A THEOLOGICAL EVALUATION OF EDWARDS'S *FREEDOM OF THE WILL*: A CASE FOR CONTINUITY WITH THE REFORMED TRADITION

A Dissertation

Presented to

the Faculty of

The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

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by

Andrew Brian Day Sparks

May 2022

APPROVAL SHEET

A THEOLOGICAL EVALUATION OF EDWARDS'S
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Andrew Brian Day Sparks

Read and Approved by:

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Bruce A. Ware (Chair)

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Stephen J. Wellum

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Shawn D. Wright

Date_____

To Theresa

As Jonathan Edwards said of his future wife, Sarah Pierpont, so I say of you,

They say there is a young lady . . . who is beloved of that almighty Being, who made and rules the world, and that there are certain seasons in which this great Being, in some way or other invisible, comes to her and fills her mind with exceeding sweet delight, and that she hardly cares for anything, except to meditate on him—that she expects after a while to be received up where he is, to be raised up out of the world and caught up into heaven; being assured that he loves her too well to let her remain at a distance from him always. There she is to dwell with him, and to be ravished with his love and delight forever. Therefore, if you present all the world before her, with the richest of its treasures, she disregards it and cares not for it, and is unmindful of any pain or affliction. She has a strange sweetness in her mind, and singular purity in her affections; is most just and conscientious in all her actions; and you could not persuade her to do anything wrong or sinful, if you would give her all the world, lest she should offend this great Being.

Jonathan Edwards, *Letters and Personal Writings*, in *WJE*, 16:789–90.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

WJE	Edwards, Jonathan. *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*. 26 vols. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1957–2008

PREFACE

When I entered the doctoral program at SBTS in 2017, Dr. Bruce Ware encouraged me to read and engage what was, at that time, Richard Muller's latest work, *Divine Will and Human Choice*. I owe Dr. Ware a great debt of gratitude for his suggestion, the fruit of which is this dissertation. Dr. Ware's supervision was marked by a sharp eye, a gracious spirit, encouraging words, wise counsel, and spirited discussion. He blessed me with his friendship and made me a better thinker, husband, and father. I am also thankful for Dr. Stephen Wellum, whose seminars, writings, and interactions shaped me as a theologian. His clarity and conviction illumined my mind and helped me firmly plant my feet in the tradition. In 2018, I undertook an independent study with Professor Paul Helm, and he has graciously interacted with me since. For his influence upon my thought in general and this work in particular, I owe him thanks. I am also grateful to Drs. Shawn Wright and Guillaume Bignon for graciously agreeing to serve on my committee and offering their expertise and insights. Drs. Gregg Allison, Kyle Claunch, Oren Martin, and Tyler Wittman also deserve thanks for their labor in the theology department at SBTS and the role they played in my theological formulation.

God graciously supplied churches and friends that shaped and supported me throughout my life, especially during my doctoral studies. I am thankful for the members and elders at Christ Community Church, Kenwood Baptist Church, Belmar Baptist Church, Farmdale Baptist Church, and Riley Bible Church. The saints that gather in these churches supported me with prayer and encouragement. Nate Brooks and Chris Cole are two dear brothers whose friendship brings about deep reflection and much needed laughter. Luke Waite, Jon Knight, and Allen Day deserve thanks for their friendship, stimulating conversations, and joyous labor alongside me in church ministry. God often

testified of his grace and faithfulness toward me through the friendship and kindness of Larry and Peggy Casler. Words cannot express the profound impact their care and support had upon my studies.

Several men deserve special thanks. Colin McCulloch's doctrinal preaching, keen mind, virtuous life, and regard for the Lord's Day, has been a sweet balm to my soul. We journeyed many puritan paths together, and he became a dear brother along the way. Alex Tibbott, Daniel Scheiderer, Henry Lyan, Torey Teer, and Dr. Randall Johnson provided a unique brotherhood throughout our doctoral studies. Together, we shared ideas, sharpened each other, enjoyed sweet fellowship, laughed a lot, and contemplated God. This work is better for their input, and I am a better husband, father, theologian, and churchman, because of all these men.

Ken and Nadine Sparks (Grandma and Grandpa) supported me in the beginning of my seminary journey but did not live to see it completed. They called me to walk in the truth and encouraged and enabled me to dedicate my life to the study of Scripture. John and Rose Aker (Pop-pop and Mom-mom) encouraged me in my studies through incessant prayer, timely visits, and undeserved acts of kindness. Knowing personally the toll of doctoral studies, they understood how to make life pleasant and sweet for my family, which was a great gift to me.

This journey would not have been possible without my parents. Their love, prayers, encouragement, wisdom, guidance, support, and friendship prepared me for seminary and equipped me to finish. My father, Lance Sparks, is my hero. His unwavering resolve and uncompromising conviction in the authority of Holy Scripture impressed upon my soul the greatest lessons I have learned: fearlessly trust in God's sovereignty and faithfully follow the truth of Scripture wherever it leads. Laurie Sparks, my mother, pursues the task of motherhood with undivided devotion and always called me to guard my heart and look to Christ. The energy she poured into her home will pay dividends for generations to come as her children teach their children to call upon the

Lord. I owe my parents honor and a great debt for their labor of love. My two brothers, Cade and AJ constantly encouraged me with their prayers, words, and lives. They are the best little brothers a man could have. My sisters, Ashley, Aryn, Anna, and Avery, unconditionally loved and cared for me and my family and have cheered me on until the end. My brothers-in-law, Dustin, Tim, and Franco, and my sister-in-law Rachael have been a great source of encouragement, friendship, Christian charity, and laughter. I am thankful for them. Kevin and Diane Broad, my in-laws, not only gave me their precious daughter in marriage but have also been very supportive of my work.

My four daughters, Verity Grace, Eden Joy, Eliza Faith, and Lydia Hope have been my sweetest supporters. They fill our home with warmth, laughter, song, and joy. Their love for me made the journey smooth and compelled me to finish well. I am thankful for the gifts that they are and the love they so generously bestow their father.

No human deserves more thanks than my beloved bride. She joyfully encouraged and supported me throughout this journey and our entire married life. She never grumbled or complained, even in difficult seasons, but enthusiastically helped me through every step and taught our daughters to do the same. She daily adorns herself with imperishable qualities and makes our home a haven of rest. For these reasons, I dedicate this work to my beloved and best friend.

Finally, all praise is due the triune God. From the foundation of the world the Father chose me, a wretched sinner, in Christ Jesus. By God's providence, I was acquainted with the sacred writings from my youth and the Holy Spirit opened my eyes to behold the glory of Christ, my righteousness. My will was bound to sin but by God's effectual call I was made willing to believe.

Drew Sparks

Terre Haute, Indiana

May 2022

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

B. B. Warfield once said of Jonathan Edwards,

> The close agreement of his teaching with that of the best esteemed Calvinistic divines is, therefore, both conscious and deliberate; his omission to appeal to them does not argue either ignorance or contempt; it is incident to his habitual manner and to the special task he was prosecuting. In point of fact, what he teaches is just the "standard" Calvinism in its completeness.[1]

Warfield's comments concern Edwards as a theologian but especially his work, *A Careful and Strict Inquiry into the Modern Prevailing Notions of the Freedom of the Will*, published in 1754. Edwards's correspondences with John Erskine reveal that he intended to write this work as early as 1747 but several personal and pastoral setbacks delayed the project until his pastorate in Stockbridge, Massachusetts. After a mere four-and-a-half-months of writing, Edwards published his work.[2]

Although many receive *Freedom of the Will* (henceforth, *FOW*) as the standard defense of Calvinist compatibilism, contemporary scholarship disagrees with Warfield and argues that Edward's view of free will marks a departure in the Reformed tradition based upon two lines of evidence.[3] First, the Reformed tradition was neither libertarian

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[1] Benjamin Breckinridge Warfield, *The Works of Benjamin B. Warfield* (1932; repr., Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2003), 9:530.

[2] For details concerning Edwards's life and ministry, see George M. Marsden, *Jonathan Edwards: A Life* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2003). In Andrew Sparks, "Edwards on Free Will," in *The Jonathan Edwards Miscellanies Companion*, vol. 2, edited by Robert L. Boss and Sarah B. Boss (Fort Worth: JESociety Press, 2021), 441–64, I examine the relationship between *Freedom of the Will* and Edwards's "Miscellanies."

[3] Willem J. van Asselt, J. Martin Bac, and Roelf T. te Velde, eds., *Reformed Thought on Freedom: The Concept of Free Choice in Early Modern Reformed Theology*, Texts and Studies in Reformation and Post-Reformation Thought (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010); Richard A. Muller, "Jonathan Edwards and the Absence of Free Choice: A Parting of Ways in the Reformed Tradition," *Jonathan Edwards Studies* 1, no. 1 (November 2011): 3–22; Muller, "Jonathan Edwards and Francis Turretin on Necessity, Contingency, and Freedom of Will," *Jonathan Edwards Studies* 4, no. 3 (September

nor compatibilist.[4] Second, since the Reformed tradition was not compatibilist, Edwards's compatibilism represents a different view of human freedom than was shared among the Reformed. Many, like Warfield, assume that *FOW* serves as the classic defense of the Reformed view of free will and would contend that Edwards represents a development within Calvinism.[5] In this dissertation, I argue that in *FOW*, Edwards employs theological arguments for compatibilism that were consistent with and common among the Reformed. This first chapter offers a preliminary overview of key terms and definitions related to free will. Then, I examine the current debates regarding the nature of free will among the Reformed and present the charges that Edwards departed from the tradition. Finally, I seek to develop a criterion to evaluate *FOW* from the writings of the Reformed.

Free Will

This section defines terms relevant to the current debate concerning the Reformed view of free will. I begin by examining the intellect and the will as understood historically in the Reformed tradition, drawing out key distinctions that are central to the present debate. The historical conversation is followed by a brief contemporary analysis of free will debates, defining determinism, incompatibilism, and compatibilism.

2014): 266–85; Muller, *Divine Will and Human Choice: Freedom, Contingency, and Necessity in Early Modern Reformed Thought* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2017); Muller, "Neither Libertarian nor Compatibilist: A Response to Paul Helm," *Journal of Reformed Theology* 13, no. 3–4 (2019): 267–86; Muller, *Grace and Freedom: William Perkins and the Early Modern Reformed Understanding of Free Choice and Divine Grace* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2020); B. Hoon Woo, "The Difference between Scotus and Turretin in Their Formulation of the Doctrine of Freedom," *Westminster Theological Journal* 78, no. 2 (Fall 2016): 249–69; HyunKwan Kim, "Francis Turretin on Human Free Choice: Walking the Fine Line between Synchronic Contingency and Compatibilistic Determinism," *Westminster Theological Journal* 79, no. 1 (2017): 25–44; Philip John Fisk, *Jonathan Edwards's Turn from the Classic-Reformed Tradition of Freedom of the Will* (Göttingen: V&R Academic, 2016).

[4] Below, I define these terms.

[5] A brief selection of contemporary sources includes Paul Helm, *The Providence of God*, Contours of Christian Theology (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1994); John S. Feinberg, *No One Like Him: The Doctrine of God*, rev. ed., Foundations of Evangelical Theology (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2001); John M. Frame, *The Doctrine of God*, A Theology of Lordship (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2002); Bruce A. Ware, *God's Greater Glory: The Exalted God of Scripture and the Christian Faith* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2004).

Intellect and Will

When discussing free will, it is important to note two faculties or powers of the soul: intellect and will. These faculties should not be conceived of as parts of man but as powers by which man understands and acts. As Paul Helm says,

> It's a general view that there is no human intellect as there is a liver or lungs or brain in a human body. It is not an organ or instrument; rather, it is the possessor of collective powers related in incredibly complex ways between itself and the memory, will, and affections based on an awareness of the types of activity of the soul.[6]

The intellect and will cannot be seen when one examines the physical components of man, like a lung or liver, but one can discern the powers that man possesses which are not present in rocks and vegetables. Should an image bearer lack or possess diminished or damaged faculties, it is identified as a privation since humans possess these faculties by nature whereas rocks and vegetables do not.[7]

Several distinctions related to the intellect and will are worth noting. The intellect can be divided into the theoretical and practical intellect. Theoretical reasoning pertains to what is and differs from practical reasoning which determines what is to be done. Robert Kane notes that the phrase, "what is to be done" is ambiguous since,

> It can signify what I (or someone) "should" or "ought" to do; or it can signify what I "will" (i.e., "choose" or "decide") to do. Thus practical reasoning can issue in two kinds of judgment—*practical* (or *normative*) *judgments*, on the one hand, about what ought to be done (or about what the best thing is to do), and *choices* or *decisions*, on the other hand, which announce that the agent "will" do such and such, now or in the future.[8]

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[6] Paul Helm, *Human Nature from Calvin to Edwards* (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2018), 16.

[7] On privation, Vermigli writes, "Evil is a lack [privatio], I mean of goodness; not of all goodness but of such a good as is required for the perfection of the creature, which I say belongs to the perfection of the subject that is corrupted. If we take sight away from a stone, it receives no injury, for that quality of nature does not apply. As a privation, evil cannot exist without good, for it must have a subject. Since a subject is a substance [natura], it is good; so evil can exist only in some good—blindness is a deprivation of sight; it does not hang in the air, but stays in the eye." Peter Martyr Vermigli, *Philosophical Works: On the Relation of Philosophy to Theology*, trans. and ed. Joseph C. McLelland (Moscow, ID: Davenant Institute, 2018), 223.

[8] Robert Kane, *The Significance of Free Will* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 21.

Kane's distinction between normative judgments and choices or decisions appears to be evident in Francis Turretin's discussion on blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. He states,

> In the sin against the Holy Spirit, the will indeed opposes the judgment of the practical intellect, even the first decided. Otherwise it could not be said to be committed against conscience and the knowledge of the truth. Still, it is not repugnant to the last decided judgment in which the flesh (all things being considered) judges here and how that the gospel should be denied and Christ forsaken.[9]

Blasphemy against the Spirit both follows and disagrees with the practical intellect.[10] It disagrees with the first decided judgment of the practical intellect, which appears to be both normative (against the conscience) and a previous decision. However, the will does not cast off the judgment of the practical intellect in the absolute sense but relative to the normative function of the practical intellect and a preceding choice that was made. Thus, we see that the intellect can be divided into the theoretical and practical intellect, with the latter being further divided into normative judgments and choices or decisions.

The will also requires precise distinctions, especially if we are to determine in what sense the will is "free." The will, like the intellect, is a faculty or power of the soul by which the agent acts. This definition differs from a desiring or striving will, such as the "the will to win" or "the will to fly," both of which express a hope rather than a faculty by which one acts. Further, it also differs from "will" understood metaphorically as is often expressed in the signified will of God, which implies what God has enjoined upon man to do rather than a declaration of what God himself will accomplish.[11] The sixth commandment, "Thou shalt not murder," expresses God's precepts for man without

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[9] Francis Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, vol. 1, *First through Tenth Topics*, ed. James T. Dennison Jr., trans. George Musgrave Giger (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 1992), 665.

[10] What Turretin means by "follows" will be discussed in later chapters. For now, it is sufficient to note the difference between the normative role of the practical intellect and the decision or choice that the will "follows."

[11] Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, 1:220.

implying that God will not permissively decree murder. The will, which we describe as free, refers to the faculty or power of the soul to act.

The Reformed tradition, known for works such as Luther's *The Bondage of the Will* and Calvin's *The Bondage and Liberation of the Will*, appears to argue for the absence of free will.[12] But, as Helm notes, "When Calvin and Luther deny free will, therefore, they chiefly have in mind not the metaphysical issues . . . , but a spiritual disposition stemming from sin which is, logically speaking, neutral on the question of determinism and libertarianism."[13] The bondage of the will denies that man can please God but still affirms that he is morally responsible for his sinful actions. Although fallen men sin necessarily, the Reformed do not categorize sin as a form of coercion. Consider Calvin, who says,

> If freedom is opposed to coercion, I both acknowledge and consistently maintain that choice is free, and I hold anyone who thinks otherwise to be a heretic. If, I say, it were called free in the sense of not being coerced nor forcibly moved by an external impulse, but moving of its own accord, I have no objection. The reason I find this epithet unsatisfactory is that people commonly think of something quite different when they hear or read it being applied to the human will. Since in fact they take it to imply ability and power, one cannot prevent from entering the minds of most people, as soon as the will is called free, the illusion that it therefore has both good and evil within its power, so that it can by its own strength choose either one of them.[14]

Calvin affirms and rejects different kinds of free will. Freedom is opposed to coercion but is consistent with the ability to only choose sin. How does he differentiate the two? If

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[12] Martin Luther, *The Bondage of the Will*, ed. James I. Packer (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1999); John Calvin, *The Bondage and Liberation of the Will: A Defence of the Orthodox Doctrine of Human Choice against Pighius*, ed. A. N. S. Lane, trans. G. Davies (Carlisle, UK: Baker Academic, 2002). For a treatment of the bondage of the will as understood by Luther, Calvin, and Edwards, see John Gerstner, "Augustine, Luther, Calvin, and Edwards on the Bondage of the Will," *The Grace of God, the Bondage of the Will*, vol. 2, *Historical and Theological Perspectives on Calvinism*, ed. Thomas R. Schreiner and Bruce A. Ware (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1995), 279–95. Matthew Barrett provides a helpful historical introduction to Reformation debates regarding bondage of the will. Matthew Barrett, "The Bondage and Liberation of the Will," in *Reformation Theology: A Systematic Summary*, ed. Matthew Barrett (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2017), 451–510.

[13] Paul Helm, *Calvin at the Centre* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 229.

[14] Calvin, *Bondage and Liberation of the Will*, 68.

man voluntarily chooses without coercion or force, he is free even if he is bound by sin and unable to freely choose the good. Calvin continues,

> Therefore we describe [as coerced] the will which does not incline this way or that of its own accord or by an internal movement of decision, but is forcibly driven by an external impulse. We say that it is self-determined when of itself it directs itself in the direction in which it is led, when it is not taken by force or dragged unwillingly. A bound will, finally, is one which because of its corruptness is held captive under the authority of evil desires, so that it can choose nothing but evil, even if it does so of its own accord and gladly, without being driven by an external impulse.[15]

Calvin offers three descriptions of the will in this paragraph.

1. Coerced will: forcibly driven by an external impulse.
2. Free will: Requires self-determination or direction and prohibits external factors that would force the will "unwillingly."
3. Bound will: Requires self-determination and prohibits external factors that would force the will "unwillingly" but is compatible with the necessity of sinful actions.[16]

The last two description are compatible with each other while the first is incompatible with both. The first description contradicts, according to Calvin, essential elements of free will. Whether or not Calvin is correct, one can see how he denies that the will was free in a state of sin while remaining bound; he simply denied that the will was free with respect to choosing between good and evil.

These distinctions are not unique to Calvin and can be found in Turretin. He states, "Free will can be viewed either in the genus of being and absolutely (as belonging to a rational being in every state); or in the genus of morals and in relation to various states (either of sin or of righteousness)."[17] Rational beings would include God, the incarnate Son of God, perfected angels and saints, and the devils and reprobates.[18] The

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[15] Calvin, *Bondage and Liberation of the Will*, 69.

[16] For further support of the definitions provided, see Calvin, *Bondage and Liberation of the Will*, 69–70.

[17] Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, 1:665.

[18] Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, 1:666.

states Turretin refers to would include the fourfold state of man: innocence (*posse non peccare*), corruption (*non posse non peccare*), grace (*posse peccare et non peccare*), and glory (*non posse peccare*).[19] The essence of freedom in Turretin's view becomes clear when one examines his statements about Adam in his state of innocence, which reads:

> But there was in him another threefold liberty: (1) from coaction; (2) from physical necessity; (3) from slavery (both of sin and misery). The former two constituted essential liberty. It belongs to man in whatever state constituted and has two characteristics: preference (*to proairetikon*) and will (*to hekousion*), so that what is done may be done by a previous judgment of reason and spontaneously. But the latter is accidental because it comes in upon the essential liberty and can be separated from it (since true liberty exists where such freedom from slavery does not exist, as in the state of sin).[20]

Turretin's description resembles Calvin. Coaction and physical necessity contradict the essence of freedom, which consists in preference and willing, whereas moral slavery is consistent with free will. Calvin and Turretin were concerned with the essence of freedom that rational beings possess and persists through all four states while still maintaining that fallen man was bound to sin and morally responsible since he carried forth sinful actions in a manner consistent with freedom. Thus, when I discuss "free will" in this work, I am not referring to man's ability to choose between good and evil while in a state of bondage, but what is essential to free will across the fourfold state of man and has been identified as metaphysical rather than moral freedom.[21]

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[19] Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, 1:570.

[20] Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, 1:571.

[21] Helm offers a brief but helpful exposition of metaphysical and moral freedom in relation to the *Westminster Confession of Faith*. Helm, *Human Nature from Calvin to Edwards*, 92–94. For a helpful response, see Michael Patrick Preciado, *A Reformed View of Freedom: The Compatibility of Guidance Control and Reformed Theology* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2019), 87–100. For an explanation of the *WCF*, see Chad Van Dixhoorn, *Confessing the Faith: A Reader's Guide to the Westminster Confession of Faith* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 2014), 135–44. Edwards's *Freedom of the Will* primarily addresses metaphysical ability. In his day, Calvin complained that Pighius conflated the two issues. Calvin, *Bondage and Liberation of the Will*, 35–36. See also Paul Helm, *John Calvin's Ideas* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 157–83. On the distinctions between *voluntas*, *arbitrium*, and *electio*, see Helm, *John Calvin's Ideas*, 160–161, 179–181; Helm, *Human Nature from Calvin to Edwards*; Muller, *Grace and Freedom*, 21–24.

Determinism, Incompatibilism, and Compatibilism

Determinism, broadly defined, is the thesis that all events in the world, including human actions, are determined by a set of sufficient conditions. If the conditions do not obtain, then it is not necessary that the event in question will occur. As Kane states,

> Any event (including a choice or action) is determined, according to this core notion, just in case there are conditions (such as the decrees of fate, antecedent physical causes plus laws of nature, or foreordaining acts of God) whose joint occurrence is (logically) sufficient for the occurrence of the event. In other words, it *must* be the case that, *if* these determining conditions obtain (e.g., physical causes and laws of nature), *then* the determined event occurs.[22]

The requirement of sufficient conditions differentiates determinism from necessitarianism, which is the thesis that all events in the world, including human actions, will occur regardless of the conditions that obtain. On determinism, a human action may be conditionally necessary whereas necessitarianism states that a human action is absolutely necessary, regardless of the prevailing conditions.

Free will and moral responsibility are either incompatible or compatible with determinism. Incompatibilism denies that free will and moral responsibility are compatible with determinism. Incompatibilism comes in two forms. First, hard determinism denies the compatibility of free will and moral responsibility with determinism and affirms that determinism is true.[23] Second, libertarianism denies the compatibility of determinism with free will and moral responsibility and affirms that some human actions are free. Libertarianism typically affirms two conditions:

1. Sourcehood: an agent is free agent if he is the ultimate source of his own actions.

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[22] Kane, *Significance of Free Will*, 8.

[23] Derk Pereboom, *Living without Free Will*, Cambridge Studies in Philosophy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

2. Leeway: an agent is free only if he possesses the categorical, as opposed to conditional, ability to do otherwise than he did, also known as the principle of alternative possibilities (henceforth, PAP).[24]

Some libertarians, such as Robert Kane, argue that both conditions are required for free actions.[25] Kevin Timpe agrees that both are required but prefers to emphasize the sourcehood condition and argues that sourcehood entails leeway.[26] Peter van Inwagen, by contrast, asserts that the definition of free will simply is the ability to do otherwise.[27] Finally, Eleonore Stump represents Frankfurt-libertarians who argue for sourcehood but do not require leeway.[28]

Compatibilism, on the other hand, is the thesis that determinism is compatible with free will and moral responsibility. Theological determinism is a subset of determinism and differs from logical, physical, and nomological determinism.[29] James Anderson writes, "Calvinists need not be committed to *material* or *physical* determinism: the thesis that every event, including human decisions and actions, is determined entirely by prior physical events in conjunction with physical laws."[30] He adds,

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[24] For a helpful treatment of these two conditions and their relationship to libertarianism, see Katherin A. Rogers, *Anselm on Freedom* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 5–6.

[25] Kane, *Significance of Free Will*. Kane's commitment to both conditions does not contradict his affirmation of self-forming actions or tracing.

[26] Kevin Timpe, *Free Will: Sourcehood and Its Alternatives*, 2nd ed. (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013).

[27] Peter van Inwagen, *An Essay on Free Will* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986).

[28] Eleonore Stump, "Moral Responsibility without Alternative Possibilities," in *Moral Responsibility and Alternative Possibilities: Essays on the Importance of Alternative Possibilities*, ed. David Widerker and McKenna Michael (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2003), 139–58. Kevin Timpe argues that sourcehood entails PAP in *Free Will* (2013). For a compatibilist critique of Frankfurt-libertarians, see Guillaume Bignon, *Excusing Sinners and Blaming God: A Calvinist Assessment of Determinism, Moral Responsibility, and Divine Involvement in Evil* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2017), 120–32. For a summary treatment of alternative possibilities and Frankfurt cases, see Michael McKenna and Derk Pereboom, *Free Will: A Contemporary Introduction*, Routledge Contemporary Introductions to Philosophy (New York: Routledge, 2016), 102–23.

[29] For a helpful discussion on different forms of determinism, see Kane, *Significance of Free Will*, 5–8; James N. Anderson and Paul Manata, "Determined to Come Most Freely," *Journal of Reformed Theology* 11, no. 3 (January 2017): 275–77.

[30] James N. Anderson, "Calvinism and the First Sin," in *Calvinism & the Problem of Evil*, ed. David E. Alexander and Daniel M. Johnson (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2016), 204–5.

> Calvinism doesn't entail *causal determinism* in the sense most often in view in discussions about free will. Causal determinism, in this technical sense, is the idea that events subsequent to *t* are necessitated by (and thus in principle could be logically deduced from) the entire state of the world at *t*. On this view, every event in the world has prior sufficient causes within the world and events are determined by their causes in strict law-like fashion (thus some philosophers prefer the term *nomological determinism* for this species of determinism).[31]

Although theological determinists deny that theological determinism is equivalent to other forms presented above, Anderson states, "There is still *some* sense in which Calvinism posits a kind of causal determinism. For every event E, God *determines* that E will take place and the decree of God is the ultimate sufficient *cause* of E."[32] Theological determinists need not commit themselves to a particular theory of causation but should follow Helm's caution, when he writes, "A touch of apophaticism seems entirely in place when considering the nature of the eternal Creator's action upon his creation, even though this may not do anything to refine our intuitions. Are we in fact in a position to know how God exercises any aspect of his control?"[33] Theological determinists are not committed to all forms of determinism nor a particular theory of causation between Creator and creature.

Theological determinism affirms that free human actions are conditionally or hypothetically necessary. This is known as the necessity of the consequence. Muller writes, "The *necessitas consequentiae* is a conditional or hypothetical necessity, best described as a logical necessity." The necessity of the consequence differs from the necessity of the consequent, which Muller defines as,

> *The necessity of the consequent* or *necessity of the consequent (thing)*; i.e., the necessity of something that cannot be other than what it is, which is to say, a simple or absolute necessity, a natural necessity *in ordine essendi*, in the order of being, or a necessity *de re* (q.v; of the thing), as opposed to necessity *de dicto* (q.v.; of a statement). A necessity of the consequent thing arises out of the connection of

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[31] Anderson, "Calvinism and the First Sin," 205.

[32] Anderson, "Calvinism and the First Sin," 205.

[33] Paul Helm, "Discrimination: Aspects of God's Causal Activity," in *Calvinism & the Problem of Evil*, ed. David E. Alexander and Daniel M. Johnson (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2016), 159.

> necessary causes with the effects that must follow from them and is sometimes also referred to as a *necessitas consequentis vel causata*, in distinction from a *necessitas consequentiae* (q.v.), which is a purely logical necessity and accordingly, when referencing things, a contingency.[34]

In further chapters, I will address these distinctions and their use among the Reformed and Edwards. For now, it suffices to say that compatibilists can affirm the necessity of the consequence and its consistency with theological determinism.[35] Theological determinists who affirm compatibilism merely assert that God determines all things by his wise and holy counsel and that God's determination is consistent with human free will and moral responsibility.

As a result, theological determinists deny the sourcehood condition as well as PAP. God's decree is the sufficient explanation for why a particular event occurs. Further, given God's immutable decree and his infallible foreknowledge, PAP is also denied. However, theological determinists have labored to discuss what the ability to do otherwise consists of and in what sense they deny it. Guillaume Bignon differentiates between PAP_{All} and PAP_{If}. He writes,

> Let PAP_{All} be the principle that "a person is morally responsible for what he has done only if, *all things inside and outside the person being just as they are at the moment of choice*, he could have done otherwise. Let us name this sort of ability a *categorical ability*.
>
> Let PAP_{If} instead be the principle that "a person is morally responsible for what he has done only if he could have done otherwise, *had his inner desires inclined him to do so at the moment of choice*."[36]

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[34] Richard A. Muller, "Necessitas Consequentis," in *Dictionary of Latin and Greek Theological Terms: Drawn Principally from Protestant Scholastic Theology*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2017), 230.

[35] Anderson and Manata, "Determined to Come Most Freely"; Preciado, *Reformed View of Freedom*; Paul Helm, *Reforming Free Will: A Conversation on the History of Reformed Views on Compatibilism (1500–1800)* (Fearn, Scotland: Mentor, 2020). These authors claim that one can hold to theological determinism and the necessity of the consequence contra those who claim otherwise, which includes J. Martin Bac, *Perfect Will Theology: Divine Agency in Reformed Scholasticism as against Suárez, Episcopius, Descartes, and Spinoza*, Brill's Series in Church History 42 (Leiden: Brill, 2010); Asselt, Bac, and te Velde, *Reformed Thought on Freedom*.

[36] Bignon, *Excusing Sinners and Blaming God*, 72.

Compatibilism affirms that the agent has a conditional, rather than categorical, ability to do otherwise. Compatibilism denies that the categorical ability to do otherwise is a requisite for moral responsibility. This view asserts that PAP_{If} is necessary for moral responsibility whereas PAP_{All} is not.[37]

John Feinberg lists eight different senses of "can."[38] An agent can or could do otherwise in a significant sense in the following criteria: (1) the agent has the physical ability, (2) the circumstances external to the agent allow for the opportunity, (3) should the agent act accordingly he would not be violating any rules, (4) upon acting the agent would be free from undesirable ill-consequences, (5) the agent can act accordingly because he holds the proper position of authority, (6) the act would not be considered unreasonable, (7) given the prior instances of "can," the agent's action could be subjected to conditional analysis akin to Bignon's PAP_{If}. Libertarians and compatibilists disagree on the eighth sense of can: contra-causal freedom or PAP_{All}.

Michael Preciado identifies a further sense in which theological determinists deny PAP:

> An agent S morally responsibly does x only if S could have done otherwise than x given C (God's foreknowledge, decree and/or providence).[39]

Bignon's PAP_{If} views alternative possibilities from the perspective of the human agent and provides a positive sense in which theological determinists can accept alternative possibilities. PAP_{All} is rejected by theological determinists along with Preciado's more theological description, as opposed to Bignon's consistent yet anthropological emphasis. For the purposes of this dissertation, I will broaden PAP_{All} and PAP_{If} to include the anthropological elements in Bignon—the role of the theoretical and practical intellect,

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[37] Bignon, *Excusing Sinners and Blaming God*, 72–73.

[38] Feinberg, *No One Like Him*, 721–24.

[39] Preciado, *Reformed View of Freedom*, 69.

man's desires, etc.—as well as the theological components of Preciado—God's foreknowledge, decree and/or providence.

The intellect and the will are the faculties or powers of the soul by which man understands and acts. How the Reformed and Edwards understood these faculties or powers of the soul and their relationship to one another will be discussed in following two chapters; for now, these issues have been introduced. Further, this section defined key terms such as determinism, hard-determinism, libertarianism, compatibilism, PAP_{All} and PAP_{If}, and how theological determinists employ them. These terms will prove helpful at the conclusion of this chapter where I offer a preliminary evaluation of Muller's views.

The Reformed Tradition, Edwards, and Free Will

Three sets of literature frame the current debate concerning Edwards's continuity with the Reformed tradition. First, some literature argues that the Reformed were neither libertarian nor compatibilist.[40] *Reformed Thought on Freedom* (henceforth, *RTF*), published in 2010, offers new or fresh translations of key Reformed texts on free will[41] and argues that the Reformed depended upon the notion of synchronic contingency—an essential apparatus of human freedom—as found in John Duns Scotus.[42] Muller helpfully differentiates (i) diachronic from (ii) synchronic contingency:

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[40] Muller finds the terms "problematic" and "inapplicable" vis-à-vis John Duns Scotus, Thomas Aquinas, and those who follow them. Muller, *Divine Will and Human Choice*, 176.

[41] Theologians include Girolamo Zanchi (1516–1590), Franciscus Junius (1545–1602), Franciscus Gomarus (1563–1641), Gisbertus Voetsius (1589–1676), Francesco Turrettini (1623–1687), and Bernardinus de Moor (1709–1780).

[42] *RTF* is the product of a research group founded by Antonie Vos. Asselt, Bac, and te Velde, *Reformed Thought on Freedom*, 16. Vos has published several works on Scotus and argues that Luther and Calvin were necessitarian in contrast to others such as Turretin: Antonie Vos, *The Philosophy of John Duns Scotus* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006); Vos, *The Theology of John Duns Scotus*, Studies in Reformed Theology 34 (Leiden: Brill, 2018); Vos, "Paul Helm on Medieval Scholasticism," *Journal of Reformed Theology* 8, no. 3 (September 2014): 263–83; Antonie Vos and Andreas J. Beck, "Conceptual Patterns Related to Reformed Scholasticism," *Nederlands Theologisch Tijdschrift* 57, no. 3 (July 2003): 223–33.

> (i) Something is contingent if it could have become presently otherwise than it is (i.e., if a different past course of development could have left it in a different present state). Contingency resides in a past possibility.
>
> (ii) Something is contingent if it can be presently otherwise than it is (i.e., if a presently unrealized possibility can still be considered a present possibility, even though unrealized). Contingency resides in a present possibility.[43]

However, Muller denies that the Reformed depended on Scotus for their formulation of free will and, instead, affirms the eclectic nature of the Reformed orthodox.[44] Muller rejects the implications of Vos's argument, which would entail the following:

> Reformed thinkers as Calvin, Vermigli, Beza, Zanchi, and Ursinus, who preceded the advent of this Scotistic understanding, were unwitting determinists even in their insistence that human beings have liberty of contradiction and contrariety in the general affairs of life. In other words, according to the claims of Vos and his associates, even when Vermigli and Zanchi argue the case for human freedom of choice, they are pressed logically into a deterministic conclusion to the extent that their intellectual apparatus lacked the Scotistic language of synchronic contingency and fell back upon a form of necessitarianism characteristic of Aristotelian philosophy and, moreover, of Thomism.[45]

In rejecting the Scotist overemphasis by Vos and *RTF*, Muller wishes to state that the Reformed employed the language of "simultaneous potencies" rather than "synchronic contingency."[46] Muller defines "simultaneous potencies" as "the idea that the operation of intellect and will is such that the *requisites for choice* being present, an agent

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[43] Muller, *Divine Will and Human Choice*, 49.

[44] Carl Trueman agrees with Muller and cautions *RTF* to consider the eclectic nature of the Reformed. Carl R. Trueman, "Reformed Thought on Freedom: The Concept of Free Choice in Early Modern Reformed Theology," *Journal of Reformed Theology* 6, no. 2 (2012): 171–72. And Helm agrees; see Paul Helm, "Reformed Thought on Freedom: Some Further Thoughts," *Journal of Reformed Theology* 4, no. 3 (2010): 206–7. HyunKwan Kim believes the project of *RTF* falters because Turretin followed Aquinas, not Scotus. He concludes, "Turretin's faculty psychology distinctively follows Aquinas's intellectualistic approach." Kim, "Francis Turretin on Human Free Choice," 42. B. Hoon Woo argues that the similarities between Turretin and Scotus can be found in the common use of logical distinctions, but Turretin did not utilize Scotist concepts with regard to indifference and necessity. Hoon Woo, "Difference between Scotus and Turretin."

[45] Muller, *Divine Will and Human Choice*, 72.

[46] According to Muller, "The reason for my preference, moreover, is not merely that the term 'synchronic' or 'simultaneous contingency' does not appear in the historical sources, but that the sources themselves were focused not on potentially alternative, simultaneous, or synchronous contingencies, but on actually resident simultaneous potencies in the will." Muller, "Neither Libertarian nor Compatibilist," 285. He affirms that synchronic contingency can be used to describe the larger framework of divine and human willing.

simultaneously (or synchronically) *has the potencies to choose A*; *to refuse it*, *choosing not-A*; *or to choose B*, hence 'synchronic.'"[47] Simply put, "In the case of acts of the will, the reason that the act could be otherwise is simply that the free will—according to the Reformed orthodox—has the capability to have done and to do the contrary."[48] The will possesses the power to actualize multiple potencies, but it cannot actualize contradictory potencies simultaneously. Both *RTF* and Muller agree that the Reformed were neither libertarian nor compatibilists even though they disagree on the influences upon and terminology in the Reformed. Thus, *RTF* and Muller claim that the Reformed utilized synchronic contingency or simultaneous potencies to argue that the will depends upon God as its first cause but retains the capacity to actualize various potencies regardless of past and present circumstances, including the judgment of the intellect, which leads *RTF* and Muller to affirm that the Reformed were neither libertarian nor compatibilists but held to "dependent freedom."[49]

The second set of literature builds upon the notion that the Reformed were not compatibilists and also argues that Jonathan Edwards departed from the tradition. In several articles, Muller contends that Edwards utilized a form of philosophical determinism unknown to the Reformed orthodox before him and abandoned the faculty psychology of his predecessors in favor of a more unified view of the soul that eliminates interaction between the intellect and the will. Other classic categories that Edwards failed to employ, according to Muller, include primary and secondary causation, fourfold causality, and a scholastic understanding of necessity and contingency.[50] As a result, in

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[47] Muller, "Neither Libertarian nor Compatibilist," 273 (emphasis original). Helm defines "contingent" as follows: "Neither impossible nor necessary. Senses are (i) an event that could logically have happened, distinct from (ii) 'contingent upon' as when one thing depends on another." Helm, *Reforming Free Will*, 239.

[48] Muller, "Neither Libertarian nor Compatibilist," 275.

[49] Muller, *Divine Will and Human Choice*, 323.

[50] This brief summary of charges brought against Edwards may be found in the following sources: Muller, "Jonathan Edwards and the Absence of Free Choice"; Muller, "Edwards and Turretin on

Muller's words, "In Edwards's [view of human freedom] there is no root or underlying indifference in the will. It is always predisposed to act in a particular way in relation to a particular object and particular circumstances."[51]

Philip Fisk's work *Jonathan Edwards's Turn from the Classic Reformed Tradition of Freedom of the Will* examines the philosophical curriculum at Harvard, Yale, and Princeton in order to supply the historical context of the Reformed tradition in Edwards's New England setting. Edwards, according to Fisk, failed to employ scholastic distinctions and lacked contingency in his system, leading to a necessitarianism akin to Calvin.[52] Fisk elsewhere argues that Edwards differed from William Ames and Petrus van Mastricht on the two conceptual planes of God's knowledge: simple understanding and knowledge of vision.[53] Edwards's unpublished writings reveal that he was aware of the two conceptual planes, but *FOW* appears to ignore these distinctions and argues "that the divine decree does not increase or change the already absolute nature of the connection, nor God's knowledge of the event decreed."[54] Thus, according to Fisk, Edwards's lack of scholastic distinctions led him to adopt views of foreknowledge and necessity that substantially differed from the Reformed, which entails that *FOW* departed

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Necessity, Contingency, and Freedom of Will"; Muller, "Neither Libertarian nor Compatibilist." In *FOW*, Edwards offers two definitions of contingency:

> (1) Anything is said to be contingent, or to come to come to pass by chance or accident, in the original meaning of such words, when its connection with its causes or antecedents, according to the established course of things, is not discerned; and so is what we have no means of the foresight of.
>
> (2) Something which has absolutely no previous ground or reason, with which its existence has any fixed and certain connection. (*WJE*, 1:155)

Edwards accepts (1) and rejects (2); in doing so, he fails to meet Muller's criteria of compatibilism, which requires ontic, not merely epistemic, contingency.

[51] Muller, "Neither Libertarian nor Compatibilist," 284.

[52] Here, Fisk follows *RTF* rather than Muller when he identifies Calvin as necessitarian.

[53] Philip J. Fisk, "Divine Knowledge at Harvard and Yale: From William Ames to Jonathan Edwards," *Jonathan Edwards Studies* 4, no. 2 (May 2014): 151–78.

[54] Fisk, "Divine Knowledge at Harvard and Yale," 176.

from the tradition. Together, the work of Muller and Fisk attempts to demonstrate the divide between the Reformed and Edwards.

The third set of literature argues that the Reformed were compatibilists and that Jonathan Edwards was in continuity with the tradition. Helm's writings over the years have addressed the role and relevance of synchronic contingency in the RO, disputed the interpretation of the translations offered by *RTF*, and challenged Muller's interpretation of the Reformed and Jonathan Edwards.[55] His most recent work, *Reforming Free Will*, addresses *RTF* and Muller's work to defend the thesis that the Reformed were compatibilists. Helm rejects that the Reformed depended on synchronic contingency since the terms are absent in their writings on free will. *RTF* argues that God possesses synchronic contingency and humans, by virtue of bearing God's image, do as well. Not only does this argument not follow, Helm argues, but it also introduces synchronicity into an eternal God, which appears to be at odds with the Reformed understanding of eternality.[56] Helm also examines the writings of Turretin and Edwards, and several other Reformers, in order to illuminate scholastic distinctions and Edwards's acceptance of similar concepts even though he chose to employ different terminology. Edwards and the Reformed, Helm argues, claimed that the understanding determined the will to a

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[55] Paul Helm, "Synchronic Contingency in Reformed Scholasticism: A Note of Caution," *Nederlands Theologisch Tijdschrift* 57, no. 3 (July 2003): 207–22; Helm, "Synchronic Contingency Again," *Nederlands Theologisch Tijdschrift* 57, no. 3 (July 2003): 234–38; Helm, *John Calvin's Ideas*; Helm, *Calvin at the Centre*; Helm, "Reformed Thought on Freedom"; Helm, "'Structural Indifference' and Compatibilism in Reformed Orthodoxy," *Journal of Reformed Theology* 5, no. 2 (2011): 184–205; Helm, "A Different Kind of Calvinism? Edwardsianism Compared with Older Forms of Reformed Thought," in *After Jonathan Edwards: The Courses of the New England Theology*, ed. Oliver D. Crisp and Douglas A. Sweeney (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 91–103; Helm, "Necessity, Contingency and the Freedom of God," *Journal of Reformed Theology* 8, no. 3 (2014): 243–62; Helm, "Jonathan Edwards and the Parting of the Ways?," *Jonathan Edwards Studies* 4, no. 1 (January 2014): 42–60; Helm, "Turretin and Edwards Once More," *Jonathan Edwards Studies* 4, no. 3 (September 2014): 286–96; Helm, "Francis Turretin and Jonathan Edwards on Contingency and Necessity," in *Learning from the Past: Essays on Reception, Catholicity and Dialogue in Honour of Anthony N. S. Lane*, ed. Jon Balserak and Richard Snoddy (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2015), 163–78; Helm, "Francis Turretin and Jonathan Edwards on Compatibilism," *Journal of Reformed Theology* 12, no. 4 (2018): 335–55; Helm, *Human Nature from Calvin to Edwards*; Helm, *Reforming Free Will*.

[56] Helm, *Reforming Free Will*, 47–48.

particular action in a manner consistent with compatibilism but distinct from fatalism, a charge regularly levied against Edwards and the Reformed.

Preciado argues that the compatibilism found in the Reformed confessions is consistent with the guidance control model found in the work of John Martin Fischer and Mark Ravizza.[57] This view denies the sourcehood and leeway conditions for freedom but affirms moderate reasons-responsive theory (henceforth, MRR) as well as mechanism ownership. MRR requires that an agent is strongly receptive and weakly reactive to reasons, allowing for weakness of will.[58] Mechanism ownership requires that the agent perceive himself as morally responsible and the proper source of his own actions.[59] MRR is the objective condition for human freedom, and mechanism ownership is the subjective condition. Preciado argues that Reformed theology meets the subjectivist condition with the *sensus divinitatis*, which is consistent with and improves upon Fischer and Ravizza's model.[60] Preciado also analyzes Reformed confessions and theologians, primarily focusing on the former, in order to argue that the confessions deny sourcehood and PAP.[61]

This brief literature review offers three insights. First, there are three interpretations of continuity and discontinuity in the Reformed tradition regarding freedom of the will. Vos and *RTF* claim that the Reformed employed scholastic distinctions that prohibit them from being labeled compatibilists and distance them from the determinism of Luther, Calvin, and Vermigli, an analysis with which Fisk agrees.

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[57] Preciado, *Reformed View of Freedom*; John Martin Fischer and Mark Ravizza, *Responsibility and Control: A Theory of Moral Responsibility*, Cambridge Studies in Philosophy and Law (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

[58] Preciado, *Reformed View of Freedom*, 25–31.

[59] Preciado, *Reformed View of Freedom*, 59.

[60] Preciado, *Reformed View of Freedom*, 168–78.

[61] Preciado, *Reformed View of Freedom*, 61–139. I chose not to use PAP_{All} here since I have defined the term for my own purposes and in a slightly different, although consistent, manner with Preciado's work.

Muller ascertains continuity from Calvin through the Reformed orthodox, arguing that they were neither libertarian nor compatibilists, and contends that Edwards departed from the tradition. Helm and Preciado argue that Luther, Calvin, and the Reformed who followed were compatibilists and in general continuity with Edwards. Second, although the debates concerning free will in the Reformed orthodox have produced helpful discussion, more work is needed that examines the relationship between free will and other theological commitments held by the Reformed and Edwards. Third, although Edwards's relationship to the tradition is in question, careful analysis of *FOW* is lacking in the current literature. The theological commitments, terminology, and argumentation found in *FOW* requires renewed examination if a positive case for continuity is to be made.

Method of This Dissertation

As stated in the thesis above, this dissertation argues that Edwards employs theological arguments for compatibilism that were consistent with and common among the Reformed. This section builds on the definitions and survey above in order to demonstrate how I intend to argue this thesis.

The Reformed Tradition

It is important to demonstrate what I do not intend to argue. First, Reformed identity is left unaddressed as I seek to work within the parameters of established interlocuters.[62] The historical interlocuters represent the usual suspects of the Reformed tradition as well as the contemporary debate about the nature of Reformed freedom. Second, compatibilism is not a litmus test for Reformed fidelity. Instead, I aim to make a much weaker claim: Edwards's compatibilism is consistent with key Reformed thinkers.

[62] For a discussion on the nature of Reformed identity, see Matthew C. Bingham et al., *On Being Reformed: Debates over a Theological Identity*, Christianities in the Trans-Atlantic World (Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Pilot, 2018).

