is the choice to sin explicable, given the connection between free will and the good discussed in chapter two?
- How is it that a non-fallen, uncorrupted moral agent could choose to sin?
- If freedom involves the ability to do evil, how are we to understand the redeemed, who presumably are not able to sin but purportedly are still free?
- Likewise, does free will even among the damned show that they are able to get out of hell?
- Is God free?
- If so, is divine freedom at all like human freedom?

³⁵ Ibid., 25f in manuscript.

Each of chapters three through five will address a pair of these questions, and attempt to show how a theologically acceptable answer to them can be given using a proper understanding of free will. I begin with 'the Primal Sin', or the first evil free choice. Whatever the other specifics of one's theology, it seems that Christian orthodoxy commits one to believe in a temporally first sin given the Christian doctrines of God's omnibenevolence and His role as creator. There will also be a temporally first sin of a human, regardless of whether one interprets the second chapter of Genesis literally, as the following passage from Swinburne makes clear:

At some state in the history of the world, there appeared the first creature with hominoid body who had some understanding of the difference between the morally obligatory, the morally permissible (i.e., right), and the morally wrong; and an ability freely to choose the morally right. So much is obvious; since on modern evolutionary views, as well as on all views held in Christian tradition, once upon a time there were no such creatures and now there are some, there must have been a first one.³⁶

But if all the agents that God creates were initially created good, how is it that at least some of them do evil? The answer, of course, is that an agent *wills* to do evil, but this answer immediately raises another question: where does the evil will originate? Answering this question is the topic of chapter three.

Chapter four transitions from the fall to the eschaton. . In general, eschatology is that branch of systematic theology which deals with *ta eschata*, last things. A distinction can be made between the eschatology of Creation as a whole, that of the human race, and of the individual.³⁷ In the present chapter, I'm concerned only with how the eschatology of the individual relates to and depends upon free will. More specifically, I explore the ways in which the condition of an individual in the afterlife depends upon the exercise of her freedom both in this life and in the afterlife. It is common in Christian theology to hold that where an individual ends up in the eschaton is a function of how that individual used his free will. While I affirm this, there is a further connection between the afterlife and free will that will be my primary focus. I will argue that it is the continuing exercise of the agent's free will in the eschaton that explains why she stays where she has gotten as a result of her free choices in this life. I will show how it is no longer possible for the redeemed to sin (or for the damned to choose for God) despite their continuing to have free will.

³⁶ Richard Swinburne, *Responsibility and Atonement* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), 141. Shane Glackin has suggested in conversation that an evolutionary account, there will be vagueness with respect to not only human nature, but also responsibility and sin. I'm inclined, however, to think that that vagueness will be epistemic in nature, and not metaphysical. Even if I'm wrong, the implications of vagueness regarding human nature and moral responsibility must be left for another time.

³⁷ See, for instance, Jerry Walls, "Introduction," in *The Oxford Handbook of Eschatology*, ed. Jerry Walls (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 4f.

Finally, in chapter five, I shall turn toward the issue of divine freedom. According to Laura Garcia, “the claim that God acts freely in choosing to create us, or in choosing to create at all, holds a central place in theologies which accept an Anselmian understanding of God as the greatest conceivable being.”³⁸ As motivations for attributing free will to God, Garcia mentions both that freedom is a perfect and that “divine freedom seems important to a proper view of God’s motives in creation, for God is traditionally viewed as creating out of a gracious love and kindness towards his creatures rather than out of necessity.”³⁹ But there are a number of puzzles regarding how divine freedom in particular should best be understood, particularly given the ontological differences between God (who is, presumably, all-perfect and necessary) and creatures such as ourselves (who are neither, unfortunately, all-perfect nor necessary). These puzzles will be the focus of the last chapter.

The ordering of these last three chapters will remind some readers of the *exitus reditus* pattern that one finds elsewhere in theology: “the coming forth (*exitus*) of all things from God, and the return (*reditus*) of all things, particularly man, to God as to the ultimate goal.”⁴⁰ As indicated above, the latter chapters begin with the fall and sin, working through redemption and eschatology, and ending with God Himself. This pattern is no accident, but is instead adopted as a way of showing not just that philosophy can inform our theology (as the chapters themselves argue), but that theology can give shape to an overarching approach to philosophical issues. It is, in other words, an attempt to illustrate the contour of the Christian theology that it assumes.

³⁸ Laura Garcia, "Divine Freedom and Creation," *Philosophical Quarterly* 42, no. 167 (1992): 191.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 192.

⁴⁰ Rudi te Velde, *Aquinas on God: The 'Divine Science' of the Summa Theologiae* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2006), 10.

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