

**Hugh McCann, ed. *Free Will and Classical Theism: The Significance of Freedom in Perfect Being Theology*.
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In October of 2014, the University of St. Thomas in St. Paul Minnesota hosted a conference to share the work focused on theology and freedom that had been funded by Alfred Mele's *Big Questions in Free Will* Templeton grant. The essays in this volume all began life as presentations at this conference. It is perhaps also worth noting, as the book's dedication highlights, that the editor, Hugh McCann, passed away the day after submitting the final manuscript to OUP. By my lights, the high quality of the essays—together with their thematic emphases and unity—allows them to constitute an especially appropriate recognition of McCann's life and work.

The essays are uniformly strong, with each one making a substantial contribution to our understanding of the relationship between theistic commitment and theorizing about freedom of the will. At the same time, the space in the volume is admirably distributed between visible senior figures and emerging scholars. (Would it have been nice to have one or two... or even three additional contributions from women? Yes, yes it would have been. But I suppose there's nothing more to say about that.) In short, from Peter van Inwagen's opening essay, "The Problem of Fr** W*ll"—a characteristically sharp, and dare I say grouchy, treatment of important methodological issues—to Derk Pereboom's concluding efforts to put universalism to work in gentle defense of his own free will skepticism, there is much to be learned on every page of this collection.

One challenge for a reviewer (or, at any rate, for this reviewer) is in providing a useful treatment that doesn't amount to a mere reiteration of the volume's able introduction, in which McCann has crisply summarized each of the essays. At the same time, selecting a few essays to focus upon threatens to obscure the breadth of the contributions (and perhaps also to annoy those contributors whose essays go untreated). My strategy, for better or worse, will be to give a very brief description of each essay in each section, followed by some general reflections on the volume as a whole. In this way, I hope to provide some feel for both the plurality and the unity of this collection.

After McCann's aforementioned introduction, the volume begins with four papers under the heading "Central Issues." To begin, Peter van Inwagen gives renewed expression to his concern that a general failure of shared meaning for the term "free will" has left the contemporary debate in confusion and disarray. He repents of his own early use of the terminology and outlines what he now thinks the real philosophical problem is; the one he has all along been aiming to address, namely, what he here calls the "Culpability Problem." He also outlines his reasons for thinking that much of the work done under the heading of

free will can make no contribution to the culpability problem because it is plagued by a pernicious form of “verbal essentialism.” David Hunt’s chapter, “Theological Fatalism as an Aporetic Problem,” attempts to de-claw the traditional foreknowledge problem by considering parallels with, for example, Zeno-type problems, wherein we do not take the argument to establish its conclusion but instead as a demand to reconfigure our understanding of the argumentative elements that have made the unacceptable conclusion seductive. Going further, and leaning on Augustine’s views about the causal direction of God’s knowledge of free action, Hunt reiterates his view that the best resolution of the aporia involves treating God as a Frankfurt intervener *par excellence*. That is, Hunt recommends that we think of God’s knowledge of what an agent will do as a factor guaranteeing that the agent will perform the action but that plays no role in the explanation of the action. In “Responsibility and Freedom,” Hugh McCann develops a custodial account of the nature of responsibility, with a view to evaluating just what determinism would mean for the moral life. With a distinction drawn between the kind of responsibility we have, on the one hand, to manage ourselves with respect to our character and the kind of responsibility we have, on the other hand, to conduct ourselves according to moral and legal norms, McCann concludes that the first form would not be threatened by determinism but the second likely would be. In the final essay of the first section, “Compatibilism and the Free Will Defense,” Michael Almeida defends the surprising claim that the free will defense does not depend upon incompatibilism. In fact, and contrary to wide-spread sensibilities, the truth of compatibilism would not undermine the force of the standard free will defense. To show this, Almeida argues that both a strong version of compatibilism (according to which alternative possibilities are required) and a weak version of compatibilism (according to which Frankfurt-style reasoning succeeds in undoing an alternative possibilities condition) entail that there are metaphysically possible worlds in which God exists and people freely go wrong.

The second section of the volume turns to “Historical Aspects” of the titular topic. Jesse Couenhoven, in “The Indicative in the Imperative: On Augustinian Oughts and Cans,” begins by taking notice of the intuitive attractions of “ought implies can” (OIC). However, he musters concerns about this principle from Augustine, Luther, and Jonathan Edwards. In the spirit of their concerns, Couenhoven goes on to develop a distinctively Augustinian alternative to OIC that captures something of its force while avoiding the concerns raised by theistic compatibilists. The alternative principle is that “ought implies apt” — where aptness is a matter of a course of action being “congruent with the person’s design plan.” Katherin Rogers turns our attention to an historically influential libertarian position with her contribution, “Anselmian Alternatives and Frankfurt-Style Counterexamples.” In addition to introducing Anselm’s distinctive claim that freedom is a matter of the ability to choose from oneself (in the Latin, *a se*) and to developing the Anselmian account of the conditions for *a se* choice, Rogers argues that Anselm is a leeway incompatibilist—that is, he is committed to the relevance of alternative possibilities for free and responsible choice. This raises the possibility that a Frankfurtian counterexample argument might be made against Anselm’s views. However, Rogers argues that no Frankfurt case can be deployed against the kinds of alternatives that Anselm insists upon, in large part because of his endorsement of a grounding principle according to which only the fact of a certain choice grounds the truth of the proposition about the choice. This principle entails a conclusion inconsistent with a successful Frankfurt strategy; namely, that nothing other than the