The existence of libertarian Calvinists, the coherence of libertarian Calvinism with other thinkers or the Reformed Confessions, or even the presence of those who argue for "dependent freedom" in no way diminishes the validity of the argument I propose. My argument merely requires that I prove Edwards's compatibilism is consistent with the writings of the usual suspects of Reformed theology.[63] Third, I am not making the claim that Edwards, as a thinker and his theology in toto, is consistent with the Reformed tradition since his writings and interpreters are too vast to argue for such a claim in a single work.[64] For this reason, I merely argue that *FOW*, as a work, is consistent with the Reformed tradition and only refer to Edwards's other writings insofar as they illuminate the work in question.[65]

Peter Martyr Vermigli and John Calvin represent early Reformed thinkers and are central to this work for two reasons. First, three different interpretations exist with regard to their view of freedom. Vos and *RTF* maintain that they are in discontinuity with the Reformed tradition since they lacked Scotist terminology whereas Muller argues that they were on continuity with the tradition but were not determinists. Helm argues that

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[63] For a defense of libertarian Calvinism, see Oliver Crisp, *Deviant Calvinism: Broadening Reformed Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2014); Oliver Crisp, *Saving Calvinism: Expanding the Reformed Tradition* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2016). For critiques of Crisp's project, see Anderson and Manata, "Determined to Come Most Freely"; Preciado, *Reformed View of Freedom*.

[64] My contemporary interlocutors indicate that I favor the British school of thought, which interprets Edwards as a one who sought to work within the boundaries of Reformed theology. The American school, by contrast, interprets Edwards as proposing a *via media* between classical and process theism. For a defense of the American school, see Sang Hyun Lee, *The Philosophical Theology of Jonathan Edwards*, exp. ed. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000). Helpful treatments in the British school of thought include Kyle Strobel, *Jonathan Edwards's Theology: A Reinterpretation*, T&T Clark Studies in Systematic Theology 19 (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2013); Oliver Crisp and Kyle Strobel, *Jonathan Edwards: An Introduction to His Thought* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2018); Stephen R. Holmes, *God of Grace and God of Glory: An Account of the Theology of Jonathan Edwards* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001).

[65] Crisp offers insight for interpreting Edwards's unpublished writings, such as the "Miscellanies." He says, "His fragmentary works on idealism and on the Trinity and his voluminous notebooks were unpublished and not in a state that indicate he would have permitted their publication. Yet they form an important part of modern interpretations of Edwards as a Reformed theologian. Much of this unpublished work should be treated with caution, however, for it is not always clear that Edwards would have endorsed without cavil the views he expressed privately." Oliver D. Crisp, *Jonathan Edwards among the Theologians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015), 5.

they were determinists but not necessitarian and are consistent with the Reformed tradition which just is compatibilist.

Second, Francis Turretin is a representative of the Reformed tradition who was held in high esteem by Edwards. In correspondence with Joseph Bellamy, Edwards reveals his thoughts on the two, saying,

> They are both excellent. Turretin is on polemical divinity; on the Five Points, and all other controversial points; and is much larger in these than Mastricht; and is better for one that desires only to be thoroughly versed in controversies. But take Mastricht for divinity in general, doctrine, practice, and controversy; or as an universal system of divinity and it is much better than Turretin or any other book in the world, excepting the Bible, in my opinion.[66]

Interestingly, Edwards indicates in this same letter that he has been reading Daniel Whitby in order to address the Arminian controversy regarding free will and asks Bellamy to inquire from a colleague how he might obtain more books on the subject, since, Edwards states, "I have got so deep into this controversy, that I am not willing to dismiss it, till I know the utmost of their matters."[67] Edwards appears receptive to the Calvinism of his forebearers and informs Bellamy how he might obtain their works for an affordable price that he might learn from them also.[68] Whether Edwards was consistent with Turretin is another matter, but he comfortably commends Turretin's works while referring to his studies and writings on free will. As for the present debate, Turretin's writings have received more attention, which will be reflected in this dissertation.

Finally, Puritanism's father and prince, William Perkins and John Owen respectively, will also be examined. Perkins is a new addition to the debate with Muller's

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[66] *WJE*, 16:217.

[67] *WJE*, 16:217.

[68] Edwards, as all good friends do, concludes his letter by telling Bellamy where to acquire the books at an affordable price, saying, "P.S. It now comes to my mind that I heard that Dr. [Joseph] Pynchon of Longmeadow has Turretin, and that he lately offered to change them away for other books; so that in all probability you may there have those books at a moderate price." *WJE*, 16:218.

latest work, *Grace and Freedom*.[69] Perkins's writings are valuable to the debate since they lack the same scholastic distinctions that are also absent from Edwards's works.[70] Thus, Perkins represents an interesting test case for this debate since he, like Edwards, did not employ key conceptual and linguistic distinctions. Owen serves as another English Puritan whose writings on free will and God's foreknowledge provide helpful material for comparing Edwards to the Reformed tradition.

Theological Arguments

In order to defend my thesis, I have chosen to evaluate the theology of the Reformed thinkers previously mentioned with Edwards's own theological commitments in *FOW* in order to prove that Edwards developed his arguments using theological reasoning similar to his forebearers. The recent debates have so heavily focused on terminology, definitions, and distinctions specifically related to free will that the larger theological commitments have been neglected. Key topics, such as God's decree, foreknowledge, and Christ's human freedom are left undiscussed despite the fact that these issues shed light on one's view of freedom. This dissertation seeks to evaluate the abstract conversations regarding the nature of human freedom among the Reformed but goes a step further and asks how they understood human freedom in these concrete situations. Thus, I will examine the anthropology, theology proper, and Christology of the Reformed in order to demonstrate that Edwards used common Reformed arguments and categories to argue for compatibilism without contradicting essential tenets of human freedom as established by the Reformed.

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[69] Muller, *Grace and Freedom*.

[70] Muller writes, "Perkins' work lacks, however, explicit reference to the distinctions between simultaneity of potency and potency of simultaneity and between the compound and the divided sense that became characteristic of Reformed scholasticism in the seventeenth century." Muller, *Grace and Freedom*, 17–18; cf. 91.

Muller's Criteria

Muller's extensive work on the nature of Reformed freedom contains several descriptions, evaluations, and definitions that I note and examine here. It is important to remember that Muller's work is historical and descriptive rather than prescriptive. Thus, his writings should be evaluated in light of how well they reflect the Reformed claims for human freedom rather than their internal coherence.

All parties in the present debate acknowledge that the terms "compatibilism" and "libertarianism" are anachronistic labels; however, Muller's claim is stronger. He asserts, "These terms, moreover, were not designed to describe medieval or early modern views on human freedom. Rather, they were designed specifically for the purpose of describing modern, largely post-Enlightenment theories concerning freedom and determinism."[71] Since these terms were fit to describe post-Enlightenment discussions of free will they are not sufficiently nuanced to describe the Reformed view of freedom. Edwards, according to Muller, is a casualty of this line of reasoning, having imbibed the work of Thomas Hobbes through the writings of John Locke.[72]

In a recent article, Muller outlines two key distinctions lost in the modern age. The first distinction lost in contemporary compatibilism is the notion of two levels of causality. He identifies the first as, "the eternal, divine primary causality," and the second as, "the temporal, creaturely secondary causality."[73] The ramifications are as follows, "Loss of this understanding of concurrent primary and secondary causality leads to an utterly temporalized approach to cause and effect that merges divine and human causality into one closed system."[74] He goes on,

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[71] Muller, *Grace and Freedom*, 5.

[72] Muller, "Edwards and Turretin on Necessity, Contingency, and Freedom of Will," 267–71; John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding: Abridged and Edited, with an Introduction and Notes* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1996).

[73] Muller, "Neither Libertarian nor Compatibilist," 272.

[74] Muller, "Neither Libertarian nor Compatibilist," 273.

> The second of these differences lies in the scholastic distinctions used to explain the operation and interrelation of those two levels of causality—distinctions that once belonged to the common vocabulary of theologians and philosophers but that ceased to be used as the alternative understandings and terminology of modern rationalism (whether Cartesian, Spinozistic, or Lockian) took hold in the eighteenth century and as theology and philosophy passed out of Latin into the vernacular.[75]

These lost distinctions include, "Christian Aristotelian understandings of causality, faculty psychology, necessity, contingency, and the related vocabulary led to the misunderstanding and disuse of the scholastic resolutions of divine will and human freedom."[76] The former set of charges addresses God-world relations, concurrence, primary and secondary causality, and the like, whereas the latter set primarily concerns the nature of human freedom.

Muller contends that causality is reduced to one closed system when temporally antecedent events determine a particular outcome, and this includes the determination of the will by the intellect. He argues,

> The will, in other words, is not necessitated by the act of the intellect, by the object presented by the intellect, or by any other temporal antecedent. It may, however, be induced or hindered by various factors, some divinely provided, some lodged in human dispositions, some external in the environment, but none being causally determinative.[77]

He continues:

> Other Reformed writers not only assume that the will must move the understanding to act, but they also argue that the will can reject the object presented by the intellect, although they differ both in how they describe the priority of the intellective judgment and over their understanding of which faculty renders the determination of the object to one thing.[78]

From these statements, Muller's criteria (MC) begin to take shape.

MC[1]: If the will is determined by temporally antecedent events, then it is not free.

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[75] Muller, "Neither Libertarian nor Compatibilist," 273.

[76] Muller, "Neither Libertarian nor Compatibilist," 273.

[77] Muller, *Grace and Freedom*, 87–88.

[78] Muller, *Grace and Freedom*, 88.

MC^2: If the will is determined by the intellect to a particular object, then it is not free.

MC^3: The will must be able to reject the object presented by the understanding.

These criteria are clear. However, as Muller seeks to differentiate his understanding of free will between libertarianism and compatibilism, the clarity dissipates.

Muller defines libertarian free will as follows:

> Libertarianism is generally taken to mean that free will or free choice, rightly understood, is incompatible with the assumption that antecedent circumstances or causes, whether physical, logical, or theological, are such that the event must occur. A libertarian understanding of free will assumes that human choices are in no way determined by causes beyond the control of the individual.[79]

The first sentence in Muller's definition is similar to PAP_{All}. The sourcehood condition appears in the second sentence and seems to ground libertarian free will for Muller. He contends that the Reformed reject this definition because it does not sufficiently account for the creature's dependence upon God. He says, "Given their doctrines of an eternal divine decree that establishes all things and an overarching divine providence, early modern Reformed thinkers, clearly, cannot be classed as libertarian."[80] Muller argues that the Reformed denied sourcehood. Although I agree with Muller, I am unsure why he believes the Reformed cannot be classified as libertarian since he fails to articulate the conditions that arise from the decree and providence that sufficiently differentiate independent from dependent freedom. His earlier work, *Divine Will and Human Choice*, does not illuminate the reasons why the Reformed could not be libertarian. There, he says,

> If libertarianism is taken to mean either that human free choice is utterly independent, that an individual agent's free choice can be defined as free only when it is brought about solely by the agent and not by causes beyond his control, or in

[79] Muller, *Grace and Freedom*, 5.

[80] Muller, *Grace and Freedom*, 5.

> soteriological matters, that human beings have the power of choosing or refusing the gift of saving grace, then Reformed orthodox theology is clearly not libertarian.[81]

Muller divides libertarian free will into metaphysical and moral categories. The metaphysical category fails to comport with the Reformed understanding because it implies sourcehood. Muller elsewhere argues for a similar position, saying,

> One of the historical errors typical of the many Arminian critiques of Calvinism is to assume that the older Reformed theology disavows human free will and undercuts human responsibility. Quite to the contrary, the theology of Calvin and of the Reformed orthodox assumes the freedom of the will from external constraint and assumes also human responsibility before God. What it denies is freedom of choice in matters of human sinfulness, grace, and salvation. It is not the case, as proponents of Arminianism allege, that the use of biblical examples by Calvin and other Reformed theologians to argue their case for predestination indicates "a divine determinism of all human actions." The issue debated between the Arminians and the Reformed was not philosophical determinism but soteriology. The biblical examples drawn by the Reformed typically point to the bondage of human beings in sin, to their inability to choose salvation, and, therefore, to the necessity of grace in salvation—not to a determination of human actions in general and, especially, not to a determination of human beings to commit individual transgressions.[82]

If libertarian free will entails that humans can choose or refuse saving grace, then the Reformed were not libertarian. So far this is clear. However, what does it mean for a free choice to be utterly independent? What are the necessary and sufficient conditions of utter independence? Muller's definition of metaphysical freedom is unclear.

Turning to Muller's definition of compatibilism does not shed light on the *tertium quid* he claims the Reformed held. In his latest work, he defines compatibilism as follows:

> Compatibilism denies the libertarian contention that there is an irreconcilable conflict between determinism and free will: when freedom of will is understood to mean that human willing is unconstrained, freedom is compatible with the assumption that there can and must be only one future event or effect of the exercise

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[81] Muller, *Divine Will and Human Choice*, 322–23.

[82] Richard Muller, "Grace, Election, and Contingent Choice: Arminius's Gambit and the Reformed Response," in *The Grace of God, the Bondage of the Will*, vol. 2, *Historical and Theological Perspectives on Calvinism*, ed. Thomas R. Schreiner and Bruce A. Ware (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1995), 269–70. In this text, Muller quotes Bruce Reichenbach, "Freedom, Justice, and Moral Responsibility," in *The Grace of God and the Will of Man*, ed. Clark Pinnock (Minneapolis: Baker, 1989), 291. On the relationship between Calvinist soteriology and Calvinist determinism, see Daniel M. Johnson, "Calvinism and the Problem of Evil: A Map of the Territory," in *Calvinism & the Problem of Evil*, ed. David E. Alexander and Daniel M. Johnson (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2016), 19–55.

> of freedom. Freedom, in the compatibilist definition, excludes genuine alternativity and is ultimately reduced to uncoerced spontaneity. In other words, given the same antecedent circumstances, a person will always act in the same way and choose the same thing: "The requisites for A being in place, A must follow"—the effect could not have been otherwise, even if it seemed so to the human agent. The Reformed, however, consistently indicate that the human will is not determined to one effect and that its freedom is characterized by liberty of contrariety, namely, the possibility of doing otherwise. In other words, their assumptions, although superficially resembling modern compatibilism, do not accord with its stated definitions.[83]

Compatibilism, according to Muller, requires uncoerced spontaneity. If this definition is allowed to include the judgment of the intellect as opposed to mere willing, then it can be said to meet the basic definition of compatibilism. However, Muller's problems with compatibilism provide further criteria for a free action, placing a wedge between his understanding of freedom among the Reformed and compatibilism.

> MC^4: Free choice requires genuine alternativity, the ability to do otherwise, which is understood as the liberty of contrariety (*A* or *B*) and contradiction (*A* or *not-A*).
>
> MC^5: If the will is determined to one effect, then it is not free.

$MC^{1–5}$ reveals that all things being what they are, the agent retains genuine alternativity, the ability to do otherwise. This appears to be a strong version of PAP, akin to PAP_{All}. In PAP_{All}, the agent retains the categorical ability to do otherwise despite the theological and anthropological conditions that obtain. Muller describes the Reformed view of freedom similarly, saying,

> If, however, compatibilism were taken to mean that the divine determination of all things is ontically as well as epistemically compatible with freedom of contradiction and contrariety, with the intellect understood as self-determining in its identification of objects, then the Reformed orthodox can be identified as compatibilists—but this definition would set an older Reformed compatibilism quite apart from classical and modern philosophical understandings of the compatibilist position where something, whether in the past or the present context, in addition to the intellect's judgment must be different and serve as a prior cause of that judgment.[84]

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[83] Muller, *Grace and Freedom*, 5.

[84] Muller, *Divine Will and Human Choice*, 323.

The divine determination of all things, according to Muller, does not eliminate MC^4 nor does it entail that an agent is determined to one effect, as outlined in MC^5. Yet, all of this is consistent with a criterion lifted from Muller's definition of libertarian freedom:

MC^6: The creature must be dependent upon God.

The vagueness of MC^6 demonstrates that Muller has exercised greater care in differentiating the Reformed view of freedom from compatibilism than he has from libertarianism. It appears that he has done so because he does not believe compatibilism can account for MC^4, but this begs the question and seems to shift the conversation from a historical account of freedom to a philosophical judgment read into the Reformed; the same is true with MC^5. Muller assumes that a free cause, by definition, cannot be determined to one effect and thus rules out compatibilism from the outset.

The problem with MC^5 is that it assumes compatibilism is hard determinism; therefore, true freedom requires MC^4 as described by Muller. After asserting MC^5, Muller uses Ursinus to support his point, saying,

> Ursinus' explication of the point [MC^5] is virtually identical in implication and perhaps somewhat clearer. He first notes the objection raised by an advocate of an alternative definition of free will: "That which is ruled by the unchangeable will of God, doth not worke freelie; the will of Angels and men is ruled by the unchangeable wil of God; Therefore either it has no libertie, or the choice which it maketh is not tied to the will of God." The objector presents a simple dichotomy that represents what, in modern parlance, would be identified as deterministic and libertarian, as the only available options. In scholastic fashion, Ursinus responds by making a distinction and thereby identifying a view of dependent, limited freedom that is neither deterministic nor libertarian.[85]

Muller assumes, and does not argue, that Ursinus's objector puts forth libertarianism or determinism as the only two options. There are three problems with this interpretation of Ursinus. First, unlike libertarianism, determinism is not a view of freedom. Some forms of determinism are inconsistent with human freedom and would entail hard determinism

[85] Muller, *Grace and Freedom*, 165n85, quoting Ursinus, *The Summe of Christian Religion*, trans. Henry Parry (Oxford: Joseph Barnes, 2011), 79.

or necessitarianism. Elsewhere, Muller appears to confuse the relationship between determinism and compatibilism, saying, "Later 'Calvinists' have typically been viewed as following in the steps of Calvin and positing a form of determinism or, at best, 'compatibilism,' according to which a rather limited view of human freedom is held to be logically compatible with an overarching divine determination of all things."[86] Determinism does not entail compatibilism nor does compatibilism testify to the truthfulness of determinism. Compatibilism affirms that free will and moral responsibility are compatible with determinism. To state that compatibilism is a limited view of freedom shifts the conversation from a historical analysis to a philosophical judgment and begs the question, tainting the discussion from the outset. Muller's lack of clarity on these terms continues when he discusses a new line of Reformed scholarship which contradicts the "older scholarship (still rampant in the popular literature) in which the Reformed position was identified as a form of utter determinism that denied free will."[87] Again, Muller's use of "utter" to describe a view of free will fails to add clarity to the conversation and confuses the matter. No citations are offered, which leaves one guessing what line of compatibilist scholarship holds to "utter determinism" and denies free will.

Second, Muller assumes that Ursinus's objector does not have hard-determinism in mind. It is possible that Ursinus is not charting a *tertium quid* between libertarianism and compatibilism but between libertarianism and hard-determinism since the objection states that there is no free will if events are determined by God. In other words, the objector may be arguing that MC^5 requires MC^4 and Ursinus rejects MC^5 and allows for a conditional sense MC^4.

Third, I believe the interpretation offered above is consistent with the reading of Ursinus provided by Muller. It reads,

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[86] Muller, *Grace and Freedom*, 3.

[87] Muller, *Grace and Freedom*, 3.

> It is not a free agent which is so ruled by God, as it hath no deliberation & election of his owne. But that which God so ruleth, as he sheweth the object unto the understanding, & by it effectually movethe & affecteth the will to choose it, that doth notwithstanding, freely worke, albeit it be inclined at the beck & wil of God, whither he will have it. For to worke freely in the creatures, is not to worke without any ones government, but with deliberation, & with a proper selfe motion of the will, although this motion be else whence raised and ruled.[88]

Ursinus seems to require deliberation, related to the understanding, and election, related to the will, for the act to be free; and these are the only two positive requirements offered, meeting a compatibilist definition of freedom. Since these are the only two requirements, God can show 'X' to a subject and by the subject's understanding moves the will to 'X' without eliminating freedom since freedom does not require the will's ability to refuse 'X.' If my interpretation stands, then the objector does not pit libertarian free will against compatibilism, which allows for a creaturely sense of understanding and choosing, but rather assumes that if the conditions of libertarian free will are not met, then hard-determinism is true and the subject is not free.

This preliminary critical evaluation of Muller's criteria must be argued further but for now, it is sufficient to demonstrate that Muller's criteria assumes that the Reformed were distancing themselves from views adopted by later compatibilists but what I demonstrated thus far reveals that Muller's criteria lack clarity, fail to properly distinguish the Reformed view of freedom from contemporary libertarianism, and fail to account for the hard-determinism the Reformed were actually arguing against. By properly situating Ursinus, one can argue that he offered a compatibilist friendly criterion to the objection in order to situate himself between libertarian free will and hard-determinism.

Conclusion

This chapter defined key terms, framed the contemporary debate, and offered a preliminary evaluation of Muller's work on its own terms. The parties of the

[88] Ursinus, *The Summe of Christian Religion*, 79.

contemporary debate reject that the Reformed were libertarian since they deny the sourcehood condition. Muller and *RTF* maintain that the Reformed were not compatibilists since their commitment to synchronic contingency and/or simultaneous potencies requires a stronger version of alternative possibilities than PAP_{If} offers.

Throughout the rest of this work, I will contend that the Reformed advocated for a view of freedom between libertarianism and hard-determinism. This position is best described as compatibilism. Focusing primarily on Muller's work, the definitions and terms offered in this chapter will be compared with the Reformed writings on free will. I will argue that they allowed for a conditional sense of alternativity since the will, as to its natural constitution, is not determined to a particular effect. Given the decree and the judgment of the intellect, the will can be determined to one effect insofar as the agent acts with reason and from his will. I will also argue that Edwards reasoned similarly and did not violate the requisites of human freedom established by the Reformed.

CHAPTER 2

THE REFORMED ON FREE WILL

In order to make the case that Jonathan Edwards has not departed from the tradition on freedom of the will, the writings of the Reformed must first be examined to establish a criterion by which Edwards may be evaluated. Muller's understanding of free will was described in the previous chapter and a criterion was developed from his writings. The criterion includes:

> MC^1: If the will is determined by temporally antecedent events, then it is not free.
>
> MC^2: If the will is determined by the intellect to a particular object, then it is not free.
>
> MC^3: The will must be able to reject the object presented by the understanding.
>
> MC^4: Free choice requires genuine alternativity, the ability to do otherwise, which is understood as the liberty of contrariety (*A* or *B*) and contradiction (*A* or *not-A*).
>
> MC^5: If the will is determined to one effect, then it is not free.
>
> MC^6: The creature must be dependent upon God.

I argued that this criterion appears to require the categorical ability to do otherwise despite the prevailing theological and anthropological conditions that obtain. This view differs from the conditional ability to do otherwise. That is, had a different set of conditions obtained, the agent could have acted otherwise than he in fact did.

The previous chapter evaluated MC on its own merits and contended that MC^6 was vague. In developing his criterion, Muller has gone to greater lengths to differentiate the Reformed view of freedom from libertarian views causing one to wonder how an agent can be dependent upon God and still retain the categorical ability to do otherwise. Muller's criteria will now be tested in light of the writings of the Reformed. In this chapter, I argue that a compatibilist reading of the Reformed adequately accounts for

their definitions of free will and that Muller's criteria requires a version of alternativity not present in their writings.

For the Reformed, a free agent acts from his reasons and with his will in such a way that is consistent with certain necessities. Necessities that undermine the role of the intellect violate free choice because the agent acts in an animalistic or naturalistic manner. Necessities that undermine the role of the will act upon and against the will from an external force. The decree and providence of God do not violate free will because God does not act upon or against the will in a manner that violates the will's natural constitution. In other words, God preserves, governs, and sustains secondary causation. The necessities that negate freedom do not require the categorical ability to do otherwise and the conditions of free will require a reasoned choice and an unimpeded will, which is consistent with the conditional ability to do otherwise. Minimally, compatibilism is not ruled out by their criteria.

Muller's requirement of alternativity adds criteria absent in the Reformed requirements for free will, going beyond their writings. Muller's work emphasizes the role of alternativity, defined as liberty of contrariety and contradiction. Compatibilists can and do affirm alternativity since the will is a power with the capacity to actualize contrary and contradictory potencies. Free will, for compatibilists, is not defined by the categorical ability to do otherwise but the ability to choose in accordance with the judgment of the intellect and an unimpeded will. As a result, one can expect the Reform to affirm that the will can actualize multiple potencies without assuming PAP_{All}.

This chapter begins with a brief examination of Muller's writings followed by an analysis of key texts from the Reformed. Issues pertaining to the decree, providence, and foreknowledge will be addressed insofar as they illuminate the context or the argument of the Reformed author. Their definitions of free will and the relationship between the intellect and the will serve as the primary focus in what follows.

Muller

Consider again Muller's definition of compatibilism:

> If, however, compatibilism were taken to mean that the divine determination of all things is ontically as well as epistemically compatible with freedom of contradiction and contrariety, with the intellect understood as self-determining in its identification of objects, then the Reformed orthodox can be identified as compatibilists—but this definition would set an older Reformed compatibilism quite apart from classical and modern philosophical understandings of the compatibilist position where something, whether in the past or the present context, in addition to the intellect's judgment must be different and serve as a prior cause of that judgment.[1]

Muller critiques compatibilism for its apparent inability to allow for genuine liberty of contradiction and contrariety, an assumption that requires synchronic contingency or simultaneous potencies, defined as, "The idea that the operation of intellect and will is such that the *requisites for choice* being present, an agent *simultaneously (or synchronically) has the potencies to choose A*; *to refuse it, choosing not-A*; *or to choose B*, hence 'synchronic.'"[2] Muller sets these concepts within the framework of other logical distinctions, such as *in sensu diviso* and *in sensu composito*, writing,

> The distinction *in sensu diviso/in sensu composito* is taken over by the Reformed orthodox from their medieval predecessors as a syntactical device in analyzing propositions. As such it relates specifically to potencies as identified in modal propositions. Accordingly, the divided and composite senses are not different states or conditions of something, they are logical representations referencing the same state or condition in different ways. In the discussion of human willing, the divided sense references potencies or capacities, the composite sense references the operation and actuality. Thus, with reference to potencies or capacities, the Reformed orthodox assume, in the divided sense, that there are multiple capacities that always belong to the will and that remain resident when one of them has been actualized. In the composite sense, namely, with reference to operation and actuality, the exercise of one capacity rules out the simultaneous exercise of a contrary or contradictory capacity, but not the existence of that capacity.[3]

In the divided sense, the will possesses a capacity to actualize contrary and contradictory potencies. In the composite sense, the will can actualize a particular potency but cannot

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[1] Richard A. Muller, *Divine Will and Human Choice: Freedom, Contingency, and Necessity in Early Modern Reformed Thought* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2017), 323.

[2] Richard A. Muller, "Neither Libertarian nor Compatibilist: A Response to Paul Helm," *Journal of Reformed Theology* 13, no. 3–4 (2019): 273.

[3] Muller, "Neither Libertarian nor Compatibilist," 274.

actualize a contrary or contradictory potency at the same time and in the same way. The will still retains a capacity to actualize contrary or contradictory potencies before and after it has actualized a particular potency, as Muller writes,

> As a simple matter of logic, that a person cannot do A and not-A at the same time, but both before and after doing A can choose to do not-A. That person, moreover, can choose either A or not-A because he has potency or capacity for either and can be identified as free because the resident potency to choose not-A does not evaporate when a person chooses A: it just cannot be actualized in the same moment.[4]

Resident potencies remain even though they cannot be actualized at the same time as contrary and contradictory potencies.

Muller's description can be reduced to logical consistency. The will cannot be determined to one effect and it must retain a sense of alternativity that is merely constrained by the logical impossibility of actualizing contrary or contradictory potencies at the same time and in the same sense. No conditions can determine the will to one particular potency, otherwise a genuine sense of alternativity is lost. The will simply and absolutely retains a capacity to act contrary or contradictory. As Muller writes,

> In scholastic terminology, these contingencies are necessities of the consequence or necessities of the present, namely, that something must be what it is when it is, even though it could be otherwise. In the case of acts of will, the reason that the act could be otherwise is simply that the free will—according to the Reformed orthodox—has the capability to have done and to do the contrary.[5]

For Muller, conditions and circumstances cannot be the reason something is necessary when it is, otherwise alternativity is no longer genuine. Again, it appears that Muller endorses PAP_{All} when he says, "'Genuine liberty,' 'genuine contingency,' and 'genuine alternativity,' therefore, are also not underdescribed."[6] For these reasons, Helm argues that Muller's definition of Reformed compatibilism combined with the understanding of

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[4] Muller, "Neither Libertarian nor Compatibilist," 274.

[5] Muller, "Neither Libertarian nor Compatibilist," 275.

[6] Muller, "Neither Libertarian nor Compatibilist," 284.

synchronic contingency entails libertarianism since these descriptions encompass the intellect and the will.[7] Muller might retort that his view does not entail libertarian free will since the Reformed argued that man was dependent upon God. How an agent can retain PAP_{All} and still be dependent upon God is unclear.

Peter Martyr Vermigli

Concerning free will, Vermigli writes, "It appears that we have free will when the appetite is moved by itself toward what the understanding or power of knowing reveals to it. It is indeed in the will, but it takes root in the understanding since it is appropriate that something is judged and measured first, and then follows either refusal or endorsement."[8] Shortly after, he defines free will as "a certain faculty of the will that follows the directive of the intellect to refuse or desire something by itself."[9] Vermigli understands a free will to be the working of both faculties: intellect and will. The root of freedom resides in the understanding, for the will must follow a judgment. The will, as a power, either accepts or rejects.

The will's power to accept or reject should not be read as a categorical ability to do otherwise. Instead, it should be seen as a natural capacity of the will independent of prevailing conditions. For, as Vermigli goes on to write, it is "an absolute will, since we ourselves seek happiness and cannot do otherwise." He continues, "Whatever we choose, we do so for the sake of something else, not for itself but through some previous deliberation. For we do not choose unless things have been identified, and distinguishing

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[7] Paul Helm, *Reforming Free Will: A Conversation on the History of Reformed Views on Compatibilism (1500–1800)* (Fearn, Scotland: Mentor, 2020), 124. This differs from Preciado's reading of Muller. See Michael Patrick Preciado, *A Reformed View of Freedom: The Compatibility of Guidance Control and Reformed Theology* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2019), 141–48. Helm is responding to Muller's writings published after Preciado's work.

[8] Peter Martyr Vermigli, *Philosophical Works: On the Relation of Philosophy to Theology*, trans. and ed. Joseph C. McLelland (Moscow, ID: Davenant Institute, 2018), 272.

[9] Vermigli, *Philosophical Works*, 272.

must be done by the understanding."[10] The will must pursue happiness and cannot do otherwise. The will does not possess a power of deliberation nor a capacity to distinguish. For this reason, it follows the intellect's directives. Should the intellect deliberate, distinguish, and offer a directive, the will pursues that directive and cannot do otherwise. If the will could cast off the directive of the intellect, then it would possess a power of understanding that could distinguish between happiness and unhappiness. "But," Vermigli argues, "the will in itself does not know that something is good except insofar as reason has taught it."[11] Thus, the power of the will, to accept or reject, is an inherent power that can be moved either way by the intellect. When the intellect distinguishes what is good, the will necessarily follows since it cannot choose otherwise than happiness. Had the intellect offered a different directive, the will could have actualized that directive since it possesses a power to do so.

This power of the will may be described in the divided and composite sense. Speaking to this distinction, Vermigli writes,

> If you would say that it is impossible for white to be black, that would be granted. If these two are taken in conjunction and together, that is, if the same thing should be both black and white, this is by no means possible, but if they are taken separately, then it may not be impossible, since something now white may be changed and made black.[12]

As a power, the will can accept or refuse a particular object in the divided sense. Muller argues that Vermigli's understanding of the divided and compound sense favors his understanding of alternativity. The question remains, is Vermigli merely reducing a free choice to logical distinctions, meaning, once a choice for a particular action occurs its

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[10] Vermigli, *Philosophical Works*, 272.

[11] Vermigli, *Philosophical Works*, 280.

[12] Peter Martyr Vermigli, *Predestination and Justification: Two Theological Loci*, trans. and ed. Frank A. James III, Sixteenth Century Essays and Studies 67 (Moscow, ID: Davenant Press, 2018), 69–70.

opposite cannot be actualized at the same time and in the same sense? Muller believes so. He writes,

> [Vermigli's] argumentation quite clearly reflects the scholastic assumption that, although no choice, act, or event can be simultaneously with its negation (there can be no potency of simultaneity), the possibility of *not-A* remains a genuine possibility and is not removed by the occurrence of *A* (there is simultaneity of potencies)—even though it does not and cannot occur in the temporal order in the same moment as *A*.[13]

Muller interprets Vermigli to merely argue for logical consistency. An agent possesses simultaneity of potency but not potency of simultaneity.

While Muller is correct, an agent cannot actualize contradictory potencies in the same time and in the same sense, his interpretation does not go far enough for three reasons. First, Vermigli, as was demonstrated, argued that the will was blind and followed the directives of the intellect. Helm interprets Vermigli in this manner, writing,

> The will is subservient to the intellect, or understanding. It is executive, hence the reference to the will accepting or rejecting. Acceptance but then rejection can occur when the intellect takes into account a second view, and either changes its goal, or keeps the goal and changes its mind regarding the means to be taken to gain the goal.[14]

Given the judgment of the intellect, the will follows its directive and endorses what the intellect deems good and rejects that which it deems evil. Thus, the will is conditioned, as Helm continues,

> Muller notes that Vermigli stresses deliberation and alternativity, as indeed he does. This is another place that it is necessary to distinguish between unconditional and conditional versions of alternativity. Alternativity by itself is not sufficient for non-compatibilism, since for a compatibilist freedom of the will arises from the operation of some state of the reason, hence the alternativity, a choice, is grounded in some state of the intellect.[15]

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[13] Muller, *Divine Will and Human Choice*, 196–97.

[14] Helm, *Reforming Free Will*, 207.

[15] Helm, *Reforming Free Will*, 206.

Vermigli's writings indicate that the will possesses alternativity but not categorical alternativity. On the one hand, his writings can be easily reconciled with a compatibilist reading. On the other hand, Muller's reading struggles to reconcile a blind will that follows the directives of the intellect with his understanding of alternativity.

Second, the context of Vermigli's argument favors a compatibilist reading. When discussing the divided and compound sense, Vermigli then turns to the role of necessity in free choice. He writes, "Our actions have no intrinsic necessity. Willing is of its own nature (as God created it), mutable and flexible to either side."[16] Vermigli defines the will in the abstract, according to its own nature, or, in the divided sense. To read this power as a categorical ability to do otherwise would beg the question. Further, he associates necessity with the will, saying,

> It has a hypothetical necessity. As soon as you consider the foreknowledge and predestination of God, it follows of necessity that it will come about just as God foreknows and predestines it. Our will does have an aptitude to be bent in either direction, but the act of conversion does not possess it, except in the direction God has foreknown.[17]

The will lacks any intrinsic necessity but when the conditions are considered, a hypothetical necessity bears on the will such that the acts of the will may be called necessary. Using predestination as an example, Vermigli argues that the conversion of an individual, when considered in the divided sense or according to the power of one's will, may or may not be. Given the conditions of God's predestination, the will is subservient to the foreknowledge and predestination of God and follows the direction God decreed.

Third, Vermigli offers a criterion that would violate a free choice, and Muller's criteria are absent. Vermigli divides necessity into internal and external forms. Inherent necessity is either absolute, such as mathematical truths, or necessary by nature, such as a

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[16] Vermigli, *Predestination and Justification*, 70.

[17] Vermigli, *Predestination and Justification*, 70.

fire that burns or the sun that moves.[18] Extrinsic necessity is either violent or hypothetical. Violent necessity compels something to work against its nature and is comparable to necessity of compulsion. These necessities violate free will since, "compulsion and violence are against the nature of the will. If the will should do anything unwillingly it would not be called a will but a 'nil' (if one may so call it), and it would be destroyed."[19] Hypothetical necessity is also extrinsic and is the necessity of the consequence. Hypothetical necessity is consistent with free will and is comparable to the necessity of certainty.[20] When Vermigli argues that the will has no intrinsic necessity but that it has a hypothetical necessity whereby it follows God's foreknowledge and predestination, he claims that his position is consistent with free will since a necessity of certainty allows for freedom. God's foreknowledge and predestination would violate free will if they were a form of violence or compulsion for then the will would be a "nil." Muller's view of alternativity is not required for a free choice, according to Vermigli.

The natural capacity of the will as a mutable power with no extrinsic violent necessity can be reconciled with the view that the will follows the directives of the intellect and cannot do otherwise. It is also consistent with God's predestination and foreknowledge, or, what Vermigli calls, "the concrete counsel of God."[21] Referring to John 10:35, which affirms that the Scriptures cannot be broken, Vermigli argues, "It is not possible to be otherwise than fulfilled."[22] Likewise, of those who sin against the Holy Spirit, he writes, "It is impossible for those who are guilty to escape, for God has forever

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[18] Vermigli, *Predestination and Justification*, 69.

[19] Vermigli, *Predestination and Justification*, 70.

[20] Vermigli, *Predestination and Justification*, 71.

[21] Vermigli, *Predestination and Justification*, 70.

[22] Vermigli, *Predestination and Justification*, 71.

decreed to forsake those who have so sinned."[23] Necessity of certainty allows for free will even if the event could not be otherwise.

Thus, Vermigli describes free will as an agent operating from his own understanding and with his own will. Inherent necessities undermine the role of the intellect, the root of a free choice. External necessities of violence and compulsion impede the will, also violating free will. Hypothetical necessity or necessity of certainty is consistent with free will which merely requires that the agent act from his reasons and with his will.

John Calvin

Calvin's central concerns per the topic of freedom relate to soteriology and the fall. His writing on the metaphysics of human freedom is slim in comparison to Edwards and Turretin. Like Perkins, Calvin lacked distinctions and concepts present in the writings of Turretin upon which Muller builds his case against Edwards.[24] However, his brief comments are consistent with what has been previously discussed.

In I.xv of his *Institutes*, Calvin addresses human nature and faculties. He distinguishes between the two faculties of the soul: understanding and will. The understanding distinguishes between different objects and the will is the faculty by which one chooses and follows the understanding. He writes,

> Thus, let us, therefore, hold—as indeed is suitable to our present purpose—that the human soul consists of two faculties, understanding and will. Let the office, moreover, of understanding be to distinguish between objects, as each seems worthy of approval or disapproval; while that of the will, to choose and follow what the understanding pronounces good, but to reject and flee what it disapproves.[25]

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[23] Vermigli, *Predestination and Justification*, 71.

[24] Muller admits, "There is no hint of a concept of synchronic contingency or simultaneity of potencies in Calvin's formulations, but also no argument against or strictly contrary to the concept." Muller, *Divine Will and Human Choice*, 193.

[25] John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, ed. John T. McNeill, trans. Ford Lewis Battles (Philadelphia: Westminster John Knox Press, 1960), I.xv.7.

Calvin gives the will a subordinate role to the understanding, "Let it be enough for us that the understanding is, as it were, the leader and governor of the soul; and that the will is always mindful of the bidding of the understanding, and in its own desires awaits the judgment of the understanding."[26] He then adds that the will is "completely amenable to the guidance of reason."[27] Calvin affirms that the understanding judges objects as worthy of approval and maintains the will's submission to the understanding's governance.

The question at hand concerns Calvin's view of the intellect and the will postlapsarian: does the fall introduce an inconsistency to this account, subverting the order of the intellect and the will or does the order remain intact? Muller argues that the fall changes the relationship between the intellect and the will, saying,

> Calvin also offered some comment on the relationship of intellect and will, indicating that the will, when operating rightly, depends on the command or judgment of the intellect, although he indicates almost immediately thereafter that this is not always the case. In subsequent sections of the *Institutes*, he argues at some length that this order has been subverted in the corruption of both intellect and will and that the fallen will cannot strive after what is good. The result is a form of soteriological voluntarism that does not address the philosophical question, namely, whether the will itself has the power to order its own choices and refuse the judgment of the intellect.[28]

According to Muller, Calvin describes the relationship of the faculties in prelapsarian Adam as intellectualist but the fall inserts a change into the relationship such that postlapsarian Adam functions as a voluntarist.

On the contrary, I argue that Calvin maintained an intellectualist view of postlapsarian man for two reasons. First, in his discussion of human nature, Calvin briefly addresses how the intellect governs the will, and then he asserts, "In another place we

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[26] Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, I.xv.7.

[27] Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, I.xv.8.

[28] Muller, *Divine Will and Human Choice*, 190. For a similar view, see Dewey J. Hoitenga, *John Calvin and the Will: A Critique and Corrective* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1997); Matthew A. LaPine, *The Logic of the Body: Retrieving Theological Psychology*, Studies in Historical and Systematic Theology (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2020), 177–78.

shall see how firmly the understanding now governs the direction of the will."[29] Calvin does not intend to change his view of human nature in its operation. The faculties operate consistently across the states of man even though the fall affected the entirety of man. Thus, when discussing the fall, he picks up his previous discussion of man's faculties, saying, "Therefore, so that the order of discussion may proceed according to our original division of man's soul into understanding and will, let us first of all examine the power of the understanding."[30] Calvin assumes continuity between the intellect and the will throughout his *Institutes*.

Muller understands the issue differently:

> The problem of the traditional faculty psychology is that its entirely correct definition of the relationship of the intellect and will applies only to the prelapsarian condition of humanity. The philosophers did not understand grasp the problem the problem of sin and therefore did not perceive the degree to which sin subverts the right ordering of the faculties.[31]

There are three problems with this interpretation. First, as I demonstrated, Calvin affirms that the intellect's governance of the will remains intact. In the 1559, and final, version of his *Institutes*, Calvin addresses the relationship between the faculties under human nature without concern for the effects of sin. While discussing human nature and briefly mentioning faculty psychology, Calvin states that he will later firmly establish that the intellect governs the will. Here, Calvin is speaking of his postlapsarian writings in II.ii.12–26. Hence, Calvin himself does not see the shift in his work that Muller does. Second, Calvin attaches choice to the will in a prelapsarian state. Since this is part of the constitution of human nature, there is no reason to assume that the fall subverts the order. Adding credence to this point, Muller admits his interpretation becomes difficult to

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[29] Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, I.xv.7.

[30] Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, II.ii.12.

[31] Richard A. Muller, *The Unaccommodated Calvin: Studies in the Foundation of a Theological Tradition*, Oxford Studies in Historical Theology (New York: Oxford University, 2000), 165.

sustain in the definitive 1559 edition.[32] Third, if Muller is correct, two problems follow. Calvin should be interpreted differently than Turretin who did not make a distinction of disordered faculties postlapsarian. Further, did Calvin view prelapsarian Adam as free in a compatibilist sense? If the intellect functioned properly prior to the fall by determining the will, then Calvin would have allowed for a version of compatibilism, at the least the kind Muller wishes to reject. For the reasons I have listed, plus Muller's admission that the 1559 edition makes this interpretation difficult to recover, it should be rejected.

Second, the fall distorted supernatural, not natural, gifts. The philosophers have arrived upon ruins believing to have found a building because they do not understand the fall's impact. They structured their view of freedom believing humans were wired to pursue virtue and neglect vice. "Nevertheless," Calvin reasons, "the philosophers hold as certain that virtues and vices are in our power."[33] Herein lies Calvin's actual problem with the philosophers. The fall prevents us from obtaining virtue by our power.

Calvin rejects the notion that man pursues virtue, the true good, by his own power but he does not overhaul his view of human nature. The understanding still governs and directs the intellect to what it approves or disapproves even if man pursues sin as that which he deems to be the good. Calvin writes,

> Since reason, therefore, by which man distinguishes between good and evil, and by which he understands and judges, is a natural gift, it could not be completely wiped out; but it was partly weakened and partly corrupted, so that its misshapen ruins appear . . . . Similarly, the will, because it is inseparable from man's nature, did not perish, but was so bound to wicked desires that it cannot strive after the right.[34]

Man now delights in different objects after the fall but the order and operation of the faculties remains intact. For example, Calvin affirms that man generally knows what to

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[32] Muller, *The Unaccommodated Calvin*, 259n51.

[33] Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, II.ii.3; see also II.ii.12.

[34] Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, II.ii.12.

do, but in specific cases forgets to apply proper principles, allowing man to contemplate murder as something good based on the judgment of the intellect, not the will's subverted order.[35] This interpretation agrees with Helm who argues, "By referring to 'natural gifts,' Calvin means that these are part of the nature or essence of humanity, inseparable from man's nature, and are such that the essence could not have disappeared without men and women losing their nature and becoming bestial."[36] Man, then, becomes animalistic, not because he lost deliberation, but because all judgments lead to a desire for one's own wellbeing, just as with beasts. The relationship between understanding and will still intact, man pursues the good; not from right reason, but in such a way as when things go well with man.[37] For Calvin, the issue is not the will's ability to subvert the order of the intellect, nor the intellect's being deceived. Rather, the intellect operates under an illusion. Sin, not the subverted order, creates this problem. It is not that the intellect knows the right and the will rejects it, but that the intellect knows what is right but deems evil as that which is good. Thus, Calvin does not overhaul his understanding of human nature, rather, he affirms that the understanding governs the will. [38]

William Perkins

Muller's argument that Edwards departed from the tradition suffers a setback when compared to the writings of William Perkins. Admittedly, terms and concepts upon

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[35] Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, II.ii.23.

[36] Paul Helm, *Human Nature from Calvin to Edwards* (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2018), 36.

[37] Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, II.ii.26.

[38] Contra Hoitenga, who too quickly accuses Calvin of inconsistency despite statements of an intellectualist leaning pre and postlapsarian. Hoitenga, *John Calvin and the Will*, 48. He argues that Calvin inconsistently allows the will to overthrow the intellect, citing Calvin's attribution of the fall to the will. However, since, as Calvin states, "the mind has no motion in itself, but is moved by choice," and he assigns choice to the will, there is nothing to blame for the fall other than Adam's will. Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, I.xv.7. The interpretation provided here allows one to affirm that Adam may not have followed what reason deems best, but he followed his deceived reason and the will, but which he acts, assumes culpability.

which Muller builds his argument that Edwards departed from the Reformed tradition are absent in Perkins's writings. Muller rightly states, "Perkins' work lacks, however, explicit reference to the distinctions between simultaneity of potency and potency of simultaneity and between the compound and divided sense that became characteristic of Reformed scholasticism in the seventeenth century."[39] However, he elsewhere asserts, "The place for synchronicity or simultaneity of potencies is precisely in the assumption of the older faculty psychology held by the Reformed."[40] Embedded in the assumptions of the Reformed, according to Muller, is their understanding of indifference, which he criticizes Edwards and Helm for lacking. He argues, "In the older Reformed view, however, the nature of free choice is such that intellect and will act together to move from indifference to the determination of an object, with liberties of contradiction and contrariety remaining in the will."[41] However, Perkins also appears to use indifference in a manner similar to Edwards.

Perkins's writings, then, create two problems for Muller. First, Perkins held to traditional faculty psychology without employing distinctions upon which Muller builds much of his argument against Edwards. Second, Perkins *only* uses the language of indifference to describe his theological opponents. Muller, then, stands on the horns of a dilemma: either the lack of these distinctions in Perkins excludes him from the Reformed view of freedom, as it does Edwards, or the lack of these distinctions in Edwards does not exclude him from the Reformed view of freedom *prima facie*.

Without the aid of the distinctions and terms that Muller uses to drive a wedge between Edwards and the Reformed, Perkins sets forth the sufficient terms for a free choice, saying, "In the doing of a voluntary action it is sufficient that it proceed of

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[39] Richard A. Muller, *Grace and Freedom: William Perkins and the Early Modern Reformed Understanding of Free Choice and Divine Grace* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2020), 17–18.

[40] Muller, "Neither Libertarian nor Compatibilist," 274.

[41] Muller, "Neither Libertarian nor Compatibilist," 284.

judgment and have his beginning from within the will, though otherwise in respect of God's will it be of an unchangeable necessity."[42] Perkins offers several criteria for a free choice:

> In every act of the will, there are two things: reason to guide, and election to assent or dissent. Will has his property, and that is the liberty of will, which is freedom from compulsion or constraint, but not from all necessity. From compulsion, because compulsion and will be contrary; and where compulsion takes place, there will gives place. And will constrained is no will. Nevertheless, will and necessity may stand together.[43]

Positively stated, freedom requires reason and election, or choice. Negatively stated, a free choice cannot be from compulsion or constraint. A free choice may be consistent with necessity, providing the necessity is neither absolute nor from violence or compulsion. These necessities undermine creaturely freedom.[44] A free choice may follow from the "necessity of infallibility or of consequence," which Perkins defines as, "When something follows necessarily upon a supposed antecedent—as namely upon the determination and decree of God."[45] Necessity and freedom, according to Perkins, are compatible since, he argues, "In the doing of a voluntary action it is sufficient that it proceed of judgment and have his beginning from within the will, though otherwise in respect of God's will it be of an unchangeable necessity."[46] Although the decree makes an event necessary, man is still free because he acts from judgment and is neither under compulsion or constraint, "and the thing that is directly contrary to freedom of will is compulsion, because it abolishes consent."[47]

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[42] William Perkins, *A Treatise on God's Free Grace and Man's Free Will*, in *The Works of William Perkins*, vol. 6, ed. Joel R. Beeke and Greg A. Salazar (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2018), 396.

[43] Perkins, *God's Free Grace and Man's Free Will*, 6:396.

[44] Perkins, *God's Free Grace and Man's Free Will*, 6:396.

[45] Perkins, *God's Free Grace and Man's Free Will*, 6:396.

[46] Perkins, *God's Free Grace and Man's Free Will*, 6:396.

[47] Perkins, *God's Free Grace and Man's Free Will*, 6:397.

Perkins argues that man's will has a "double power," identified as a liberty of contrariety and contradiction.[48] Compatibilists and libertarians affirm, albeit differently, that the will possesses these powers. Perkins illuminates his own use of these terms by distinguishing the liberty of the will from natural agents and beasts. Natural agents, such as fire and rocks, *always* act in the same manner and without sense. Fire always burns and rocks always fall when cast into the air. An animal has a sense of liberty, Perkins argues, "For it follows sense and in choosing or refusing keeps always one order."[49] He elaborates as follows,

> The sheep flees the wolf; and all sheep do so at all times and in all places. Bees gather honey. They do so always and in all places, and they can do no otherwise. When the beast in the field chooses one herb and refuses another, there is a show of liberty, yet not true liberty. For that which it chooses or refuses once, it chooses or refuses always in the same manner.[50]

Perkins distinguishes his understanding of the will from the necessary actions of natural agents and animals. Animals, according to Perkins, always choose the same way and in the same manner. Humans, on the other hand, choose differently from each other and the same human can choose differently at different times.

Perkins serves as a helpful testcase by which one can evaluate Muller's view. Perkins fails to employ categories that Muller argues are essential to the Reformed view of free will, categories that mark Edwards's departure from the tradition. Nor does Perkins argue that the will can, all the prerequisites for action being in place, choose otherwise. He does argue that the will has a "double power," but this power is not categorized as a power to do otherwise given the prerequisites for action; rather, it is a power inherent in the human will that depends upon the exercise of reason and is incompatible with constraint and compulsion. The "double power" of the will explains

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[48] Perkins, *God's Free Grace and Man's Free Will*, 6:397.

[49] Perkins, *God's Free Grace and Man's Free Will*, 6:397.

[50] Perkins, *God's Free Grace and Man's Free Will*, 6:397.

why humans differ from each other in the exercises of liberty and why the same human may choose differently at another time; these are truths a compatibilist like Edwards can consistently affirm.[51] Perkins's writings appear to undermine Muller's definition of free will as well as the criteria established for a free action.

John Owen

John Owen, critiquing Arminian views of free will, offers a definition of freedom, saying, "Endued we are with such a liberty of will as is free from all outward compulsion and inward necessity, having an elective faculty of applying itself unto that which seems good unto it, in which it is a free choice; notwithstanding, it is subservient to the decree of God."[52] A free choice must be from the agent's reasoning and chosen apart from compulsion or inward necessity. Owen critiques a faulty definition of freedom found among the Arminians, he argues,

> Surely to assert such a supreme independency and every way unbounded indifferency as the Arminian claim, whereby, all other things requisite being pre-supposed, it should remain absolutely in our own power to will or not to will, to do any thing or not to do it, is plainly to deny that our wills are subject to the rule of the Most High. It is granted that in such a chimerical, fancied consideration of free-will, wherein it is looked upon as having no relation to any act of God's but only its creation, abstracting from his decree, it may be said to have such a liberty in regard of the object. But the truth is, this divided sense is plain nonsense, a mere fiction of such an estate wherein it never was, nor ever can be, so long as men will confess any deity but themselves, to whose determinations they must be subject.[53]

At the surface, Owen appears to reject a definition of human freedom that resembles Muller's criteria. Owen defines the Arminian view of free will as a power to will or not to will something given all the requisites for action. He equates this form of alternativity

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[51] *WJE*, 1:147.

[52] John Owen, *A Display of Arminianism*, in *The Works of John Owen*, vol. 10, *The Death of Christ*, ed. William H. Goold (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 2000), 119.

[53] Owen, *A Display of Arminianism*, 10:119.

with independence. Owen also rejects the divided sense as "plain nonsense," and, "a mere fiction," that does not exist if deity exists.[54]

Muller, aware of the difficulties the above statement poses, notes that Owen rejected the Arminian notion of the divided sense as it applies to free will, but he does not reject the notion entirely as he elsewhere accepts the divided sense when applied to the decree of God.[55] Muller understands Owen's argument as follows, "Here he does, however, explicitly reject an Arminianizing use of the distinction to redefine and expand free choice by considering the choice in isolation from one of its requisites. Such freedom in the divided sense would imply an absolute independence of the willing agent, namely, an agent who is pure actuality."[56] According to Muller, the creature's dependence upon God is one of these requisites for action in Owen's writing.

Muller correctly identifies the importance of physical premotion and primary causality in Owen's view. However, his interpretation of Owen suffers two setbacks. First, Owen's affirmation of the divided sense regarding the decree proves that he accepted the distinction as valid but fails to demonstrate how he employed it in his definition of free will. Owen argues that the will abstracted from the divine decree possesses freedom with regard to a particular object. The human will abstracted from the requisites for action is not necessarily inclined toward or away from that object. The distinction's utility demands that a deity's determinations have no bearing upon an individual's choice. Given deity, the employment of the divided sense is "fanciful," according to Owen. Muller's appeal to Owen's positive use of the divided sense fails to prove that Owen applied the distinction in such a way that enabled the creature to choose

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[54] Owen, *A Display of Arminianism*, 10:119.

[55] Muller, *Divine Will and Human Choice*, 240. For Owen's reference to the decree of God and the divided sense, see John Owen, *A Dissertation on Divine Justice*, in *The Works of John Owen*, vol. 10, *The Death of Christ*, ed. William H. Goold (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 2000), 587.

[56] Muller, *Divine Will and Human Choice*, 240.

otherwise given all the requisites for action. Owen's claim that the divided sense is "fanciful" fits the definition of PAP_{If}.

Second, and a greater threat to Muller's interpretation, Owen defines independence from God as the creature's ability to act otherwise given all the requisites for action. Muller states that the requisites for action include the creature's dependence upon God, a point Owen himself argues. However Muller's definition of creaturely dependence is vague. When interpreting Owen, Muller argues that the Arminian view of free will lacked the proper notion of creaturely dependence upon God. He notes how Owen goes on to argue that the creature's dependence upon God requires physical premotion and primary causality, but these are only two of Owen's three arguments against the Arminian notion of free will.[57] The second argument Owen puts forth receives no attention from Muller but is quoted here at length:

> If the free acts of our wills are so subservient to the providence of God as that he useth them to what end he will and by them effecteth many of his purposes, then they cannot of themselves be so absolutely independent as to have in their own power every necessary circumstance and condition, that they may use or not use at their pleasure. Now, the former is proved by all those reasons and texts of Scripture I before produced to show that the providence of God overruleth the actions and determineth the wills of men freely to do that which he hath appointed. And truly, were it otherwise, God's dominion over the most things that are in the world were quote excluded; he had not power to determine that any one thing should ever come to pass which hath any reference to the wills of men.[58]

Owen identifies independence as a particular power available to the agent in the presence of certain conditions and circumstances. The power in question denies God the ability to overrule and determine subservient wills of men. To overrule or determine man's will moves beyond the realm of physical premotion and primary causality and considers God's government of dependent creatures. If the creature possessed a power that he could

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[57] Muller, *Divine Will and Human Choice*, 240–41. For Owen's arguments, see Owen, *A Display of Arminianism*, 10:119–20.

[58] Owen, *A Display of Arminianism*, 10:120.

use or not use given the prevailing conditions and circumstances, that creature would be independent from God.

Owen does not argue that the Arminians denied physical premotion and primary causality. He acknowledges that they affirm these two notions but reject the entailment that God determines all creaturely actions. On one hand, Muller takes Owen to argue that the Arminians denied physical premotion and primary causality; therefore, they denied creaturely dependence upon God. Owen, on the other hand, identified the independence argued for by the Arminians as the ability to do otherwise given all the requisites for action, not as the mere absence of physical premotion and primary causality.

The divine determination of the will to a particular object, not merely premotion and primary causality, grounds creaturely dependence for Owen. In the above quotation, Owen refers his readers to earlier statements in *A Display of Arminianism*. There, he recognizes that Arminians argued that God conserved and sustained all things and affirmed that God concurred with creaturely actions.[59] Owen critiqued Arminians because they reduced God's conserving work to a mere negative will whereby he determined not to destroy his creation. He argues, "For this conservation or sustaining of all things, they affirm it to be very likely that this is nothing but a negative act of his will, whereby he willeth or determineth not to destroy the things by him created."[60] Further, they reduced concurrence to "an imaginary concurrence of God's providence," since they uphold "a general and indifferent influence, always waiting and expecting the will of man to determine itself to this or that effect, good or bad."[61] He defines their view as follows, "For God's concurring with inferior causes in all their acts and working, they affirm it to

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[59] Owen, *A Display of Arminianism*, 10:38–39.

[60] Owen, *A Display of Arminianism*, 10:38–39.

[61] Owen, *A Display of Arminianism*, 10:37.

be only *a general influence alike upon all and every one, which they may use or not use at their pleasure,* and in the use determine it to this or that effect, be it good or bad."[62] Although Owen disagrees with the Arminian notions of God's conserving and concurring work, it is not the case that he believed his opponents denied these teaching as much as they altered them to fit their view of free will.

Where Muller argues that the Arminians denied dependence, Owen argues that they affirmed it, albeit it differently, to defend their view of free will. The Arminians denied, according to Owen,

> God's determining or circumscribing the will of man to do this or that in particular, they absolutely explode it, as a thing destructive to their adored liberty. . . . So that the sum of their endeavor is, to prove that the will of man is so absolutely free, independent, and uncontrollable, that God doth not nay, with all his power cannot, determine it certainly and infallibly to the performance of this or that particular action, thereby to accomplish his purposes and to attain his own ends.[63]

Again, Owen grounds the Arminian notion of independence on their understanding that the will cannot be determined by God to a particular action. What prevents God from doing this? According to Owen, independence is the view that the creature can use or not use his power given certain circumstances and conditions such that the creature cannot be determined to a particular action. Muller argues that the Reformed held to the creature's dependence upon God while affirming that the agent could do otherwise given the presence of certain circumstances and conditions, but Owen sees these ideas as incompatible.

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[62] Owen, *A Display of Arminianism*, 10:39.

[63] Owen, *A Display of Arminianism*, 10:39–40.

Francis Turretin

Francis Turretin's writings on free will have received significant attention due to his place in Reformed orthodoxy as well as his detailed treatment of the will.[64] Thus, I dedicate significant space to his work. I will discuss his treatment on the will in the Tenth Topic of his *Institutes*.

Analysis of Key Texts

Turretin's primary addresses on human freedom come from his treatments on the state of man before the fall and the free will of man in a state of sin. The latter treatment, despite its postlapsarian title, addresses and argues for free will across the fourfold state of man, the genus of being and the genus of morals in relation to each state.[65] He makes these distinctions to assert that man may freely sin while being bound to sin and, in doing so, sins freely despite his bondage to sin. Later, when discussing man's servitude to sin, he states,

> The question is not about the essential freedom from coaction and physical necessity (called such with reference to the subject and principle because it is always the same everywhere and in every state of man, as has been said before), but about the accidental freedom from slavery of sin, with reference to the object (about which the will is occupied, whether it is only evil or also good.[66]

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[64] Turretin's work has received recent and detailed treatment in the following works: Muller, "Neither Libertarian nor Compatibilist"; Muller, *Divine Will and Human Choice*; Muller, "Jonathan Edwards and Francis Turretin on Necessity, Contingency, and Freedom of Will," *Jonathan Edwards Studies* 4, no. 3 (September 2014): 266–85; Helm, *Reforming Free Will*; Helm, *Human Nature from Calvin to Edwards*; Helm, "Jonathan Edwards and the Parting of the Ways?," *Jonathan Edwards Studies* 4, no. 1 (January 2014): 42–60; Helm, "Turretin and Edwards Once More," *Jonathan Edwards Studies* 4, no. 3 (September 2014): 286–96; Willem J. van Asselt, J. Martin Bac, and Roelf T. te Velde, eds., *Reformed Thought on Freedom: The Concept of Free Choice in Early Modern Reformed Theology*, Texts and Studies in Reformation and Post-Reformation Thought (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010); HyunKwan Kim, "Francis Turretin on Human Free Choice: Walking the Fine Line between Synchronic Contingency and Compatibilistic Determinism," *Westminster Theological Journal* 79, no. 1 (2017): 25–44; B. Hoon Woo, "The Difference between Scotus and Turretin in Their Formulation of the Doctrine of Freedom," *Westminster Theological Journal* 78, no. 2 (Fall 2016): 249–69.

[65] Francis Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, vol. 1, *First through Tenth Topics*, ed. James T. Dennison Jr., trans. George Musgrave Giger (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 1992), 665.

[66] Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, 1:669.

Thus, he distinguishes between what is essential for freedom and what is accidental to freedom. In his upright state, Adam possessed liberty from action, physical necessity, and slavery.[67] The former two constitute essential liberty and may be characterized by preference (*to proairetikon*) and will (*to hekousion*).[68] He continues, "[Liberty] belongs to man in whatever state constituted and has two characteristics: preference (*to proairetikon*) and will (*to hekousion*), so that what is done may be done by a previous judgment of the reason and spontaneously." Turretin's view of essential freedom concerns the remainder of this section.

Turretin contends that free will does not belong to either the faculty of the intellect or of the will but of the conjoint working of the two, saying, "The subject of free will is neither the intellect, nor the will separately, but both faculties conjointly. As it belongs to the intellect with regard to the decision of choice (*proaireseōs*); so it belongs to the will with regard to freedom."[69] "Hence," he continues, "You may rightly call it a mixed faculty or a wedlock and meeting (*synkyrian*) of both—the intellect as well as the will. Nevertheless you would not properly say it consists rather in each faculty; for as the decision of the intellect is terminated in the will, so the liberty of the will has its roots in the intellect."[70] The conjoint work of the two faculties satisfies Turretin's criteria for a free action: choice and willingness.[71] Notice, Turretin has yet to deny that a free will can be determined to one effect and he has placed the essence of freedom in reason and the will. Up to this point, the requirements for freedom fail to include indifference,

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[67] Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, 1:570.

[68] Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, 1:570.

[69] Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, 1:660.

[70] Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, 1:660.

[71] Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, 1:662.

contingency, or the notion of alternative possibilities as outlined by Muller. The intellect terminates on the will and liberty of the will finds its root in the intellect.

To further clarify his views on free will, Turretin distinguishes between six different kinds of necessity to discern the senses in which the will is free.[72] The two necessities which are inconsistent with freedom include the necessity of coaction and physical or brute instinct. Coaction occurs when an external agent violates the freedom of the agent such that the agent does not act spontaneously, or, from himself.[73] Turretin defines physical and brute necessity as, "A blind impulse of nature or a brute instinct and innate appetite, without, however, any light of reason (as the necessity in fire to burn, a combustible object being supplied; the necessity in a horse to eat straw or grass put before him) and without any choice (*prairesei*).[74] Coaction and physical or brute necessity violate essential freedom since the former infringes upon the faculty of will and the latter upon the intellect whereby the agent reasons, the root of the will.

Turretin continues and identifies four kinds of necessity compatible with free will. First, a creature may be free despite its dependence upon God, which includes moral dependence upon the law of God; physical dependence or the doctrine of concursus; and dependence upon God's providence, the decree, and its execution.[75] The necessity of dependence entails, according to Turretin, infallibility with respect to God's foreknowledge and immutability in relation to the decree.[76] Second, Turretin argues that the free will is compatible with rational necessity, which he defines as, "The

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[72] For a helpful treatment on necessity in Turretin, see Paul Helm, "Francis Turretin and Jonathan Edwards on Contingency and Necessity," in *Learning from the Past: Essays on Reception, Catholicity and Dialogue in Honour of Anthony N. S. Lane*, ed. Jon Balserak and Richard Snoddy (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2015), 163–78.

[73] On the language of spontaneity, see Helm, *Reforming Free Will*, 144–45.

[74] Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, 1:662.

[75] Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, 1:662.

[76] Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, 1:662.

determination to one thing by a judgement of the practical intellect (which the will cannot resist)."[77] Liberty of the will finds its root in the intellect. The practical intellect makes a judgment and determines the will to a particular object such that the will cannot resist this judgment of the practical intellect. Third, free will is compatible with moral necessity, otherwise habits, virtuous or vicious, would destroy the will. Here, the distinction between essential and accidental freedom comes to the foreground, as Turretin writes, "Although the sinner is so enslaved by evil that he cannot but sin, still he does not cease to sin most freely and with the highest liberty."[78] Vicious habits do not oppose essential freedom. Fourth, and finally, the necessity of the event whereby the existence of a thing or event makes it necessary.

On the one hand, necessity that arises from coaction or compulsion as well as from physical necessity or brute instinct violate free will. Necessity, on the other hand, that arises from dependence upon God, the will's determination by the intellect, moral habits, and the necessity of the event, preserve and protect free will.[79] Thus, Turretin has not ruled out the compatibility of free choice with the necessary determination to one event insofar as the necessity is neither coaction nor physical or brute necessity. Compare the necessities put forth by Turretin with the fourfold liberty he describes elsewhere, when he writes,

> (1) The liberty of independence which belongs to God as the first being; this is opposed to the necessity of dependence which belongs to all creatures. (2) Liberty from coaction by which man acts spontaneously and with freedom, this is opposed to the necessity of coaction seen in those who act through force. (3) Rational liberty from brute and physical necessity by which man acts from choice (*ek proaireseōs*) and not by a brute instinct and blind impulse; this is opposed to the physical necessity of inanimates and brutes. (4) Liberty from slavery by which man is subject

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[77] Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, 1:662.

[78] Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, 1:663.

[79] Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, 1:662.

> to the yoke of slavery, either of sin or of misery; this is opposed to the necessity of slavery in sinners.[80]

The necessities that violate freedom and the liberties required for freedom fail to rule out Muller's understanding of compatibilism. Muller must demonstrate that the version of compatibilism espoused by Edwards entails either brute instinct or that man acts like an inanimate object. That Turretin fails to distance himself or provide a criterion that would rule out Edwards's view presents a problem for Muller's claim that Edwards departed from the Reformed.

Turretin, on the other hand, critiques those who place the formal reason of free will in indifference which differs from Turretin and the orthodox who place free will in rational willingness.[81] Turretin writes, "We contend here against the Jesuits, Socinians, and Remonstrants who (following Pelagius) place the essence of free will in indifference (*adiaphoria*) and are wont to define it as 'the faculty by which all things requisite for acting being posited, the will can act or not act."[82] Turretin, like Owen, contends against his opponents who state that the will can act or not act given all the requisites for action, which Turretin identifies as, "The decree of God, and his concourse, the judgment of the mind; and other circumstances which belong here."[83] Thus, we can rightly reformulate Turretin's writings to say that he rejects the following definition of freedom since it belongs to the Jesuits, Socinians, and Remonstrants: the faculty by which *the judgment of the mind* being posited, the will can act or not act.

Turretin rejects the view of indifference presented above but he goes on to accept indifference in a qualified sense.[84] He writes,

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[80] Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, 1:570.

[81] Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, 1:665.

[82] Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, 1:665.

[83] Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, 1:665.

[84] For a similar interpretation, see Helm, *Reforming Free Will*, 145–47.

> Hence, it is evident that it is not inquired here concerning indifference in the first act or in a divided sense, as to simultaneity of power which is called passive and objective (to wit, whether the will considered absolutely from its natural constitution, the requisites to action being withdrawn, is determinable to various objects and holds itself indifferently towards them).[85]

According to its natural constitution, the will possesses liberty of contradiction and contrariety as well as indifference of the will when the mind is uncertain.[86] In other words, the will differs from inanimate objects and animals since it is the kind of faculty that can be directed to multiple objects. Fire cannot but burn a combustible object whereas a man may be angry and sin or be angry and not sin. Although the horse cannot but eat the straw or grass put before him, man may choose to eat steak, decline the steak, or choose chicken.[87] Turretin accepts another sense of indifference, when he continues, "We also confess that the will is indifferent as long as the intellect remains doubtful and uncertain whither to turn itself."[88] While man reasons between steak and chicken, the will is indifferent to either object since the requisites for action have been withdraw. Once the practical intellect determines steak as the greatest apparent good, the will no longer remains indifferent. As Turretin explains,

> But concerning indifference in the second act and in a compound sense (as to simultaneity of power called active and subjective)—whether the will (all the requisites to acting being posited; for example, the decree of God and his concourse; the judgment of the practical intellect, etc.) is always so indifferent and undetermined that it can act or not act. This is our opponents pretend in order that its own liberty may be left to the will. We deny it.[89]

As a power, the will possesses a kind of indifference that allows it to be determined to multiple objects.

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[85] Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, 1:665.

[86] Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, 1:665.

[87] Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, 1:662.

[88] Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, 1:665.

[89] Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, 1:665–66.

This power explains how two men may exercise their wills differently or how the same man can exercise his will differently at different times. Apart from the judgment of reason, man may choose the steak or the chicken, but the will no longer remains indifferent to the steak once the practical intellect determines the will. Turretin describes his opponents as those who argue that the will remains indifferent after the judgment of the intellect, as well as concourse of God and other requisites for action. They argue that indifference is essential to free will whereas Turretin argued that the will possesses indifference in the divided sense apart from the requisites for action since this describes the natural constitution of the will.

Turretin concludes his writings on the essence of free will by placing liberty in rational willingness rather than indifference. He repeats two criteria for a free choice, which includes choice and voluntariness.[90] With these two criteria in place, the will can be determined by God and the intellect, as Turretin argues,

> To be free, election ought to enjoy an immunity from coaction and physical necessity; but not from the intrinsic necessity of dependence upon God and the intrinsic of determination by the intellect. And so far as the determination to one thing (made by the reason) taking away from free election, that it rather makes it perfect. It therefore elects this or that because determined to it by the judgment of the intellect.[91]

The will may be determined extrinsically and intrinsically provided the necessities are consistent with freedom. Coaction, another creature acting upon the agent's will, is an extrinsic necessity that violates free will. The decree does not function as a form of coaction; therefore the will is free. Brute instinct is an intrinsic necessity that violates free will since it eliminates choice. An intrinsic necessity that arises from choice differs from brute instinct and perfects free will. The determination of the intellect is not a mere choice of an object that the will can either accept or reject. Rather, the intellect

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[90] Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, 1:667.

[91] Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, 1:668.

determines a particular object for the will and the will follows by an intrinsic necessity. For these reasons, man bears moral responsibility for sin even if he could not have done otherwise since he acted from choice and voluntariness, as Turretin states, "The nature of obedience is not placed in this—that man can obey or not obey; but in this—that man obeys freely and without compulsion from previous reason."[92] Turretin requires that an agent act with reason and an unimpeded will, not that the agent possess the ability to obey or not obey. This most naturally fits with compatibilism. Further, Turretin's view properly uses means "For," he argues, "If it is certain that the will is determined by the intellect, the intellect must be persuaded before it can influence the will. And yet how can it be persuaded except by reasons and exhortations?"[93] Even though reasons and exhortations fail apart from divine grace, Turretin contends that his view better respects the relationship between means and ends.

The analysis of Turretin's views demonstrates that he neither excluded the compatibilism espoused by Edwards nor argued for Muller's criteria. Turretin argued that the essence of freedom consists in choice and willingness/voluntariness, which is compatible with man's necessary dependence upon God, rational necessity, moral necessity, and the necessity of the event. Only coaction and physical necessity violate free will since the former eliminates voluntariness and the latter, choice. The formal reason of freedom does not consist in indifference. Turretin allowed for a qualified sense of indifference described as the natural constitution of the will and the will's state of indifference while the intellect remains undecided. Upon the determination of the intellect, a requisite of action, the will follows the judgment of the practical intellect by an intrinsic necessity. Turretin ought to be labeled a compatibilist for these reasons.

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[92] Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, 1:664.

[93] Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, 1:664.

Objections to a Compatibilist Reading of Turretin

The interpretation of Turretin presented above faces two significant objections. The first objection concerns scholastic distinctions known as the divided sense (*in senus diviso*), the compound sense (*in sensu composito*), primary actuality (*actus primus*), and secondary actuality (*actus secundus*), specifically, as they relate to indifference. Describing these terms, Muller writes, "Turretin's point is not that there is a temporal sequence from the divided to the composite sense but that in any given moment, there is in the divided sense a simultaneity of potencies to multiple effects while there is also, and necessarily so, no potency for simultaneity in the composite sense."[94] He continues, "In other words, potencies to do otherwise are resident, but incapable of actualization at the same time as their contraries and contradictories. The distinction is relevant to the issue of free choice inasmuch as the presence of the potency or capacity to do otherwise is evidence that the choice of election is genuinely free."[95] According to Muller, Turretin argues that the will possesses indifference in its primary actuality, rendering it capable of actualizing multiple potencies. In its operation, the composite sense, the will cannot actualize multiple potencies, "namely no potency of choosing and refusing the same object at the same time and in the same way."[96] The will possesses a "root indifference," which, Muller argues, cannot be accounted for by Helm or Edwards's view.

The second objection concerns the meaning of determine or follow. Muller argues that Turretin avoids a necessitarian reading by allowing for interactivity between the intellect and the will.[97] He claims, "The intellect, in other words, does not determine

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[94] Muller, "Neither Libertarian nor Compatibilist," 277.

[95] Muller, "Neither Libertarian nor Compatibilist," 277.

[96] Muller, "Neither Libertarian nor Compatibilist," 283.

[97] Kim, "Francis Turretin on Human Free Choice"; Muller, "Edwards and Turretin on Necessity, Contingency, and Freedom of Will"; Muller, *Divine Will and Human Choice*.

the will, it determines the object—and it does not command the will, it judges and presents the object."[98] The necessary determination of the object, he argues,

> Does not import a necessary determination of one object rather than another but rather the necessity that there be the determination of one object by the understanding in order that the will have an object—and, then, all of the requisites to the free choice being present, indifference can be overcome and an object chosen or rejected.[99]

Further, the intellect does not necessitate, govern, constrain, command or compel the will. When Turretin says the will "must follow" the intellect, Muller takes this as terms of order and priority, not determination. In short, the intellect can choose among various objects, is not necessitated toward a particular object, and remains undetermined, reserving the right to accept or reject the object.[100]

Where Helm understands "follows" as a command such that the will "must" follow the intellect, Muller argues for a sequential ordering. Rational necessity, according to Muller, is not causal.[101] He rightly states that "follow" has a broad range of meaning and correctly notes that Turretin does not offer a definition of the term. With this understanding in place, Muller argues that Turretin places liberty of contrariety and liberty of contradiction in the will, not the intellect. Therefore,

> Helm's reading of Turretin's "cannot not follow" as a causal "must follow" rather than the establishment of an order in the act of choosing removes the will's liberties of contradiction and contrariety and reduces it to a necessary cause determined to one effect . . . . If "follow" is causal in Helm's sense, how can the will either refuse to act or act contrarily?[102]

Should the will be determined to one effect then liberty of contrariety and contradiction become useless distinctions. Further, he argues, "Turretin has previously ruled out

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[98] Muller, *Divine Will and Human Choice*, 254.

[99] Muller, *Divine Will and Human Choice*, 253–54.

[100] Muller, *Divine Will and Human Choice*, 254.

[101] Muller, "Neither Libertarian nor Compatibilist," 278–79.

[102] Muller, "Neither Libertarian nor Compatibilist," 279.

compulsion as interfering with freedom: why would he merely rule out an external compulsion and allow for an inward compulsion of the will by the intellect?"[103] If the intellect necessitates the will toward a particular act, as Helm argues, then this "assumes a causal necessity where there is none."[104] "The intellect," according to Muller, "is not an engine that necessitates the actualization of potencies by the will."[105]

Affirming a Compatibilist Reading of Turretin

Four responses are in order. First, Muller's interpretation must be consistently applied to Turretin's disagreements with his opponents. On Muller's view, Turretin contends that the will possesses simultaneous potencies in the divided sense, revealing the will's capacity to actualize multiple potencies, but in the compound sense the will, having actualized a potency, cannot operate on other potencies at the same time and in the same way. In other words, the will in its operation cannot actualize logical contradictions by choosing *A* and *not-A* at the same time and in the same way. Turretin's opponents argued that the will possessed indifference in the second act and in a compound sense. They did not argue that the will in its operation could actualize contradictory potencies. Thus, Turretin rejects his opponents view, not because it allowed an agent to actualize opposites, but because it requires "indifference to opposites," a key feature of Muller's position.[106] If Turretin merely argues for a logically consistent position where an agent cannot actualize multiple potencies, then how did he view his opponents' position? Either, they argued that an agent could actualize multiple potencies, which does not appear to be the case from Turretin's own perspective, or they too argued

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[103] Muller, "Neither Libertarian nor Compatibilist," 279.

[104] Muller, "Neither Libertarian nor Compatibilist," 284.

[105] Muller, "Neither Libertarian nor Compatibilist," 284.

[106] Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, 1:666.

for a logically consistent position. The latter appears to be the case since Turretin does not accuse his opponents of arguing that an agent could actualize multiple potencies. Therefore, what practical disagreement stands between Turretin and his opponents? Muller's position minimizes Turretin's perceived differences between himself and his opponents.

Should Muller's interpretation stand, it poses an interesting question regarding the Jesuit notion of rational necessity, which Turretin describes as a difference between himself and his opponents. Turretin identifies the disagreements concerning necessity when he writes,

> When they say that man is free from coaction and not from necessity, they do not mean physical necessity (about which there is no controversy and which is sufficiently excluded of itself, both by the condition of the subject [which is rational] and by the acts of judging and willing [which are incompatible with it]); but a dependent, slavish, and rational necessity.[107]

If Muller is right, rational necessity consists in rational ordering without determination of the will. Assuming Muller's interpretation is correct, how does Turretin see himself as differing from the Jesuits? It cannot be anti-determination in Muller's sense, for then Turretin would agree with the Jesuits. It cannot be determination, for the Jesuits were not determinists. I question if Muller's interpretation of rational necessity as a necessary ordering without a determination means that the Jesuit notion of anti-rational becomes anti-ordering of the intellect's judgment and presenting of objects to the will. In other words, they accept a will prior to that of the intellect. Yet this is not their charge. For example, Molina argues for a position *functionally* equivalent to Muller's interpretation of Turretin. Molina argues, "It is necessary that when the act is elicited by the faculty of

[107] Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, 1:662.

choice, it be within the faculty's power not to elicit it, given all the circumstances obtaining at that time."[108]

Muller may object, claiming that Molina argues the will interacts with the intellect when all the circumstances obtain, describing the compound sense, where Muller sees interactivity in the divided sense. He argues,

> This point allows us to return to the placement of freedom by Turretin and others, not in the *actus primus* indifference of the will, but in the *actus secundus* 'rational willingness.' Turretin, arguably, assumed that the underlying requirement for freedom of choice was a fundamental spontaneity of the will resting on this essential or root indifference in primary actuality—with the indifference defined in terms of simultaneity of potencies, but rather than rest his understanding of freedom radically in this indifference, as did the Molinists, he rested it in the uncoerced or spontaneous passage, on the basis of an uncoerced judgment, from the indifferent *actus primus* to the determinate *actus secundus*.[109]

However, this will not suffice, for the issue is one of rational necessity, which constitutes ordering according to Muller, a point the Jesuits would not demur. What the Jesuits do reject, and that which is consistent with the interpretation offered here, is that the will is determined by the intellect. Consider Freddoso's description of Molina's view, when he writes, "For Molina, then, to be free with respect to a given object (that is, a state of affairs) is to have a faculty, namely, a will or intellective appetite, by virtue of which one is capable of choosing indeterministically with respect to that object."[110] The divide concerns itself with necessity and determination, not ordering, for this is where Turretin and the Jesuits agree.[111] For this reason, Helm argues that Muller's "root indifference"

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[108] Luis De Molina, *On Divine Foreknowledge: Part IV of the "Concordia"*, trans. Alfred J. Freddoso (repr., Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2004), Disputation 53, pt. 2, sect. 17.

[109] Muller, *Divine Will and Human Choice*, 297.

[110] Alfred J. Freddoso, trans., introduction to *On Divine Foreknowledge*, by Molina, 25.

[111] The authors of *RTF* contend, "The fact that the ultimate practical judgment itself is necessarily followed by the will does not necessitate the will in a deterministic sense." Asselt, Bac, and te Velde, *Reformed Thought on Freedom*, 192. Thus, the argument above applies to their position as well. Should this interpretation be consistently read through Turretin, anti-rational necessity reduces to anti-ordering of the will and the intellect.

appears to possess the functional equivalent of the radical indifference of the Molinists, saying,

> Turretin's view seems to be that this is not a case of potency of simultaneity, but rather he is asserting that the potency of simultaneity has no application in the *actus secundus* except on pain of committing the person to the unacceptable Jesuit view of synchronic simultaneity . . . . Isn't Muller here running headlong into the Jesuit view of freedom despite his protestations to the contrary?[112]

Muller's interpretation of Turretin's writings fails to place a functional wedge between Turretin and his opponents since it requires in the first act what the Jesuits require in the second act: the ability of the will to interact in such a way that its determination by the intellect does not determine it toward an object. As Muller states of his interpretation, "In this approach, whereas the underlying possibility, one might even say the foundation or basis of freedom of will, lies in the indifference or absence of determination of the will prior to its operation."[113]

Given this reading, one would expect Turretin's third question on the free will of man in a state of sin to read as follows, "Whether the formal reason of free will consists in indifference or in rational spontaneity. We distinguish." Instead, Turretin denies the former claim and affirms the latter, understanding them to be fundamentally different. In his sources of solution, he claims, "To be free, election ought to enjoy an immunity from coaction and physical necessity; but not from the extrinsic necessity of dependence upon God and the intrinsic of determination by the intellect. And so far is determination to one thing (made by the reason) from taking away from election, that it rather makes it perfect."[114] Not once throughout his writing does Turretin insist that indifference constitutes the will's freedom, as this is "the fount of error."[115] Rather,

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[112] Helm, *Reforming Free Will*, 229–30.

[113] Muller, *Divine Will and Human Choice*, 256.

[114] Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, 1:668.

[115] According to Turretin, "The fount of error is the measuring of the nature of liberty from equilibrium (*isorropia*) and making indifference (*to amphirrepes*) essential to it. Liberty must be defined by

freedom, whether antecedent or subsequent to the fall, consists in rational willingness and spontaneity alone.

Second, Muller's interpretation faces the difficulty of parallel arguments employed by Turretin. Turretin oftentimes parallels divine determination and the determination of the intellect. For example, he states, "The will can never be without determination as well extrinsic from the providence of God, as intrinsic from the judgment of the intellect."[116] A twofold determination affects the will. A consistent reading of Turretin seems to require that if the intellect merely determines objects for the will rather than the will itself, then God's extrinsic determination also merely determines objects for the will. Further, if the will, as Muller argues, can reject the determination of the object presented by the intellect, then the will should also be able to reject the extrinsic determination arising from the providence of God.

Consider another example from the parallel of providence. Turretin writes, "The will is said to be the mistress of its own actions, not absolutely and simply (as if it depended upon it always to elicit or not elicit them—for in this way it cannot but be in subjection both to God and to the intellect)."[117] As the will possesses a twofold determination, so it also resides under a twofold subjection: God and the intellect. Turretin argues that the manner in which the will is subject to God parallels the will's

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willingness and spontaneity." Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, 1:508. Adam possessed a threefold liberty from (1) coaction, (2) physical necessity, (3) and slavery. Turretin then states that the former two constitute liberty in all men, calling it essential because it allows for freedom of preference and will, allowing actions to be carried out by the previous judgment of reason and spontaneity. The latter is consistent with freedom but is accidental to man's state (1:570). Later, he argues, "There are two principal characteristics of free will in which its formal nature consists: (1) the choice, so that what is done is done by a previous judgment of reason; (2) the willingness, so that what is done is done voluntarily and without compulsion. The former belongs to the intellect; the latter belongs to the will" (1:662). Turretin's freedom specifically opposes coaction, wherein an external agent forces another against his will and physical or brute necessity, which Turretin likens to a fire burning or a horse eating straw. Neither of these opposes the rational necessity as argued here.

[116] Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, 1:666.

[117] Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, 1:664.

subjection to the intellect. Should the will be able to reject its wedlock from the intellect and fail to submit to the intellect, so too could the will refuse to subject itself to God.

Turretin provides these parallels of providence because he understood the will to stand in a twofold relation: God and the intellect. The will is determined and subject to God's providence and the judgment of the intellect. The strength of the argument from the parallels of the providence rests upon the twofold relation, which Turretin consistently maintains throughout his writings.

> The will can be viewed either in relation to the decree and concourse of God or in contradistinction to the intellect. In the former sense, it is rightly said to be determined by God as also to determine itself (because as was seen before, God so moves creatures as to leave their own motions to them). But in the latter sense, it cannot be said to determine itself (because it is determined by the intellect whose last judgment of practical intellect it must follow.[118]

Here, Turretin argues that the will is both determined by God and by itself, which is another way of asserting that the acts of the will properly arise from the creature as a secondary cause.[119] For example, when the sun emits heat, it is indeed the sun emitting heat and not God emitting heat.[120] When God determines the will and the will determines itself, Turretin describes the concourse of God as the primary cause and the created agent as a secondary cause, preserving the Creator-creature distinction. The will, as understood in relation to the decree of God, is determined and self-determined. However, with relation to the intellect, the will is not self-determined but determined. In the former sense, Turretin speaks of the will as the creaturely capacity for action, determined by the decree and preserved by God. It determines itself because the choice properly arises from the creaturely agent. In the latter sense, Turretin speaks of the will in its state of wedlock

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[118] Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, 1:664.

[119] Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, 1:500.

[120] As Turretin elsewhere explains, "Although God previously moves second causes, still he cannot be said to produce the actions of second causes (for instance, to make warm or to walk). These actions belong to God only efficiently, but to creatures they belong not only efficiently, but also formally and subjectively (as from them the creatures are better denominated than God himself)." Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, 1:509.

to the intellect. Free will, as Turretin argues, does not merely belong to the intellect or to the will, "but both faculties conjointly."[121] When Turretin affirms that the will determines itself in relation to the decree, he implies that the decree does not function as coaction, violating the free will of the agent. When he affirms that the will is determined by the intellect, he implies that the will does not operate from brute or natural necessity. The will finds its liberty in rational choice.[122] Thus, the determination of the will by the decree and the intellect neither removes the creature's freedom nor requires that the will possess the ability to act otherwise than determined by the intellect. The parallels of providence argue that the intellect determines the will, not merely the object for the will to accept or reject.

Turretin provides another set of parallels that present difficulties for Muller's position. Turretin writes,

> Not every necessity contends with liberty, nor agrees with it. A certain extrinsic necessity destroys liberty; another agrees with it. A certain intrinsic necessity crushes it and another perfects it. The necessity of coaction, which is extrinsic, is incompatible (*asystatos*) with liberty; but a hypothetical necessity, arising either from a decree or from the existence of the thing, conspires with it. Intrinsic necessity (arising from a physical and brute determination to one thing) takes away liberty; an intrinsic necessity (flowing from the rational determination of the will by the intellect) not only does not destroy liberty but preserves and fosters it.[123]

Turretin argues that certain necessities destroy freedom while other necessities perfect it. Two necessities are extrinsic and two are intrinsic. The intrinsic necessity of the rational intellect is not less necessary than physical necessity or brute instinct; rather, it arises from choice. Animal instinct determines the will to act and the rational judgment of the intellect determines the will toward its object. To assume that one intrinsic necessity determines the will and yet affirm that another intrinsic necessity fails to determine the

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[121] Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, 1:660.

[122] Turretin reasons similarly when discussing God's providence; see Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, 1:513.

[123] Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, 1:569–70.

will confuses Turretin's parallel presentation. Yet, consider Muller's argument, which was briefly quoted above but quoted here in full, when he says,

> Turretin has previously ruled out compulsion as interfering with freedom; why would he merely rule out an external compulsion and allow for an inward compulsion of the will by the intellect? The will does not, of course, elect an object in utter isolation: Turretin argues both an "extrinsic" determination by divine providence and an "intrinsic" or inward determination by the intellect, neither of which, however, removes "the nature of free will to determine itself." We remind ourselves that a determination is a diacritical act: when the intellect makes a determination, it identifies an object for the will as distinct from other objects; when the will determines itself it makes distinctions with regard to the objects.[124]

Muller begs the question and assumes that an intrinsic and necessary determination of the will by the intellect would violate human freedom, akin to external compulsion, ruling out a compatibilist interpretation of Turretin. As was demonstrated earlier, the will does determine itself in relation to the decree of God, yet the will is subject to the determination of the intellect such that it cannot be said to determine itself. Muller's reading of Turretin turns the intrinsic necessity of the rational intellect into a necessary determination of the object by the intellect. However, a more natural reading respects the parallel structure of Turretin's argument and affirms that the will is preserved by an intrinsic necessity whereby it is determined according to rational judgment rather than by brute instinct.

The first two responses to Muller's view challenged the consistency of his interpretation. The third response argues that Turretin consistently argues that the will, not the objects for the will, is determined by the intellect. Turretin argues that the will "elects this or that because determined to it by a judgment of the intellect."[125] The reason the will elects a particular act may be found in the intellect. Had the intellect made a different judgment the will would have elected accordingly. The intellect must determine

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[124] Muller, "Neither Libertarian nor Compatibilist," 279. For the quotations from Turretin that Muller refers to, see Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, 1:668.

[125] Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, 1:668.

the will to elect a particular object because the will is impotent to determine itself. In relation to the intellect, he states, "It cannot be said to determine itself (because it is determined by the intellect whose last judgment of the practical intellect it must follow)."[126] The will "follows" the intellect because it is determined to do so, not because an object was determined for it to accept or refuse. For this reason, Turretin denies that the will can oppose the judgments of the intellect, saying, "Although the will can oppose the theoretical judgment of the intellect or the absolute judgment and of simple practical intellect; . . . yet it can never oppose the decided and last judgment."[127] The will is not opposing objects and accepting objects, it is opposing or following the intellect emphasizing that the intellect determines the will not the object. Exhortations and commands work as a means, although impossible to obey apart from the grace of God, because the intellect determines the will. He states, "For if it is certain that the will is determined by the intellect, the intellect must first be persuaded before it can influence the will."[128]

Related to this point, the intellect necessarily pursues the greatest good, and the will follows. As Turretin states, "We cannot abstain from seeking the highest good," labeling this task an "unavoidable necessity."[129] The intellect weighs and chooses the greatest good and the will necessarily follows because a necessary connection between means—the will—and ends—the good—exists as the will elects freely, as Turretin states, "Since the means are granted (having a necessary connection with the end and about whose election the will is occupied), it will be occupied freely indeed in electing them,

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[126] Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, 1:664.

[127] Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, 1:664.

[128] Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, 1:668.

[129] Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, 1:667.

but yet necessarily."[130] Upon the judgment of the intellect, the will freely, yet unavoidably and necessarily, elects the greatest good.

Since the will is a rational appetite, Turretin contends that it must necessarily follow the rational determinations of the intellect otherwise it would fail to choose in accord with the greatest good and choose evil for its own sake. But the will possesses no such ability. He reasons, "It is not the liberty of the will undetermined by the practical intellect; for this would have changed the will into an irrational appetite, so that he would have sought evil as evil. This would not have been so much liberty as unbridled license, incompatible (*asystatos*) with the image of God."[131] Contra Muller, Turretin does not emphasize the necessary ordering of intellect and will, although this is implied; rather, he states that the will is not left undetermined to the greatest good. If the will were left undetermined, as his opponents argue, then the will could go against the intellect by willing that which is not the greatest apparent good. Muller's view would allow for such a possibility, but Turretin argues, "Since the will is a rational appetite, such is its nature that it must follow the last judgment of the practical intellect; otherwise it could seek evil as evil and be turned away from good as good (which is absurd [*asystaton*])."[132] If the will sought an object deemed evil by the intellect, which is allowed in Muller's view, it would act contrary to its nature.

Fourth, and finally, Turretin identifies independence from God with PAP_{All}. He writes, "The empire of God over the will is destroyed (which would be independent of its own right) if, all the requisites for acting being furnished, it can act or not act."[133] Muller argues that the will cannot actualize contrary or contradictory potencies in the compound

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[130] Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, 1:667.

[131] Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, 1:570.

[132] Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, 1:663.

[133] Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, 1:667.

sense. *RTF* argues that Turretin rejects the view that "the will is indifferent at every moment with respect to any act provided that the requisites for acting are present."[134] However, for Turretin, neither logical contradictions nor an indifferent will in the compound sense appears to be the problem. If the indifference in the divided sense provides the same alternativity that Turretin's opponents placed in the compound sense, then the empire of God could still be cast off. The strong alternativity put forth by Muller and *RTF* requires the categorical ability to do otherwise. Should one locate this in ability the divided sense, granting the agent a categorical ability to do otherwise despite the conditions that obtain, then one can act or not act in a manner that would cast off God's rule.

Turretin argues that free will belongs to the conjoint working of the intellect and the will. Free will is comprised, then, of choice and willingness. The kinds of necessity incompatible with free will do not require the alternativity put forth by Muller. Muller's view fails to put a sufficient gap between Turretin and his opponents. The parallels put forth by Turretin demonstrate a twofold determination of the will. If the will is not determined by the intellect than a consistent reading of Turretin requires one to say that it is also not determined by God. Muller's position fails to consistently map onto Turretin's writings. Further, Turretin positively argues that the intellect determines the will. If the will possessed an undetermined indifference, then it could act or not act, casting off God's empire. Whether one locates genuine alternativity, PAP_{All}, in the divided sense or the compound sense, the outcome is the same. The distinction between the divided sense and compound sense better coheres with a compatibilist understanding of alternativity, PAP_{If}.