choice itself could determine the content of a proposition expressing the choice. Moving forward into early modernity, Oliver Crisp, in his essay, "Libertarian Calvinism" defends the view that the Westminster Confession does not, contrary to the common view, commit Reformed thinkers to a rejection of libertarianism. In fact, Crisp attempts to demonstrate that a form of robust libertarianism is positively consistent with the Reformed commitments expressed in the Confession. To get the consistency, Crisp makes two crucial distinctions. The first is between the kind of freedom possessed by our initial human ancestors and the kind possessed by the rest of us after their fall. The second is between the kind of freedom that we fallen human beings have with respect to matters relevant to salvation and the kind of freedom we have with respect to the many other matters of choice that are not salvation-relevant. In keeping with the Confession, this Libertarian Calvinism affirms that pre-fall humans were free in the libertarian sense, though the fall has rendered us now unfree with respect to salvation-relevant choices. Nevertheless, we can still enjoy libertarian free will with respect to choices that are not salvation-relevant.

The third section of the volume is addressed to "Divine Freedom." Kevin Timpe's contribution, "The Best Thing in Life Is Free," takes up a problem for God's freedom that appears to arise from moral perfection. If God is morally perfect, as orthodoxy insists, then it seems that God can do nothing other than what is good. However, this looks to be in tension with an incompatibilist conception of freedom, whereby robust alternative possibilities are required. Timpe nevertheless argues that there is no real conflict between God's moral perfection and God's libertarian free will. To get this conclusion, Timpe develops a "virtue libertarianism" that places the emphasis not on being undetermined *simpliciter* but on being externally undetermined. He then uses this brand of libertarianism to respond to recent arguments both for a compatibilist conception of divine freedom and for the denial of divine freedom altogether. Addressing similar concerns, Brian Leftow's "Two Pictures of Divine Choice" is aimed at giving God leeway for action without abandoning perfect rationality (or other standard commitments of classical theism, including the falsity of the view that each human being exists necessarily). The way to do this, Leftow claims, is by accepting that God can have preferences that do not align neatly with objective value (though, of course, these preferences can't be for outcomes too far from ideal goodness). This allows Leftow to argue that God can have leeway in divine choice (for example, in the divine choice of creation) by virtue of some preferences, grounded in God's love, that do not maximize objective value.

Finally, the concluding section of the collection is organized around "Divine Omnicausality and Responsibility." In his "Divine Universal Causality Without Occasionalism (and with Agent-Causation," W. Matthews Grant confronts the traditional problem of reconciling the causal efficacy of creaturely powers with the classical view that God directly and fully causes everything other than God. Grant's strategy is to defend the (admittedly unpopular) view that an effect can be fully brought about by God while also being fully brought about by the creaturely power. Here Grant responds to four metaphysical arguments for the impossibility of dual full causation. He then goes on to respond to what he calls an epistemological argument, rooted in parsimony, against dual causation. Finally, Grant addresses Timothy O'Connor's claim that agent-causal actions in particular cannot themselves be caused. He reaches the tentative conclusion that all arguments attempting to establish the incompatibility of universal divine causality and creaturely causal efficacy have failed. In the concluding essay of the volume, "Theological

Determinism and the Relationship with God,” Derk Pereboom concedes that the theological determinist who insists that some are destined to hell has a problem. In particular, the problem has to do with how created persons can maintain an intimate relationship with a God who would seem to condemn some of his creatures in the arbitrary way that these commitments suggest. Love for and trust in this God appear to be hard either to justify or to conjure up. As Pereboom notes, this stands to explain much of the widespread attraction to libertarianism among traditional theists. Pereboom argues, however, that another approach to the problem of a healthy relationship with God is not to give up theological determinism but rather to accept universalism, the view that all humans will be saved. Given universalism (and some adjunct but plausibly acceptable premises), the theological determinist can also properly respond to God with love and trust. At the same time, libertarianism can also provide for a healthy relationship with God, on the assumption of universalism—even if the grounds for the healthy relationship will be somewhat different.