[134] Asselt, Bac, and te Velde, *Reformed Thought on Freedom*, 196.

Indifference, Potency, and Contingency

Before concluding this chapter and evaluating Edwards's own views of free will, key terms need to be clarified in light of the preceding discourse. Specifically, I am concerned with indifference, potency, and contingency. Some of these terms, such as indifference and potency, fail to be embraced by writers such as Perkins and Calvin. In this way, Perkins and Calvin are like Edwards. Others, such as Owen and Turretin, employed these terms favorably although they rejected certain uses. As Helm writes, "So for Owen, as for Turretin, there are two kinds of indifference and correspondingly two kinds of contingency."[135]

The rejected form of indifference consists in the notion that the will can act or not act given the prerequisites for action. These prerequisites for action include theological and anthropological conditions, such as the decree of God and the judgment of the intellect. Helm offers a definition of indifference acceptable to the Reformed view, "Indifference *in sensu diviso* refers to a power, a potentiality of the will, the power intrinsic to the will, to execute what the practical reason may decide as an end in action."[136] In this sense, indifference describes the will's ability to frictionlessly actualize the determination of the intellect. The will, as a power, can actualize liberties of contradiction and contrariety or suspend action while awaiting the judgment of the intellect.[137] Antecedent conditions that determine the will to one effect do not eliminate indifference. Had the conditions been otherwise, the will could have actualized a different potency since the will is indifferent *in sensu diviso*. Helm offers several analogies that illuminate this understanding, saying,

> We might ask, can the weathervane *as such* point to all points of the compass? Or we might ask, if, in a strong southerly wind, the weathervane can point to all points

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[135] Helm, *Reforming Free Will*, 215.

[136] Helm, *Reforming Free Will*, 146.

[137] Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, 1:665–666 (X.iii.4); Helm, *Reforming Free Will*, 145–46.

> of the compass? To the first question, the divided sense, the answer is "yes", while to the second question, the compound sense, the answer is "no". Turning to a case involving a human being suppose we ask, Can John speak? Is he, *as a person*, able to speak? Or we might ask, In a state where he is bound and gagged, can he speak? To the first question, the divided sense, the answer is, yes, it is possible for him to speak and to be silent. While to the second question, the compound sense, the answer is "no", he cannot at one and the same time speak and be silent.[138]

This notion of indifference explains why two wills can choose differently or one will can choose differently at different times, for this just is the nature of the will. Compatibilists can accept indifference *in sensu diviso* without committing to it *in sensu composito*. Further, indifference *in sensu diviso*, as a logical distinction, need not commit one to PAP_{All}. Just because a weathervane may point to all points on a compass does not mean that it can do so regardless of the conditions that obtain.

Likewise, a compatibilist can affirm that the will can actualize multiple potencies. Because the will is indifferent as to its nature, it possesses liberty of contrariety and contradiction *in sensu diviso*. Muller, however, wishes to argue that the will retains a capacity to actualize a contrary or contradictory potency. Recall, he argues, "That person, moreover, can choose either A or not-A because he has potency or capacity for either and can be identified as free because the resident potency to choose not-A does not evaporate when a person chooses A."[139] Thus, even in the composite sense, he retains the capacity to actualize the non-evaporated potency, just not simultaneously to its contrary or contradiction.[140] Helm rightly challenges whether or not such a reading is warranted by Turretin's writings.[141] He also asks what benefit an unactualized potency amounts to, saying,

> Such a potency is one of two potencies, one of which has been exercised, and so is spent, in a choice. And so is not the remaining potency now unrealizeable, because

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[138] Paul Helm, "'Structural Indifference' and Compatibilism in Reformed Orthodoxy," *Journal of Reformed Theology* 5, no. 2 (2011): 196.

[139] Muller, "Neither Libertarian nor Compatibilist," 274.

[140] Muller, "Neither Libertarian nor Compatibilist," 274.

[141] Helm, *Reforming Free Will*, 229–30.

> it is already in the past? The remaining non-actualized potency is presumably a vestigial power that it is impossible at this stage to realize, because the other potency has been actualized in the choice, whatever it was. What does this trace of the past contribute to indeterminism in the present? Possessing an unrealized potency appears to be a 'scholastic' expression in the worst sense.[142]

Helm reasons that this *a priori* commitment struggles to find a basis in Turretin's writings, awkwardly holds on to a past potency that cannot be actualized, and is a theory of free will that cannot be epistemologically verified since the potency cannot be actualized.[143] For these reasons, it seems best to say that the agent could have actualized a different potency rather than that the agent retains a capacity to actualize a different potency that is now past. To say that an agent could have actualized a different potency better fits with PAP_{If} as well as diachronic contingency.

Conclusion

The Reformed consistently defined freedom in compatibilist friendly terms. Free will requires that an agent act from his reason and with an unimpeded will. The kinds of necessity that oppose free will fail to rule out a compatibilist reading and allow for an agent to be determined to one effect by a judgment of the intellect. The alternativity required by the Reformed should be understood as a natural capacity of the will to actualize different potencies. This alternativity is consistent with PAP_{If}. Muller's view of alternativity failed to find its place among the definitions of the Reformed. Further, several thinkers identified the alternativity espoused by Muller with "independence" from God. Others clearly articulated that the intellect determines the will to one effect. Muller's view of dependence upon God is vague and his view of alternativity contradicts the Reformed view of dependence. If this interpretation stands, Muller's view of alternativity fails to drive a wedge between the Reformed and Edwards,

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[142] Helm, *Reforming Free Will*, 230. See also Preciado, *Reformed View of Freedom*, 136–37.

[143] Helm, *Reforming Free Will*, 230–31.

strengthening the case that *FOW* is in continuity with the tradition. His writings on free will are the subject of the next chapter.

CHAPTER 3

EDWARDS ON FREE WILL

Having examined the Reformed writings, Jonathan Edwards's *FOW* becomes the focus of this chapter. Our purpose is not to examine the historical setting;[1] his arguments against Isaac Watts, Daniel Whitby, and Thomas Chubb;[2] the validity or persuasiveness of his arguments;[3] nor the effects and reception of this work upon the generations that followed Edwards.[4] Instead, this chapter examines claims that Edwards departed from the Reformed tradition.

If the previous chapter stands, then one may identify several Reformed thinkers as compatibilists. The Reformed deemed rational spontaneity and willingness as the sufficient conditions for a free act. PAP_{All}, as put forth by Muller, fails to find a home among the Reformed definitions of free will. Upon the supposition of antecedent

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[1] James Harris, *Of Liberty and Necessity: The Free Will Debate in Eighteenth-Century British Philosophy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2005); Norman Fiering, *Jonathan Edwards's Moral Thought and Its British Context* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2006).

[2] C. Samuel Storms, "Jonathan Edwards on the Freedom of the Will," *Trinity Journal* 3, no. 2 (1982): 131–69; Joe Rigney, "Freedom of the Will," in *A Reader's Guide to the Major Writings of Jonathan Edwards*, ed. Nathan A. Finn and Jeremy Kimble (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2017), 131–52.

[3] Stephen R. Holmes, *God of Grace and God of Glory: An Account of the Theology of Jonathan Edwards* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 151–59; Hugh J. McCann, "Edwards on Free Will," in *Jonathan Edwards: Philosophical Theologian*, ed. Paul Helm and Oliver Crisp (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2003); Oliver Crisp, *Jonathan Edwards and the Metaphysics of Sin* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2005).

[4] Allen C. Guelzo, *Edwards on the Will: A Century of American Theological Debate* (repr., Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2008); Guelzo, "After Edwards: Original Sin and Freedom of the Will," in *After Jonathan Edwards: The Courses of the New England Theology*, ed. Oliver D. Crisp and Douglas A. Sweeney (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 51–62; Richard A. Muller, "Jonathan Edwards and the Absence of Free Choice: A Parting of Ways in the Reformed Tradition," *Jonathan Edwards Studies* 1, no. 1 (November 2011): 3–22; Chris Chun, *The Legacy of Jonathan Edwards in the Theology of Andrew Fuller*, Studies in the History of Christian Traditions 162 (Leiden: Brill, 2012).

conditions, including the determination of the will by the intellect, the will may be determined to one effect. The Reformed position, then, more closely aligns with PAP_{If}.

However, as I discussed in chapter 1, the charges that Edwards departed from the tradition come in two forms. First, the Reformed were not compatibilists; a charge I answered in chapter 2. Second, Edwards lacked key terms and distinctions in his own writings that were essential to a Reformed view of free will. Several of these distinctions, I argued, are not merely lacking in Edwards, but also Calvin and Perkins. Owen too found little use for "fanciful" definitions of the divided sense. The absence of these distinctions does not mark a departure from the tradition *prima facie*, otherwise several other Reformed theologians would be outside the tradition.

In order for Edwards to be considered within the tradition, several points must be argued. Edwards's description of free will must include rational spontaneity and choice or willingness. There must be a peculiar work of the intellect and a work of the will since rational spontaneity and willingness are the sufficient conditions for a free choice. The categorical ability to do otherwise is unnecessary since the Reformed did not define free will in these terms, as Muller alleges. However, conditional alternativity must be present in such a way that the will possesses an inherent power to frictionlessly actualize liberties of contrariety and contradiction given the antecedent conditions, such as the judgment of the intellect. The working of the intellect cannot resemble internal necessity akin to the necessity found in inanimate objects or animals otherwise Edwards's view of free will would only amount to an apparent liberty. These points must be argued while considering Edwards's departure from the traditional faculty psychology found among the Reformed. In this chapter, I argue that Edwards conceives of the understanding as a power that perceives objects in a theoretical and practical manner and differs from the will, a power possessing an inherent capacity to actualize contradictories and contrarieties.

A preliminary survey of faculty psychology among the Reformed determines the boundaries by which Muller's charges and Edwards's writings will be examined. The rest of the chapter will be a careful exposition of the relationship between the intellect and the will in *FOW*. Beginning with Edwards's view of the understanding, I demonstrate that he is conceptually consistent with the Reformed. Although he differs from them semantically, *FOW* spends considerable time describing the practical intellect, which Edwards sets within a larger framework that includes the theoretical intellect. Together, these ground moral agency, responsibility, and undergird Edwards's view on blasphemy of the Holy Spirit. Having established the role of the understanding, I can answer Muller's charges that Edwards abandoned fourfold causality and reduced anthropological causation to efficient causality. Then, I explain how Edwards operated with a qualified sense of indifference that allowed the will to actualize contradictories and contrarieties.

Faculty Psychology in the Reformed

This section offers a brief survey of faculty psychology among the Reformed.[5] In previous chapters, a preliminary description of faculty psychology was given, noting various distinctions. The survey here provides a framework allowing for a proper evaluation of Muller's objections. It also provides the boundaries established by the Reformed that will be instrumental in determining whether Edwards departed from the tradition.

The Nature of Faculty Psychology

Helm helpfully describes the nature of faculty psychology among the Reformed. He writes,

> One must always bear in mind that the distinctions between the faculties is not a real—that is, objective—distinction, as an arm is an objectively distinct part of the

[5] For a helpful treatment of faculty psychology among the Reformed, see Paul Helm, *Human Nature from Calvin to Edwards* (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2018).

> body from a leg. Rather, these are distinctions formed by observation of the various activities of the soul. The "real" object is the soul and its powers. When these powers are occupied with knowledge and judgment, we refer to them as "intellectual" and the product of the "intellect." And when the powers are of hating or loving these objects of knowledge, the powers are referred to as those of the will and the affections. This stance, that the structure of the soul is constructed out of the observation of its powers in operation, is fundamental to the use of faculty psychology in theology and in casuistry.[6]

The faculties of the soul differ from the body of man in that the distinctions are not "real." The Reformed identified the faculties by virtue of the various powers endued to the soul and, broadly speaking, they discerned two common faculties. Calvin, for example, identifies the understanding and will as the "original division of man's soul."[7]

Perkins also followed this original division as can be seen early in his treatment on the conscience. He states,

> Understanding is that faculty in the soul whereby we use reason; and it is the principal part serving to rule and order the whole man; and therefore it is placed in the soul to be as the wagoner in the wagon. The will is another faculty whereby we do will or nill anything, that is, choose or refuse it. With the will is joined sundry affections, as joy, sorrow, love, hatred, etc., whereby we embrace or eschew that which is good or evil.[8]

Perkins begins with these two faculties and locates the conscience in the understanding. He reasons that the conscience belongs in the understanding due to a further division of the understanding, labeled the theoretical and practical intellect. He states,

> Understanding again has two parts. The first is that which stands in the view of contemplation of truth and falsehood, and goes no further. The second is that which stands in the view and consideration of every particular action, to search whether it is good or bad. The first is called theoretical understanding, [and] the second the practical understanding. Conscience is to be comprehended under the latter, because its property is to judge of the goodness or badness of things or actions done.[9]

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[6] Helm, *Human Nature from Calvin to Edwards*, 159.

[7] John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, ed. John T. McNeill, trans. Ford Lewis Battles (Philadelphia: Westminster John Knox Press, 1960), II.ii.12.

[8] William Perkins, *A Discourse of Conscience*, in *The Works of William Perkins*, vol. 8, ed. Stephen Yuille (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2019), 7.

[9] Perkins, *A Discourse of Conscience*, 8:7.

The theoretical intellect reasons about that which is true or false and the practical intellect between good and evil; therefore, the conscience naturally resides in the practical intellect as the judge of good and evil actions. According to Perkins, only men and angels have consciences since God's intrinsic righteousness governs all his actions and beasts only have a shadowy form of understanding but lack "true reason" and, as a consequence, a conscience.[10]

Owen offers a similar construction of the faculty of the mind in *Pneumatologia*. When discussing the nature of the unregenerate mind, which is darkened by sin, Owen presents the division of the mind into the theoretical and practical, saying,

> Now the mind may be considered two ways:—As it is *theoretical* or contemplative, discerning and judging of things proposed unto it. So it is its office to find out, consider, discern, and apprehend the truth of things. In the case before us, it is the duty of the mind to apprehend, understand, and receive, the truths of the Gospel as they are proposed unto it, in the manner of and unto the end of their proposal . . . . It may be considered as it is *practical*, as to the power it hath to direct the whole soul, and determine the will unto actual operation, according to its light. I shall not inquire at present whether the will, as to the *specification* of its acts, do necessarily follow the determination of the mind or practical understanding. I am at no more but that it is the directive faculty of the soul as unto all moral and spiritual operations.[11]

Owen follows the pattern we have seen thus far by identifying discernment, apprehension, and judgment to the theoretical intellect as that which is concerned with truth; and recognizing that the practical intellect considers what ought to be done. Interestingly, Owen hints at two ways in which the practical intellect can determine the will in its operation although he leaves the discussion for another place and time. There is a way, according to Owen, in which the practical intellect directs and determines the soul in its moral operations and to specific acts.

Turretin operates with a similar view of theoretical and practical intellect. In the previous chapter, we examined how the will may oppose the theoretical intellect and

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[10] Perkins, *A Discourse of Conscience*, 8:8.

[11] John Owen, *The Works of John Owen*, vol. 3, *ΠΝΕΥΜΑΤΟΛΟΓΙΑ*, ed. William H. Goold (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 2018), 280–81.

even the absolute and simple judgment of the practical intellect. But it can never oppose the decided and last judgment.[12] Turretin goes on to provide two examples of how the will opposes the theoretical intellect and absolute judgment of the simple and practical intellect. First, "Adam did not follow the first and absolute judgment of the intellect (by which it judged that the fruit must not be eaten)."[13] Here we see a moral and normative judgment of the practical intellect that follows the command of God. The practical intellect functions as a preemptive moral arbiter such that Adam would know that he had chosen against God's revealed will, with which Adam's practical judgment agreed. He continues, "Rather, it followed the decided and last judgment by which it is said that the woman saw the fruit of the tree to be good to her for food (v. 6) and judged it to be desirable to the eyes (viz., according to the deceitful promise of Satan that they would be like God)."[14] Thus, we see Turretin differentiate between the decided and last judgment, which pertains to the decision to eat the fruit of the tree, and the absolute and simple judgment.

The second example Turretin offers concerns blasphemy of the Holy Spirit.[15] He states,

> In the sin against the Holy Spirit, the will indeed opposes the judgment of the practical intellect, even the first decided. Otherwise it could not be said to be committed against the conscience and the knowledge of the truth. Still, it is not repugnant to the last decided judgment in which the flesh (all things being

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[12] Francis Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, vol. 1, *First through Tenth Topics*, ed. James T. Dennison Jr., trans. George Musgrave Giger (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 1992), 664.

[13] Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, 1:665.

[14] Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, 1:665.

[15] Gregg R. Allison and Andreas J. Köstenberger outline four different views on the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit. The first is persistent unbelief that endures until death. Second, blasphemy of the Holy Spirit is the forfeiture of salvation through apostacy. Third, blasphemy of the Holy Spirit consists in slander and malice against the work of the Spirit, attributing the Spirit's work to Satan. The fourth view bears similarities to the third, but argues that this sin could only occur during Christ's ministry. Gregg R. Allison and Andreas J. Köstenberger, *The Holy Spirit*, Theology for the People of God (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2020), 343–45. Turretin and Edwards espouse a position akin to the third view.

> considered) judges here and now that the gospel should be denied and Christ forsaken.[16]

Again, the will opposes the practical intellect by means of opposing the first decided practical judgment, which must be the case if blasphemy against the Spirit is to be considered as an act against the conscience according to Turretin. The picture of the practical intellect becomes clearer when one examines how Turretin further describes the sin against the Spirit. Elsewhere, he divides the practical judgment as follows,

> That it may more clearly appear what knowledge is here required and how it differs from the saving knowledge of believers, we must distinguish the threefold judgment of the practical intellect: (1) absolute and simple; (2) first comparative; (3) last comparative called the last practical.

The "absolute and simple" judgment of the practical intellect refers to "the thing considered simply and in itself or *in thesi*."[17] Turning to Calvin, one can see how the practical intellect functions with regard to the absolute and simple judgment, when he says,

> In reply to the general question, every man will affirm that murder is evil. But he who is plotting the death of an enemy contemplates murder as something good. The adulterer will condemn adultery in general, but will privately flatter himself in his own adultery. Herein is man's ignorance: when he comes to a particular case, he forgets the general principle that he has just laid down.[18]

Although Calvin does not use the same terminology as Turretin and further divide the practical intellect, the categories are similar. Both theologians allow for man to acknowledge a normative judgment of the practical intellect that a particular act is wrong when considered simply or absolutely and yet the will may oppose that particular judgment. Calvin allows for man to forget the principle in a particular case, which fits Turretin's understanding of the first and last comparative judgment where a man judges an action good that he formerly deemed evil.

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[16] Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, 1:665.

[17] Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, 1:648.

[18] Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, II.ii.23.

Given these writings, several boundaries can be drawn. First, the Reformed divided the intellect into theoretical and practical. The practical intellect discerned those things which are true whereas the practical intellect discerns that which ought to be done. The practical intellect can be divided into a normative judgment and last judgment. The normative judgment is a value judgment of a given act whereas the last judgment is the intellect's determination of the will. Second, the will does not always follow the theoretical intellect. Nor does the will always follow the practical intellect in its normative function. We will examine these divisions in the intellect as well as the will's relationship to the intellect after addressing Muller's objections.

Muller's Charges against Edwards

Following Locke, Edwards abandoned the traditional faculty psychology of the Reformed scholastics.[19] The terminology of a free person was desired over the language of a free will, revealing the preference to speak of persons holistically rather than aspects of the person compartmentalized.[20] Edwards opted to speak of powers of the soul. Helm states, "It is true that Edwards continues to refer to 'powers' or 'faculties' of the soul, but always as powers of the soul, never as the will as a distinct faculty within the soul."[21] Muller objects to Edwards's human psychology. The loss of traditional faculty psychology as found in the scholastics led Edwards to deny any indifference of the will, eliminating choice from the act of willing. Criticizing Edwards, he states,

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[19] Guelzo describes Edwards shift from faculty psychology to a view that espoused the unitary operations as one driven by the idea of a new sense or perception and delight, saying, "As Edwards discovered, the new sense acted upon all the faculties, not only the understanding directly. This led Edwards to suspect that the traditional psychology of his education, which rigidly parceled the mind into faculties of will, understanding, and passions, and then argued over which was the principal, might be in error. Since the 'new sense' acted equally among the faculties, it seemed more likely to Edwards that understanding, passions, and will were much more closely linked, and on more equal footing, than the scholastic psychology in his Yale textbooks had allowed." Guelzo, *Edwards on the Will*, 33.

[20] *WJE*, 1:163, 171.

[21] Helm, *Human Nature from Calvin to Edwards*, 220–21.

> There can never, in other words, be a moment of indifference. In Edwards's understanding of willing or choice as doing as one pleases without impediment, there is only pre-determination and action. There is no inward interaction between knowing and willing, merely willing.[22]

According to Muller, this was not the case with the Reformed tradition, as he argues,

> Turretin and others of the Reformed distinguish the faculties of intellect and will without separating them into two things or realities. Intellect and will are conjoined. Their distinction is extrinsic and made with reference to the object as judged and chosen.[23]

Muller contends that the problem for Edwards is definitional and practical. He argues that Edwards definition of a free will, like Hobbes and Locke, fails to posit "a distinction between mind and will or suggests any interaction of faculties according to which mind or intellect judges objects for the will."[24] Further, Edwards fails to make these distinctions in practice,

> Although Edwards uses the term "faculty," he makes no actual distinction between mind, will, or the act of choosing and he identifies willing with choosing. Turretin, by contrast, clearly distinguished the functions of mind or intellect from the function of will and argued an interaction or conjunction of faculties.[25]

In sum, the loss of faculty psychology entails, on Edwards's view, the absence of interaction between the intellect and the will. The mind and the will are indistinguishable. The mind fails to judge objects for the will, leaving Edwards with mere willing and no notion of indifference.

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[22] Richard A. Muller, "Jonathan Edwards and Francis Turretin on Necessity, Contingency, and Freedom of Will," *Jonathan Edwards Studies* 4, no. 3 (September 2014): 277–78.

[23] Richard A. Muller, "Neither Libertarian nor Compatibilist: A Response to Paul Helm," *Journal of Reformed Theology* 13, no. 3–4 (2019): 278.

[24] Muller, "Edwards and Turretin on Necessity, Contingency, and Freedom of Will," 270. It is beyond the scope of this dissertation to examine the relationship between Hobbes, Locke, and Edwards. For a helpful treatment on the nature of free will and changes in the eighteenth century, see Harris, *Of Liberty and Necessity*.

[25] Muller, "Edwards and Turretin on Necessity, Contingency, and Freedom of Will," 278.

Understanding and Will in Edwards

What follows is an attempt to answer Muller's charges against Edwards while acknowledging that Muller's understanding of "interaction" and "indifference" differ from Edwards's use. I examine Edwards's use of indifference later. Instead of presupposing Muller's definitions, I argue that Edwards operated with concepts consistent with the Reformed view of the intellect. Edwards's more refined language reveals that he distinguished the intellect from the will. Early in *FOW*, he examines the role of the understanding in determining the will to the greatest good. Although one will not find the terms 'practical' and 'theoretical' intellect, Edwards conceives of the understanding in narrow and broad terms that reflect the theoretical and practical intellect. This conception of the understanding undergirds moral agency and responsibility. Should the understanding suffer a lack, the agent should not be considered morally responsible. The role of the understanding and its relationship to the will bears great similarity to the Reformed, which will be made evident when one compares how Turretin and Edwards described blasphemy against the Holy Spirit.

Before presenting these arguments, an interpretive point needs to be addressed. If one is to read *FOW* properly, Paul Ramsey's words should be considered. He says,

> This is the focus of Edwards' picture of the exertion of an act of the will. He seeks to catch the agent in the very act of willing or choosing, and to give an accurate report of what goes on in the soul or mind in the state of willing and at the time of willing or in the state of freedom at the time of freedom, without consideration of what went before or comes after.[26]

Edwards has zoomed in to describe what is happening at the moment of willing and leaves very little room for abstract speculation. Edwards seeks to back his theological opponents into a corner and remain there until his work is done. How might this influence the way we read Edwards? A sympathetic reading of Edwards looks for and appreciates minor nuances of Edwards's view that indicate his awareness of the broader discussions

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[26] Paul Ramsey, "Editor's Introduction," in *WJE*, 1:16.

of free will. With that said, we will now examine the role of understanding in Edwards's thought.

Understanding and Free Choice

In the beginning of *FOW*, Edwards defines the will, saying,

> And therefore I observe, that the will (without any metaphysical refining) is plainly, that by which the mind chooses anything. The faculty of the will is that faculty or power or principle of mind by which it is capable of choosing: an act of the will is the same as an act of choosing or choice.[27]

Edwards is also willing to accept the definition that the will is that "by which the soul either chooses or refuses."[28] Do these definitions demand that Edwards merely required an unimpeded will for a free choice? Or does Edwards practically function as if the understanding conflated with the will such that it does not serve the role apprehension, contemplation, judgment, and discernment as found in the Reformed? Several reasons indicate that Edwards reserved a role for the understanding that functioned in a similar role to the Reformed.

First, Edwards elsewhere outlines the role of the understanding in his thought, which is consistent with the Reformed. In *Religious Affections*, Edwards states,

> God has indued the soul with two faculties: one is that by which it is capable of perception and speculation, or by which it discerns and views and judges of things; which is called the understanding. The other faculty is that by which the soul does not merely perceive and view things, but is some way inclined with respect to the things it views or considers; either is inclined to 'em, or is disinclined, and averse from 'em; or is the faculty by which the soul does not behold things, as an indifferent and unaffected spectator, but either as liking or disliking, pleased or displeased, approving or rejecting. This faculty is called by various names: it is sometimes called the *inclination*; and as it has respect to the actions that are determined and governed by it, is called the *will*: and the *mind*, with regard to the exercises of this faculty, is often called the *heart*.[29]

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[27] *WJE*, 1:137.

[28] *WJE*, 1:137.

[29] *WJE*, 2:96.

Here, Edwards offers two faculties that are distinct with regard to their function. The understanding perceives and judges whereas the other faculty is inclined or disinclined to a particular object, adopting a particular disposition identified as either inclination, will, or heart. Of the latter faculty, Helm states, "I suppose that here Edwards has chiefly in view what the Reformed orthodox, following a venerable tradition, called the practical reason. However, he does not use the language of either the theoretical or practical reason."[30] These distinctions continue to appear in *Religious Affections* since they are crucial to Edwards's project, which requires a distinction between those things known by the mind and sensed by the soul. He writes,

> There is a distinction to be made between a mere notional understanding, wherein the mind only beholds things in the exercise of a speculative faculty; and the sense of the heart, wherein the mind don't only speculate and behold, but relishes and feels . . . . There is a mere speculative knowledge; the other sensible knowledge, in which more than the mere intellect is concerned the heart is the proper subject of it, or the soul as a being that not only beholds, but has inclination, and is pleased or displeased.[31]

Edwards identifies mere "notional understanding" with a form of knowledge, citing Romans 2:20, which he contrasts with the sweet taste of the glory of God identified as spiritual knowledge, grounded in texts such as Matthew 16:23.

Second, Edwards more precise language in *FOW* demonstrates that the understanding and will differ. The will is the consequence or fruit of the mind's choice, indicating a one-way, asymmetrical relationship that begins in the understanding and concludes in the will, as Edwards states,

> If strict propriety of speech be insisted on, it may more properly be said, that the voluntary action which is the immediate consequence and fruit of the mind's volition or choice, is determined by that which appears most agreeable, than the preference or choice itself; but the act of volition itself is always determined by that

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[30] Helm, *Human Nature from Calvin to Edwards*, 218.

[31] *WJE*, 2:272.

> in or about the mind's view of the object, which causes it to appear most agreeable.[32]

Several elements of Edwards's statement are worth noting. First, it fits with the interpretive suggestion made earlier that Edwards concerns himself with the concrete act of willing rather than statements whereby he abstracts the mind and the will and considers them in isolation. Here, he gladly acknowledges strict and proper speech allows one to differentiate between mind and will such that a choice is made, and the will is the fruit or consequence of the choice made in the mind rather than the will. The choice in the mind differs from the action of the will. The will cannot *strictly* or *properly* be said to be the preference or choice. Second, Edwards's strict statements should be granted interpretive priority, allowing one to rightly understand Edwards when he says, "The mind's preferring and choosing, seem hardly to be properly and perfectly distinct."[33] What is good in the mind's choice is carried forth by the will such that there is no distinction between what is preferred and what is done since the object is the same. The will cannot but execute the choice of the intellect. Third, Edwards associates activities commonly identified as functions of the intellect with the mind rather than the will. These include: viewing the object and judging its apparent goodness. The will neither views nor judges objects; it merely follows the dictates of the understanding. When Edwards's strict speech receives its proper interpretive role, it becomes evident that he distinguished between the intellect and the will.

Third, Edwards offered a robust account of the role of the understanding, providing evidence that he distinguished the understanding from the will. In *FOW* I.ii, Edwards begins, "If the will be determined, there is a determiner. This must be supposed to be intended even by them that say, the will determines itself."[34] What, on Edwards's

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[32] *WJE*, 1:144.

[33] *WJE*, 1:144.

[34] *WJE*, 1:141.

view, determines the will? He answers, "It is the motive, which, as it stands in the view of the mind, is the strongest, that determines the will."[35] A motive is that which "moves, excites or invites the mind to volition, whether that be one thing singly or many things conjunctly."[36] Motives do not present themselves to the will, Edwards states, but to the mind since, "Whatever is a motive, in this sense, must be something that is extant in the view or apprehension of the understanding or the perceiving faculty."[37] The perceiving faculty is not the willing faculty but that which properly apprehends the object and can be identified as the intellect. Motives only move the will insofar as they are perceived by the intellect as a stronger or weaker motive.

The strength or weakness of the motive is discerned in the mind. For that reason, a motive cannot directly affect the will apart from the mind. The will does not possess the ability to determine the strength of a particular motive. This is why the same motive may not excite two different wills to the same action or the will of one person to the same action at different times. Two individuals perceive the strength of a motive differently and the same individual may perceive the strength of a motive differently at a later time. The mind, not the will, would be the reason for this difference. Once the mind determines the greatest apparent good, Edwards argues "that the will is always as the greatest apparent good is."[38] The "greatest apparent good" would be that motive which appears in the mind as such.

Practical Intellect

How might the understanding, according to Edwards, determine the greatest apparent good? We return to the "strict propriety of speech" whereby the volition is the

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[35] *WJE*, 1:141.

[36] *WJE*, 1:141.

[37] *WJE*, 1:142.

[38] *WJE*, 1:142.

fruit of the mind's choice as it views the object and determines that which is most agreeable. Edwards continues, "I say, in or about the mind's view of the object, because what has influence to render an object in view agreeable, is not only what appears in the object viewed, but also the manner of the view, and the state and circumstances of the mind that views."[39] In this statement, Edwards offers three elements considered by the mind in its determination of the will. These elements are consistent with the Reformed notion of the practical intellect.

First, the practical intellect judges what appears in the object viewed, discerning its nature and circumstance. Using three criteria, the understanding judges the agreeableness of the object. First, the object appears to the practical understanding, taking a form of either beauty or deformity. Here, Edwards acknowledges the difference between the material appearance of the object to its perceiving faculty and its formal appearance. He gives greater credence to the latter in the practical understanding. Second, the mind detects the "apparent degree of pleasure or trouble attending the object, or the consequence of it."[40] All these appear, as it were, "in the mind's view."[41] Finally, the mind considers the time or distance of the intended pleasure. If two objects of equal pleasure are apprehended but one object is closer in time, the mind always chooses the nearer object. The appearance of the object to the mind and the mind's proceeding judgments concerning beauty, attending consequences, and nearness of the object reveal activities exclusive to the understanding and instrumental in discerning the strongest motive that determines the will.

Edwards continues past the object's appearance in the mind to the manner in which it is presented, the second element of the practical understanding. The manner of

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[39] *WJE*, 1:144.

[40] *WJE*, 1:145.

[41] *WJE*, 1:145.

appearance concerns the "certain happiness" associated with the object. The mind always chooses those objects that provide certain, rather than uncertain, happiness. Individuals may pursue different forms of certain happiness. On the one hand, those who find certain happiness in routine will require a more certain happiness to abandon their routine. On the other hand, another might consider routine as uncertain happiness, fearing that they have missed something better. These individuals will regularly try new things because the joy of trying something new is certain even if the joy of a particular object is uncertain in itself. The manner of appearance also concerns the mind's ability to apprehend the liveliness of an object. Here, Edwards takes into account past experiences that shaped the mind. By way of analogy, Edwards states, "Our idea of the sweet relish of a delicious fruit is usually stronger when we taste it, than when we only imagine it."[42] The understanding, not the will properly understood as the fruit of choice, apprehends the certainty and liveliness of the object, marking a clear distinction between the two.

The third element that constitutes the practical understanding is the state of the individual's mind when the object is presented. This element considers the shape of the person generally and in a particular circumstance. Factors that shape the person include the following:

> The particular temper which the mind has by nature, or that has been introduced and established by education, example, custom, or some other means; or the frame or state that the mind is in on a particular occasion. That object which appears agreeable to one, does not to another. And the same object don't always appear alike agreeable to the same person at different times. It is most agreeable to some men, to follow their reason; and to others, to follow their appetites: to some men, it is more agreeable to deny a vicious inclination, than to gratify it; others it suits best to gratify the vilest appetites. 'Tis more disagreeable to some men than others, to counteract a former resolution. In these respects, and many others which might be mentioned, different things will be most agreeable to different persons; and not only so, but to the same person at different times.[43]

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[42] *WJE*, 1:146.

[43] *WJE*, 1:146–47.

Edwards considers a host of differences that shape the individual and, in doing so, the appearance of the object of choice as it is presented to the mind. Factors to be accounted for include nature and nurture, the makeup of different individuals, and the makeup of the same individual but when considered at a different time. Edwards affirms that some men are inclined to follow reason and others seek to fulfill their appetites. He implies that some would rather contemplate, being pleased or finding the good in reason. Others merely satisfy instincts. For the one who follows reason, rational choices are perceived as more beautiful and good whereas appetitive reasoning is judged as deformed. The reason for these differences exists in the mind and the manifestations of these differences are displayed in the will.

Edwards's account of the understanding ends with an explicit distinction within the understanding that distinguishes it from the will in multiple respects. While clarifying how the will follows the dictates of the understanding, he argues,

> It appears from these things, that in some sense, the will always follows the last dictate of the understanding. But then the understanding must be taken in a large sense, as including the whole faculty of perception or apprehension, and not merely what is called reason or judgment. If by the dictate of the understanding is meant what reason declares to be best or most for the person's happiness, taking in the whole of his duration, it is not true, that the will always follows the last dictate of the understanding. Such a dictate of reason is quite a different matter from things appearing now most agreeable; all things being put together which pertain to the mind's present perceptions, apprehensions or ideas, in any respect.[44]

Edwards distinguishes between the broad and narrow understanding.[45] Similarly, Calvin and Turretin distinguished between the absolute and simple judgment and the comparative judgment. Edwards might say, with Calvin, that reason or judgment declares adultery to be wrong, but a man may still go against his own reason, the narrow

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[44] *WJE*, 1:148.

[45] The language of "narrow" is borrowed from Ramsey, "Editor's Introduction," in *WJE*, 1:56: "The difference between Edwards and Locke appears again on p. 148, where Edwards states that 'the will always follows the last dictate of the understanding.' In doing so he takes 'understanding' in 'a large sense' to mean the mind's whole *present* or efficacious apprehension of the greater good, which might as well be called a 'narrow' sense excluding reference to the *remote* good except insofar as this plays a part in present uneasiness—which comes down to saying that the mind is now motivated by present motivation."

judgment. However, when one considers the whole faculty, the broad understanding, adultery might appear a most agreeable in the moment. The will does not always follow the absolute judgment, the narrow understanding, but it does follow the broad judgment, which is comparative.[46] Edwards distinguishes between absolute and comparative judgments and, like Turretin, addresses the last comparative judgment. I discuss the latter when I compare Turretin and Edwards on blasphemy against the Holy Spirit.

In *FOW* I.ii, Edwards offers a robust account of what the Reformed identified as the practical understanding. Although he rejected their faculty psychology in favor of powers of the soul, he argued that motives present themselves to the perceptive power of the soul, identified as the mind, which then apprehends and judges the object as it considers the direct and immediate object of choice. The mind perceives the object and considers several factors relevant to the particular individual at a particular time. The function of the practical understanding found among the Reformed is present in Edwards's work.

Theoretical Intellect

It appears that Edwards has a robust account of the role of the practical understanding, but this should be set within his conception of the *object* perceived by the mind as good; doing so will continue to reinforce the idea that Edwards distinguished between the intellect and the will. Edwards states,

> When I say, the will is as the greatest apparent good is, or (as I have explained it) that volition has always for its object the thing which appears most agreeable; it must be carefully observed, to avoid confusion and needless objection, that I speak

[46] Contra McCann, who states, "For Edwards, then, there is not even a logical possibility of the mind or will rising up against the force of inclination, and charting an independent course," McCann, "Edwards on Free Will," 33. This does not sufficiently address the difference between broad and narrow understanding. The will cannot chart an independent course from what appears as the greatest good to the narrow understanding. However, there is a sufficient understanding of internal conflict in the understanding for which McCann does not account.

> of the direct and immediate object of the act of volition; and not some object that the act of will has not an immediate, but only an indirect and remote respect to.[47]

As the mind discerns the greatest apparent good it also differentiates between immediate, direct, and present objects versus those that are indirect, remote, and future. This distinguishing factor of the mind further confirms that Edwards understands a free choice as more than simply an unimpeded will. The understanding carefully governs the will after it discerns and judges the immediate, direct, and present object of choice by means of its perceptive faculty. The ability of the understanding to judge between immediate vs. mediate, direct vs. indirect, and present vs. future objects, reveals the presence of what the Reformed identified as the theoretical intellect.

Edwards uses the example of a drunkard to illustrate the difference between the direct and indirect object of choice. Should an alcoholic beverage be placed before a drunkard, the direct, immediate, and present decision concerns the act of drinking the liquor before him rather than the choice of future sobriety or a life of drunkenness. Although the indirect, remote, and future object—such as being sober or a drunkard—may influence his understanding of the present greatest good, it is not the direct object of choice, which is to drink or not to drink.[48] The drunkard may be conflicted. He can simultaneously perceive sobriety and drinking as the greatest good, but these are different objects, allowing Edwards to avoid contradiction by saying that the drunkard can desire both but in different ways.[49] He can desire to drink with regard to the immediate object of

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[47] *WJE*, 1:143.

[48] This is an important distinction in Edwards thought that can be overlooked by his critics. See Rigney, "Freedom of the Will," 138n20.

[49] This interpretation stands in contrast to McCann, who understands Edwards's as follows: "There is no room in Edwards's position for a distinction between passive and active willing. That is, he sees no difference between merely desiring to perform some action, a state libertarians would likely view as passive and involuntary, and actively deciding to perform the act, or forming the intention to perform it. Rather, there is nothing to willing except preponderant desire or inclination." McCann, "Edwards on Free Will," 32. He goes on to say, "Desire is in the main a dispositional state, a liking for one or another thing or action that may or may not lead one to pursue it if the circumstances are right" (37). However, Edwards allows for a drunkard who will not drink because the circumstances are not right. The same is true in "Miscellanies," no. 1153, where he offers the analogy of a man who loves his whore but chooses to remain with his wife. Although the man loves his whore, is overpowered by lust for her, and is alienated from his

choice and sobriety with regard to the remote object of choice. What role, does the indirect act of choice play? Edwards states,

> If in the choice he makes in the case, he prefers a present pleasure to a future advantage, which he judges will be greater when it comes; then a lesser present pleasure appears more agreeable to him than a greater advantage at a distance. If on the contrary a future advantage is preferred, then that appears most agreeable and suits him best. And so still the present volition as the greatest apparent good at present it.[50]

Note how the mind differentiates and judges direct and indirect objects, a role reserved for the understanding, not the will. In the present act of choice, the drunkard considers the present and the future, the attending consequences, pleasure and sorrow, and these judgments may lead the understanding to apprehend the lesser present pleasure as the greatest apparent good. Or he may indulge in the greater present pleasure and forsake what he deems to be a greater future good. In Edwards's account, the understanding serves two distinct roles: determining the object of choice and discerning the form of the object. The former represents the function of the theoretical understanding whereas the latter is evidence of the practical.

The role of the practical understanding in Edwards appears to assume the theoretical intellect as well. In *Religious Affections*, we noted how Edwards explicitly acknowledged a perceptive faculty that speculates, discerns, and judges, meaning it would be fair to assume the presence of the speculative faculty in *FOW*. Hints of the theoretical intellect appear in the object's material appearance to the mind, the mind's ability to differentiate between direct and remote objects, and the reasoning process that

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wife, the man remains with his wife. Edwards writes, "He wishes that he loved his wife as well as he does his whore, and that his heart cleaved to her with so full a choice and entire compliance that he could have as much pleasure and delight in her as in the other. His indirect willingness to cleave in his love and choice to his wife does not at all excuse him for the want of actual love and choice." "Miscellanies," no. 1153, in *WJE*, 23:49. Thus, on Edwards's view, there is a distinction between desiring to perform an action and actually performing the action. For more on indirect willingness in this "Miscellanies," see Andrew Sparks, "Edwards on Free Will," in *The Jonathan Edwards Miscellanies Companion*, vol. 2, edited by Robert L. Boss and Sarah B. Boss (Fort Worth: JESociety Press, 2021), 451–56.

[50] *WJE*, 1:144.

occurs as the mind considers past experiences and future consequences. For these reasons, one should assume the implicit presence of the theoretical intellect in *FOW* I.ii as well as the explicit presence of the practical intellect.

Moral Agency and Image of God

What role does the understanding play in moral responsibility according to Edwards? Edwards defines a morally responsible agent as follows:

> A moral agent is a being that is capable of those actions that have a moral quality, and which can properly be denominated good or evil in a moral sense, virtuous or vicious, commendable or faulty. To moral agency belongs a moral faculty, or sense of moral good and evil, or of such a thing as desert or worthiness of praise or blame, reward or punishment; and a capacity which an agent has of being influenced in his actions by moral inducements or motives, exhibited to the view of understanding and reason, to engage to a conduct agreeable to the moral faculty.[51]

A moral agent performs actions that are either good or evil and can do so because moral motives are presented to the mind and aim to "engage" the will in action. Edwards follows this definition with several things that are not morally responsible agents. The sun in the heavens or a fire that breaks out in the city cannot be considered either morally good or evil, or worthy of praise or blame because they are not moral agents. Animals, or "brute creatures," cannot be considered moral agents Edwards argues, because,

> They have no moral faculty, or sense of desert, and don't act from choice guided by understanding, or with a capacity of reasoning and reflecting, but only from instinct, and are not capable of being influenced by moral inducements, their actions are not properly sinful or virtuous; nor are they properly the subjects of any such moral treatment for what they do, as moral agents are for their faults or good deeds.

Animals cannot be considered morally responsible because they operate from instinct rather than from the faculties or powers of understanding endowed upon those created in God's image. Brute creatures cannot perceive moral motivations, fail to act with understanding, and lack the capacity to reason and reflect. For these reasons, they cannot

[51] *WJE*, 1:165.

be considered moral agents. In these ways, Edwards differentiates animals from image bearers.

Humans possess a twofold image of God corresponding to God's natural and moral attributes.[52] "God's natural image," Edwards explains, consists "in men's reason and understanding, his natural ability, and dominion over the creatures."[53] Looking to God, in whose image man is made, Edwards states,

> The essential qualities of a moral agent are in God, in the greatest possible perfection; such as understanding, to perceive the difference between moral good and evil; a capacity of discerning that moral worthiness and demerit, by which some things are praiseworthy, others deserving of blame and punishment; and also a capacity of choice and choice guided by understanding, and a power of acting according to his choice or pleasure, and being capable of doing those things which are in the highest sense praiseworthy. And herein does very much consist that image of God wherein he made man (which we read of Gen. 1:26, 27 and ch. 9:6), by which God distinguished man from the beasts, viz. in those faculties and principles of nature, whereby he is capable of moral agency. Herein very much consists the *natural* image of God; as his *spiritual* and *moral* image, wherein man was made at first, consisted in that moral excellency, that he was endowed with.[54]

Understanding, discernment, and choice guided by understanding are essential, according to Edwards, for an agent to be considered morally responsible. These qualities are distinguished from the power of acting in accordance with one's choice; all of which differentiates man from animal.

Moral Responsibility

God is a moral agent and man, by virtue of being in God's image, is a moral agent. The two possess the same essential qualities although they differ with regard to circumstance. God is a ruler and man is his subject. As such, God gives commands to men, obligating obedience. Specifically, God addresses commands at the will of men,

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[52] In *Religious Affections*, Edwards divides God's attributes into natural and moral; see *WJE*, 2:255–56. For a helpful treatment of this distinction and how it relates to free will, see Marco Barone, "The Relationship between God's Nature, God's Image in Man, and Freedom in the Philosophy of Jonathan Edwards," *Jonathan Edwards Studies* 8, no. 1 (January 2018): 37–51.

[53] *WJE*, 2:256.

[54] *WJE*, 1:166.

since, Edwards claims, "The will itself, and not only those actions which are the effects of the will, is the proper object of precept or command."[55] The will as the proper object differs from the soul that is the subject of commands since it alone is "capable of receiving or perceiving commands," whereas the will acts by "'consenting,' 'yielding,' 'accepting,' 'complying,' 'refusing,' rejecting,' etc."[56] Although the will is the object of all commands, commands do not bypass the intellect. The intellect must receive and apprehend the command, governing the will by choice and understanding.

A moral agent possesses two distinct powers of the soul. The first requires the ability to receive, understand, and judge the object. Second, a choice that governs the will by understanding. The criteria provided by Edwards for moral agency appears to undermine Muller's claim that a free action requires mere willing, and this is further confirmed by those factors that relieve moral responsibility. If Muller were correct, one would expect that an agent would be discharged of moral responsibility only if the will was impeded. But this is not the case. According to Edwards, an agent is not morally responsible if a natural inability exists, as he argues,

> Natural inability, arising from the want of natural capacity, or external hindrance (which alone is properly called inability) without doubt wholly excuse or makes a thing improperly the matter of command. If men are excused from doing or acting any good thing, supposed to be commanded, it must be through some defect or obstacle that is not in the will itself, but extrinsic to it; either in the capacity of understanding, or body, or outward circumstances.[57]

One can see how natural ability corresponds to the natural image of God in man. If essential elements of the natural image are unable to function properly then man cannot be considered morally responsible regarding that particular action.[58] These inabilities that

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[55] *WJE*, 1:302.

[56] *WJE*, 1:302.

[57] *WJE*, 1:309.

[58] With Michael J. McClymond and Gerald R. McDermott, who say, "Like Augustine, Luther, and Calvin, Edwards by this distinction was pointing out the difference between determinism and compulsion. Natural necessity worked *against* the will, while moral necessity lay *in* the will." Michael J.

relieve moral responsible cannot be said to belong to the will. Rather, they belong either to the understanding, the body, or outward circumstances.

Edwards begins with the inability arising from a want in the understanding, indicating that he views the understanding as something extrinsic to and distinct from the will. He describes this particular inability as follows:

> As to spiritual duties or acts, or any good thing in the state of immanent acts of the will itself, or of the affections (which are only certain modes of the exercise of the will) if persons are justly excused, it must be through want of capacity of the natural faculty of understanding.[59]

He later continues by contrasting an inability relieved through a lack in the understanding with an inability that arises from the body, also extrinsic to and distinct from the will, saying,

> As to such motions of body, or exercises and alterations of mind, which don't consist in the immanent acts or state of the will itself, but are supposed to be required as effects of the will; I say, in such supposed effects of the will, in cases wherein there is not want of capacity of understanding, that inability and that only excuses which consists in want of connection between them and the will.[60]

He then reduces all inabilities to those of "either capacity of understanding, or external strength."[61]

Edwards's criteria that relieve moral responsibility provides three important insights regarding the role of the understanding. First, the understanding, like the body, is something distinct from the will and a potential source of inability. Edwards claims that inabilities reside in those things extrinsic to the will, such as the understanding or the

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McClymond and Gerald R. McDermott, *The Theology of Jonathan Edwards* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 342.

[59] *WJE*, 1:309–10.

[60] *WJE*, 1:310.

[61] *WJE*, 1:310. A lack of external strength would include an agent's being forced against his will, according to Edwards in "Miscellanies," no. 363, in *WJE*, 13:435–36.

body. Just as the body is distinct from the will in Edwards's thought, so is the understanding.

The second insight comes from Edwards's distinction between immanent and external acts of the will. This distinction appears only once in *FOW* but may also be found in his "Miscellanies," as well as *Religious Affections*, where he defines immanent acts, saying,

> There are those that some call immanent acts: that is, those exercises of grace that remain within the soul, that begin and are terminated there, without any immediate relation to anything to be done outwardly, or to be brought to pass in practice. Such are the exercises of grace that remain within the soul, that begin and are terminated there, without any immediate relation to anything to be done outwardly, or to be brought to pass in practice.[62]

Examples of immanent acts include contemplation or those acts of the heart that "don't directly proceed to, or terminate in anything beyond the thoughts of the mind; however they may tend to practice (as all exercises of grace do) more remotely."[63] Immanent acts are contrasted with practical or effective acts that "immediately respect something to be done," such as giving a drink to a disciple of Jesus.[64] Immanent acts of the will, which includes affections, flow from inward principles of actions or habits and shape how the mind considers an object by offering a practical judgment.[65] As the root of action, flowing from gracious principles, immanent acts terminate on the soul and do not

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[62] *WJE*, 2:422. Edwards uses this distinction in several places in his "Miscellanies" when discussing issues related to moral responsibility, such as what God requires for salvation.

[63] *WJE*, 2:422–23.

[64] *WJE*, 2:423.

[65] Edwards relates immanent acts of the will to the affections in *WJE*, 1:309, which he defined in *WJE*, 2:96. Speaking of gracious affections, Edwards says, "The reason it appears from this, that gracious affections do arise from those operations and influences which are spiritual, and that the inward principle from whence they flow, is something divine, a communication of God, a participation of the divine nature, Christ living in the heart, the Holy Spirit dwelling there, in union with the faculties of the soul, as an internal vital principle, exerting his own proper nature in the exercise of those faculties." *WJE*, 2:392. See also "Miscellanies" no. 819, in *WJE*, 18:530. The progression from principle or habit, to immanent act, to external acts is set forth in Edwards's understanding of James 1:15 as found in *Religious Affections*, when Edwards says, "Here are three steps; first, sin in its principle or habit, in the being of lust in the heart; and nextly here it is conceiving, consisting in the immanent exercises of it in the mind; and lastly, here is the fruit that was conceived actually brought forth, in the wicked work and practice." *WJE*, 2:435.

immediately relate to an outward act. By contrast, external acts are the fruit of action and terminate upon an outward act, its immediate relation.[66]

Having clearly defined and distinguished immanent and external acts of the will, the role of the understanding in relation to moral responsibility can be examined. The understanding precedes the will in its immanent and external operations voiding the charge that Edwards's view of free will is mere willing. If Edwards simply advocated that mere willing was required for a free action, then only those factors which disrupted the connection between inclination and external acts would relieve moral responsibility. However, Edwards prioritizes the understanding antecedent to the inclinations. If the understanding possesses some natural inability, then the lack in the inclination relieves moral culpability since a want exists in the natural faculty of the understanding. The privation or lack in the understanding must affect the agent's ability to accurately perceive motives. Recall, a motive is that which is "extant in the view or apprehension of the understanding or perceiving faculty."[67] The mind's inability to properly perceive the motive cannot be moral. Edwards reasons, "The insufficiency of motives will not excuse; unless their being insufficient arises not from the moral state of the will, or inclination itself, but from the state of the natural understanding."[68] Thus, the agent must have a properly functioning natural understanding capable of rightly perceiving objects and leading to appropriate immanent acts of the will commensurate with the capacity of understanding. Since immanent acts of the will arise within the context of properly

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[66] Portions of this material have been adapted from previous work found in Sparks, "Edwards on Free Will," 451.

[67] *WJE*, 1:142.

[68] *WJE*, 1:310.

functioning natural capacities of understanding, the understanding is a prerequisite to moral responsibility.[69]

The third and final insight reveals that Edwards requires a properly functioning understanding for external acts of the will as well. The understanding, then, not only affects inclinations but also the fruit of choice. Unfortunately, Edwards fails to offer analogies or arguments to make his case; rather, he simply assumes that a natural defect in the understanding could render external acts of the will exempt from moral responsibility. External acts are preceded by the understanding, which differ from external factors that excuse a man because they disconnect the act of the will from its intended effect. Thus, in both immanent and external operations of the will, the extrinsic and natural faculty of understanding precedes the will whereas a want of strength reveals a disconnect between the act of the will and its intended effect.[70] Image bearers require more than an unimpeded will. A properly functioning understanding antecedent to immanent and external acts of the will is a necessary condition for moral responsibility.

Blasphemy of the Holy Spirit

This section has demonstrated that Edwards distinguished between the intellect and the will, dividing the intellect into categories that are functionally equivalent to the Reformed view of the theoretical and practical intellect. Further, I have shown that the

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[69] Addressing unresolved puzzles in *FOW*, Rigney questions how Edwards might respond to someone whose mind was altered due to no fault of their own; see Rigney, "Freedom of the Will," 147–48. He offers an example of someone who commits a crime after bring provided with the wrong drug prescription. I believe this section solves the puzzle. Should the man have been given a mind-altering drug due to no fault of his own, his natural capacity of understanding would have been affected. As a result, his immanent and external acts of the will would be altered. Since the drugs affected the man's natural understanding, it is plausible that Edwards would relieve the man of responsibility since his immanent and external operations of the will would spring from a faulty understanding.

[70] Consider "Miscellanies," no. 573, which reads, "Those acts which consist and are complete in the mere immanent exercise of the will or inclination itself; such are the internal breathings of love to God, and exercises of faith in Christ . . . . These, in the most ordinary way of using the expression, can't be said to be in man's own power or not in his power: because when we speak of things being in man's power or not in his power, in our common discourse, we have respect only to things that are consequential to his will, that are considered as the effects of his will; and not of the mere simple and first motions of the will itself." "Miscellanies," no. 573, in *WJE*, 18:111–12.

distinct role of the understanding is required for Edwards's view of moral agency and responsibility. I wish to conclude this section with a brief comparison between Turretin and Edwards.

Earlier, we noted how Turretin explained the relationship between the intellect and the will with regard to blasphemy of the Holy Spirit. The will opposes the first decided judgment of the practical intellect by sinning against its conscience despite having a knowledge of the truth.[71] This absolute judgment of the practical intellect is cast off by the will in favor of the last decided judgment of the intellect, which may be defined as apostacy.

In "Miscellanies," no. 706, Edwards explains why the sin against the Holy Spirit is unpardonable. He explicitly acknowledges his debt to Turretin's *Institutes*, which is evident in three areas.[72] First, Edwards argues that those who commit this sin made against a first comparative judgment of the understanding, evidenced by their previous profession of religion. Edwards writes,

> They are such as are, or have been, professors of religion, that have visibly received God, and been visibly received by him. Besides the mercy there is in this to them, this capacitates them to do greater injury than others these two ways, vis. (1) as hereby they have voluntarily laid themselves under the highest obligation to God by; and (2) as they by such a visible relation to God and concern with him are capable of casting a greater reproach on God, and putting Christ to a greater shame, than others.[73]

Those who commit this sin renounce the God they once professed, making their sin an act of apostacy. Edwards identifies pastors and teachers, like the Pharisees in Christ's day, as the common culprits among those who blaspheme the Spirit. Thus, they oppose a former

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[71] Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, 1:665.

[72] "Miscellanies," no. 706, in *WJE*, 18:327.

[73] "Miscellanies," no. 706, in *WJE*, 18:325.

judgment of the practical intellect, disavowing and even persecuting the faith they once held and propagated with gifts supplied by the Spirit.[74]

Second, as in Turretin's writings, these apostates commit this sin against their consciences and a knowledge of the truth. Specifying the nature of this sin, Edwards delineates the manner in which it is a sin against the conscience, saying, "'Tis also the most heinous kind, not only as 'tis against outward light, but against inward light, against the light of men's own consciences; and 'tis a sin not only against doubts and misgivings of conscience, but against the plain dictates and clear light of conscience."[75] Not only do these apostates commit the sin against their conscience, they also fight against the inward work of the Spirit. Edwards continues, "And this sin is not only against the inward strivings of God's Spirit, but against those strivings that are of the highest kind that are ever given to natural men, as Heb 6; so great as to give conviction of the truth, and what is called the knowledge of the truth, viz. the truth of the things of revealed religion."[76] The apostates are those whose conscience has dictated that the Christian faith is right and, by their understanding, acknowledge the things revealed as true; functions reserved for the theoretical and practical intellect. Thus, in these first two similarities, one sees the first comparative judgment of the practical intellect, followed by a last comparative judgment against what is known to be good, and the work of the theoretical intellect that judged the gospel as true.

Finally, like Turretin, Edwards argues that blasphemy against the Spirit follows from a decision to forsake Christ and his gospel rather than a mere approbation of the will, which would merely constitute another normative judgment of the intellect.

> 'Tis a sin of the most inexcusable sort because 'tis the most willful. 'Tis not willful merely as there is an approbation of the will to what is evil in it, as there is in sins of

[74] "Miscellanies," no. 706, in *WJE*, 18:325.

[75] "Miscellanies," no. 706, in *WJE*, 18:324.

[76] "Miscellanies," no. 706, in *WJE*, 18:324.

> ignorance; nor [is] it willful as the will is gained by being driven against light by fear, or drawn by carnal appetite or the like. But 'tis so willful that 'tis done, ἑκουσίως, *sponte*. They commit it of their own accord for opposition's sake—committed from mere malice and contumacy.[77]

This act of the will follows the dictates of the intellect while rejecting a previous comparative judgment of the intellect.

"Miscellanies," no. 706 does not stand on its own. *FOW* contains evidence to support the claim that Edwards sufficiently differentiated between the intellect and the will. The understanding determines and governs the will. Yet, it also operates in a manner consistent with the Reformed understanding of the theoretical and practical intellect. For this reason, Edwards can comfortably rely on Turretin's writings on blasphemy of the Holy Spirit, describing the nature of the sin in a nearly identical manner.[78] Thus, Muller's argument that Turretin allowed for interaction between the understanding and will need not assume Muller's view of alternativity, as this brief excursus on the sin against the Spirit reveals.

Causation

Edwards did not adopt Aristotelian causality as part of his language. He purposefully avoids metaphysical refining in elements of his writing, clarifying definitions only when it is absolutely required. Edwards employs terms broadly, seeking to avoid obscurity often brought about by philosophers, metaphysicians, and polemic divines.[79] For this lack of precision, Muller charges Edwards with a causal system that emphasizes efficient causality while neglecting formal and final causality at the human level.[80] He states,

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[77] "Miscellanies," no. 706, in *WJE*, 18:324.

[78] A simple reading of no. 706 reveals considerable theological agreement with Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, 1:647–52.

[79] *WJE*, 1:137.

[80] Muller defines formal and final cause as follows: "(3) the *causa formalis*, or formal cause, which is the *essential* or *quidditas* of the thing, and which is determinative of *what* the thing caused is to

> Edwards [sic] approach assumes a single line of causality that emphasizes efficiency but also includes material and final causes, probably lacks a sense of distinct formal causes, and does not make the traditional distinction between primary and secondary causality.[81]

And elsewhere,

> Edwards' theology as a whole may be teleological, but there is no teleology here [in Edwards' sun analogy]. The causation is mechanical, not from a materialist perspective, but in the sense that there is nothing about it that yields genuine contingencies, effects that could be otherwise. The chain of causes, of material and immaterial antecedents simply grinds on as it must.[82]

Muller willingly grants that Edwards works with notions of efficient and material causes. Final causes may be found in Edwards's greater theological work as a general principle, such as *Concerning The End for Which God Created the World*. However, final causation remains absent in Edwards's anthropology with regard to human choice and formal causes are either indistinct or absent.

Causation in *FOW*

I offer two minor responses to Muller's argument followed by a possible rendering of formal causation in Edwards. First, Edwards was neither unaware nor dismissive of formal and final causes. As a student and tutor, Edwards would have used William Brattle's logic text, which contains the four causes found in Aristotle as well as 10 different refinements of efficient causality.[83] Further, nothing in his writing explicitly or implicitly indicates a disdain for final or formal causes.

Second, Edwards's definition of a cause is broader than efficient causality and could conceivably allow for formal and final causality. He expressly states,

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be; (4) the *causa finalis*, or final cause, which is the ultimate purpose for which a thing is made or an act is performed." Richard A. Muller, "Causa," in *Dictionary of Latin and Greek Theological Terms: Drawn Principally from Protestant Scholastic Theology*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2017), 56–57.

[81] Muller, "Edwards and Turretin on Necessity, Contingency, and Freedom of Will," 271.

[82] Muller, "Edwards and Turretin on Necessity, Contingency, and Freedom of Will," 272.

[83] *WJE*, 6:350n6. For the texts used, see Rick Kennedy, ed., *Aristotelian and Cartesian Logic at Harvard: Charles Morton's "Logick System" & William Brattle's "Compendium of Logick"* (Boston: Colonial Society of Massachusetts, 1995).

> When I use the word "cause" in this discourse: since, for want of a better word, I shall have occasion to use it in a sense which is more extensive, than that in which it is sometimes used. The word is often used in so restrained a sense as to signify only that which has a positive efficiency or influence to produce a thing or bring it to pass.[84]

He then defines "cause" as follows:

> Therefore I sometimes use the word "cause" in this inquiry, to signify any antecedent, either natural or moral, positive or negative, on which an event, either a thing, or the manner and circumstance of a thing, so depends, that it is the ground and reason, either in whole, or in part, why it is, rather than not, or why it is as it is, rather than otherwise; or in other words, any antecedent with which a consequent event is so connected, that it truly belongs to the reason why the proposition which affirms that event, is true; whether it has any positive influence or not.[85]

Edwards's definition would not exclude formal and final causes or merely emphasize efficiency. Rather, a cause is a thing, or any number of things, providing a reason or explanation for an effect. In fact, Edwards even appears comfortable using the word "occasion" over "cause" to describe the relationship between cause and effect.[86] However, he is concerned with keeping a connection between events that he fears others would ignore if the word "occasion" were adopted. Should this connection be lost, so are principles of common sense and proofs for the existence of God. These two brief responses argue for a weak claim that Edwards is not opposed to formal and final causes either in his definitions or concepts.

The third and final claim is stronger: Edwards appears to have a notion of formal cause and operates with final causality in his anthropology of human choice, not merely in his theology generically. Speaking of Edwards's definition of cause, quoted above, Muller states, "There is no reference to formality or finality."[87] However, Edwards definition of a cause mentions the "manner and circumstance of a thing," referring to an

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[84] *WJE*, 1:180.

[85] *WJE*, 1:180–81.

[86] *WJE*, 1:181.

[87] Muller, "Edwards and Turretin on Necessity, Contingency, and Freedom of Will," 272.

earlier portion of *FOW* where a case can be made for concepts consistent with formal and final causality.

The determination of the will, according to Edwards, requires the mind's proper view of the object for it to be deemed agreeable. Edwards provides a partial enumeration of what this entails: the appearance of the object viewed, the manner of view, and the state of mind of the subject.[88] The circumstance of the object, as viewed in the mind's eye, is either, "beautiful and pleasant, or deformed and irksome."[89] Although the object presents itself to the mind, the object itself must be viewed as beautiful by the mind. The object may be beautiful at one time and deformed at another, as judged by the same person at a different time, or by different persons at the same time.[90] Motives help shape the form of the object in the mind of the subject, as Edwards states,

> Whatever is a motive, in this sense, must be something that is extant in the view or apprehension of the understanding, or perceiving faculty. Nothing can induce or invite the mind to will or act anything, any further than it is perceived, or is some way or other in the mind's view; for what is wholly unperceived, and perfectly out of the mind's view, can't affect the mind at all. 'Tis most evident, that nothing is in the mind, or reaches it, or takes any hold of it, any otherwise than as it is perceived or thought of.[91]

The presentation of the object as beautiful or irksome is dependent upon the mind's apprehending it as such, specifically, the motives that exist in the mind. Further, the mind perceives the attending pleasure and trouble. Should two objects present themselves to the mind, the mind judges their attending beauty or deformity. If the mind discerns that they are relatively equal, the mind must then determine how near or far off the object is, since, "'Tis a thing in itself agreeable to the mind, to have pleasure speedily; and

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[88] In this part of the work, Edwards regularly refers to objects, their appearance of the mind, and the state of the subject's mind as "manner" and "circumstance." *WJE*, 1:144–48.

[89] *WJE*, 1:145. Although Edwards always speaks of the "manner and circumstance of a thing," in that order, he addresses the circumstance first and the manner second.

[90] *WJE*, 1:147.

[91] *WJE*, 1:142.

disagreeable to have it delayed." The mind pursues that with the greatest and nearest degree of pleasure, be this of appetite or reason.[92]

The mind not only discerns the circumstance of the object but also its manner. The manner of the object's appearance concerns the mind's ability to apprehend the object's firmness and degree of pleasure. The mind desires certain happiness. The firmer the connection appears in the mind the more likely it is to choose that object. Further, the degree of future pleasure must be clear in the mind. The mind is more inclined to choose that which appears livelier and stronger. Putting the circumstance and manner together: the mind's perception of the idea of beauty and its attending pleasures supply elements equivalent to the formal cause.

The final cause is goodness, or that which appears as good or agreeable to the subject. Edwards considers it a contradiction that the will pursue that which is disagreeable, rather, it must pursue "that which suits the mind."[93] Thus, choice for Edwards is inherently teleological, even at the level of anthropology; it pursues that which appears as good. It might be said, that man, created in God's image, acts like God. Both pursue that which is ultimately for their own good. Both do so by means of an idea of beauty. The former represents final cause and the latter formal cause. Formal and final causes are not entirely distinct in his thought, but that should be no surprise. It is difficult, at times, to differentiate between formal and final causes since there are occasions when the form is fully realized in the end for which it was caused.[94]

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[92] *WJE*, 1:147.

[93] *WJE*, 1:143.

[94] Andrea Falcon, "Aristotle on Causality," in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward N. Zalta, Spring 2019 ed., Metaphysics Research Lab, Stanford University, 2019, https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2019/entries/aristotle-causality/.

"Miscellanies," no. 749

Thus far, a case for an inherent teleology, including elements that satisfy the notion of a formal cause, has been made from Edwards work, *FOW*. "Miscellanies," no. 749 confirms this reading of Edwards and grounds human formal and final causes in the image of God. Edwards argues that the world, as a whole and in its parts, is designed with final causes, aims, and ends. He holds this as common sense.

This supposition of a final cause requires an efficient cause that is "an intelligent and voluntary, or designing agent."[95] He reasons that the world cannot have any cause, for, "In nothing there can in no respect be any regard or relation to a future thing."[96] Further, the world cannot be self-caused, for futurity governs the thing disposed. The world cannot be self-disposed for a final cause when it has no relation to its own future prior to disposal. By way of example, the clock is disposed to tell time; time is not disposed by the clock. Edwards's reasoning "shows that an efficient cause of the world must be an intelligent, voluntary agent."[97] Final causes demand an intelligent being since the final cause is not immediately present in the effect, for the future has no "actual being," yet, "has influence and governs in the effect that is produced."[98] He continues, "For that which in no respect whatsoever *is* can in no respect whatsoever have influence in an effect, for it is a contradiction to suppose that that which absolutely and in all respects is not, or is nothing, should have influence of causality, or that mere nothing can do something."[99] The bridge, then, between efficient cause and final cause requires that the final cause exist, "in the understanding or some idea."[100] He reasons,

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[95] "Miscellanies," no. 749, in *WJE*, 18:392.

[96] "Miscellanies," no. 749, in *WJE*, 18:393.

[97] "Miscellanies," no. 749, in *WJE*, 18:393.

[98] "Miscellanies," no. 749, in *WJE*, 18:393.

[99] "Miscellanies," no. 749, in *WJE*, 18:393.

[100] "Miscellanies," no. 749, in *WJE*, 18:393.

> Therefore, if any cause be now seen acting with evident respect to something that is first to begin to be the next year, so as that its effects shall be disposed in order to it, and the production of that future thing governs in the ordering and disposal of the effect, it argues that that cause is intelligent, and that he foresees that future thing, or that it exists already in his idea, just as if he foretold it. To foretell an event to come is to hold forth those things that are signs conformed to the future event, and by their conformity manifestly show that that future event is present with the efficient of those signs, and that there is an aim or respect of the efficient to the event in directing and ordering and designing those things wherein the sign consists in conformity to the event signified, and for an end.[101]

For Edwards, final causes are not present in the efficient cause. Many efficient causes dispose effects that are not the final cause; nor are final causes discernible in those effects.

The process of moving toward the final cause, or causes, requires an intelligent and voluntary agent able to conceptualize the relationship between efficient and final cause to govern the intermediate until the final cause is realized. The idea governs the efficient cause moving it toward the end for which it exists. Since the end does not exist in the efficient cause and the efficient cause is not the end, the idea perceiving the form must exist for the final cause to be realized.

Edwards offers several examples to clarify his point, which include: stamps and the picture designed to be stamped, types in the press and the intended impression, letters and their combinations on paper with words intended to be spoken and read. These designs aim, direct, and order things toward their end.[102] In short, "There is indeed a presence of things absent, as in idea, and that there is indeed an ordering of effects for final causes, as in design."[103]

Edwards's argument in "Miscellanies," no. 749 is an argument for an intelligent and voluntary cause of the world. He reasons to God from the *telos* of the world. However, he also reasons from human beings made in God's image, which makes

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[101] "Miscellanies," no. 749, in *WJE*, 18:393.

[102] "Miscellanies," no. 749, in *WJE*, 18:394.

[103] "Miscellanies," no. 749, in *WJE*, 18:395.

no. 749 relevant to the argument of this dissertation. "Our own immediate consciousness," Edwards argues, reveals that intelligent and voluntary beings exist, and that, "we are intelligent and voluntary beings."[104] Edwards reasons that the effect cannot be more intelligent than the cause in whose image they are made. He states,

> Why should it appear strange that the intelligent creatures that it has made, are more in his image, than any other effects that it hath made? We see they are in its image in all other things far more than any unperceiving beings. They are so in the manner of their acting. The first cause acts from him [self], so these act more from themselves than any other beings. The first cause acts for final causes, so do these his creatures and these only. The first cause is the chief of all beings. Those intelligent beings that he has made are chief among creatures, and so in his image in that respect: and are next to their first cause, and 'tis more likely that those effects of the first cause that are nearest to it should be most like it. Those intelligent creatures are evidently set over the rest; the rest are put more in subjection to them than to any other and more in their power. In this respect they bear the image of the first [cause].[105]

Intelligent and voluntary beings differ from the rest of God's creation as they are the only causes that act for final causes. To act for final causes requires an idea or perception of the good in the object of choice that is not yet present in the efficient cause nor discerned in the coming final cause. The signs of intelligence, which reflect the image, include:

> 1.) that he acts and produces effects, 2.) that in acting or producing effects, he shows that things not present in their actual existence are yet some way present with him as an idea, by a conformity of his acts to things distant or future, as it is one that conceives of things distant and future, 3.) that he acts with design or [by] aiming at that which is future. But he that acts for final causes does all these things.[106]

Thus, human beings are inherently and necessarily designed to pursue the good as the final cause.

The formal cause may be considered as the idea of the good present in the mind of the intelligent and voluntary agent. The idea of the good consists in the manner and circumstance of the object as it appears to the agent combined with the state of the

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[104] "Miscellanies," no. 749, in *WJE*, 18:396.

[105] "Miscellanies," no. 749, in *WJE*, 18:396.

[106] "Miscellanies," no. 749, in *WJE*, 18:394.

subject's mind at the time preceding the choice. The agent makes the choice and the will is determined toward that particular end. I believe this best makes sense of Edwards's account of *FOW* with the aid of "Miscellanies," no. 749. Simply put, in Edwards's words, "In an efficient cause's disposing things for a final cause, it appears that things not actually in being are present with it, but present with it so as to determine it in acting; just as intelligent beings are determined by choice, and by a wise choice, rejecting the bad and choosing the good."[107]

Indifference and Potency

Muller's concern that Edwards's view is "mere willing" has been obviated. However, Muller's charge is more specific: Edwards denies any moment of indifference. Even if the above arguments succeed in demonstrating that the intellect and will are distinct, the purpose for this distinction is to provide an account of indifference in free will. The extent and role of indifference in the Reformed orthodox is debated, but the general assumption is that Edwards rejected every sense of indifference. However, this is a misreading.[108]

Early in his work, Edwards assumes that the soul may be considered in a perfect state of indifference. He states,

> I trust it will be allowed by all, that in every act of the will there is an act of choice; that in every volition there is a preference, or a prevailing inclination of the soul, whereby the soul, at that instant, is out of a state of perfect indifference, with respect to the direct object of the volition. So that in every act, or going forth of the will,

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[107] "Miscellanies," no. 749, in *WJE*, 18:395.

[108] Sam Storms's positive reception of Edwards merely focuses on his negative arguments against indifference of the will, which, to be fair, Edwards dedicates great attention to. Storms, "Jonathan Edwards on the Freedom of the Will," 131–69. However, Edwards's positive acceptance of indifference and the role it plays is absent. Muller, likewise, neglects Edwards's positive reception of indifference, claiming he denied it and attributed it to the Arminians, distancing himself from the tradition. Muller, "Jonathan Edwards and the Absence of Free Choice," 20–21. Muller contends, that Turretin's nuanced understanding of indifference allowed him to accept and reject it in a qualified sense, but the same cannot be said for Edwards. Muller, "Edwards and Turretin on Necessity, Contingency, and Freedom of Will," 279. In note 50, Muller claims Edwards's understanding of indifference is univocally discussed as the Jesuit sense. In his most recent article, he continues to levy this charge against Edwards; see Muller, "Neither Libertarian nor Compatibilist."

> there is some preponderation of the mind or inclination, one way rather than another; and the soul had rather have or do one thing [*A*] than another [*B*], or than not to have or do that thing [*not-A*]; and that there, where there is absolutely no preferring or choosing, but a perfect continuing equilibrium, there is no volition.[109]

Here, Edwards assumes common ground. The soul is in a state of perfect indifference toward the object prior to prevailing inclinations.[110] Prior to the will's extension or movement toward a particular object, the mind ponders *A*, *not-A*, or *B*. Where there is no inclination, the soul maintains a perfect equilibrium. That is, apart from preferences and inclinations, Edwards's view allows for indifference toward *A*, *not-A*, or *B*. This notion of indifference works in his system in three different ways.[111]

First, indifference occurs in the mind prior to the act of choosing which he contrasts with indifference when the act of choosing takes place. Speaking of Watts's work, Edwards says,

> What is meant can't be, that the mind is indifferent before it comes to have a choice, or till it has a preference; or, which is the same thing, that the mind is indifferent until it comes to be not indifferent. *For certainly this author did not suppose he had a controversy with any person in supposing this* [emphasis added] . . . . Besides, it appears in fact, that the thing which this author supposes, is not that the will chooses one thing before another, concerning which it is indifferent *before* it chooses; but also is indifferent *when* it chooses; and that its being otherwise than indifferent is not till afterwards, in consequence of its choice.[112]

Again, Edwards assumes that he shares a common notion of indifference with his opponents. He opposes indifference in the act of choosing, which is accepted by his opponents, but accepts indifference prior to choice. For example, an agent may be indifferent toward various objects and unable to make up his mind *with respect to the*

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[109] *WJE*, 1:140.

[110] Edwards also speaks of a state of perfect indifference in *WJE*, 2:96.

[111] For a treatment of how Edwards rejects indifference of the will, see Storms, "Jonathan Edwards on the Freedom of the Will," 150–51.

[112] *WJE*, 1:196.

objects. However, the choice to withhold acting, or to deliberate, means that the mind is not indifferent to the next, direct, and immediate *act*.[113]

Second, Edwards allows for a general, but not particular, indifference. Edwards describes an agent who has decided to touch a square on a chessboard (particular) but has yet to decide which square to touch (general). The agent may begin a series of actions without being inclined to the entire series of acts instantaneously. As such, he is more inclined to be indifferent toward remote rather than near objects. This instance of indifference concerns itself with the progress of one act to the next while the first instance addresses the difference between action and object. Philip Fisk appears to overlook how Edwards utilized indifference, hinting that he denied it completely.[114] For this reason, he assumes Locke's notion of deliberation and suspension would have aided Edwards, even if Edwards labeled them acts of the will. However, Edwards did label them acts of the will. These acts of the will would have followed the last dictate of the understanding. The agent would deliberate, suspending the act with the object in view. Since indifference toward various objects exists, the mind is not indifferent toward suspending the act in relation to the object.

By way of example, consider a man about to attend a formal event. He does not know whether he should wear the red tie or the blue tie. He is indifferent to the object, the tie. Since he is indifferent to the object, he suspends his action with regard to the object and deliberates as his next act. He was not indifferent toward this act of deliberation. His lack of indifference in suspending the act in order to deliberate arose from his indifference toward the ties. While deliberating, he perceives a particular motivation in his mind. He might remember that his wife favors the blue tie. This

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[113] *WJE*, 1:200–201.

[114] Philip John Fisk, *Jonathan Edwards's Turn from the Classic-Reformed Tradition of Freedom of the Will* (Göttingen: V&R Academic, 2016), 313–14, 320.

motivation being perceived as the strongest in his mind, the man is moved out of a state of indifference with regard to the object, the tie, and as his next, he chooses the blue tie.

Finally, Edwards allows for indifference in terms of power and ability while rejecting it in reference to choice.[115] Edwards is aware of discussions relating to the indifference of the will as it relates to power and choice. The former speaks to the will's power *qua* will whereas the latter speaks of the will's ability to act without bias or determination. Both refer of the will's power or ability to select between *A*, *not-A*, or *B*. He understands those who speak of the will's indifference as it relates to power as inconsistent "with the manner of expression used by the defenders of liberty of indifference in general."[116] Therefore, it is not an attack on indifference of the power of the will but the abuses of those who use this distinction to argue for the Arminian sense of indifference.[117] Edwards recognizes and distinguishes the two views. He continues,

> And I wish such refiners would thoroughly consider, whether they distinctly know their own meaning, when they make a distinction between indifference of the soul as to its power or ability of willing or choosing, and the soul's indifference as to the preference or choice itself; and whether they don't deceive themselves in imagining that they have any distinct meaning at all. The indifference of the soul as to its ability or power to will, must be the same thing as the indifference of the state of the power or faculty of the will, or the indifference of the state which the soul itself, which has that power or faculty, hitherto remains in, as to the exercise of that power, in the choice it shall by and by make.[118]

He contends that those who use the distinction between indifference as to power and indifference as to choice practically operate as if there is no distinction between the two. For his opponents, the distinction of power just is the distinction of choice. Not only does the will have the power to perform *A*, *not-A*, and *B*, but that power persists through choice, such that, all things being what they are, the will still possesses power to choose

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[115] *WJE*, 1:204.

[116] *WJE*, 1:204.

[117] *WJE*, 1:203.

[118] *WJE*, 1:204.

between *A*, *not-A*, and *B*. This view is opposed to the distinction that the will retains the power of contradiction and contrary choice but follows the dictate of the understanding, which accurately describes Edwards's view. Thus, Edwards does not reject indifference as to power. Rather, he criticizes those who use this distinction to aid their cause in such a way that eliminates the need for the division between the two senses. Since the distinctions are abused, Edwards moves beyond this language while not denying the same principle that governs the need for the distinction in the first place.

Although Edwards does not explicitly affirm indifference in terms of power and ability, he does not deny it and it appears implied. Further, he arrives at the same distinction via a different route: moral and natural ability. Consider the following: "It can't be truly said, according to the ordinary use of language, that a malicious man, let him be never so malicious, can't hold his hand from striking, or that he is not able to shew his neighbor kindness."[119] The malicious man can strike (*A*), withhold from striking (*not-A*), or show kindness (*B*). According to Edwards, "In the strictest propriety of speech, a man has a thing in his power."[120] He concludes, "Therefore, in these things to ascribe a nonperformance to the want of power or ability is not just; because the thing wanting is not a being *able* but a being *willing*. There are faculties of mind, and capacity of nature, and everything else, sufficient, but a disposition; nothing wanting but a will."[121] The agent, according to Edwards, has the capacity to will something different, and, by mere willing, would extend toward a different object. The sufficient conditions, including faculties of the mind and capacity of nature as well as anything else that might apply, are present. Only the mind's perception of the good at the moment of choice lacks.

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[119] *WJE*, 1:162.

[120] *WJE*, 1:162.

[121] *WJE*, 1:162.

Thus, the will, and all its attending sufficient conditions, possesses a power suitable to extend to multiple objects. Edwards materially affirms indifference of power or ability.

Contra Muller, Edwards allows for indifference of the will but in a distinguished sense.[122] Indifference in the mode of acting does not constitute freedom of the will, but may be found when the understanding deliberates, is indifferent to future actions, or understood as a power. Muller might respond, "In neither case, Hobbes or Edwards, is there a prior moment of genuine indifference, unclogged by any 'pre-determining Bias or Preponderation.'"[123] While Muller would be partially correct, the statement does not do justice to Edwards's thought. The three ways Edwards accepts indifference allow him to say that the will may be indifferent toward the next *object* but not the next *act*. The next act may be to weigh options about two objects that appear to be equal. This distinction is crucial to understanding Edwards's project and prevents it from being flattened into a mechanistic view of man. While criticizing Edwards, Muller states, "In the Reformed orthodox view, the will is indeterminate with regard [sic] its particular objects in the primary state or actuality, prior to choice."[124] But, Muller claims, this is not true for Edwards since the will, "Is always predisposed to act in a particular way in relation to a particular object and particular circumstance."[125] If this were the case, then Edwards would have no need to distinguish between *object* and *act*. The need for this distinction reflects the kind of indifference Edwards presupposes.

Thus, when Muller contends, "In the early Reformed understanding, there appears to be precisely such a moment, a moment in which the final cause or goal of the

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[122] Muller states, "Whereas Edwards simply denies indifference of the will, Turretin makes a distinction, affirming one kind of indifference, denying another." Muller, "Edwards and Turretin on Necessity, Contingency, and Freedom of Will," 279.

[123] Richard A. Muller, *Divine Will and Human Choice: Freedom, Contingency, and Necessity in Early Modern Reformed Thought* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2017), 295. Muller finishes the sentence by quoting *WJE*, 1:345.

[124] Muller, "Neither Libertarian nor Compatibilist," 283.

[125] Muller, "Neither Libertarian nor Compatibilist," 284.

act is freely determined by the conjoint working of intellect in relation to a particular object,"[126] Edwards can concur. If conjoint means a determination of the will by the intellect upon evaluating two or more objects that the agent is presently indifferent toward, Edwards would not demur given the understanding of indifference supplied here. He distinguished between indifference, allowing him to accept three forms while rejecting the Arminian notion. Failure to note these forms prevents one from seeing the precision in his work.

Should the argumentation regarding Edwards's view of indifference stand, he ought to be read and judged differently. From the beginning of his work, he affirms that the soul is in a state of indifference, apart from inclinations, toward different objects. As he continues, his writing focuses on more narrow elements of choice. His work ought to be read as a treatise on practical understanding in the moment of choice. It is, after all, not a treatise on the will, but a polemic against the Arminian notion of freedom of the will. Some interpreters read his work expecting a broader treatment than offered. Yet, they often miss the subtleties and nuances that clarify his thought by revealing the intricacies of his position.

Conclusion

This chapter labored to demonstrate Edwards's continuity with the Reformed tradition by examining his view of the understanding and the will. Significant attention was given to the understanding. I argued that Edwards's more refined language in *FOW* reveals that he differentiated the two. Although he did not operate with the faculty psychology of the Reformed, the powers of the soul function in a similar manner. The understanding is a perceiving faculty, speculating and feeling. The mind perceives that which appears as the greatest good, determining the will. The will is not necessarily

[126] Muller, *Divine Will and Human Choice*, 296–96.

determined by the greatest good according to the narrow understanding, but the broad understanding, considering all things relevant to the present good. The understanding makes absolute and comparative judgments. Edwards's view of the broad and narrow understanding fits within a larger context that reveals the work of the theoretical intellect. The mind perceives objects in relation to each other and does not merely perceive them as beautiful or irksome. Edwards's deemed the understanding, not merely an unimpeded will, as essential to moral responsibility and agency. The agent must be a moral creature, able to receive moral motivations. Further, an impairment that hinders immanent or external acts of the will relieves the agent of moral culpability. Upon comparing Turretin and Edwards on blasphemy of the Holy Spirit, it was confirmed that the distinctions in the understanding are functionally equivalent between the two theologians.

Although Edwards did not explicitly endorse or employ formal and final causality, they find a place in *FOW* and his "Miscellanies." The "manner and circumstance" of the object as perceived by the understanding reveal the presence of formal causation. Final causation may be found in the will's determination to the greatest apparent good. This reading of *FOW* was bolstered by "Miscellanies," no. 749, where Edwards reasons that voluntary and intelligent agents act for final causes. Efficient causes are connected to final causes by the idea present in the mind of the voluntary and intelligent agent, which constitutes formal causality. Humans, created in God's image, act this way by nature.

Having sufficiently distinguished the understanding from the will, I explained how Edwards accepted a qualified version of indifference. Edwards understands the will as a power with the capacity to actualize *A*, *not-A*, and *B*. Considered in the act of choice, the will follows the determination of the understanding. With regard to deliberation, future actions, and understood as an abstract power, Edwards allows for indifference of the will. Although he spends very little time explicating these distinctions, they are present in his work.

In the second chapter, I argued that the Reformed were compatibilists. Like Edwards, they defined a free choice as rational spontaneity and willingness. Insofar as the will possessed an inherent capacity to actualize liberties of contrariety and contradiction, the will could be conditionally determined by the intellect. Edwards argued similarly. The role of the understanding for the Reformed was essential for free choice, as it was for Edwards. His writings failed to turn the understanding into brute instinct. The criteria put forth by the Reformed are not violated by Edwards. Not only has Muller's work read unnecessary conditions for a free choice onto the Reformed, but he has also misread Edwards's work. The next two chapters continue to demonstrate Edwards's continuity with the tradition by examining how the Reformed and Edwards discussed free will in light of God's decree and foreknowledge as well as Christ's impeccability.

CHAPTER 4

FATE, FOREKNOWLEDGE, AND FREEDOM

This chapter marks a turn in the dissertation. Up to this point, we have evaluated the arguments and definitions put forth by Muller and *RTF* as they relate to the anthropology of the Reformed and Edwards. In chapter 2, I argued that the Reformed defined a free choice as one that arises from the agent's reasons and with his will. A reasoned choice differs from physical necessity and brute instinct. A choice that forces an agent against his will may be described as coaction and negates a free choice. These criteria are consistent with compatibilism and do not require the alternative possibilities condition put forth by Muller and *RTF*.

Chapter 3 argued that Edwards sufficiently distinguished between the intellect and the will even though he did not employ the faculty psychology of the Reformed. Formal and final causality fit comfortably within his writings in *FOW* and are grounded in the appearance of the object and the intellect's determination of the will to the greatest apparent good. If the Reformed do not require PAP_{All} as espoused by Muller and *RTF*, then Edwards's qualified sense of indifference and moral and natural ability distinction may be found consistent with Reformed writings since a man may properly have within his power the capacity to actualize *A*, *not-A*, and *B*. Thus, Edwards's view of free will is consistent with the rational spontaneity and willingness espoused by the Reformed. In this chapter, I argue that the Reformed and Edwards maintained that God's foreknowledge follows from the decree, ensuring the infallibility of an event that could not be otherwise than God foreknows. In order to establish this thesis, I discuss the Reformed and Edwards's view of fate to show that they shared the same concerns about fate while accepting a causal connection properly grounded in God's decree and carried

forth by reason and choice. Then, I examine the Reformed doctrine of foreknowledge and explicate how a contingent act could not be otherwise. Finally, I examine Edwards's argument for foreknowledge as found in *FOW* and demonstrate that he is in continuity with the Reformed.

Fate

The Reformed consistently addressed and rejected the charge that their doctrine resembled Stoic fate. However, a mere rejection of Stoic fate does not entail the denial of compatibilism. In what follows, I briefly analyze how the Reformed responded to fate, answer Muller's charge that the Reformed rejection of fate implies a denial of compatibilism and demonstrate that Edwards answered charges of fatalism in a manner similar to the Reformed.

The Reformed and Fatalism

Turretin identifies four different kinds of fate. Physical fatalism, the first form, reduces all events in the world to natural causes and is therefore rejected. The second form of fatalism is mathematical or that which allows the stars in the heavens to necessarily move the will of men on earth. Vermigli notes that this form of fatalism has consistently been rejected by the fathers.[1] The third fate identified by Turretin is Stoical fate, which he handles with greater care. Should this view imply a fixed connection of causes within the created order that subjects God and man, then he rejects it since, "They subject God to necessity, we subject necessity to God."[2] Necessity, for Turretin, does not present a problem. Some forms of Stoicism are close to the truth. He rejects these forms

[1] Peter Martyr Vermigli, *Predestination and Justification: Two Theological Loci*, trans. and ed. Frank A. James III, Sixteenth Century Essays and Studies 67 (Moscow, ID: Davenant Press, 2018), 18.

[2] Francis Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, vol. 1, *First through Tenth Topics*, ed. James T. Dennison Jr., trans. George Musgrave Giger (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 1992), 496.

because they appear to reduce causation to natural causes or causes that bind God. He claims,

> For although we hold that all things happen by an inevitable necessity through providence, still there is nothing common to us with them. We do not urge an absolute necessity in the causes themselves (as they do), but only a hypothetical necessity from the decree. Nor do we feign a natural and eternal series of causes and so inevitable even as to God, but a temporal (as are the causes themselves, made by God himself—to whose good pleasure and rule it is subject that he can at pleasure either change or hinder or take away.[3]

The kind of fatalism Turretin rejects becomes clearer: an absolute necessity arising from eternity and brought about by mere natural causes fails to comply with Christian theism because it binds God and removes his ability to will from his good pleasure. Turretin does not, however, reject the role of temporal causation insofar as it follows from the decree of God.

Calvin's argument resembles Turretin. Of Stoic fate, Calvin says,

> We do not, with the Stoics, contrive a necessity out of the perpetual connection and intimately related series of causes, which is contained in nature; but we make God the ruler and governor of all things, who in accordance with his wisdom has from the farthest limit of eternity decreed what he was going to do, and now by his might carries out what he has decreed. From this we declare that not only heaven and earth and inanimate creatures, but also the plans and intentions of men, are so governed by his providence that they are borne by it straight to their appointed end.[4]

The Stoics, according to Calvin, reduced causation to a series of causes within nature, which eliminates God's rule, governance, and decree. The version of fatalism Calvin opposes here rules out theism and God's sovereign and providential rule over the universe. Of Calvin's view, Helm rightly states,

> The ultimate explanation of why events, including human actions, occur is not in the last analysis to be referred to any immanent set of causes, much less to a set of causes to which God is bound. Calvin is not willing to consider the power of such a series, particularly the idea of a necessary set of causes, apart from the one who

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[3] Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, 1:496.

[4] John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, ed. John T. McNeill, trans. Ford Lewis Battles (Philadelphia: Westminster John Knox Press, 1960), I.xvi.8.

> ordains it, Almighty God. But this does not mean that Calvin denies the existence of such a series. It is simply that this is not the whole story.[5]

According to Helm, Calvin rejected a series of causes independent of God or a series of causes that bound God. Calvin sought to explain how and why events in the created realm were necessary, as he later states, "What God has determined must necessarily so take place, even though it is neither unconditionally, nor of its own peculiar nature, necessary."[6] The necessity can neither be absolute nor reduced to the created order. If an event is necessary due to God's eternal decree and its execution in time, then Calvin does not object to this form of necessity.

Turretin accepts, in substance although he does not seem to favor the term, Christian fate, which differs from other forms of fate in three aspects. First, providence resides in the subject, God, whereas fate is detached from the subject and resides in the created order. Second, the order differs since "fate depends on providence, not the contrary."[7] Third, fate eliminates immediate divine causation in the created realm. For these reasons, Vermigli does not outright reject the notion of fate, saying, "If fate signifies nothing else but a certain connection of causes, which is not carried rashly or by chance, but is governed by providence of God and may at his will be changed, I see no cause why the thing itself should be rejected by any."[8] The Reformed remain unconcerned about the fixed connection of causes in the created order and focused their attention on the origin of these connections. Certain forms of fatalism were off limits because they imposed a necessity that did not originate in God and occurred by an impersonal inevitability. Inevitability, however, only affects human freedom if it

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[5] Paul Helm, *Calvin at the Centre* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 247.

[6] Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, I.xvi.9.

[7] Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, 1:497.

[8] Vermigli, *Predestination and Justification*, 18; Vermigli, *Philosophical Works: On the Relation of Philosophy to Theology*, trans. and ed. Joseph C. McLelland (Moscow, ID: Davenant Institute, 2018), 196.

originated in an impersonal force or reduces causation to the natural order. Compatibilism does neither and, as such, remains a viable option for the Reformed.

Perkins adds credence to this interpretation when he discusses necessity of compulsion and infallibility. He defines the former as follows, "Necessity of compulsion is that which infers violence to things by some cause working without and forcibly constrains that they do either this or that. This indeed is the stoical necessity, that a man should do anything against his will being compelled by force and necessity."[9] When the Reformed rejected Stoic fate for reasons that violated human freedom, it is because free actions devolved into natural causes, absolute necessity, or an external cause working against a willing will.