As I have said, and have said quite sincerely, this is an extraordinarily valuable volume with wise and intriguing arguments in each contribution. Though there are various details of specific lines of reasoning in the essays that I might profitably challenge or extend, I would like instead to zoom out and consider the wider argumentative context in which this collection seeks to advance our understanding. Taking its title seriously, the volume can be thought to be unified by reflection on the distinctive role to be played by freedom within *classical theism*. Neither the editor nor any of the contributors give us a precise accounting of what classical theism is supposed to be. In consequence, it seems we can trust the traditional understanding of this view as the one animating, for example, Augustine, Anselm, Maimonides, Averroes, Avicenna, and Aquinas, according to which God is the metaphysically independent ground of all being. On the classical view, this grounding role can only be filled by that which is radically independent from creation; which means that God’s perfections must include simplicity, aseity, immutability, and impassability, among others. (As an aside, the subtitle of the volume would seem to suggest if not identity then at least deep conceptual affinity between classical theism and perfect being theology. I find this somewhat misleading. Though classical theism may typically avail itself of the broadly Anselmian perfect being methodology, the methodology itself does not lead inextricably, or even especially powerfully, to the classical conclusions. A great many theorists committed to identifying God’s attributes with the perfections have nevertheless reached the conclusion that some of the standard classical attributes are not among the perfections.) But quibbles about the title of the volume aren’t illuminating. Instead, I am interested in how to think of the substantive unifying project of the volume in light of alternatives.

The volume is, by my lights, largely a work in classical philosophical theology. Here I am imagining this project as parallel to what Alvin Plantinga has described as one legitimate aspect of the work of the Christian philosopher; one that begins essentially with the acceptance of the main contours of Christianity in order to work through the implications of these commitments for a wide range of issues of importance to Christians. That is, the Christian Philosopher is not, according to Plantinga, required to do all of her work in a mode addressed to or animated by the concerns of non-Christians or non-theists. In a similar way, then, it seems appropriate for classical theists to do parallel work that begins by accepting the contours of classical theism for the purposes of making important philosophical progress internal to the worldview. The contributors to this volume most

certainly do accomplish good work of this kind. One particularly noteworthy feature of this work, given the unique challenges that classical theism faces with respect to issues of free will, is the way that it spans the range of approaches to freedom. On this score, an Augustinian compatibilism receives intelligent treatment throughout (especially from Hunt and Coenhoven). But versions of libertarianism are also well-represented (in particular, by Rogers, Crisp, and Timpe). This at least suggests that the compatibility question still presents a decision-point for classical theists. And there are any number of other points at which the project of classical philosophical theology is intelligently developed.

But with Plantinga in mind, we can envision especially fruitful and integrative instances of constructive Christian philosophy that might play an extended role in advancing the attractions of the Christian worldview. As cases in point, Plantinga's own work on the metaphysics of modality or on proper functionalism in epistemology have had the power not merely to advance Christian thinking on these topics, but in addition to present the overarching worldview as an attractive competitor. The idea might be put this way. When the theorist who is not inclined toward the Christian outlook comes to see its power and fecundity as it is deployed, say, in understanding metaphysical necessity or the epistemology of warrant, she may very well find herself rationally reconsidering her rejection of the overall outlook. Maintaining the parallel, we can imagine an execution of the constructive philosophical treatment of classical theism with respect to the topic of freedom that has the power to provoke opponents of classical theism to reconsider their rejection. I recognize that it would be expecting too much of this volume to demand that it achieve this goal. Still, I feel compelled to report that I do not think its overall impact is likely to be of this kind. That is, I doubt that non-classical theists will find in its approach and argumentation the kind of wholistic integration and explanatory power that would move them to a substantive reconsideration. For my own part, as one of these non-classical theists (with leanings toward open theism and with related doubts about divine simplicity and impassability), I can point to two brief issues that have left me unmoved. First, it seems to me that the achievement of this stronger polemical aim would demand more by way of antecedent justification for the classical commitments than this volume offers (and let me be as clear as I can be that I do not take the editor or the authors to have been under any obligation to provide such justification). Second, one of deepest grounds for abandonment of classical theism has had to do with the problem of evil—a problem (or, really, a set of problems) that implicates views about free will transparently. While there are some hints throughout about how individual authors might face this problem while maintaining commitment to the classical picture, only Almeida and Pereboom address the issues directly. In both cases, the treatment is more suggestive than constructive, with Almeida arguing that the free will defender need not insist on incompatibilism and Pereboom suggesting that the theological determinist (who accepts universalism) can appeal to skeptical theism in response to evil. My judgment is that these efforts will not be enough to move those who have found the problem of evil to be substantially more manageable under non-classical commitments.

Once again, none of this is in any way to disparage the volume as it stands. It is constituted by first-rate work by first-rate thinkers on topics of deep importance for classical theism. And, of course, the relevance of free will, both divine and human, to this classical picture is easy to see. Furthermore, since wider concerns about free will are perennial and pervasive in contemporary philosophy, the insight of the papers in this

collection will be valuable beyond the fields of philosophy of religion and philosophical theology.