Muller and Fatalism

Muller understands the difference between the Reformed view of freedom and Stoic fatalism as follows:

> Free choice then, is more than the mere spontaneity that could characterize willing under the conditions of Stoic fatalism: it is also constituted by the power of self-motion, an inward cause to do something, and its identification as a kind of contingency rests on the natural capacity to do something that might "as well not have been done."[10]

This statement does not appear to do justice to the analysis just provided. The Reformed could allow for rational spontaneity arising from the judgment of the intellect and determined to one particular effect by the decree of God which necessarily connects causes and effects within the created order, all the while rejecting Stoic fate. The causes could neither be naturalized nor absolutely necessary. Should certain conditions obtain, then an event could not be otherwise. If the agent was not coerced and acted from reason,

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[9] William Perkins, *The Manner and Order of Predestination*, in *The Works of William Perkins*, vol. 6, ed. Joel R. Beeke and Greg A. Salazar (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2018), 333.

[10] Richard A. Muller, *Grace and Freedom: William Perkins and the Early Modern Reformed Understanding of Free Choice and Divine Grace* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2020), 181.

then the agent was free even though he could not do otherwise. The Reformed criticism of Stoic fatalism neither rules out compatibilism nor assumes Muller's version of alternativity. If this is correct, compatibilism remains an option among the Reformed.

Edwards and Fatalism

Edwards rejected forms of fatalism as well and for similar reasons as the Reformed. With Perkins, Edwards argued that fatalism can work against a willing will and, if so, it ought to be rejected. Necessity of compulsion undermines moral agency and the use of means. Edwards also rejected the claim that his view shared common ground with the Stoic fatalists who naturalized causation since, according to Edwards, it is, "Inconsistent with any kind of liberty, that is or can be any perfection, dignity, privilege or benefit, or anything desirable, in any respect, for any intelligent creature, or indeed with any liberty that is possible or conceivable."[11] Naturalistic causation violates the process of human reasoning and understanding, a necessary requirement for intelligent creatures who act freely. Finally, Edwards rejected fatalism for the same reasons as Reformed: it failed to properly place the connection of causes in God. Edwards states,

> If they held any such doctrine of fate as is inconsistent with the world's being in all things subject to the disposal of an intelligent wise agent, that presides, not as the soul of the world, but as the sovereign Lord of the universe, governing all things by proper will, choice and design, in the exercise of the most perfect liberty conceivable, without subjection to any constraint, or being properly under the power or influence of anything before, above or without himself; I wholly renounce any such doctrine.[12]

In order for God's sovereignty to be retained, all causes must be subject to God's disposal and God cannot be subject to the disposal of a series of causes that fail to originate with him. God is not the soul of the world, unfolding in time, but the Lord who governs all things as directed by his understanding and accomplished by his will.

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[11] *WJE*, 1:374.

[12] *WJE*, 1:374.

This brief analysis of fate reveals that Edwards rejected Stoic fatalism for the same reasons as the Reformed. The Reformed rejection of Stoic fatalism does not entail a denial of compatibilism or a fixed connection of causes. Nor is PAP_{All}, a necessary condition. It is necessary that an agent acts from reason and without coercion, which is compatible with a fixed connection of causes. If the series of causes rules God or is beyond the rule of God, then this form of fatalism is also rejected. Here, Edwards and the Reformed agree. Further, the Reformed did not put forth a criterion that eliminates Edwards's view. Instead, one finds continuity in their rejection of fatalism.

Foreknowledge

The Reformed did not rule out fate for reasons that would also eliminate the compatibilism espoused by Edwards. Neither the Reformed nor Edwards were concerned about a fixed connection of causes if the causes were neither reduced to nature nor binding upon God. Instead, they argued that God determines or brings about all things by his decree, governing all causes and their connections. This section examines the Reformed view of foreknowledge and its relationship to the decree with a twofold purpose. First, I intend to argue that the Reformed view of foreknowledge and the decree differs from the view of alternativity put forth by Muller and *RTF*. God's immutable decree and infallible foreknowledge requires conditional alternativity. Second, the explication of the Reformed view provides the parameters by which Edwards's own view of foreknowledge and freedom can be examined.

The Reformed View of Foreknowledge

Paul Helm coined *A*-foreknowledge, as a term. Derived from Reformed thought, Helm contends that it alleviates and clarifies some of the concerns associated with the Reformed tradition as they pertain to God's knowledge and human freedom. He contrasts *A*-foreknowledge and *O*-foreknowledge, stating,

> If *X O*-foreknows that *p* then *X* knows that *p* but not as a result of bringing it about that *p* is true. There is a contingent connection between the foreknowledge of *p* and the making of *p* true; *O*-foreknowledge results from possessing evidence which ensures the truth of *p*, or from some other factor. By contrast if *X A*-foreknows that *p* then he knows that *p* as a result of ordaining or effectively willing or otherwise ensuring that *p* is true. At the very least *X's A*-foreknowing that *p* is causally necessary for the truth of *p* and perhaps it is causally sufficient as well.[13]

How *X* foreknows differentiates the two models. *O*-foreknowledge is passive. *X O*-foreknows something to be true when *X* possesses sufficient evidence of a contingent future event. *A*-foreknowledge is active. *X A*-foreknows a contingent future event because *X* decreed or ordained the future contingent event. It is important to draw this distinction since, as Helm notes, "While modern philosophers of religion take note of *A*-foreknowledge they almost invariably discuss the problem of divine foreknowledge and human freedom in terms of *O*-foreknowledge."[14] *A*-foreknowledge allows one to affirm that propositions are bearers of truth that can be expressed in a tenseless form.[15] As a result, *A*-foreknowledge provides a tool that allows one to defend divine timelessness, escape the charge of logical fatalism, and affirm the compatibility of divine determinism and human responsibility.[16] The Reformed will now be examined in light of this distinction.

Consider the following quotations from Vermigli and Calvin, which are consistent with Helm's description. Vermigli writes,

> We should understand that the knowledge of God extends further than his foreknowledge, or his knowledge does not reach only to things present, past, or

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[13] Paul Helm, *Eternal God: A Study of God without Time*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 129.

[14] Helm, *Eternal God*, 132.

[15] Helm, *Eternal God*, 140. Oliver Crisp rightly employs Edwards's understanding of *A*-foreknowledge to overcome Plantinga's objection that Edwards's view entails fatalism. For Plantinga's argument, see Alvin Plantinga, "On Ockham's Way Out," in *The Concept of God*, ed. Thomas V. Morris, Oxford Readings in Philosophy (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 171–200. Helm offers a compelling response to Plantinga's charges in Helm, *Eternal God*. For a response specifically focused on Edwards's use of the distinction, see Oliver Crisp, *Jonathan Edwards and the Metaphysics of Sin* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2005).

[16] *A*-foreknowledge is not without its problems. It must be shown that compatibilism allows for moral responsibility, and one must answer the further charge that God is the author of sin.

> future, but also to those things that will never happen, whether possible (as they say) or impossible. God's foreknowledge pertains to those things that will come about, so that foreknowledge requires a will that precedes, for nothing will happen unless God wills it; otherwise, he would prevent it. Therefore, God foreknows those things that he wills to come to pass.[17]

God knows more than he foreknows. Those things which God knows that he does not foreknow include events that will not occur. God's will precedes his foreknowledge. Vermigli elsewhere defines this as God's decree, which is essential for God's foreknowledge. He writes,

> But there is not a bare foreknowledge of these things, but the sort of divine will by which God cannot foreknow future things unless they are such as will happen. And those things that will or will not be cannot happen or exist unless God wills them to happen with some kind of will. Therefore, there is a will of God that precedes foreknowledge.[18]

The "bare foreknowledge" may be described as *O*-foreknowledge whereas God's knowledge that requires and is preceded by a will is *A*-foreknowledge. *A*-foreknowledge fits Vermigli's view. Similarly, Calvin writes,

> If God only foresaw human events, and did not also dispose and determine them by his decision, then there would be some point in raising the question: whether his foreseeing had anything to do with their necessity. But since he foresees future events only by reason of the fact that he decreed that they take place, they vainly raise a quarrel over foreknowledge, when it is clear that all things take place rather by his determination and bidding.[19]

For Calvin, God foresees future events by reason of his decree. For this reason, discussion of *O*-foreknowledge is vain.

Perkins also distinguishes these two forms of foreknowledge, affirming *A*-foreknowledge.

> God, they say, decrees nothing in particular of things that are causal and contingent, but He foresees within Himself what the will of the creature will do nor not do when things are thus or thus ordered. And upon this foresight, He consequently determines what shall be done. But this opinion, as it gives to God a common or

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[17] Vermigli, *Predestination and Justification*, 16–17.

[18] Vermigli, *Philosophical Works*, 255.

[19] Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, III.xxiii.6.

> general providence, so it takes away the certain determination of God touching all particular events. And it is absurd to think that God should foresee the future acts of man's free will, when as yet He has determined nothing; for things that shall be are therefore to come to pass because God by decree has determined their being. And therefore the foreknowledge of things that shall be follows the decrees of God.[20]

For Perkins, if determination follows foresight, as his opponents argue, then God merely possesses a general providence. Instead, he argues that God's decree and determination of all things grounds his foreknowledge. He finds it absurd to believe that God's knowledge of future things exists antecedent to his decree since God's decree ensures that future things exists. Like Vermigli, Perkins affirms that God's foreknowledge follows the decree but that God knows more than he foreknows. He asserts,

> Therefore, the existence or being of things does not go before, but out of all doubt follows the decree of God. For first of all, there is a foreknowledge or (as it pleases others) a knowledge of beholding, whereby God beholds and sees what is possible to be and what not. Then follows the decree either of God's operation or of his voluntary permission, and consequentially of the event of the thing. And this decree being once laid down, the definite foreknowledge is conceived whereby it is known what shall come to pass infallibly.[21]

Perkins distinguishes between God's foreknowledge identified as knowledge of beholding and definite foreknowledge. God's essence grounds the former and his will the latter.

This distinction may also be described as God's knowledge of simple intelligence and knowledge of vision. Owen delineates these two distinctions in a manner similar to Perkins, saying,

> (1.) "Scientia visionis" hath for its object things past, present, and to come,—whatever had, hath, or will have, actual being. The measure of this knowledge is his will; because the will and decree of God only make those things future which were but possible before.

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[20] William Perkins, *A Treatise on God's Free Grace and Man's Free Will*, in *The Works of William Perkins*, vol. 6, ed. Joel R. Beeke and Greg A. Salazar (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2018), 432–33.

[21] Perkins, *The Manner and Order of Predestination*, 6:353.

> (2.) As for that 'scientia' which we call "simplicis intelligentiæ," the object of it is possible; the measure of it omnipotency, for by it he knows all he can do.[22]

Knowledge of simple intelligence may also be identified as God's natural knowledge whereas knowledge of vision is commonly designated as God's free knowledge.[23] Because God knows all that he can do and wills to bring about a particular event *p*, *p* has a determined truth value.[24] Owen reasoned that God's prediction of future events requires that the event in question, *p*, have a determinate truth value.[25]

The Reformed affirmed that God knows all that he could do in virtue of his nature and that will come about by virtue of his will. God does not will what he sees the creature do in time but wills what the creature will do in time, denying the Arminian notion of foreknowledge. Further, they also rejected middle knowledge. Turretin writes,

> Therefore the question is whether besides the natural knowledge (which is only of things possible) and the knowledge of vision (which is only of things future), there may be granted in God a certain third or middle knowledge concerning conditional future things. By which God knows what men or angels will freely do without a special decree preceding (if placed with these or those circumstances in such an order of things). The Jesuits, Socinians, and Remonstrants affirm this, the orthodox deny it.[26]

Middle knowledge could not be ascribed to God since he could not know the thing in itself, for it is only possible, nor could he know it by his decree, since middle knowledge

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[22] John Owen, *The Works of John Owen*, vol. 12, *Vindiciæ Evangelicæ*, ed. William H. Goold (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 2009), 128.

[23] For a helpful treatment on the various distinctions in the Reformed tradition, see Richard A. Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics: The Rise and Development of Reformed Orthodoxy, ca. 1520 to ca. 1725*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academics, 2003), 2:384–431.

[24] Owen, *Vindiciæ Evangelicæ*, 139.

[25] Owen helpful clarifies the status of a future proposition in relation to God, saying, "Their existence in time and being cast by the successive motion of things into the number of the things that are past, denotes an alteration in them, but not at all in the knowledge of God. So it is also in respect of things future. God knows them in that *esse intelligibile* which they have, as they may be known and understood; and how that is shall afterward be declared. He sees and knows them as they are, when they have that respect upon them of being future; when they lose this respect by their actual existence, he knows them still as before. They are altered; his knowledge, his understanding is infinite, and changeth not." Owen, *Vindiciæ Evangelicæ*, 127.

[26] Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, 1:214.

is antecedent to the decree. That which is future and possible may only be known consequent to the decree.

In *Introduction to Reformed Scholasticism*, Willem van Asselt outlines three views on the relationship between the decree and God's foreknowledge. He writes,

> Thomists defended their view that God's knowledge of future events is *preceded* by a divine decree (*decretum antecedens*). The Scotists rejected the Thomistic notions of an antecedent divine decree and of a physical determination of the human will. For the Scotists, the decision of a person does not depend on a temporally antecedent decree of God; God's decree was rather seen as *contemporaneous* with the decision of the created free will. In other words, God decides that what the human will freely does shall indeed occur. In the Scotist view there is no antecedent decree (*decretum antecedens*), but rather a concomitant decree (*decretum concomitans*). With their theory of *scientia media*, the Molinists defended the notion that God's decree was dependent on the human free will. Thus they taught that God's decree *follows* God's foreknowledge of that which a person will free do.[27]

Given the view of *A*-foreknowledge presented above, the Reformed presented above cannot be identified as Molinists or Scotists. The Reformed rejected the Molinist scheme of middle knowledge as fictitious and distinguished between the decree and its execution, ruling out the Scotist view as described by van Asselt. Turretin, for example, states, "There are acts immanent and intrinsic in God, but connoting a respect and relation (*schesin*) to something outside of God (such are the decrees, which are nothing else than the counsels of God concerning future things out of himself)."[28] The decree, then, differs from immanent, *ad intra* acts, such as the personal acts of begetting and spiration. These immanent acts terminate in the being of God and are absolutely necessary. The decree terminates outside of God and its effects are hypothetically necessary or necessary upon the supposition of the decree. Further, the decree also differs from extrinsic and transient acts of God, such as creation and government.[29] These extrinsic and transient acts are

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[27] Willem J. van Asselt, "Scholasticism in the Time of Early Orthodoxy (ca. 1560–1620)," in *Introduction to Reformed Scholasticism*, trans. Albert Gootjes, Reformed Historical-Theological Studies (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2011), 106–7.

[28] Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, 1:311.

[29] Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, 1:311.

from God and concern the execution of the decree. Turretin explicates this point when discussing the doctrine of providence, saying, "Providence can be viewed either in the antecedent decree or in the subsequent execution. The former is the eternal destination of all things to their ends; the latter is the temporal government of all things according to that decree. The former is an immanent act in God; the latter is a transitive action out of God."[30] Providence cannot be considered apart from the decree or its execution but consists in both. Thus, it may be viewed with respect to the immanent act of the decree or the external and transient acts of creation and government.

Contra the Scotist scheme presented by van Asselt, Turretin differentiates between the decree and its execution. However, it would also be inappropriate to affirm that Turretin held to a temporally antecedent decree, following van Asselt's description. Turretin argued that the decree of God was eternal, which means "not successive, but individual and simultaneous."[31] When passages such as Ephesians 1:4 use the word "before," Turretin claims that the decree preceded temporal events but the decree is not temporal. He reasons,

> Nor does the adverb of time "before" (used here) to imply a temporal act because it is taken not so much positively (to indicate a difference of time) as negatively (to denote its removal). Nor ought it to be said that this is asserted only of certain decrees and not of all (to show the singular excellence of the persons or things or their preeminent certainty) because the same ought to be the case with all the decrees.[32]

The immanent and intrinsic decree of God is eternal just as God is, since, "The decree is nothing other than God himself decreeing."[33] The decree, like God, is antecedent to creation without being temporally prior to the created order. Turretin closely weds the immanent and intrinsic decree with the extrinsic and transient acts by arguing that God

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[30] Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, 1:489.

[31] Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, 1:315.

[32] Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, 1:314.

[33] Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, 1:313.

also acts by a predetermining and simultaneous concourse.[34] He joins the decree and its execution as follows:

> God by an absolute and efficacious will decreed from eternity all acts (even free) antecedently to the foresight of the determination of the free will itself. Therefore, he ought also in time to predetermine the will to the same acts; otherwise God's eternal decree could be frustrated. The reason for the consequence is drawn from the connection of God's decree with its execution. Whatever he decreed, that he follows out; and whatever he performs in time, he decreed from eternity. The antecedent is proved because since the futurition of things depends upon no other than God's decree, nothing can be done in time which has not been decreed by him from all eternity.[35]

Turretin argues that God executes in time what he decreed from all eternity such that the two are mutually connected. The extrinsic and transient acts presuppose an antecedent decree, and the antecedent decree requires the execution in time of the things decreed lest the antecedent decree be frustrated.

These distinctions are not unique to Turretin. Perkins writes that God's work can be understood in relation to his decree or its execution. He defines the decree of God as, "That by which God in Himself has necessarily and yet freely from all eternity determined all things."[36] He attributes the cause of all things to God's decree conjoined with his foreknowledge. Here, he again affirms that God knows all things in virtue of the decree rather than mere foreknowledge. Then, Perkins considers the execution of the decree in time, which can be divided into God's operation and operative permission.[37]

Owen also argues that all the decrees of God are internal and eternal acts of the will.[38] He differentiates these internal acts with external works, "those actions which

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[34] Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, 1:507.

[35] Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, 1:508.

[36] William Perkins, *A Golden Chain*, in *The Works of William Perkins*, vol. 6, ed. Joel R. Beeke and Greg A. Salazar (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2018), 23.

[37] Perkins, *A Golden Chain*, 6:24.

[38] John Owen, *A Display of Arminianism*, in *The Works of John Owen*, vol. 10, *The Death of Christ*, ed. William H. Goold (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 2000), 16.

outwardly are of him."[39] These include: "inflicting of punishments, bestowing of rewards, and other such outward acts of his providence, whose administration we confess to be various, and diversely applied to several occasions."[40] Like Turretin, he connects the internal and external works of God under the heading of providence. He writes, "Providence is a word which, in its proper signification, may seem to comprehend all the actions of God that outwardly are of him, that have any respect unto his creatures, all his works that are not *ad intra*, essentially belonging to his Deity."[41] He continues,

> Seeing, also, that known unto God are all his works from eternity; therefore, three things concerning his providence are considerable:—1. His *decree* or *purpose*, whereby he hath disposed all things in order, and appointed them for certain ends, which he hath fore-ordained. 2. His *prescience*, whereby he certainly foreknoweth all things that shall come to pass. 3. His *temporal operation*, or working in time.[42]

The decree of God is an internal and free act. The decree differs from essential acts which terminate *ad intra*. God knows all things that he could do in virtue of knowing his essence and foreknows all things future by his internal and eternal decree. The decree grounds prescience. The decree, which is internal and eternal, differs from God's external and temporal operation, otherwise known as the termination of the decree *ad extra*.

The Reformed distinguished between God's knowledge of simple intelligence and his knowledge of vision, otherwise known as natural and free knowledge. By God's natural knowledge, he knows himself and his power perfectly, grounding the notion of possibility. By God's free knowledge, he knows the events that will occur in the world. He does not possess middle knowledge since things which are future and possible cannot be known determinately. Only by God's act of the will can he know what free creatures will do. For this reason, Helm identifies the Reformed view as *A*-foreknowledge. This act

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[39] Owen, *A Display of Arminianism*, 10:17.

[40] Owen, *A Display of Arminianism*, 10:17.

[41] Owen, *A Display of Arminianism*, 10:31.

[42] Owen, *A Display of Arminianism*, 10:31.

of the will, or the decree, is an immanent and intrinsic act that terminates *ad extra*. The decree ought to be considered an antecedent act that is logically, not temporally, prior. The decree grounds what will occur in time and God's providence or concourse, which concerns extrinsic and transient acts, confirms the antecedent nature of the decree, and consists in God's predetermining and simultaneous concourse.

Having developed the Reformed view of foreknowledge in relation to the decree, we must now examine the ramifications of their views on human freedom. By God's knowledge of simple intelligence, he knows that he can create person *P*, who possesses the liberty of contrariety (*A* or *B*) and contradiction (*A* or *not-A*) in a particular circumstance, *X*. By an eternal, immutable, internal, and antecedent act, God decrees to create *P* willing *A* in *X*. God infallibly *A*-foreknows that *P* will perform *A* in *X* rather than *not-A* or *B*. In *X*, *P* willing *A* is determinately true whereas *P* willing not-*A* or *B* is determinately false. God's knowledge of *P* willing *A* in *X* is infallible because of the certain and sure connection between God's decreeing *P* willing *A* in *X*. By an extrinsic and transient act, God executes his decree of *P* willing *A* in *X* by predetermination and simultaneous concourse. Since the antecedent act of the decree is eternal and immutable, the execution of the decree cannot be other than the decree itself, which is *P* willing *A* in *X*, otherwise God's decree could be frustrated and his foreknowledge fallible. Thus, upon the supposition of the decree, *P* willing *A* in *X* must occur, and *P* willing not-*A* or *B* will not occur.

Decree, Foreknowledge, and PAP

The above presentation would lend credence to a conditional sense of alternativity. For this reason, the Reformed were comfortable affirming that a hypothetical necessity meant that an event could not be otherwise. The will could be determined to one effect without violating the nature of the will as a second cause. Contingency and alternativity do not entail a categorical ability to do otherwise.

Vermigli offers and answers the following question on the relationship between contingency and necessity: "Why is anything said to be contingent, since God has already in one sense determined it so that it becomes a necessity? I answer: Everything is contingent from its properties and principles. But the providence that bestows necessity is an external cause whose name should not be applied to things."[43] Those things which are contingent are contingent by their nature. They can either be or not be. In other words, God's decree and foreknowledge fail to turn necessity of the will into a natural necessity; yet the will of God determines the will to one effect. Vermigli rejects the idea that God's providence brings an agent to a choice between alternatives and merely foreknows how what the agent will choose or refuse, since "These statements do not agree sufficiently with Scripture."[44] God foresees all things but God's sight follows from his will rather than from the actions of the free agent. He reasons,

> Yet, we cannot postulate bare knowledge in God; for the will is added, by which he directs and ordains all things. Nevertheless, what they say will be true if understood from the effect or, as they say, *a posteriori*. For from the fact that something is done we understand that it was the divine counsel that it should be done. Otherwise, the Scriptures speak clearly, that Christ had to die, that Scripture had to be fulfilled. But how was it necessary? Conditionally, since God foresaw it, and not because such necessity was in the nature of the thing.[45]

Bare foresight fails to satisfy Vermigli, who argues that the will of God ordains and directs all things such that they are necessary. However, they are not necessary in their own nature, apart from a specific condition, but upon the supposition of God's decree, the particular event necessarily occurs.

Vermigli offers an illustration from 1 Samuel 10:3. He writes, "For example, Saul met men carrying kids, bread, and wine. In its very nature their choice was unlimited, whether to give something to him or not. But by his providence, God limited

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[43] Vermigli, *Philosophical Works*, 194.

[44] Vermigli, *Philosophical Works*, 194.

[45] Vermigli, *Philosophical Works*, 194.

that will to one choice . . . . God put this in their minds, and restrained whatever might have hindered his will."[46] A human can make multiple choices according to the nature of its will but when God determines by his counsel that a particular choice occur, he can reduce the agent to one choice without changing the will's nature. Thus, Vermigli writes, "The nature of the thing itself was contingent, but when determined by God it became necessary."[47] And later, "It must be concluded that, as we have often said, all things are necessary in relation to the providence of God, while in their own nature they are contingent."[48] Thus, a thing may be contingent as to its nature but necessary as to the event with respect to God's determination.

When discussing the fall of Adam, Perkins says, "It is manifest also what we ought to think concerning the fall of Adam, which truly according to the event is necessary by the necessity of infallibility by reason of the foreknowledge and decree of God."[49] Then, he anticipates and answers the following objection:

> But you will say that Adam could not withstand God's will—that is, his decree. Wherefore, I answer that even as he could not, so also he would not. But you will say again he could not will otherwise. Which I confess to be true as touching the act and event, but not as touching the very power of his will, which was not compelled but of the own free motion consented to the suggestion of the devil.[50]

Here, Perkins strongly states that the fall of Adam could not be otherwise, given the decree of God. Adam could not, by virtue of the decree, and would not, by virtue of his own will, but fall. Adam was not compelled. His fall, according to Perkins, was under a twofold necessity. He argues, "First, by reason of the foreknowledge of God, for that which He foreknew would come to pass must needs of necessity come to pass. Second,

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[46] Vermigli, *Philosophical Works*, 195.

[47] Vermigli, *Philosophical Works*, 195.

[48] Vermigli, *Philosophical Works*, 195.

[49] Perkins, *The Manner and Order of Predestination*, 6:334.

[50] Perkins, *The Manner and Order of Predestination*, 6:334.

by reason of the permissive decree of God, that fall was according to the event necessary immutably."[51] According to Perkins, God's permission of a particular event, such as Adam's fall, entails that it occurs and could not occur otherwise than God permits. He states, "Because evil permitted must come to pass and cannot otherwise come to pass than God permits."[52] God foreknew the fall of Adam by virtue of his permissive decree that Adam fall and, as a consequence, the fall of Adam could not be otherwise. Even though Adam's will possessed a natural power of willing good or evil, Perkins reconciled this power with the fact that Adam could not have willed otherwise given the God's decree and Adam's will.[53]

The Arminians, according to Owen, deny that God determines future events unto either part.[54] However, when discussing providence, Owen affirms that God's work in second causes determines them to a particular effect without violating the nature of the will. Concerning God's predetermination of second causes, he writes,

> [It] is that effectual working of his, according to his eternal purpose, whereby, though some agents, as the wills of men, are causes most free and indefinite, or unlimited lords of their own actions, in respect of their internal principle of operation (that is, by their own nature), [they] are yet all, in respect of his decree, and by his powerful working, determined to this or that effect in particular.[55]

God's providence is the effectual outworking of his internal and eternal decree. Providence preserves the internal operations of the will while ensuring that the will is determined to a particular effect. Scripture testifies to this conditional necessity occasioned by the decree.[56] Thus, with respect to man's will, it could have been

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[51] Perkins, *The Manner and Order of Predestination*, 6:335.

[52] Perkins, *The Manner and Order of Predestination*, 6:335.

[53] Perkins, *God's Free Grace and Man's Free Will*, 6:405.

[54] Owen, *A Display of Arminianism*, 10:26.

[55] Owen, *A Display of Arminianism*, 10:36.

[56] Owen, *A Display of Arminianism*, 10:36.

otherwise given the power of the will. Given the decree, the will is determined to a particular effect.

Turretin defines necessity as that "which cannot be otherwise."[57] A thing may be necessary in respect to God or the created thing. "In God," Turretin writes, "A twofold necessity is commonly remarked: the one absolute, the opposite of which is simply impossible to God (as when God is said to be incorruptible and incapable of denying himself); another hypothetical, arising from the hypothesis of the divine decree which, being made the effect itself willed, must necessarily follow."[58] An absolute necessity rests upon the immutable nature of God whereas a hypothetical necessity follows from God's immutable will.

From the immutable will of God follows the immutable decree and infallible foreknowledge.[59] Things in themselves are either necessary by physical and internal necessity, coaction, or a hypothetical necessity. Of the latter, he says, "Hypothetical of the event or dependence through which a thing, although naturally mutable and contingent, cannot but be on account of its dependence upon the ordination of God whose will cannot be changed nor his foreknowledge deceived."[60] Like Vermigli, Turretin argues that a thing contingent in its own nature may be necessary such that it cannot be otherwise than it is; this includes human free choices. Speaking of events future to the human agent, Turretin writes, "They are certainly predicted as future so that the word of God cannot fail, nor can Scripture be broken. Therefore they must happen necessarily, if not as to the mode of production (which is often contingent), still as to the certainty of the

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[57] Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, 1:320.

[58] Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, 1:320.

[59] Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, 1:320.

[60] Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, 1:320.

event (which cannot be otherwise)."[61] For Turretin, if the immutable will of God decrees a particular contingent event to occur, then God infallibly foreknows that the event cannot be otherwise than God decreed. The mode of production does not change. A will by its natural constitution possesses liberty of contrariety and contradiction. God can preserve the will's mode of production and determine a particular event. Of this particular event, Turretin affirms that it is necessary, which means it "cannot be otherwise."[62] This necessity arising from God's will ensures that it "cannot but be" and it "cannot be changed."[63] These events happen "necessarily" such that the certainty of the event "cannot be otherwise."[64]

The language of the Reformed indicates that a free will can be determined to one effect. Vermigli argued that God's providence reduces the will to one choice so that God's plans might not be hindered. God's preserves the will's natural aptness to multiple choices yet still ensures that a particular effect is actualized. Perkins illustrated the role of the decree and the function of the will in the fall of Adam which could not be otherwise than God decreed it to be. Owen differed from the Arminians who denied that God determined the will and instead affirmed that God's effectual providence determined the will to a particular effect. Turretin stressed that God's decree confirmed the certainty of the event such that it could not but be otherwise. These statements demonstrate that God's antecedent decree and consequent execution fail to remove the natural capacities of the will while determining it to one particular effect.

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[61] Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, 1:320.

[62] Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, 1:320.

[63] Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, 1:320.

[64] Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, 1:320.

Muller and PAP

Muller argues for a strong version of alternativity, PAP_{All}. Throughout his writings, it is difficult to discern the effect of the decree upon free choices. Muller rightly upholds God's decree and denies that God and man can will contradictory to each other. How this works is unclear. Muller provides an interpretation that preserves simultaneous potencies in a formula for divine and human willing. He writes,

> The formula then becomes "when God wills that *A* will *p* concurrently with *A* willing *p,* it is possible that God will that *A* wills *not-p* concurrently with *A* willing *not-p*." The point is that both God and *A*, as rational beings, have potencies to more than one effect—and that God, at his primary level of causality, volitionally and ontological concurs with the willing of *A*, so that the real or actual order in which *A* exists is constituted, as future contingencies are actualized, by both divine and human willing. The divine and the human willing are both free and both capable of alternativity; both are necessary and together sufficient for the act to take place. Neither by itself is sufficient.[65]

Muller correctly states that God and *A* possess potencies to more than one effect and yet they concur to bring about the same effect. However, Muller does not consider the conditions that make it possible that God and *A* actualize the same potency. If a condition or set of conditions ensure that God and *A* will *p* concurrently, in what sense is it possible that God will that *A* wills *not-p* concurrently with *A* willing *not-p*?

Muller's formula encounters difficulties when compared with the Reformed view of foreknowledge and its relationship to the decree. The phrase, "when God wills" may be understood as the execution of the decree or the decree itself. If Muller refers to the execution of the decree, which appears to be the case here given the emphasis on concurrence, then it is not possible that the execution of the decree be different than the decree itself. Otherwise, the formula would read, "When God executes the decree that *A* will *p* concurrently with *A* willing *p*, it is possible that God executes that *A* wills *not-p* concurrently with *A* willing *not-p*, which is other than he decreed." Recall, Turretin argued, "Whatever he decreed, that he follows out; and whatever he performs in time, he

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[65] Richard A. Muller, *Divine Will and Human Choice: Freedom, Contingency, and Necessity in Early Modern Reformed Thought* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2017), 308.

decreed from eternity."[66] Thus, it is not possible that God perform in time other than he antecedently decreed from eternity. If Muller refers to the decree itself, then the formula represents conditional alternativity. If God had willed something different then the human willing would have been different. A different condition would have to obtain for God to concur with *A* willing *not-p*, which entails conditional alternativity. The formula fails to provide the notion of alternativity Muller contends the Reformed held and better coheres with PAP_{If}.

The distinction between God's knowledge of simple intelligence and his knowledge of vision assists us at this point. According to God's knowledge of simple intelligence, God knows that he could actualize a world where God wills that *A* will *p* concurrently with *A* willing *p* or that he could actualize a world where God wills that *A* wills *not-p* concurrently with *A* willing *not-p*. These possibilities remain possibilities known by God's knowledge of simple intelligence. As Owen states,

> Things are possible in regard to God's power, future in regard of his decree. So that (if I may so say) the measure of the first kind of science is God's omnipotency, what he can do; of the other his purpose, what certainly he will do, or permit to be done. With this prescience, then, God foreseeth all, and nothing but what he hath decreed shall come to pass.[67]

Owen distinguishes between what God knows by his power, all things possible, and what God knows to be future by virtue of the decree. God decrees and knows one future and those things which are possible with respect to God's knowledge of simple intelligence are not possibly future with respect to God's knowledge of vision which follows the decree. There is, according to the Reformed, only one future on the supposition of God's decree. Thus, what Muller argues is possible, Owen acknowledges as possible but not possibly future. It shall not come to pass since God will not execute in time other than what he has decreed from eternity. In other words, a world where God wills that *A* wills

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[66] Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, 1:508.

[67] Owen, *A Display of Arminianism*, 10:24.

not-p concurrently with *A* willing *not-p* will not be future since God neither decreed that it would be nor foreknows it as such.

The Reformed argued that the truth value of future propositions and the necessity of the event, grounded in the decree, preserves the nature of the will as a power that can actualize multiple potencies but on the supposition of the decree is determined to one effect. The free act is conditionally necessary. Conditional necessity differs from physical and brute necessity since, if the conditions were different, the event could be otherwise. Given God's immutable decree and infallible foreknowledge, only one future shall come to pass.

Muller articulates the preservation of the will's nature and its relationship to concurrence by arguing that *A*'s potencies to more than effect are not removed. He writes,

> The divine concurrence, in other words, does not erase *A*'s potency to more than one effect, although, clearly, in *A*'s actual world, only one effect (*p*) will occur and its contrary (*not-p*) cannot exist at the same time in the same world order. *A*, God willing, can, at t^1, *in acto primo* be indifferent to *p* and *not-p* and have potency to both; can, at t^2, *in actu secondo*, will *p*; and can, at t^3, having retained his potency to more than one effect, will *not-p*.[68]

If Muller merely intends to argue that concurrence fails to remove the will's natural capacity to actualize different effects, then a compatibilist can agree. Perkins describes the will in a similar manner, saying,

> The will in all her elections keeps and maintains her liberty. Because when it wills or nills anything it moves itself freely of itself to will or to nill without any external compulsions; and when it wills anything, it so wills as still retaining a natural aptness to nill the same. And when it wills any one particular thing, it remains still apt not to will it, but to will another thing on the contrary.[69]

However, Perkins reconciled the natural aptness of the will with conditional necessity such that Adam could not and would not but fall.[70] The natural aptness of the will does

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[68] Muller, *Divine Will and Human Choice*, 308.

[69] Perkins, *God's Free Grace and Man's Free Will*, 6:405.

[70] Perkins, *The Manner and Order of Predestination*, 6:333–34.

not entail the categorical ability to do otherwise, evidenced by the fact that Adam "could not will otherwise."[71] Muller appears disinclined to affirm that an event could not be otherwise.

On Muller's account, the Reformed doctrine of concurrence merely rejected the logical contradiction that *A* could actualize *p* and *not-p* at the same time and in the same world order. Not only does this position fail to drive a wedge between the Reformed and their opponents, but it also fails to map on the reasoning of the Reformed.

Determinism

RTF object that the Reformed were determinists. Whether or not they reject the terminology, or the substance of determinism, is difficult to discern at times, as will be shown. They contend that the Reformed sense of determinism and the modern conception of the term differ. They write,

> The distinction between natural and free cause is given with the way they "determine their act. This technical term "determination" should not be associated with the *modern* term "determinism," because that term did not exist yet; the concept of determinism was denoted by other terms like "Stoic fate." Rather, determination means that a cause gets directed to one effect. A natural cause is determined by its *nature* to the act; a free cause determines itself by *freedom* to one of possible acts. Hence, determination refers to the state of a cause: being undetermined means that the (free) cause has not yet directed itself to a certain effect. A determined cause will produce its determined effect, but still the effect can be either contingent (determined by a free act) or necessary (determined by a natural act).[72]

Elsewhere, Beck and Vos equate "determinism" with "hard-determinism."[73] Thus, they reject "determinism." Determination, as they use it, should not be understood as

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[71] Perkins, *The Manner and Order of Predestination*, 6:333–34.

[72] Willem J. van Asselt, J. Martin Bac, and Roelf T. te Velde, eds., *Reformed Thought on Freedom: The Concept of Free Choice in Early Modern Reformed Theology*, Texts and Studies in Reformation and Post-Reformation Thought (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010), 31.

[73] Antonie Vos and Andreas J. Beck, "Conceptual Patterns Related to Reformed Scholasticism," *Nederlands Theologisch Tijdschrift* 57, no. 3 (July 2003): 225.

necessitarian or causal, but the mere assigning of a truth-value to a particular proposition. They continue,

> It is perhaps useful to point out here that "to determine" in scholastic language often simply means "to assign a truth-value to a proposition." For example, if a scholastic author claims that the truth of a future contingent proposition is determined, mostly all that is meant is that it has a truth value, in distinction from lacking it (being neither true nor false). The content we often here in "determined" is "could not be but so-and-so." This necessitation element, however, is only attached to the meaning of "determined" in a basically non-Christian, Aristotelian paradigm.[74]

For this reason, freedom must consist in alternative possibilities. A reasoned choice that is uncoerced fits with a deterministic system, resulting in hard-determinism. In order for a choice to be "real," the agent must possess alternative possibilities. They write,

> Spontaneity as such refers to acts which originate from an internal principle (they are not externally coacted), but still it is possible that the agents do not have any choice (for instance, animals that are driven by their own instinct to eat, but do not have the choice to do otherwise). When the Reformed position is interpreted in this way, it could easily be integrated in a deterministic system. Then man can be determined (e.g., by God's providence and predestination) and have no real possibility to do otherwise, but still act spontaneously. However, rational spontaneity requires not only an internal principle which is not coacted upon but a *rational* internal principle, which acts on (grounds of) both the judgment of reason and the "pleasure/compliance" of the will. Hereby, man always has a free choice, so this is not compatible with a deterministic worldview. Man has always a real possibility to choose whichever he likes. Thus, rational spontaneity grants real freedom to man and provides him with the opportunity of real choice.[75]

According to *RTF*, should the agent be determined by providence or predestination to a particular effect, then hard-determinism is the consequence. The agent no longer possesses real freedom. The kind of freedom that can be determined to one effect is consistent with Stoicism or animal instinct whereas humans possess a rational principle that provides the alternativity necessary for real choices.

The interpretation of the Reformed presented by *RTF* should be rejected for three reasons. First, it is difficult to discern how the truth-value of a proposition can be

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[74] Asselt, Bac, and te Velde, *Reformed Thought on Freedom*, 189–90.

[75] Asselt, Bac, and te Velde, *Reformed Thought on Freedom*, 221–22.

determined and be otherwise than it is determined to be. As Preciado points out, "God assigning a truth-value to future conditional propositions is inconsistent with the alternative possibilities condition."[76] However, *RTF* fail to provide a clear analysis of God's role in determining truth-values. They write,

> Now, in regard to human freedom, the question might arise how the determination of the First cause to, say, effect d relates to the freedom of acting of the second cause. If the First cause chooses for d, does the second cause keep any freedom at all in its acting? Does the second cause keep a real freedom between different acts (both d and e), or does the determinate state of the effect leave only the option of d open? Although an exact answer to this question would require a separate study, the basic answer is that the divine choice for d is realized by the free choice of the second cause for it. So the second cause keeps both possibilities, but is guided to choose *by itself* for d.[77]

Given God's choice for *d*, in what way is the second cause's choice of *e* possible? Could it be otherwise than *d*? How is the divine choice for *d* not an instance of God's work of providence and predestination ensuring that *d* obtains such that *e* could not obtain? Had the agent guided itself to choose *e*, would the divine choice for *e* have been realized or would the divine choice for *d* have been unrealized? When the divine choice for *d* is realized, is this due to an antecedent decree that has been executed in time? The commitment to alternative possibilities rests on dubious ground if God determines the truth-value of future propositions since his decree is immutable and his foreknowledge infallible.

Second, as Helm argues, the determination of truth-values fails to account for the Reformed doctrine of the decree and its execution. He writes,

> These efforts by the editors [*RTF*] to evacuate "determine" of any causal force are what we called earlier the "masking" of causality with logic. They are extreme cases of scholasticism. The RO [Reformed Orthodox] were not as extreme, recognising that God's decrees are not arguments, assigning truths to sentences are not human actions. According to the RO God creates, upholds, and governs His creation, His creatures, and all their actions. We may say that the divine decrees and acts of

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[76] Michael Patrick Preciado, *A Reformed View of Freedom: The Compatibility of Guidance Control and Reformed Theology* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2019), 78.

[77] Asselt, Bac, and te Velde, *Reformed Thought on Freedom*, 33.

> creation have effects, states of affairs, the bringing to pass of what the Creator has decreed. The divine decrees are causal in character, bringing the states of affairs to come to pass. By steadfastly avoiding or severely downplaying this fact, the authors of *RTF* are excluding, or minimizing causality in their theology, and making it almost a purely logical exercise.[78]

God's activity as the First cause is causal by nature even though it differs from human causation. As the above section on fatalism demonstrated, the Reformed did not shy away from a certain and fixed connection of causes insofar as God was the ultimate cause of all things. God's internal and antecedent decree ensures that God's will for a particular effect will be realized in time as God's external operations execute his eternal purpose.

Third, and finally, *RTF*'s identification of hard-determinism with determinism creates the inconsistencies in their writings. The Reformed acknowledged that the necessity of the event entailed that the event could not be otherwise lest the decree was frustrated or God's foreknowledge fallible. For these reasons, Perkins and Turretin acknowledged that events, such as the fall of Adam, could not be otherwise than they were while affirming that the natural capacity of the will was preserved through in their free choice to a particular effect since the free choice was conditionally necessary.

At times, *RTF* argues a similar position, saying,

> If God foreknows p, p shall surely happen, and in that sense, it is not possible that it does not happen. Yet the Reformed were eager to show that this kind of necessity can be united with the contingency of p. This would only be impossible if we ignore the distinction between the necessity of the consequent and the necessity of the consequence: in that case there would be no difference between both kinds of necessity and p would be necessary in every respect. So, by using this distinction, the Reformed made it clear that if God knows p, then the existence of p itself is not necessary; p is only necessary on the supposition of God's knowing. So God's knowing of p implies only the necessity of consequence and not the necessity of the consequent.[79]

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[78] Paul Helm, *Reforming Free Will: A Conversation on the History of Reformed Views on Compatibilism (1500–1800)* (Fearn, Scotland: Mentor, 2020), 172–73.

[79] Asselt, Bac, and te Velde, *Reformed Thought on Freedom*, 37.

On one hand, *RTF* affirms the impossibility of *not-p* while, on the other hand, rejecting determinism, which argues that an event "could not be but so-and-so."[80] Further, if God foreknows *p* and it is not possible that *p* does not occur, how does that escape their own charge, which reads, "When the Reformed position is interpreted in this way, it could easily be integrated in a deterministic system. Then man can be determined (e.g., by God's providence and predestination) and have no real possibility to do otherwise, but still act spontaneously."[81] Helm argues that these inconsistencies arise because *RTF* fail to consider how compatibilists discuss alternativity. He writes,

> The authors of *RTF* do not consider a free act as one that is an action for a reason. In fact, the authors are not clear about acting for a reason, giving rise to conditioned alternativity. Their idea of alternativity is of a choice without a cause, which Vos and company impute to the RO. But Turretin's is another kind of choice, that of a reasoned or grounded alternativity.[82]

In other words, given the dictate of the intellect, the will operates with a conditional necessity, determined to one effect. The dictate of the will could have been otherwise given a different set of conditions internal or external to the agent. Consequently, the operation of the will would also have been otherwise since the will follows the dictate of the intellect.

A compatibilist affirms conditional alternativity and the necessity of the consequence, as Preciado notes,

> The necessity of the consequent did not allow the consequent to be contingent. However, the necessity of the consequence did allow the consequent to be contingent in itself. This is what the confession is saying. The consequent in itself could have been otherwise. However, when the consequent is related to the antecedent in the necessity of the consequence, then the consequent could not have been otherwise. This is what we are affirming.[83]

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[80] Asselt, Bac, and te Velde, *Reformed Thought on Freedom*, 189–90.

[81] Asselt, Bac, and te Velde, *Reformed Thought on Freedom*, 221.

[82] Helm, *Reforming Free Will*, 133.

[83] Preciado, *Reformed View of Freedom*, 106.

Had there been a different antecedent, the consequent may have been otherwise. Given the antecedent conditions, such as the decree of God and the dictate of the intellect, the will is determined to a particular effect. Anderson and Manata write, "This is precisely the position held by contemporary Calvinist philosophers like ourselves, who claim that Calvinism is deterministic. Thus, we fully affirm the distinction between *necessitas consequentiae* and *necessitas consequentis*."[84]

RTF assert that God determines the truth value of all propositions while denying determinism in order to preserve real choices. Conditional alternativity, when understood as compatibilism, can also preserve real choices insofar as the question is not begged. Compatibilism better fits with God's assigning of truth values, allowing for conditional alternativity. God assigns truth values to propositions by means of the antecedent decree which he executes in time. Properly understood, the Reformed can be identified as determinists, contra *RTF*.

Edwards's View of Foreknowledge

Having evaluated the Reformed view of foreknowledge, its relationship to the decree and free will, Edwards's writings will now be examined. I offer a preliminary overview of his writings on foreknowledge in *FOW* II.xi-xii in order to discern the purpose of Edwards's argument and situate his view within his own thought. Then, four points of comparison are made between Edwards and the tradition, demonstrating continuity.

Purpose of Edwards's Argument

Edwards's most sustained treatment on the doctrine of God's foreknowledge may be found in his work, *FOW*. This work is highly polemical and often lacking in

[84] James N. Anderson and Paul Manata, "Determined to Come Most Freely," *Journal of Reformed Theology* 11, no. 3 (January 2017): 276n4.

systematic construction. It is, after all, a work of polemics addressing "prevailing modern notions," as the title indicates. It is not a dissertation on free will wherein Edwards develops a doctrine of providence coupled with a proper understanding of primary and secondary causes and their interrelation.[85] No, instead, Edwards seeks to undermine the Arminian notion of free will. Thus, one must carefully discern when Edwards is demonstrating the inconsistencies with the Arminian view versus constructing his own position, specifically of foreknowledge.

Given his purpose, Edwards merely believes that he has to prove that God has foreknowledge and this foreknowledge is inconsistent with contingency. When Edwards critiques the Arminian notion of contingency he defines it as an event without any necessity. The Arminian position, in affirming God's foreknowledge, agrees that God foreknows future events yet denies that it imposes necessity. Given their agreement on foreknowledge, Edwards argues that the necessity of the event follows necessarily from foreknowledge, placing Arminians and Calvinists in the same predicament: the event is necessary.

With the focused and polemical nature of the work, Edwards declares, "I therefore shall consider the evidence of such a prescience in the most High, as fully as the designed limits of this essay will admit of; supposing myself herein to have to do with such as own the truth of the Bible."[86] The arguments lack elaborate theologizing and philosophizing in II.xi. He assumes that he merely needs to proof-text. After mounting arguments in favor of God's foreknowledge, he contends that necessity of the event

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[85] Edwards's arguments in *FOW* do not entail occasionalism. For an analysis of occasionalism in Edwards's thought, see Oliver D. Crisp, "How 'Occasional' Was Edwards's Occasionalism," in *Jonathan Edwards: Philosophical Theologian*, ed. Oliver D. Crisp and Paul Helm (New York: Routledge, 2003), 61–77. S. Mark Hamilton contends that Edwards advocated for secondary causation, including natural causes. See S. Mark Hamilton, *A Treatise on Jonathan Edwards, Continuous Creation and Christology* (Fort Worth: JESociety Press, 2017).

[86] *WJE*, 1:239.

follows by "necessity of connection or consequence."[87] The Arminians deny this consequence "and affirm, that if such foreknowledge be allowed 'tis no evidence of any necessity of the event foreknown."[88] Edwards contends that the consequence follows, even given their view. He fights the Arminians on their own turf. For this reason, Edwards's writing in *FOW* should not be taken as his view of foreknowledge in *toto*, nor should they be put in tension with other writings.[89]

Situating Edwards's View

The purpose and nature of the work stated, an examination of his view is now required. Edwards argues that foreknowledge imposes no more of a necessity upon an event than the decree. Simply put, whatever God decrees or foreknows will occur. God's foreknowledge of a future event does make the event less necessary even though foreknowledge may only prove an event rather than cause it. He accomplishes this goal with three arguments. First, Edwards argues for necessity. He states, "'Tis very evident, with regard to a thing whose existence is infallibly and indissolubly connected with something which already hath, or has had existence, the existence of that thing is necessary."[90] Edwards argues for necessity of connection or consequence between God's foreknowledge and future events. He previously defined the necessity of the consequence as a thing being "either fully and thoroughly connected with that which is absolutely necessary in its own nature, or something which has already received and made sure of existence . . . . Things which are perfectly connected with other things that are necessary,

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[87] *WJE*, 1:257.

[88] *WJE*, 1:257.

[89] Below, I interact with Philip J. Fisk's article "Divine Knowledge at Harvard and Yale: From William Ames to Jonathan Edwards," *Jonathan Edwards Studies* 4, no. 2 (May 2014): 151–78. The unnecessary tension he places between Edwards works assumes a rigid and unnecessary interpretation of *FOW*. For a similar criticism, see Joseph J. Rigney, "Diverse Excellencies: Jonathan Edwards on the Attributes of God" (PhD thesis, University of Chester, 2019), 257–58.

[90] *WJE*, 1:257.

are necessary themselves, by a necessity of consequence."[91] In order for the necessary connection, two or more propositions must be infallibly connected with each other. Edwards contrasts the necessity of the consequence with accidental necessity, which merely requires one proposition. Edwards states that future events are necessary by a necessity of the consequence, saying,

> Their existence is not necessary in itself; for if so, they always have existed. Nor is their existence become necessary by being made sure, by being already come to pass. Therefore, the only way that anything that is to come to pass hereafter, is or can be necessary, is by a connection with something that is necessary in its own nature, or something that already is, or has been; so that the one being supposed, the other certainly follows.[92]

The consequent proposition, according to Edwards, is not absolutely necessary. That is, to borrow Edwards's own description, it does not have a full and perfect connection in and of itself.[93] Things with an absolute necessity, according to Edwards, are God and his attributes, mathematical truths, and the like. Further, the consequent proposition is not accidentally necessary since it neither logically nor temporally occurred. Thus, it must be infallibly connected with something foregoing. The antecedent being supposed, the consequent follows. With the exception of those things from eternity—that which is absolutely necessary—all past events occur with the necessity of the consequence. Given that an accidental necessity is considered a past event, everything that is not absolutely necessary comes about by a necessity of the consequence.

Edwards supports his argument in four steps. First, he states that past events are necessary by their sure existence; as such, they cannot now be otherwise. Since he focuses on foreknowledge and the necessity it imposes, and the next point specifically refers to the foreknowledge of God, Edwards's argument concerns necessary or logical,

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[91] *WJE*, 1:153.

[92] *WJE*, 1:153–54.

[93] *WJE*, 1:152.

connections rather than the necessity of the past events occurring in time. For example, Edwards then does not concern himself with propositions such as, "Abraham existed in 1995 BC."[94] Rather, his reference point is God's foreknowledge as that which logically precedes the event. Note the second point in his reasoning from necessity, which confirms this reading, "If there be any such thing as a divine foreknowledge of the volition of free agents, that foreknowledge, by the supposition, is a thing which already *has*, and long ago *had* existence; and so, now its existence is necessary."[95] For Edwards, God's foreknowledge is not temporally situated but an eternal foreknowing.[96] Although it is eternal, Edwards categorizes foreknowledge as that which is accidentally necessary rather than necessary in itself. Third, he states, "That those things which are indissolubly connected with other things that are necessary, are themselves necessary."[97] Finally, God infallibly foreknows future events, meaning, a necessary connection exists between God's foreknowledge and the volitions of man. Thus, Edwards argues that a necessary connection exists between what occurs in time and God's foreknowledge of that event. He progressed from the principle of accidental necessity to the foreknowledge of God as accidentally necessary, to the principle of the necessity of the consequence, to the necessity of the event.

The second argument Edwards develops derives from his understanding of knowledge as that which requires evidence. The need for this discussion arises from the fact that some will deny the certain connection between the event and God's foreknowledge. He argues,

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[94] This phrase is borrowed from Alvin Plantinga's critique of Edwards in Plantinga, "On Ockham's Way Out."

[95] *WJE*, 1:257.

[96] Crisp, *Jonathan Edwards and the Metaphysics of Sin*, 85.

[97] *WJE*, 1:258. He bases this point upon the following line of reasoning: "As that proposition whose truth is necessarily connected with another proposition, which is necessarily true, is itself necessarily true."

> For a thing to be certainly known to any understanding, is for it to be *evident* to that understanding: and for a thing to be evident to any understanding, is the same thing, as for that understanding to *see evidence* of it: but no understanding, created or increated, can see evidence where there is none: for that is the same thing, as to see that to be which is not.[98]

Thus, that which is future yet contingent cannot be known necessarily since no evidence exists. Evidence, for Edwards, is either self-evidence or proof; meaning, a thing is either evident in itself or it is evident in something else. Future events are not self-evident since they do not yet exist and are not necessary by nature. Further, no proof exists since the event has no necessary connections. Thus, the event cannot be proved in itself or in something else. He concludes, "'Tis demonstrated, that there is in the nature of things absolutely no evidence at all of the future existence of that event, which is contingent, without all necessity (if any such event there be); neither self-evidence nor proof."[99] According to Edwards, God cannot have certain and infallible foreknowledge concerning future events if no necessary connection exists between his knowledge and the event.

Edwards's third and final argument combines his first two as he argues for the consistency of God's knowledge. He states,

> For to say, that God certainly, and without all conjecture, knows that a thing will infallibly be, which at the same time he knows to be so contingent, that it may possibly not be, is to suppose his knowledge inconsistent with itself; or that one thing that he knows is utterly inconsistent with another thing that he knows.[100]

Given the context of the argument, one should not read this as a statement about God's simple understanding but of God's foreknowledge. It is not a statement about God's knowledge of possibilities in the abstract but whether God can foreknow an event in the actual world as determinatively true while not yet determined.[101] God cannot know future

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[98] *WJE*, 1:258–59.

[99] *WJE*, 1:259.

[100] *WJE*, 1:260.

[101] Hugh J. McCann rightly notes that the issue concerns not merely God's knowledge of the subjunctives but their truthfulness. Hugh J. McCann, *Creation and the Sovereignty of God* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2012), 79–80, 89, 248n.37.

human events since they are not necessary in themselves, cannot be proved from necessary truths, and are not accidentally necessary. He may only know them by necessity of the consequence. But if no necessity exists whatsoever, then nothing determines whether a future event will come to pass. A future event must be true in order for God to know it, but he cannot know it as true unless the proper evidence obtains.

The argument does not speak to the truthfulness of a particular event or how God comes to know that an event is true. Rather, it is an argument concerning God's knowledge of the world, specifically future events. God can only know events as true if they are true absolutely, accidentally, or by the necessity of the consequence. Future human volitions fit the necessity of the consequence since they are not necessary in themselves nor have they occurred. The future proposition, "Peter prays," is neither absolutely nor accidentally true. It is true by the necessity of the consequence. It does not have to be true, but, "the one thing being supposed, the other certainly follows."[102] God's foreknowledge is an accidental necessity and upon the supposition of God's foreknowledge, "Peter prays," is true. The proposition is true consequentially, not absolutely or accidentally. Thus, God cannot foreknow that "Peter prays," is true but could be false, per the event, according to his foreknowledge of the actual world. Either God cannot know this event according to his foreknowledge or he knows contradictions. For Edwards, claiming that God has a way of knowing contingent events necessarily is "ridiculous."[103]

Edwards concludes his chapter on the consequences of foreknowledge by highlighting three corollaries. First, the decrees of God are no more inconsistent with human liberty than his foreknowledge on account of the necessity of the event. God

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[102] *WJE*, 1:154.

[103] In Edwards's words, "As much so, as to say, that God may know contradictions to be true, for ought we know, or that he may know a thing to be certain, and at the same time know it not to be certain, though we can't conceive how; because he has ways of knowing which we cannot comprehend." *WJE*, 1:261.

cannot be more certain because of his decree than he is due to foreknowledge since the decree adds no more necessity *to the event* than foreknowledge. For those who contend that foreknowledge, unlike the decree, does not cause the event to be so, Edwards offers two responses. First, regardless if one argues from cause to effect—decree to human action—or effect to cause—human action to God's foreknowledge—, the impossibility of the event being otherwise than God's foreknowledge still exists. Second, the futurity of the event is so sure because the cause (human action) has already produced its effect (God's foreknowledge). The relationship between cause and effect being necessary, it is as if the event already happened since the action caused God's foreknowledge. There is yet another objection to this point, namely, presentism. However, the view that no before or after exists in the mind of God such that he sees all things "by one perfect unchangeable view, without any succession," poses no threat to Edwards's position.[104] He readily accepts this thesis that God has no future or succession of ideas because it strengthens his position that all truths are evident to God's mind. He continues,

> The very reason why God's knowledge is without succession, is, because it is absolutely perfect, to the highest possible degree of clearness and certainty: all things, whether past or present or to come, being viewed with equal evidence and fullness; future things being seen with as much clearness, as if they were present; the view is always in absolute perfection; and absolute constant perfection admits of no alteration, and so no succession; the actual existence of the thing known, don't at all increase, or add to the clearness or certainty of the thing known: God calls the things that are not, as though they were; they are all one to him as if they had already existed.[105]

Further, immutability prevents God's knowledge from changing. Should his knowledge change then he would be subject to time due to succession of thought, but this cannot be for the one "who comprehends all things, from eternity to eternity, in one, most perfect,

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[104] *WJE*, 1:266.

[105] *WJE*, 1:267–68.

and unalterable view; so that his whole eternal duration is *vitae interminabilis, tota, simul,* and *perfecta possessio*."[106]

Edwards briefly address the final two corollaries. Second, the doctrine of necessity as taught by the Calvinists implies no more fatality upon events than the doctrine of the Arminians. Thus, they should cease charging Calvinists with fatalism. Finally, Arminian arguments against Calvinists that apply to the doctrine of necessity work against their own teachings. Given the necessity imposed by foreknowledge, unregenerate men are no more able to respond to the commands and admonitions of God on the Arminian view than on the Calvinist. Neither foreknowledge nor the decree grants greater certainty to the future event. Thus, for the Calvinist and those who hold the Bible to be true, agreeing with foreknowledge, the necessity of the event is not incompatible with moral responsibility.

Comparison with the Reformed

Having analyzed Edwards's view of foreknowledge as presented in II.xi–xii of *FOW*, comparisons will now be drawn between Edwards and the tradition. The above treatment of the Reformed view of foreknowledge and its relationship to the decree provide four criteria by which Edwards can be evaluated. The Reformed held to *A*-foreknowledge, distinguished between knowledge of simple intelligence and of vision, argued for an eternal and antecedent decree that God executed in time, and maintained that future propositions were determinately true but not in themselves. Edwards writings reveal continuity with the Reformed on these points.

First, Edwards affirmed *A*-foreknowledge. Crisp writes, "Edwards is committed to an 'A', rather than an 'O' view of foreknowledge. A-foreknowledge is a strong thesis, corresponding to a causal kind of knowing (or of bringing about that a thing

[106] *WJE*, 1:268.

takes place at a certain time and place."[107] One could posit that Edwards criticizes his opponents who hold to *O*-foreknowledge.[108] An explicit affirmation of this doctrine comes near the end of *FOW*, when, discussing the secret and revealed will of God, Edwards writes, "I might also shew, how God's certain foreknowledge must suppose an absolute decree, and how such a decree can be proved to a demonstration from it: but that this discourse mayn't be lengthened out too much, that must be omitted for the present."[109] Edwards had already argued that knowledge requires evidence. God's foreknowledge is either an effect of what happens in time or it follows from the decree. The decree grounds God's foreknowledge.

Second, Edwards distinguished between God's simple knowledge and knowledge of vision. Simple understanding is antecedent to the divine will and arises from God's all-sufficiency. Edwards affirms such a doctrine in *The End for Which God Created the World*, where he says,

> God as perfectly knew himself and his perfections, had as a perfect an idea of exercises and effects they were sufficient for, antecedently to any such actual operations of them, as since. If therefore it be nevertheless a thing in itself valuable, and worthy to be desired, that these glorious perfections be actually expressed and exhibited in their corresponding effects; then it seems, also that the knowledge of these perfections, and the expressions and discoveries that are made of them, is a thing valuable in itself absolutely considered; and that 'tis desirable that this knowledge should exist.[110]

God possesses a perfect and unmediated knowledge of all that he could do *ad extra*.[111] He perfectly knows all that he could do in virtue of knowing himself. This knowledge exists

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[107] See Crisp, *Jonathan Edwards and the Metaphysics of Sin*, 84.

[108] Helm, *Eternal God*, 130.

[109] *WJE*, 1:435.

[110] *WJE*, 8:431.

[111] Walter Schultz offers a helpful analysis of this statement from Edwards. Of God's perfect knowledge of himself, Schultz says, "There are no mediating processes or entities involved in God's knowing himself; no things which otherwise might be supposed to be 'encountered' or beyond his control." Walter J. Schultz, *Jonathan Edwards'* Concerning the End for Which God Created the World*: Exposition, Analysis, and Philosophical Implications* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2020), 160.

logically antecedent to God's actual operation and grounds possibility.[112] Edwards has a category that corresponds to the Reformed notion of simple intelligence.

This view ought to be set in contrast with the Arminian position Edwards eschews in *FOW*. Of the Arminian view, he writes,

> We have a fixed unalterable state of things, properly distinct from the perfect nature of the divine mind, and the state of the divine will and design, and entirely independent on these things, and which they have no hand in, because they are prior to them; and which God's will is truly subject to, being obliged to conform or accommodate himself to it, in all his purposes and decrees, and in everything he does in his disposals and government of the world.[113]

The Arminian view presents God with an unalterable state of affairs arising from free choices independent of God's design and will. He rejects this view as one which would make God a servant whose will is subject to the creature.[114] That Edwards held to God's knowledge of vision need not be examined in light of the previous evidence. His commitment to *A*-foreknowledge as the means by which God foreknows future events ensures God's knowledge of vision.

Third, Edwards argued for an eternal and antecedent decree that God executed in time. Instead of accepting the Arminian view of foreknowledge, Edwards opts for a view wherein God knowingly and willingly designs a world from his own intention, in accordance with his wisdom, and grounded in a perfect knowledge of all that he is sufficient to bring about *ad extra*. This is seen near the end of *FOW*, where he states,

> And the certain truth of these doctrines, concerning God's eternal purposes, will follow from what was just now observed concerning God's universal providence; how it infallibly follows from what has been proved, that God order all events, and the volitions of moral agents amongst others, by such a decisive disposal, that the events are infallibly connected with his disposal. For if God disposes all events, so that the infallible existence of the events is decided by his providence, then he doubtless thus orders and decides things *knowingly* and *on design*. God don't do

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[112] For a helpful treatment on possibilities as they relate to God's power, see Schultz, *Jonathan Edwards'* Concerning the End, 159–69.

[113] *WJE*, 1:395.

[114] *WJE*, 1:395–96.

> what he does, nor order what he orders, accidentally and unawares; either *without*, or *beside* his intention. And if there be a foregoing *design* of doing and ordering as he does, this is the same with a purpose or *decree*. And it has been shewn, that nothing is new to God, in any respect, but all things are perfectly and equally in his view from eternity; hence it will follow, that his design or purposes are not things formed anew, founded on any new views or appearances, but are all eternal purposes.[115]

The decree is an eternal and antecedent, or foregoing, purpose executed in time. Those events which God ordered occur in time in such a way that they are infallibly connected by his design. "Indeed," Edwards writes, "such an [sic] *universal determining providence*, infers some kind of necessity of all events; such a necessity as implies an infallible previous fixedness of the futurity of the event."[116] Upon the condition of God's purposes and providence, the events unfold in time as they were designed from eternity.[117]

Finally, Edwards held to the determinate truth value of future propositions but did not ground the truthfulness in the thing itself. Edwards argues for a necessary connection between God's knowledge and future events: God infallibly knows future events because they are true on the supposition of the decree. Human actions are indiscernible in themselves. They possess no evidence for their own existence. Recall, evidence must either be in the thing itself or in something else. Future events are neither absolutely nor accidentally necessary and they are not infallibly connected with an absolute or an accidental necessity. Therefore, God cannot discern them since there is no

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[115] *WJE*, 1:434–35.

[116] *WJE*, 1:431.

[117] Further, the reason why something does not exist may also be found in God. In *Original Sin*, Edwards argues against Dr. Taylor who proposed that Adam's sin jeopardized the possible existence of his posterity. Because of Adam's sin, although innocent, his posterity becomes subject to death. Adam's posterity may not have ever existed had God enacted his threat upon Adam immediately after the fall. Edwards rejects this view since it equates death with the failure of possible existence. Should Adam have never sinned, Edwards reasons, an infinite number of possible beings would have still failed to exist. For this reason, sin and failure of existence cannot be equated. He then says, "God has appointed not to bring into existence numberless possible worlds, each replenished with innumerable possible inhabitants." *WJE*, 3:249.

evidence for the existence of a particular future event.[118] God may know the laws of motion in the course of nature, but even these are frustrated given the natural world is subordinate to the moral order. Should the natural order proceed apart from the moral, God may know future effects given the nature of material causes as determined to a particular effect. But, for Edwards, human actions are not like this; otherwise, they could be known. God may know his own actions as he interposes himself into the created order, but this presupposes foresight of the moral order. Given that human actions are possible to be or not be in and of themselves, their futurition is indiscernible to God. To be known, they must certainly be true and determined to be true. Edwards rejects that God's foreknowledge is the effect of something not God, such as a fixed unalterable state of things. Instead, God's foreknowledge infers the decree. The decree renders possible events future, supplying a truth value and evidence for God's foreknowledge.

Philip Fisk disagrees with the above interpretation. He argues that Edwards's view of foreknowledge differs from theologians such as William Ames and Petrus van Mastricht. He claims that theologians, such as Ames, distinguished between God's knowledge that logically precedes the divine will and that which logically follows. Edwards failed to make this distinction due to his faulty use of the Boethian definition of eternity, which Edwards employs when arguing against Arminians. Fisk contends that Edwards, as a consequence, was in greater agreement with the Arminians than the Reformed tradition. He writes, "What permits this agreement is the lack of either party to hold to distinct, structurally ordered 'moments' in the 'unchanging ever-presentness of God,' whether antecedent to or following the decree, which would have set one party in opposition to the other."[119] He continues, "These are aspects of divine intuitive knowledge (of vision), but these planes of knowledge are not specified in Edwards's text.

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[118] What follows is a summary of Edwards's argumentation as found in *WJE*, 1:250–51.

[119] Fisk, "Divine Knowledge at Harvard and Yale," 170.

By way of contrast with these two schemes, as Ames puts it in his *Marrow*, God's knowledge of all things that are to be known, and his power which can do all possible things."[120] As a consequence, in *FOW*, Edwards can merely assert that "the divine decree does not increase or change the already absolute nature of the connection, nor God's knowledge of the event decreed."[121] Fisk acknowledges that Edwards was aware of these distinctions in his private writings but failed to utilize them in his published works. As a result, Fisk concludes, "He does not feel beholden to defending an historical line of Reformed arguments."[122]

Fisk's interpretation assumes that Edwards conscientiously departed not only from the Reformed tradition but also himself. I believe this stems from the fact that he expects *FOW* to function as a treatise on God's knowledge rather than a polemical argument against the Arminians. As Edwards writes, "'Tis utterly impossible the known events should fail existence. For if that were possible, then it would be possible for there to be a change in God's knowledge and view of things"[123] This statement is about God's foreknowledge, not God's knowledge of simple intelligence.

Although I argued that Edwards makes this distinction in his published works, the reason why it does not occupy significant space in *FOW* is due to the disagreement Edwards shares with the Arminians. What God foreknows cannot be otherwise than God foreknows. If God's foreknowledge follows from the creature's choice in time, then God's knowledge of the future event means that the future event is necessary. If it is necessary, then it cannot be otherwise. The decree also ensures the necessity of the event, but the event is necessary whether God foreknows it as a consequence of the decree or

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[120] Fisk, "Divine Knowledge at Harvard and Yale," 170–71.

[121] Fisk, "Divine Knowledge at Harvard and Yale," 176.

[122] Fisk, "Divine Knowledge at Harvard and Yale," 177.

[123] *WJE*, 1:268.

human actions in time. Edwards argues that knowledge requires evidence and the evidence for God's foreknowledge of future events, which are indiscernible in themselves, is grounded in the decree. Regardless, Calvinists and Arminians agree that the event cannot be otherwise than God foreknows. Fisk expects Edwards to develop two structural planes of God's knowledge when Edwards intends to argue with the Arminians on the plane of God's knowledge of vision. As a result, Edwards should not be seen as departing from himself or the tradition. He maintained that God knows all that he could do, and that foreknowledge follows the decree.

Edwards and the Reformed share commonality on their view of foreknowledge. Earlier in the chapter, I argued that these criteria lead one to conclude that the Reformed were compatibilists contra Muller and *RTF*. Edwards shares an affinity for these same theological commitments although they are not explicitly stated and systematized in *FOW*.

Edwards and the Tradition

Having analyzed Edwards's view of foreknowledge and comparing it with the tradition, two objections must be answered. The first objection states that Edwards's view of freedom differed from the Reformed due to his faulty understanding of the necessity of the consequence. Muller argues that Edwards's work results in a kind of determinism not found in the Reformed tradition. Edwards, according to Muller, misconstrues the distinction between necessity of the consequence and necessity of the consequent. Failing to properly define this distinction prohibits Edwards from allowing any contingency in the world. Muller states the problem as follows:

> Edwards identifies the consequence as the result of a connection, indeed, a necessary connection. His definition does not conform to the concept of a necessity of the consequence (necessitas consequentiae) or necessity de dicto as traditionally defined: the necessity of the consequence is the logical or present necessity that a thing must be what it is, although it also either could not be or could be otherwise. In other words, a necessity of the consequence indicates a genuine contingency. The other member of the traditional distinction, a necessity of the consequent of the

> consequent thing (necessitas consequentiae) represents a necessity that, on hypothesis of its antecedent, is absolutely necessary can cannot be otherwise.[124]

The necessity of the consequence refers to the validity of the statement whereas the necessity of the consequent assumes the necessity of the thing itself.

Interacting with Muller, Helm offers an alternative interpretation of Edwards, stating that Edwards merely disregards the distinction.[125] Helm elsewhere argues that Edwards differs with Francis Turretin on these issues, arguing that Edwards notion of necessity argues *de re* instead of *de dicto*, as Turretin does. Partly, this is due to the fact that God necessarily foreknows what he foreknows.[126] Helm disagrees with Muller concerning the ramifications for human freedom, but he sees Edwards as different than Turretin regarding God's foreknowledge and decree.

The second, and related objection, comes from Fisk and Muller. Fisk argues that Edwards's view of necessary connections rules out contingency, driving a wedge between Edwards and the Reformed. Fisk interprets Edwards to argue that a series of events are interlocked in an unbreakable connection due to their relationship with an unalterable past. After examining Edwards's notion of absolute necessity, Fisk states,

> But then Edwards makes a move that needs to be analysed. He seems to infer from the absolute necessity of God's infallible knowledge an infallibly certain and fixed connection of events. In other words, he takes a step of inference from ontological truths, things necessary in themselves, like God's knowledge, towards propositional language, and then a step from the logical inner necessity and nexus of propositions to make inferences from causality necessary. This is seen in his move to transfer

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[124] Richard A. Muller, "Jonathan Edwards and Francis Turretin on Necessity, Contingency, and Freedom of Will," *Jonathan Edwards Studies* 4, no. 3 (September 2014): 273.

[125] Helm states, "Muller thinks that Edwards has misunderstood the distinction. But an alternative view is that Edwards refuses to accept the distinction and deliberately disregards its language. Why would this be? I suggest that it is because God, according to Edwards, does not have the freedom of alternativity and so the distinction cannot be applied in respect of God's action, any more than (he thinks) it can be deployed in respect of human choice." Helm, "Turretin and Edwards Once More," *Jonathan Edwards Studies* 4, no. 3 (September 2014): 292.

[126] Paul Helm, "Francis Turretin and Jonathan Edwards on Contingency and Necessity," in *Learning from the Past: Essays on Reception, Catholicity and Dialogue in Honour of Anthony N. S. Lane*, ed. Jon Balserak and Richard Snoddy (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2015), 175–76.

> what he calls the necessity of the consequence from one event in a chain of events to another.[127]

Fisk locates God's foreknowledge and its relationship between the necessary connection of events in the realm of absolute necessity. He argues that the problems related to contingency begin here. In part, this is due to Fisk's understanding of Edwards's notion of an accidental necessity. Edwards claims it is impossible that past events should be otherwise than true.[128] Fisk states the problem as follows, "That I married Cynthia was a contingent event. If Edwards is saying that, given the fact that my marriage to Cynthia already has come to pass, it is impossible that it not be true, then he is pointing to the issue of whether a past event is necessary or contingent."[129] He continues, "Although the marriage-event was true on a certain day in the past, that same event could, seen today, not be true on that same day in the past. The event was contingent."[130] Since Fisk takes Edwards to state that all future events are necessarily connected with past events that lack contingency, he concludes that all events have the necessity of the consequent according to Edwards's reasoning. Further, all events lack contingency since they are connected to events that are not contingent. Fisk writes,

> The confusing misstep that Edwards takes is to describe the necessity of the consequence in terms of a series of events whose connection is marked by philosophical necessity. But the implication that one proposition implies another does not entail the individual necessity of one or the other, neither does it remove the contingency of one or the other. Edwards, therefore, confounds the necessity of the consequence with a sequence of events that are, as he says, 'necessarily' connected in the sense of a philosophical necessity.[131]

Edwards, Fisk claims, fills the concept of the necessity of the consequence with the idea that all events are necessarily connected by a philosophical necessity such that each

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[127] Philip John Fisk, *Jonathan Edwards's Turn from the Classic-Reformed Tradition of Freedom of the Will* (Göttingen: V&R Academic, 2016), 334.

[128] *WJE*, 1:153.

[129] Fisk, *Jonathan Edwards's Turn*, 338.

[130] Fisk, *Jonathan Edwards's Turn*, 338.

[131] Fisk, *Jonathan Edwards's Turn*, 340–41.

proposition implies future events. Thus, for Fisk, the problem is not that every effect has a cause, but Edwards's faulty notion of the necessity of the consequence.[132]

Similarly, Muller argues that Edwards's denial of contingency is a departure from the tradition. Edwards offers two definitions of contingency:

> Contingency[1]: Anything is said to be contingent, or to come to come to pass by chance or accident, in the original meaning of such words, when its connection with its causes or antecedents, according to the established course of things, is not discerned; and so is what we have no means of the foresight of.
>
> Contingency[2]: Something which has absolutely no previous ground or reason, with which its existence has any fixed and certain connection.[133]

Edwards' accepts contingency[1] and rejects contingency[2]. Muller rejects Edwards's definitions as incompatible with the Reformed understanding of contingency. Contingency entails not merely indiscernibility of human action but the potency of the will to different effects.[134] More recently, he describes contingency as follows:

> The phrase indicates, quite precisely, a contingency that, given the simultaneously present resident capabilities (potencies) of the will, a person is capable of choosing or refusing an object or of choosing another object, with the will determining its own act. To claim, moreover, that such language has a parallel in an Edwardsian identification of contingency with "the belief in an agent's mind that he could have done otherwise had other reasons to act thusly been uppermost" is hardly credible. The Reformed orthodox identify an actual, genuine contingency in the real order of things—Helm here identifies a "belief," an imagined or purely epistemic contingency. Such willing may be spontaneous or uncoerced, but in the older Reformed view it is not (genuinely) free.[135]

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[132] Fisk, *Jonathan Edwards's Turn*, 340.

[133] *WJE*, 1:155.

[134] Muller states, "The Reformed deny chance, indicating that what appears to be fortuitous actually has causes that are not evident to the observer, but affirm contingency as something that could be otherwise given that its causality is contingent and, in the case of human choices, defined as contingency by potencies of will to more than one effect." Muller, "Edwards and Turretin on Necessity, Contingency, and Freedom of Will," 274.

[135] Richard A Muller, "Neither Libertarian nor Compatibilist: A Response to Paul Helm," *Journal of Reformed Theology* 13, no. 3–4 (2019): 284.

For Muller, the indiscernibility of a future event does not constitute contingency. He argues that contingency requires a capacity to actualize multiple potencies, though not at the same time.

In sum, there are three related objections. First, Edwards does not have a proper view of the necessity of the consequence, whether he misunderstood or intentionally disregarded it. Second, Edwards's notion of accidental necessity entails that an event cannot be otherwise, leading to a denial of contingency in *FOW*. Third, God necessarily foreknows what he foreknows.

My response to these objections is twofold. First, Edwards is aware of and properly uses the necessity of the consequence in various places. Evidence for this can be found in his sermons and writings on perseverance. Perseverance is a necessary consequence immutably connected with saving faith.[136] Another example may be found in the relationship between faith and justification, with the former being a condition for the latter. He states,

> For by the word *condition*, as 'tis very often (and perhaps most commonly), used; we mean anything that may have the place of a condition in a conditional proposition, and as such is truly connected with the consequent, especially if the

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[136] For example, in "Miscellanies," no. 412, he states, "Universal and persevering obedience, and bringing forth the fruits of love to God and our neighbor, are conditions of salvation; as they may be put into a conditional proposition and often are so in Scripture (if we have them, we shall have eternal life; and if we have them not, we shall not have eternal life), by reason of their necessary and immutable connection with faith, as immediately flowing from the nature of it." "Miscellanies," no. 412, in *WJE*, 13:472. And also, "Hebrews 6:4, etc., 'For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, . . . if they fall away,' etc.—such hypothetical propositions may be true when one or both parts of it are impossible, the truth of such a proposition consisting in the connection of the antecedent and consequent; as when our Lord said to the Jew, 'If I should say I knew him not, I should be a liar, like unto you.'" Jonathan Edwards, *"Controversies" Notebook*, *Works of Jonathan Edwards Online*, vol. 27, Jonathan Edwards Center, Yale University, 2008, http://edwards.yale.edu/archive?path=aHR0cDovL2Vkd2FyZHMueWFsZS5lZHUvY2dpLWJpbi9uZXdwaGlsby9zZWxlY3QucGw/d2plby4yNg==. Further, he also appears to be aware of and approve John Gill's use of the distinction in his writings against a fellow opponent, Daniel Whitby. Gill states, "But admitting that the apostle and other true believers are included in these words, they are not a categorical but hypothetical proposition; which may be true when one or both parts of it are impossible; the truth of such a proposition consisting in the connexion of the antecedent and consequent; as when our Lord said to the Jews, *If I should say I know him not, I should be a liar like unto you*;* the proposition is true, when both the parts of it were impossible; it was impossible that Christ should say, he knew not the Father; and it was equally impossible that he should be a liar like unto them." John Gill, *The Cause of God & Truth* (Lafayette, IN: Sovereign Grace, 2002), 57.

> proposition holds both in the affirmative and negative, as the condition is either affirmed or denied; if it be that with which, or which being supposed, a thing shall be, and without which, or it being denied, a thing shall not be, we in such a case call it a condition of that thing.[137]

Thus, Edwards can affirm, from the perspective of the individual justified, that faith is the condition of justification. Apart from faith, an individual cannot be justified. The conditional element, faith, must be truly connected with the consequent, justification. Should the antecedent be certain, the consequent occurs because it is truly, infallibly, and immutably connected to its antecedent. If the condition of faith is absent, then justification is wanting. This is not too different from Edwards's definition of the necessity of the consequence, "So that the one being supposed, the other certainly follows."[138] Thus, one can safely say that Edwards was aware of and properly utilized this distinction.[139]

Second, given Edwards's awareness and proper use of the distinction, a more charitable reading may be in line. Let us assume that Edwards is aware of and properly uses the necessity of the consequence in his definition based upon the above reasoning. The necessity of the consequence, according to Edwards, requires, "The connection of two or more propositions to one another."[140] The former proposition shall be identified as P^1 and the latter P^2. In order for P^2 to come to pass it must "be surely and firmly connected with something else, that is necessary on one of the former respects." That is, P^2 must be firmly connected to P^1, which must be either absolutely or accidentally

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[137] "Justification by Faith Alone," in *WJE*, 19:152,

[138] *WJE* 1:154.

[139] Marco Barone, "Jonathan Edwards on Necessity and Contingency: A Reconsideration," *Online Journal* 10, no. 1 (2020): 2–19.

[140] Here is the full definition: "The subject and predicate of a proposition which affirms something to be, may have a real and certain connection consequentially; the existence of the thing may be consequentially necessary; as it may be surely and firmly connected with something else, that is necessary in one of the former respects: as it is either fully and thoroughly connected with that which is absolutely necessary in its own nature, or with something which has already received and made sure existence. This necessity lies in, or may be explained by the connection of two or more propositions one with another. Things which are perfectly connected with other things that are necessary, are necessary themselves, by a necessity of the consequence." *WJE*, 1:153.

necessary. He concludes, "Things which are perfectly connected with other things that are necessary, are necessary themselves, by a necessity of consequence."[141] Future events are said to be necessary with the necessity of the consequence, and only in this way. The reason for this is twofold. First, P^2 is not necessary in and of itself otherwise it would have already existed. Second, P^2 cannot be accidentally necessary since it is future and has not yet passed. Thus, P^2 depends upon the supposition P^1. As a definition, nothing is inherently problematic. If P^2 represents justification, which is neither absolutely nor accidentally necessary, the supposition of faith, P^1, is required. In this instance, P^1 is neither absolutely nor accidentally necessary. However, upon P^1 occurring in history and since its existence cannot now be otherwise, P^2 necessarily follows. His reasoning does not entail either P^1 or P^2 are absolutely or accidentally necessary.

Edwards offers a practical example of this distinction in his argument that God possesses foreknowledge of future events. He states,

> When the conspirators in Persia, against the Magi, were consulting about a succession to the empire, it came into the mind of one of them, to propose, that he whose horse neighed first [P^1], when they came together the next morning, should be king [P^2]. Now such a thing's coming into his mind, might depend on innumerable incidents, wherein the volitions of mankind had been concerned. But in consequence of this accident [Darius' horse neighing P^{1*}], Darius, the son of Histaspes, was king [P^{2*}]. And if this had not been, probably his successor would not have been the same, and all the circumstances of the Persian empire might have been far otherwise. And then perhaps Alexander might never have conquered that Empire. And then probably the circumstances of the world in all succeeding ages, might have been vastly otherwise.[142]

Muller states, "The necessity of the consequence is the logical or present necessity that a thing must be what it is, although it also either could not be or could be otherwise."[143] Edwards's illustration fits Muller's definition. One of them offered the following rule: "Whoever's horse neighs first shall be king." Darius' horse neighed, P^{1*}; therefore,

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[141] *WJE*, 1:153.

[142] *WJE*, 1:249.

[143] Muller, "Edwards and Turretin on Necessity, Contingency, and Freedom of Will," 272.

Darius became king P^{2*}. The neighing of Darius' horse and the governing rule were accidentally, not absolutely, necessary. Since it was not absolutely necessary, it might have been otherwise. Should it have been otherwise, the entire course of history might also have been otherwise. Given that the entire course of history could have been otherwise, history *itself* is not absolutely necessary nor does it bear the necessity of the consequent. Not only does this example fit Muller's definition, but it also contradicts Fisk's understanding of Edwards. There is a sense in which the past could have been otherwise but no longer can be given that it is an accident of history.

In light of the preceding argument, how should Edwards's view of contingency be understood? Marco Barone offers a philosophical analysis of necessity and contingency in Edwards's thought. He recognizes that Edwards proposes two definitions of contingency but argues that these definitions are the primary senses in which Edwards defines contingency. These definitions neither exclude nor exhaust what constitutes contingency.[144] Of Contingency^2, he asserts,

> Edwards assumes this definition of contingency in *Freedom of the Will* as the primary (and not *exclusive*) meaning of contingency *in the polemical context* of his *Freedom of the Will* against his philosophical and theological adversaries (Thomas Chubb, Daniel Whitby, and Isaac Watts). Assuming this primary definition of contingency does not in and of itself logically imply that Edwards rules out contingency understood as a caused event that is not absolutely necessary and either could be otherwise or could simply not be.[145]

That Edwards denies an uncaused event does not entail that a caused event could not be otherwise. Edwards properly utilizes the necessity of the consequence, as I argued, and categorizes acts of the will as events with the necessity of the consequence. Barone continues and explains the ramifications of Edwards's reasoning, saying,

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[144] He writes, "Several other passages reveal that contingency intended as the absence of a cause is the definition of contingency that Edwards is opposing. However, from this fact alone it does not follow that Edwards is stipulating only two definitions of contingency (that is, contingency intended either as the absence of a cause or the mere ignorance of a cause)." Barone, "Edwards on Necessity and Contingency," 4.

[145] Barone, "Edwards on Necessity and Contingency," 5.

> This means that event *y* does not infallibly follow event *x* because of a supposed intrinsic or absolute necessity belonging to *x*. There is not intrinsic or absolute necessity that makes *y* to infallibly follow from *x*, but *y* infallibly follows from *x* once we posit the certainty and infallibility of the knowledge and the decree of God who ordained those events.[146]

Consider the above example of Darius' horse. The rule that infallibly connected two propositions and the propositions themselves were neither intrinsically nor absolutely necessary. However, upon the supposition of the rule and the neighing of Darius' horse, Darius became king. Edwards affirms that this course of history could have been otherwise. That it could have been otherwise is not merely an epistemic claim, but a claim rooted in the fact that the nature of history and acts of the will could be otherwise because they are not absolutely necessary.

Edwards illustrates this point in his example of a malicious man, which reads:

> It can't be truly said, according to ordinary use of language, that a malicious man, let him be never so malicious, can't hold his hand from striking, or that he is not able to shew his neighbor kindness; or that a drunkard, let his appetite be never so strong, can't keep the cup from his mouth. In the strictest propriety of speech, a man has a thing in his power, if he has it in his choice, or at his election: and a man can't be truly said to be unable to do a thing, when he can do it if he will.[147]

The malicious man has the capacity to strike (*A*), not strike (*not-A*), or show kindness (*B*), for this just is the power that a man has. Strict propriety of speech requires one to affirm that the malicious man possesses liberty of contrariety and contradiction. One cannot possess a power to actualize a contrary or a contradiction of an absolute necessity, otherwise the necessity is not absolute. Edwards affirms that the malicious man has everything sufficient to act differently than he in fact does. He writes, "Therefore, in these things to ascribe a nonperformance to the want of power or ability, is not just; because the thing wanting is not a being *able*, but a being *willing*. There are faculties of mind, and a capacity of nature, and everything else, sufficient, but a disposition: nothing

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[146] Barone, "Edwards on Necessity and Contingency," 13.

[147] *WJE*, 1:162.

is wanting but a will."[148] The malicious man lacks a will. A previous judgment of the intellect could have led to a different outcome. The malicious man may have acted otherwise than he in fact did because acts of the will are necessary by a necessary connection or consequence. The role of the intellect, the capacity of man, and the power of the will allow Edwards to say that an event could have been otherwise. His system of compatibilism does not render all human acts necessary with the necessity of the consequent.

By demonstrating that Edwards was aware of and accurately used the necessity of the consequence, Muller and Fisk's charges have been answered. These charges differ from Helm's, who writes,

> In a system that is necessitarian in Edwards's sense, in which both the decree itself and what is decreed are necessary, there is no use for the distinction between the necessity of the consequence, or *de re* necessity, and the necessity of the consequent, or *de dicto* necessity. Or rather, this is a distinction without a difference. And so there is no use for Turretin's hypothetical necessity.[149]

According to Helm, even if Edwards distinguishes between necessity of the consequence and the necessity of the consequent, his overall theological system fails to supply a real difference between these two concepts. He continues, "It is from Edwards's denial of *divine freedom* in this sense that the distinction means that the consequence—consequent distinction has no application in his theology."[150] For Helm, the denial of divine freedom follows since Edwards denies freedom of alternativity to God.[151]

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[148] *WJE*, 1:162.

[149] Helm, "Turretin and Edwards on Contingency and Necessity," 176.

[150] Helm, "Turretin and Edwards on Contingency and Necessity," 177.

[151] Helm, "Turretin and Edwards Once More," 292.

Despite Helm's criticism, he still maintains that Edwards's compatibilism is consistent with the Reformed since this is a difference in theology proper rather than anthropology.[152] Similarly, Preciado writes,

> In my view, Edwards's denial of alternativity in God is the most substantial parting of the ways between him and the Reformed orthodox. Yet we must ask, does this alone place the reformed orthodox outside of the compatibilist camp? I cannot see how it would. They still denied the sourcehood and alternative possibilities conditions. This alone makes them compatibilists.[153]

For these reasons, even if Helm's charge is correct, there is no reason to assume a difference at the level of human freedom.

However, there may be good reasons to believe that Edwards offers more than a distinction. An argument for a real difference could be made from Edwards trinitarian theology. Edwards differentiated between the eternal begetting of the Son and the act of creation, using different language for each. Of this difference Stephen Holmes writes,

> By distinguishing sharply between the generation of the Son and the creation of the world, it is possible to assert that the Son is *homoousios* with the Father and eternal, while the world is neither, but instead created *ex nihilo*. Again, the same distinction protects the status of creation as a free act of God, while also asserting that the generation of the Son is a necessary act: God can be God without the world, but God would be less than he in fact is without the Son.[154]

This difference preserves God's aseity and the distinction between Creator and creature.[155] By differentiating between eternal generation and creation, Holmes believes Edwards distinguished between necessary and appropriate acts of God.[156] He grounds his

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[152] Helm, "Turretin and Edwards Once More," 292.

[153] Preciado, *Reformed View of Freedom*, 209.

[154] Stephen R. Holmes, "Does Edwards Use a Dispositional Ontology? A Response to Sang Hyun Lee," in *Jonathan Edwards: Philosophical Theologian*, ed. Paul Helm and Oliver Crisp (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2003), 106.

[155] Stephen R. Holmes, *God of Grace and God of Glory: An Account of the Theology of Jonathan Edwards* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 49.

[156] Holmes, *God of Grace and God of Glory*, 49.

argument in Edwards's sermon, "The Excellency of Christ." In this sermon, Edwards writes of Christ,

> As he is a divine person he is self-sufficient, standing in need of nothing; all creatures are dependent on him, but he is dependent on none, but is absolutely independent. His proceeding from the Father in his eternal generation, or filiation, argues no proper dependence on the will of the Father; for that proceeding was natural and necessary and not arbitrary.[157]

The proceeding of the Son differs from acts of God's will, which bear an arbitrary character. An arbitrary act may be governed and directed by wisdom but not limited by laws, especially natural laws.[158] Creation, as opposed to eternal generation, is an arbitrary act.[159] Thus, Edwards can speak of God's knowledge of things possible and dependent upon the will of God. These possible objects are not absolutely necessary. Accordingly, they are not necessary in themselves, nor necessary as the eternal generation of the Son is necessary. Nor are created objects logically necessary. Unlike the Son's generation, they depend solely upon the will of God for their existence. For these reasons, the distinction Edwards draws between the necessity of the consequence and the consequent may contain a difference.[160]

Conclusion

The Reformed and Edwards held similar views with regard to fate and foreknowledge. Consequently, their views of human freedom are similar. They rejected

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[157] "The Excellency of Christ," in *WJE*, 19:571–72.

[158] "Miscellanies," no. 1263, in *WJE*, 23:202.

[159] Kyle Strobel, *Jonathan Edwards's Theology: A Reinterpretation*, T&T Clark Studies in Systematic Theology 19 (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2013), 85.

[160] A discussion of divine freedom in Edwards's thought would go beyond the scope of this dissertation. For interpreters in the British school who argue that God did not have to create, see Strobel, *Jonathan Edwards's Theology*, 75–104; Holmes, *God of Grace and God of Glory*; Holmes, "Does Edwards Use a Dispositional Ontology?" For an alternative view within the British school, see Oliver Crisp, *Jonathan Edwards on God and Creation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 57–93; Crisp, "Jonathan Edwards on God's Relation to Creation," *Jonathan Edwards Studies* 8, no. 1 (April 2018): 2018. For a response to Crisp's charges that God must necessarily create, see Rigney, "Diverse Excellencies," 244–62. For an analysis of *The End for Which God Created the World* that argues that God did not have to create, see Schultz, *Jonathan Edwards'* Concerning the End.

forms of fate that denied God's wise decree and governance over all things. The Reformed did not reject forms of fate because of their commitment to PAP_{All} since freedom merely requires a reasoned choice and an unimpeded will. They allowed for a fixed causal connection of all things insofar as it could be grounded in God's decree.

According to the Reformed, foreknowledge follows the divine decree. The decree is an internal and immanent act, antecedent to all things. The eternal and antecedent decree of God terminates *ad extra* as God executes in time those things decreed from eternity. God's immutable decree ensures infallible foreknowledge. What God decreed from eternity is foreknown and cannot be otherwise than God decreed and foreknows it to be. Alternative possibilities, then, should be understood conditionally rather than categorically. An event could have been otherwise had God decreed differently than he in fact did. As a result, God's foreknowledge would have been different as well since he knows future events as determinately true. He determined future events to be true by an efficacious decree, not the mere assigning of truth values.

Muller and *RTF* do not account for how the decree of God ensures how God and an agent can concur to bring about the same act. They merely argue that God and free agents cannot produce logically contradictory events and that God assigns truth values to future events without an efficacious determination. When contrasted with the Reformed, Muller's formula for concurrence and alternative possibilities condition struggled to account for the relationship between the antecedent decree and its execution in time. *RTF* faced several inconsistencies that may be easily resolved should the Reformed be understood as compatibilists.

After analyzing the Reformed view of foreknowledge, Edwards's writings were examined in light of the criteria of the Reformed. Themes of continuity may be found in Edwards's commitment to *A*-foreknowledge, the difference between knowledge of simple intelligence and of vision, an eternal and antecedent decree that God executed in time, and the determinate truth value of future propositions grounded in God's decree.

Then, I examined the objection that Edwards failed to properly utilize the necessity of the consequence. I argued that Edwards is aware of and properly utilized the distinction several times in *FOW* and other writings. His system may render it a distinction without a difference. However, Edwards's trinitarian theology may reveal that there is indeed a difference. Regardless, the conditions of human freedom do not change and, as a result, he appears to be in continuity with the Reformed tradition.

CHAPTER 5

CHRIST'S IMPECCABILITY

Speaking of Francis Turretin and Jonathan Edwards, Paul Helm writes,

> They were both classical theists, Augustinians, confessing both predestination and meticulous divine providence, the divine decrees, and so on, and a Chalcedonian Christology, and both were explicitly opposed to the position of the Jesuits and Arminians on grace and free will. These common positions can be understood as boundaries of what I call their common theological niche.[1]

Within these boundaries, Turretin and Edwards employed Christ's impeccability to argue that Christ possessed morally significant freedom even though he could not sin.[2] This is known as the doctrine of Christ's impeccability. Louis Berkhof defines Christ's impeccability, saying, "This means not merely that Christ could avoid sinning (*potuit non peccare*), and did actually avoid it, but also that it was impossible for Him to sin (*non potuit peccare*) because of the essential bond between the human and the divine natures."[3] Simply put, there is no possible world in which Christ sins. For good reasons, Christians have also wanted to affirm that the sinless Christ was free such that his actions are worthy of praise, meriting salvation. How then should we conceive of Christ's freedom?

Compatibilism serves as the simplest and most plausible explanation for Christ's human freedom since he could not do otherwise than act holy and he is praiseworthy. For example, David Alexander writes,

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[1] Paul Helm, *Reforming Free Will: A Conversation on the History of Reformed Views on Compatibilism (1500–1800)* (Fearn, Scotland: Mentor, 2020), 131.

[2] Helm, *Reforming Free Will*, 151–53.

[3] Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 2021), 322.

> If LFW [libertarian free will] is true, then in order for Jesus to be morally praiseworthy it must be true that he could have failed to perform his duty or he could have failed to be virtuous. But both views mentioned deny this. Either he could not have sinned or the divine nature would not allow it. Either way Jesus is morally praiseworthy and he could not have sinned (either considered just as a human or considered as both God and man). So, Jesus gives us a nice example of someone morally praiseworthy and yet unable to do other than what is right or virtuous.[4]

A compatibilist can account for the data of Scripture, the reality of Christ's temptations, and undergirding theological principles, with greater ease than those who advocate for libertarian free will.[5] Some who hold to libertarian free will also agree. For example, Tim Pawl writes,

> If God were to determine that CHN [Christ's human nature] never sins despite being free and tempted (or, put in a different way, that the Son never acts sinfully by means of his human nature), then we have the human freedom of Christ, the temptation of Christ, and the sinlessness of the Incarnate Christ, all without any heavy metaphysical lifting. In a similar way, if compatibilism were true, then the worrisome logical determination that might result from Christ's foreknowing in his human intellect all the future free actions of any agents would dissipate. For Christ's foreknowing, even if it determined the later actions of agents, wouldn't for that reason preclude their being free, given the truth of compatibilism.[6]

Pawl denies the truthfulness of compatibilism, but the point remains: compatibilism provides a simple explanation Christ's freedom if one desires to hold to impeccability.[7]

Proponents of libertarian free will advocate for Christ's impeccability in a variety of ways. Pawl and Kevin Timpe argue for a limited version of PAP_{All} that

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[4] David E. Alexander, "Orthodoxy, Theological Determinism, and the Problem of Evil," in *Calvinism & the Problem of Evil*, ed. David E. Alexander and Daniel M. Johnson (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2016), 130.

[5] For a brief but helpful description of Christ's impeccability and its relationship to free will, see Stephen J. Wellum, *God the Son Incarnate: The Doctrine of Christ*, Foundations of Evangelical Theology (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2016), 459–65; John Feinberg, "The Incarnation of Jesus Christ," in *In Defense of Miracles: A Comprehensive Case for God's Action in History*, ed. R. Douglas Geivett and Gary R. Habermas (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1997), 226–46.

[6] Timothy Pawl, *In Defense of Extended Conciliar Christology: A Philosophical Essay*, Oxford Studies in Analytic Theology (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), 125.

[7] For a helpful treatment of impeccability, reasons for accepting and consequences of denying it, see Oliver Crisp, *God Incarnate: Explorations in Christology* (London: T&T Clark, 2009). Although he denies impeccability, Millard Erickson notes the devastating consequences should Christ actually have sinned. Millard J. Erickson, *The Word Became Flesh* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1991).

emphasizes sourcehood.[8] Some, such as Thomas Morris and William Lane Craig hold to Christ's impeccability and affirm libertarian free will but, as a consequence, deny that PAP_{All} is true[9] Similarly, Katherin Rogers offers an Anselmian approach to Christ's impeccability that differentiates Christ's freedom from human freedom. Human freedom requires the ability to do otherwise whereas *a se* freedom, which Christ possesses, does not.[10] Others, such as Thomas Flint, argue that Molinism allows the Christian to consistently affirm Christ's sinlessness and his significant freedom, defined as the categorical ability to do otherwise.[11]

According to Muller and *RTF*, these views would fail to describe dependent freedom as put forth by the Reformed.[12] Pawl and Timpe affirm sourcehood, which Muller and *RTF* would likely equate with independence from God. Morris, Craig, and Rogers deny that Christ possessed the alternativity required for dependent freedom. Flint's self-professed radical view requires Molinism and appears to draw too sharp of a distinction between the person of Christ and his human nature. Both aspects would fail to find favor among a Reformed view of foreknowledge and their Christology.

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[8] Timothy Pawl and Kevin Timpe, "Freedom and the Incarnation," *Philosophy Compass* 11, no. 11 (2016): 743–56. This article was adapted and expanded in Pawl, *In Defense of Extended Conciliar Christology*.

[9] See Thomas V. Morris, *The Logic of God Incarnate* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1986), 146–53; James Porter Moreland and William Lane Craig, *Philosophical Foundations for a Christian Worldview* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003), 610–13; William Lane Craig, "Flint's Radical Molinist Christology Not Radical Enough," *Faith and Philosophy: Journal of the Society of Christian Philosophers* 23, no. 1 (January 2006): 55–64.

[10] Katherin A. Rogers, "Christ's Freedom: Anselm vs. Molina," *Religious Studies* 52, no. 4 (2016): 497–512.

[11] Thomas Flint, "A Death He Freely Accepted: Molinist Reflections on the Incarnation," *Faith and Philosophy: Journal of the Society of Christian Philosophers* 18, no. 1 (January 2001): 3–20; Flint, "The Possibilities of Incarnation: Some Radical Molinist Suggestions," *Religious Studies* 37, no. 3 (September 2001): 307–20; Flint, *Divine Providence: The Molinist Account*, Cornell Studies in the Philosophy of Religion (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2006).

[12] These views may or may not be viable. Regardless, according to the criteria put forth by Muller and *RTF*, they fail to accurately depict the Reformed view of free will.

The variety of libertarian views and the simplicity of the compatibilist position reveals multiple problems for those who espouse dependent freedom. First, the alternative possibilities condition creates difficulties for those who hold to Christ's impeccability, which the Reformed did. They either limit or deny it or radicalize other aspects of their theology.[13] Second, compatibilism offers a simple answer to the problem of Christ's impeccability and his freedom. Third, Edwards was a compatibilist who argued for Christ's impeccability. *Prima facie*, Edwards's argument from Christ's impeccability fails to drive a significant wedge between himself and the Reformed.[14] Fourth, and finally, those who espouse dependent freedom have yet to propose how the Reformed held to impeccability and PAP_{All}, nor have they attempted to demonstrate how Edwards's argument from impeccability marks a departure from the tradition.

For these reasons, a significant burden of proof rests upon Muller and *RTF*. Their position must be able to account for Christ's impeccability while affirming PAP_{All} and demonstrate how Edwards's compatibilist understanding of impeccability marks a departure from the tradition. In this chapter, I contend that this burden of proof is too great since Edwards's argument from impeccability bears significant similarities to the Reformed and conditional alternativity better accounts for how the Reformed viewed Christ's freedom, rendering Edwards's view of freedom as a more plausible understanding of the Reformed view than dependent freedom.

In order to defend this thesis, I begin with an analysis of Edwards's argument from impeccability. Then, I demonstrate that Edwards's position utilizes several Reformed theological concepts, identifying him as a theologian seeking to work within

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[13] For a critique of Flint's radical molinist view that reveals the Christological problems, see Rogers, "Christ's Freedom," 506–10.

[14] Fisk discusses several similarities between Edwards and the Reformed. He does not, however, evaluate how their commitment to impeccability reveals continuity or discontinuity. Philip J. Fisk, "Jonathan Edwards's Freedom of the Will and His Defence of the Impeccability of Jesus Christ," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 60, no. 3 (2007): 309–25.

the tradition. I conclude the chapter with an analysis of Turretin and Perkins and argue a compatibilist reading such as Edwards's, rather than dependent freedom, better explains the Reformed view of Christ's impeccability.

Edwards's Argument from Impeccability

Edwards's argument from Christ's impeccability follows immediately after he argues that God is necessarily perfect and worthy of praise. His argument consists in two parts. First, Christ, in his state of humiliation, necessarily obeyed and, second, he is worthy of praise. Edwards writes,

> First, I would show, that his holy behavior was necessary; or that it was impossible it should be otherwise, than that he should behave himself holily, and that he should be perfectly holy in each individual act of his life. And secondly, that his holy behavior was properly of the nature of virtue, and was worthy of praise; and that he was the subject of law, precepts or commands, promises and rewards; and that he was in a state of trial.[15]

Edwards then proceeds to argue from promises contained in Scripture that Christ could not act "otherwise than holy, and agreeable to God's nature and will."[16] Edwards then mounts eleven arguments as a cumulative case for impeccability, nine of which explicitly relate to promises contained in Scripture whereas two arguments demonstrate the devastating consequence should Christ have failed. Below, I briefly summarize the eleven arguments.[17]

Argument #1: God effectually promised to preserve Christ by the Spirit (Isa 42:1–8). The Spirit of God is bestowed upon Christ to bring judgment into the world leading to victory as the kingdom is established on earth.

Argument #2: God promised success, future glory, and a kingdom to the Messiah (Pss 2:6–7; 110:4; Isa 49; 52:13–15; 53:10–12), all of which is depends upon

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[15] *WJE*, 1:281.

[16] *WJE*, 1:281.

[17] What follows is a summary of *WJE*, 1:281–88.

perfect holiness. Since the absolute promises of God make the things promised necessary and God promised the Messiah would not fail, the Messiah could not fail.

Argument #3: a sinless savior was promised to the church (Jer 23:5–6; 33:15; Isa 9:6–7; 11:1–2, 4–5; 52:13; 53:9). Christ understood himself as the fulfillment of these prophecies (Luke 24:44; Matt 26:54; Mark 14:49). Since, Edwards reasons, it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for the promises of God, it was impossible that Christ be anything other than a perfect savior.

Argument #4: all the promises to the church from the paradise (Gen 3:15) to Malachi "show it to be impossible that Christ should not have persevered in perfect holiness."[18] The promises of God, which are as sure as God's covenant with the day and night, indicate that a righteous one from David's line will rule on the throne forever (Jer 31:15, 20–21, 25–26).

Argument #5: the effects of the Messiah's work are promised to the church, such as her enlargement and advancement, and these effects require the perfecting work of the Messiah which is contingent upon his perseverance in perfect holiness in order that God's sure promises should stand (Isa 54:9 [cf. 62:8]; 49:15 [cf. 54:10]; 51:4–8; 40:8).

Argument #6: it was impossible for the Messiah to fail because of the promises that were given to the blessed Virgin Mary (Matt 1:21; Luke 1:32–33). Mary, according to Edwards, acted reasonably by trusting in these promises.

Argument #7: should Christ fail in perfect holiness this would contradict the eternal decree of God to save a people for himself. This is the first argument Edwards proposes that is not based upon a promise but the consequence of a failed promise. Knowing the Arminians disagree with God's election of particular persons to everlasting life, Edwards reasons from within their theological presuppositions and argues that general election of the church and conditional election of man requires an absolute decree

[18] *WJE*, 1:284.

that Christ procure salvation (1 Cor 2:7; Eph 1:4–5; 3:9–11; 1 Pet 1:19–20). "And since," Edwards argues, "(as the Arminians themselves strenuously maintain) a decree of God infers necessity; hence it became necessary that Christ should persevere and actually work out salvation for us, and that he should not fail by the commission of sin."[19]

Argument #8: the Father, from long ago, promised salvation to those who follow the Son (Titus 1:2). Should this promise fail, the promise of a people chosen in the Son fails with it.

Argument #9: the Son promised to the Father to do his will and die as a perfect sacrifice (Ps 40:6–8; cf. Heb 10:5–9). Edwards argues that the eternal Son, the second person of the trinity identified as the Logos, covenanted with the Father to do his will in his human nature ensuring its success. He argues, "If the Logos who was with the father before the world and who made the world thus engaged in a covenant to do the will of the father in the human nature and the promise, was as it were recorded, that it might be made sure, doubtless it was impossible that it should fail; and so it was impossible that Christ should fail of doing the will of the Father in the human nature."[20]

Argument #10: the salvation of those before the death of Christ requires a firm foundation of Christ's perfect work as savior. Should he fail or be liable to fail then the salvation of saints before the cross was built upon the sand. However, Scripture speaks of Christ as a sure foundation (Isa 28:16), the consolation of Israel (Luke 2:25, 38), and the one who grounds the sure promises upon which the patriarchs rested their faith (Heb 11:13). This is the second and final argument that demonstrates the absurdity should God's promises fail.

Argument #11: Jesus promises the success of his mission despite temptations and difficulties and extends the promises to his disciples (John 14). However, the

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[19] *WJE*, 1:286.

[20] *WJE*, 1:287.

disciples would have had no reason to believe these promises nor would Jesus have been within his right to extend the effect of his work to them before it had been accomplished.

The second half of Edwards's argument demonstrates that the impeccable Christ meets the criteria established by Whitby without requiring freedom of indifference. Although Christ necessarily acts in perfect holiness, he was the subject of his Father's commands and obeyed. Being necessarily determined to good did not prohibit or minimize the reward for Christ's work in any way. The Father covenanted a kingdom to the Son and the Son enters into covenant with his followers (Luke 22:28–29). These promises of a future reward and kingdom were set before him as motivations for obedience through temptations and trials (Heb 12:1–2). None would dare lessen the virtue of Christ's work or consider it worthy of less praise than creatures receive who are not bound to the same kind of necessity as Christ. Edwards argues that Jesus's necessity makes him no less of an example for us who seek to do good. Rather, he not only made satisfaction for our sins but is our "leader and captain, in the exercise of glorious and victorious virtue, and might be a visible instance of the glorious end and reward of it; that we might see in him the beauty, amiableness, and true honor and glory, and exceeding benefit of that virtue, which it is proper for us human beings to practice."[21] For this reason, the Father is pleased with his Son and the heavenly hosts praise the lamb that was slain for his perfect obedience. As a result, the Father rewards him "far above all his other servants" (Isa 53:11–12; Phil 2:7–9).[22] Edwards concludes addressing the trials and tribulations of Christ, which he surely entered into and conquered by focusing on the rewards of obedience.

Having addressed the relationship between Christ's impeccability and promises, rewards, and motivations, Edwards, apparently, felt no need to justify the

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[21] *WJE*, 1:291.

[22] *WJE*, 1:293.

genuineness of Christ's temptation. He takes it as fact that Christ was impeccable and that he was tempted, thus, necessity is not opposed to temptation. Should Edwards's argument stand, he has proven that freedom of indifference fails to account for the praiseworthiness of Christ's obedience through trials.

Themes of Continuity

Having examined Edwards's view, three themes of continuity will now be explored. Edwards appears to see himself within the tradition as he argues against a common opponent. He also utilizes themes of promise and the covenant of redemption throughout his writings. Similar arguments are found in the Reformed. Finally, I conclude this section with an exploration of Edwards's Christology. In doing so, I aim to demonstrate that he grounded impeccability in the constitution of the person of Christ, the theanthropos.

Common Opponent

Edwards and Turretin share a theological opponent, Simon Episcopius.[23] Turretin acknowledges the historical claim that Christ did not sin but he also affirms that Christ was unable to sin. According to Turretin, Episcopius and the Remonstrants affirmed the former and denied the latter. Turretin claims the immaculate Son could not have sinned and those who suggest otherwise utter blasphemy.[24] Edwards also addresses Episcopius. After outlining his eleven arguments from promise, he states,

> I have been the longer in the proof of this matter, it being a thing denied by some of the greatest Arminians, by Episcopius in particular; and because I look upon it as a point clearly and absolutely determining the controversy between Calvinists and Arminians, concerning the necessity of such freedom of will as is insisted on by the

[23] Helm, *Reforming Free Will*, 152–53.

[24] Francis Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, vol. 1, *First through Tenth Topics*, ed. James T. Dennison Jr., trans. George Musgrave Giger (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 1992), 666.

> latter, in order to moral agency, virtue, command, or prohibition, promise or threatening, reward or punishment, praise or dispraise, merit or demerit.[25]

Edwards, with Turretin, saw impeccability as a divide between the Remonstrants or Arminians, both identify a common theological opponent, and both argue that Christ could not have been otherwise than perfectly holy.

Arguments from Promise

Edwards's argument from promise bears a twofold resemblance with the Reformed tradition. First, Edwards argues from prophecy. As I stated above, Edwards's arguments for Christ's impeccability rely heavily upon the promises of Scripture. Against Episcopius and those who argue for a conjectural foreknowledge of God, Owen argued that God had certain foreknowledge of future events based upon the prophecies concerning the Christ. He writes, "Do but consider the prophecies of Scripture, especially those concerning our Savior, how many free and contingent actions did concur for the fulfilling of them; as Isa. vii. 14, ix. 6l Gen. iii. 15, etc." Turretin seeks to establish that the decree necessitates future things. He writes, "The question does not concern the necessity of coaction because the decree brings no violence to second causes, but decrees the futurition of things to take place agreeably to their nature. Rather the question concerns hypothetical and consequential necessity with respect to the certainty of the event and the futurition from the decree. We assert the latter."[26] From here, he offers several reasons, some of which pertain to the promises about the Christ. "Scripture," according to Turretin, "predicts that necessity."[27] He lists several texts interspersed with his own comments to argue his point, writing,

> "It must needs be that offenses come" (Mt. 18:7); "But how then shall the Scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be [viz., from the decree]" (Mt. 26:54); "The Son of

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[25] *WJE*, 1:289.

[26] Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, 1:320.

[27] Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, 1:320.

> man goeth, as it was determined" (*kata to hōismenon*, Lk. 22:22). Thus "Herod and Pontius Pilate were gathered together for to do whatsoever they hand and counsel" [i.e., the most efficacious counsel] "determined before to be done" (Acts 2:23; 4:28.).[28]

In the context of Turretin's broader argument concerning the necessity of future events, these prophecies, "cannot be otherwise."[29] The death of Christ, for Turretin, is not merely a determined truth value, although it cannot be less than that, it follows "the most efficacious counsel;" thus, it carries the causal implications of determinism.[30] Turretin reasons from the death of Christ that it could not have been otherwise on hypothesis of the efficacious decree.

Second, Edwards argues from the covenant of redemption. Answering Whitby's charge that promises require liberty of indifference and prohibit that one be determined to a particular outcome, Edwards reasons that, "The man Christ Jesus had his will infallibly, unalterably and unfrustrably determined to good, and that alone; but yet he had promises of glorious rewards made to him, on the condition of his persevering in, and perfecting the work which God had appointed him (Is. 53:10, 11, 12; Ps. 2 and 110; Is. 49:7, 8, 9)."[31] He then refers to Luke 22:28–29 and expounds on the word "appoint," saying,

> The word most properly signifies to appoint by covenant, or promise. The plain meaning of Christ's words is this: "As you have partook of my temptations and trials, and have been steadfast, and have overcome; I promise to make you partakers of my reward, and to give you a kingdom; as the Father has promised me a kingdom for continuing steadfast, and overcoming in those trials."[32]

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[28] Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, 1:320.

[29] Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, 1:320.

[30] Contra *RTF*, who *merely* argues that God assigns truth-values to propositions. See Willem J. van Asselt, J. Martin Bac, and Roelf T. te Velde, eds., *Reformed Thought on Freedom: The Concept of Free Choice in Early Modern Reformed Theology*, Texts and Studies in Reformation and Post-Reformation Thought (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010), 189–90.

With Helm, who argues that the decree has a causal force in Helm, *Reforming Free Will*, 172–73. I argued this point in the previous chapter.

[31] *WJE*, 1:289–90.

[32] *WJE*, 1:290.

Elsewhere, he refers to the promises made to the Messiah and his work, saying,

> I say, all these promises imply, that the Messiah should perfect the work of redemption; and this implies, that he should persevere in the work which the Father had appointed him, being in all things conformed to his will. These promises were often confirmed by an oath (see Is. 54:9 with the context; ch. 62:8). And it is represented as utterly impossible that these promises should fail (Is. 49:15 with the context; ch. 54:10 with the context; ch. 51:4–8; ch. 40:8 with the context). And therefore it was impossible, that the Messiah should fail, or commit sin.[33]

The arguments from promises and the covenant of redemption require more than a mere holy will. Christ also had to fulfill specific acts related to the promises and the covenant and do so in a holy manner. Edwards developed these arguments from the same texts and theological concepts as his Reformed predecessors.

Christology

Christology is the last theme that demonstrates broad continuity with the Reformed tradition.[34] Admittedly, Edwards's Christological commitments are scant in *FOW*. However, the absence of explicit Christological commitments may be due to the purpose of Edwards's argument; he merely needs to argue that Jesus was necessarily holy, under the law, the subject of rewards, and in a state of trial. Arminian opponents, such as Episcopius, denied Christ's impeccability and Whitby based much of his argument for free will upon the condition that the subject must be in a state of trial. Thus, according to Whitby, the freedom possessed by God, elect angels, and damned angels fails to bear significant resemblance to man's freedom since these beings cannot ever be in a state of trial or have already been confirmed in their trial. Edwards, then, needed to merely undercut the thrust of Whitby's argument by demonstrating that Christ was free while in a state of trial.

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[33] *WJE*, 1:286.

[34] Two works that serve as helpful reflections of Reformed Christology include Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, vol. 3, *Sin and Salvation in Christ*, ed. John Bolt, trans. John Vriend (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003); Wellum, *God the Son Incarnate*.

John Gill, a contemporary of whom Edwards was aware and a theological opponent of Whitby, reasons similarly in *The Cause of God and Truth*.[35] He argues that God, those in a confirmed state of holiness, the devils, and the damned, do not possess freedom of moral indifference and yet, "[Liberty] is consistent with some kind of necessity, and a determination to one."[36] Like Edwards, Gill uses the doctrine of Christ's impeccability to undercut Whitby's that the essence of human freedom differs from those beings who are not presently in a state of trial. He reasons,

> The human nature of Christ, or the man Christ Jesus, who, as he was born without sin, and lived without it all his days on earth; so was impeccable, could not sin. He lay under some kind of necessity, from the purpose of God, the command of God, the covenant between God and him, as well as from the purity of his nature, to fulfill all righteousness; and yet he did it most freely and voluntarily: which proves that the liberty of man's will, in its greatest perfection, which is so in the man Christ Jesus, does not lie *in equilibrio*, in an indifference to good and evil, but is consistent with some kind of necessity, and with a determination to that which is good only.[37]

As he continues, he argues that Whitby's criterion of a state of trial, fails to properly consider Christ's work, saying,

> The objection to the former argument can have no force here, for though Christ was not in a state of trial, as men in common are not; yet he was liable to be tempted, and was tempted to evil, though he had no inclination to it, nor was it possible that he should be prevailed upon to commit it.[38]

Edwards recognizes the objection as Gill does but spends an entire chapter seeking to undermine in Whitby what Gill critiques in a few sentences. Edwards does not feel the need to develop a Christology containing implications his opponents will disregard. Instead, he develops arguments that demonstrate the inconsistency of the Arminian

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[35] Gill presents a particularly helpful case study since Gill and Edwards argued against Daniel Whitby. Gill's works preceded Edwards and interacted with Hobbes, yet he did not have the same indebtedness to Locke. Muller identifies Gill within Reformed orthodoxy. See Richard Muller, "John Gill and the Reformed Tradition: A Study in the Reception of Protestant Orthodoxy in the Eighteenth Century," in *The Life and Thought of John Gill (1697–1771): A Tercentennial Appreciation*, ed. Michael A. G. Haykin, Studies in the History of Christian Thought 77 (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 51–68.

[36] Gill, *The Cause of God & Truth*, 197.

[37] Gill, *The Cause of God & Truth*, 197.

[38] Gill, *The Cause of God & Truth*, 197.

position. For example, he contends that the Arminian notion of an antecedent decree of general election requires that Christ could not sin. He writes,

> God could not decree before the foundation of the world, to save all that should believe in, and obey Christ, unless he had absolutely decreed that salvation should be provided, and effectually wrought out by Christ. And since (as the Arminians themselves strenuously maintain) a decree of God infers necessity; hence it became necessary that Christ should persevere, and actually work out salvation for us, and that he should not fail by the commission of sin.[39]

Even when building his arguments from the covenant of redemption, Edwards does so in a manner with which the Arminians would likely have to concede.[40] One should interpret Edwards as reasoning from common ground in order to undermine Whitby's claims.

Given this analysis, one should not expect to discern all the underpinnings of Edwards's doctrine of impeccability since he does not intend to establish a full-fledged Christology; rather, he merely argues that Christ could not sin and yet was subject to the law and considered worthy of praise. Some interpret Edwards as resting impeccability upon the theme of promise rather than the constitution of his person. Consider William Shedd, who writes, "Edwards (Will 3.2) argues the impeccability of Christ from the promises made to him and the operation of the Holy Spirit in him, not from the constitution of his person."[41] Similarly, Fisk states,

> Edwards's theological argument rests on intra-trinitarian promises, promises from the Father to the Son, and from the Son to the Father, before the Son takes on a human nature . . . . Edwards, like Turretin and Mastricht, rests impeccability on the theanthropic person of Christ; but unlike his predecessors, he argues from intra-trinitarian promises made by the Son to the Father that are recorded in Scripture.[42]

It is difficult to discern in Fisk's work whether impeccability rests on the promises or the theanthropic person. Further, he also discusses impeccability as an operative attribute in

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[39] *WJE*, 1:286.

[40] *WJE*, 1:287.

[41] William Greenough Thayer Shedd, *Dogmatic Theology*, ed. Alan Gomes, 3rd ed. (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2003), 670.

[42] Fisk, "Jonathan Edwards's Freedom of the Will," 322.

Edwards's thought, as opposed to quiescent, which is a characteristic of Lutheran rather than Reformed Christology.[43] Since it is assumed that Edwards grounds impeccability in either the promises made to the Son or as a result of an operative attribute, I will examine three characteristics of Reformed Christology in order to argue that he grounded impeccability in the constitution of the person, the God-man.

Edwards's interpreters debate the nature of his Christology as well as its coherence with other metaphysical commitments that are either embedded or deduced from his writings.[44] While a full examination of Edwards's Christology is beyond the scope of this work, several clearly articulated elements found in his "Miscellanies" and Sermons are worth noting.

Edwards affirmed two minds and two wills. In "Miscellanies," no. 766, Edwards affirms the "understanding and the will of the divine Logos, and the understanding and will of the human nature of Christ."[45] Thus, there is a divine understanding and will as well as a human understanding and will. The same person, the Logos, possessed divine knowledge and human knowledge; the former of which resides

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[43] He writes, "When considering the two natures of the one person of the God-man, the question arises of whether or not the divine attributes are communicated to the human nature and, in particular, whether or not the attribute of impeccability is communicated to the human nature of Christ. Moral impeccability is one attribute that is communicated; otherwise, a quiescent divine nature could, in theory, leave the human nature to apostatise and if it did, it would contribute guilt to the person of Christ; for Christ, being one person, would bear responsibility." Fisk, "Jonathan Edwards's Freedom of the Will," 318.

[44] Robert Jenson argues that Edwards conjoined divine and human attributes. His reasoning is based upon Edwards's sermon "The Excellency of Christ." See Robert W. Jenson, *America's Theologian: A Recommendation of Jonathan Edwards* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 116–17; Jenson, "Christology," in *The Princeton Companion to Jonathan Edwards*, ed. Sang Hyun Lee (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005), 72–86. It is difficult to warrant Jenson's interpretation from this sermon, and, as I argue below, Edwards held to several traditional Reformed Christological commitments. Crisp discusses the coherence of Edwards's other theological and philosophical commitments with his Christology in Oliver Crisp, "Jonathan Edwards, Idealism, and Christology," in *Idealism and Christian Theology*, ed. Joshua R. Farris, S. Mark Hamilton, and James S. Spiegel, Idealism and Christianity 1 (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2016), 145–76.

[45] "Miscellanies," no. 766, in *WJE*, 18:412. Edwards would seem to fit the classical definition of a "person" since he does not associate mind or will with person but affirms that a person has a mind and a will via its nature. Thus, the Son can have two minds and two wills without being two persons. What matters, according to Edwards, is that the person has a communication of the understanding, will, and consciousness, such that he knows he is the same person. See "Miscellanies," no. 487, in *WJE*, 13:529.

in the one divine mind of the triune God, whereas the latter was created and possesses knowledge fitting to a creature.

Concerning the divine mind, Edwards writes,

> In the first place, we don't suppose that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost are three distinct beings that have three distinct understandings . . . . The Father understands, the Son understands, and the Holy Ghost understands, because every one is the same understanding divine essence; and not that each of them have a distinct understanding of their own.[46]

This statement coheres with Edwards's commitment to divine simplicity.[47] Concerning the human mind, Edwards appears to follow the maxim, *finitum non capax infiniti* when establishing the unity of the incarnate person.[48] He writes, "The man Christ Jesus, being the same person with the eternal Son of God, has a reminiscence or consciousness of what appertained to the eternal Logos, and so of his happiness with the Father."[49] Edwards reasons in this manner in order to establish how the Christ might speak of eternal realities, such as the glory he shared with the Father before the world began and the covenant of redemption. He continues,

> Now when he remembered those things, he could not remember [them] as they were in the infinite mind, for the idea of the Creator cannot be communicated to the creature as it is in God; but the remembrance, as it was in his mind, was the same after a different manner: the things which he remembered were from all eternity in the Logos after the manner of God; and the man Christ Jesus was conscious to

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[46] "Miscellanies," no. 308, in *WJE*, 13:392.

[47] Crips claims that Edwards affirmed a classical understanding of divine simplicity. Crisp, "Jonathan Edwards, Idealism, and Christology," 146–47. Likewise, Joe Rigney writes, "From the beginning of his ministry until its end, in sermons, personal letters, public treatises, and private notebooks, Edwards repeatedly and clearly affirms and commends the doctrine of divine simplicity, as it was preserved in the broad Reformed tradition which he self-consciously placed himself within." Joe Rigney, "Jonathan Edwards on Divine Simplicity," in *The Lord Is One: Reclaiming Divine Simplicity*, ed. Joseph Minich and Onsi A. Kamel (Moscow, ID: Davenant Press, 2019), 128–29.

[48] Muller defines the term as follows: "The finite or finite being is incapable of grasping, comprehending, or receiving the infinite or infinite being; an epistemological and ontological maxim drawn into Christological debate between the Reformed and the Lutherans." Richard A. Muller, "Finitum Non Capax Infiniti," in *Dictionary of Latin and Greek Theological Terms: Drawn Principally from Protestant Scholastic Theology*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2017), 125. Robert Caldwell interprets Edwards along similar lines to what I outline in this chapter; see Robert Caldwell, "Pneumatology," in *The Oxford Handbook of Jonathan Edwards*, ed. Douglas A. Sweeney and Jan Stievermann (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021), 151–64.

[49] "Miscellanies," no. 205, in *WJE*, 13:340.

> himself of them as if they had been after the manner of a creature . . . . 'Twas impossible that the man Christ Jesus should remember this as it was in the Deity, for then an idea of the eternal mind could be communicated to a finite mind even as it is in the infinite mind; but he remembered it as if it had been really such a transaction, before the world was, between him and the Father.[50]

The finite understanding belonging to the human nature of the person who is the Son of God, knows that he is the one with whom the eternal covenant was made, not because his finite mind is from eternity, nor because the human mind is a subset of the divine mind, but because the Spirit communicates these truths to the human mind of Christ.[51] Edwards could affirm that the knowledge of eternal transactions and glory belonged to the Son's divine mind and his human mind according to different modes of knowing: infinite and finite.

Edwards held to a threefold *communicatio*. "Miscellanies," no. 1219 specifically addresses the communication of properties. Edwards begins by saying, "Such a communication of properties and characters with respect to Christ in the language of Scripture, which divines suppose to have its foundation in the union of the divine and human natures of Jesus, is not absurd."[52] He argues, by way of analogy, that humanity speaks in similar terms about the union of a body and soul in one human person, saying, "The properties of soul and body, which are so very different, are affirmed of the person, through agreeing only to one of the principles which he is constituted."[53] For example, it is the body of an individual that is "well-proportioned" rather than their soul, which may instead be described as "learned, wise, thoughtful."[54] Those things said of the body

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[50] "Miscellanies," no. 205, in *WJE*, 13:340.

[51] Edwards writes, "And yet the knowledge of divine things that the human nature had was by the Spirit of God, by his inspiration or revelation: for he taught and did the business of the great prophet of God by the Spirit. But these things can't consist together any other way, than that the Spirit of God is the bond of union between the knowledge of the divine nature of Christ and the human, so that the knowledge of the divine logos was his knowledge." "Miscellanies," no. 766, in *WJE*, 18:413.

[52] "Miscellanies," no. 1219, in *WJE*, 23:153.

[53] "Miscellanies," no. 1219, in *WJE*, 23:154.

[54] "Miscellanies," no. 1219, in *WJE*, 23:154.

cannot be said of the soul and vice-versa; yet, whatever is said of the body or the soul is said of the person. Returning to Edwards's two minds Christology, the Son possesses ideas according to a divine and infinite manner of knowing while also possessing the same idea according to a human and finite manner of knowing since it is the knowledge of the same Son that he has by virtue of his two natures. Attributes of the divine nature are not attributed to the human nature.

Edwards also held to the communication of gifts. Muller defines this theological concept as follows,

> The impartation of grace by the Word to the human nature it assumed in the incarnation, consisting in the *gratia unionis* (q.w.), the grace of union, also termed *gratia eminentiae*, or grace of eminence, which elevates Jesus's humanity above all other creatures; and the *gratiae habituales*, the habitual graces or gracious dispositions conferred by the Holy Spirit on the human nature of Christ. Those latter graces are gifts of true knowledge of God, soundness and perseverance of will, and great power of action, beyond the natural capacity of human beings.[55]

The communication of graces emerges in Reformed theology in distinction to Lutheran theology, which operates with a different understanding of the communication of attributes. On the Lutheran view, several attributes of the divine nature are communicated to the human nature. Communicated attributes are operative attributes whereas those attributes not communicated are known as quiescent attributes. Since the Reformed denied that the finite could comprehend the infinite, they instead argued that Christ's human nature was equipped with gifts of grace from birth and at various other times that assisted Christ's human nature without transgressing the boundaries of what a human nature could possess. These gifts especially equipped Christ to fulfill his threefold office of prophet, priest, and king.

Since Edwards held to a traditional understanding of the communication of attributes, one would also expect to find him employing the communication of graces.

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[55] Muller, "Communicatio Gratiarum," in *Dictionary*, 69.

According to Edwards, the Spirit formed the holy human nature of Christ in Mary's womb. Commenting on Luke 1:35, he writes,

> Here it seems to be supposed, that seeing this thing is formed by the Holy Ghost, it must needs be an holy thing. Seeing it was the immediate work of infinite, omnipotent, holiness itself, the thing wrought must needs be perfectly holy, without any unholiness. Though wrought in the midst of pollution and brought out of it, yet this agent being infinitely powerful in its influence must needs infinitely prevail over any ill influence, that the nature of the mother might be supposed to have. It is the proper work of this infinite, divine, holy energy to bring good out of evil, light of darkness, life out of death, holiness out of impurity.[56]

With the forming of the human nature came endowments of nature and of grace, as Edwards elsewhere writes, "All the endowments of both nature and grace which Christ had were given him of the Father, for all are of the spirit; the natural faculties are of the Spirit of God . . . . And seeing that all of Christ's gifts of nature and grace were from the Father, so was that increase in wisdom and stature that we read of [Luke 2:40]."[57] The human nature of Christ was fitted with gifts of grace from inception, and with these endowments of nature and grace, the Son grew.

The endowments did not transform the human nature of Christ but he was the most holy of all creatures since he possessed the Spirit in a "peculiar manner and without measures."[58] Edwards writes,

> This shows how much the man Christ Jesus must needs be the most holy of all creatures. For the creature is more or less holy according as it has more or less of the Holy Spirit dwelling in it; but Christ has so much of the Spirit, and hath it in so high and excellent a manner, as to render him the same person with him whose Spirit it is.[59]

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[56] "Miscellanies," no. 767, in *WJE*, 18:414.

[57] "Miscellanies," no. 958, in *WJE*, 20:235.

[58] "Miscellanies," no. 487, in *WJE*, 13:528.

[59] "Miscellanies," no. 766, in *WJE*, 18:413. In other words, the eternal Son has the Spirit and renders the human nature of Christ to the one who is the eternal Son to whom belongs the Spirit. He previously says, "The union of the eternal Logos with the man Christ Jesus was doubtless by some communication or other, by that means some way peculiarly communicating with that divine Logos in what was his, or by having something dwelling in [him] that was divine, that belong to the Logos. If there is no more communication between this individual human nature and the eternal Son of God than others, there is no more real union. But all that was divine in the man Christ Jesus is from the Spirit of God. But all that

Edwards frequently speaks of the initial endowments of nature and grace as the anointing work of the Spirit but he also allows for a further anointing at the beginning of Christ's ministry. He writes,

> The Holy Ghost did not first descend on Christ at his baptism; Jesus was united to the divine nature before this. No, it first descended on him at his conception. Jesus was conceived by the power of the Holy [Ghost], so that he was anointed as united to the divine nature when he first began to be; by this the Logos was made flesh in the womb of the Virgin Mary. Christ's anointing don't only mark out Christ as being our mediator, but 'tis his anointing that qualifies and fits him for the work of mediator.[60]

The anointing work of the Spirit forms the holy thing in the womb of Mary, provides endowments of nature and grace, and qualifies and fits Christ for the work of ministry without transforming the human nature.

Finally, Edwards also affirmed the communication of operations. Returning to his "Miscellanies," no. 1219 on the communication of attributes, Edwards continues by saying,

> In other instances we affirm that of the person, which agrees to neither of the constituent principles of his nature considered alone, and is only true of the man as constituted of both; as when we say of Peter, that he served his country with honor; purchased such an estate, etc., here we attribute that to Peter, which belongs neither to soul nor body considered alone. And thus it is with respect to Christ, by virtue of the wonderful union of two such distinct natures in his person. When we say of him that he suffered and died, we mean it of his human nature only; when we say of him that he 'thought it no robbery to be equal with God,' that he is omniscient, omnipresent, etc., we mean it only with respect to his divine nature; and when we say of him, that he is the Mediator, the Redeemer and Savior of sinners, we mean it of his person constituted of both natures.[61]

Edwards makes this point explicit in his writing on the death of Christ, saying,

> The offering up the life of Christ, though it was only of the human life, yet the offering was made by Christ not only as man but as God-man. It was an act of the priesthood of Christ. But all acts of the priesthood of Christ are performed by Christ

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was divine in the man Christ Jesus is from the Spirit of God—divine power, and divine knowledge, and divine will, and divine acts—and therefore, it must be that the divine Logos dwelt in him by the Spirit, or which is the same thing, was united to him by the Spirit." "Miscellanies," no. 766, in *WJE*, 18:413.

[60] "Miscellanies," no. 487, in *WJE*, 13:530.

[61] "Miscellanies," no. 1219, in *WJE*, 23:154.

> as God-man. It is that which renders the act meritorious, because it is not only the act of Christ as man, but also as God . . . . That life that was offered up, though it was only the human life of Christ; yet being the life of a divine person, it was that which the whole person has a propriety in. And therefore not only the man but God is said to have laid down his life.[62]

The union of the divine and human nature in the person of Christ as expressed in the communication of operations ensures the union of God and man since it is the work of the God-man.[63] For this reason, Vos identifies the communication of operations as, "The ripe fruit of the entire development of biblical Christology."[64]

Before moving on, one should note that Edwards denied the doctrine of consubstantiation in his sermon, "One Great End In God's Appointing The Gospel Ministry."[65] Given the relationship between Christology and debates concerning the presence of Christ at the Lord's Supper, one should see this as a further sign that he held to classic Reformed Christology.[66]

Edwards argued for the *extra calvinisticum*. Finally, Edwards argued for the *extra calvinisticum*, a doctrine which teaches the Son's continued exercise of his divine attributes while incarnate. Muller says of the Reformed tradition, "The Reformed argued that the Word is fully united to but never totally contained within the human nature and therefore, even in incarnation, is to be conceived of as beyond or outside of (*extra*) the

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[62] "The Free and Voluntary Suffering and Death of Christ," in *WJE*, 19:497.

[63] As Gill notes, "His blood was shed in the human nature, to cleanse from sin; but it is owing to its union with the Son of God that such an effect is produced by it. The redemption of men is by the ransom-price of the life and blood of Christ; but it is the divine nature, to which the human is united, in the person of the Son of God, that makes it a sufficient one." John Gill, *A Body of Divinity* (Grand Rapids: Sovereign Grace, 1971), 387.

[64] Geerhardus Vos, *Reformed Dogmatics*, vol. 3, *Christology*, trans. and ed. Richard B. Gaffin (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2016), 63.

[65] "One Great End in God's Appointing the Gospel Ministry," in *WJE*, 19:444–45.

[66] On Christological controversies with the Lutherans, Turretin writes, "The origin of the controversy is to be traced to another controversy concerning the Lord's Supper." Francis Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, vol. 2, *Eleventh through Seventeenth Topics*, ed. James T. Dennison Jr., trans. George Musgrave Giger (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 1992), 323.

human nature."[67] This doctrine logically follows from Edwards's own presentation of the two minds and wills of Christ, but also the threefold communication. Further, Edwards held other commitments that rendered his affirmation of the *extra* inevitable. For example, he writes, "As all the persons of the Trinity do concur in all acts *ad extra*—as the creation of the world and raising the bodies of saints, etc., are especially the work of the Son of God in his economical office, but yet they are not done without the Father, and are often ascribed to the Father. The Father and the Son produce the same works."[68] All three persons create the universe by the one divine will and the act of creating is intimately connected with upholding the created order, on Edwards's view. Thus, Edwards concludes that the Son not only created the universe but also upholds it, writing elsewhere,

> 'Tis evident that the same WORD, the same Son of God, that made the world or gave it being, also upholds it in being and governs it. This is evident in part unto reason. For upholding the world in being and creating of it, are not properly distinct works. For tis manifest that upholding the world ain being is the same with a continued creation, and consequently that creating of the world is but the beginning of upholding of it, if I may so say, the beginning to give the world a supported and dependent existence; and preservation is only continuing to give it such a supported existence. So that truly the giving the world a being at first no more differs from preserving it through all successive moments, than the giving a being the last moment differs from the giving a supported being this moment.[69]

Given the logic of Edwards's reasoning, he rejects the absurdity of denying the *extra*. For those who suppose a change took place while Christ was in his humble state, he writes,

> Who upheld and governed the world at that time? Doubtless it will be said that God the Father took the world out of the hands of the Son for that time, to uphold and govern it, and returned it into his hands again at his exaltation. But is there any ground to suppose such a mighty change as this as to the Author of the universe, its having such different authors of its being and of all its properties, natural principles and motions and alterations and events, both in bodies and all created minds, for

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[67] Muller, "Extra Calvinisticum," in *Dictionary*, 116.

[68] "Miscellanies," no. 958, in *WJE*, 20:238.

[69] "Miscellanies," no. 1358, in *WJE*, 23:608.

> one, three, or four and thirty years, from what it had ever before or since? Have we any hint of such a thing?[70]

Edwards cannot conceive how the Father might take the world out of the hand of the Son only to return it to him at his exaltation. Edwards assumes that the Son, by his divine will, upholds the created order during the incarnation.

Along similar lines, Edwards argues against Isaac Watts, who maintained that Christ had a pre-existent human soul. Concerning the creation and upholding of the universe on Watt's view, Edwards writes, "If the pre-existing soul of Christ created the world, then doubtless it upholds and governs it. The same Son of God that did one, does the other."[71] However, Edwards argues,

> The work of creation, and so the work of upholding all things in being, can in no sense be properly said to be the work of any created nature . . . . So that it cannot be true in Dr. Watts' scheme that that Son of God, who is a distinct person from God the Father; did at all, in any manner of propriety, create the world, nor does he uphold or govern it. Nor can those things that Christ often says of himself be true, as "The Father worketh hitherto, and I work"; "Whatsoever the Father doeth, those doeth the Son likewise" (John 5:17, 19). 'Tis very evident that the works of creating and upholding and governing the world are ascribed to the Son, as a distinct person from the Father.[72]

The work of the Son as God must be carried forth according to his divine nature and the human acts of the Son must also spring from his human nature.

With these Christological pieces in place, we see not only that Edwards closely aligned with the Reformed tradition's understanding of Christology, but he also grounded Christ's impeccability in a fitting place: the constitution of the person. Promises were made to the impeccable One but the argument from impeccability does not appear to rest on promises. Nor do operative attributes ground Christ's impeccability.

Recall Edwards's description of Christ's theanthropic acts, when he writes, "When we say of him, that he is the Mediator, the Redeemer and Savior of sinners, we

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[70] "Miscellanies," no. 1358, in *WJE*, 23:609.

[71] "Miscellanies," no. 1174, in *WJE*, 23:89.

[72] "Miscellanies," no. 1174, in *WJE*, 23:92.

mean it of his person constituted of both natures."[73] In the same way that one ascribes Savior of sinners to Christ, one cannot ascribe "sinner" or "potential to sin" to Christ. Since "all acts of the priesthood of Christ are performed by Christ as God-man," one could argue that Christ's ability to sin would be the ability of the God-man since "the whole person has a propriety in."[74] Turretin makes similar arguments when he contends that Christ is the mediator according to both natures. He writes, "One is the principal agent (to wit, the person of Christ) and one the issue (*apotelesma*) or mediatorial work. But it is worked by two natures as two principles; whence flow two energies (*energeiai*) or operations concurring to that one work."[75] He continues to explain that the acts of Christ must be considered in a threefold order: acts as God (creating and sustaining), acts as man (eating and sleeping), and mixed actions, which he identifies as theandric.[76] Accordingly, the acts of Christ are the acts of the theanthropos and there is a unity of result in the actions. He later states,

> The unity of result indeed proves a unity of the principle-which (*principii quod*), but not always of the principle-by-which (*principii quo*). For the same work can proceed from various formal principles, but in different respects (*kat' allo kai allo*). For example, speech is one work produced by man as a common principle which, however, has two formal principles, the body and soul Thus here we have distinct energies (*energeiai*) but one effect (*energēma*). Hence you would improperly infer that there followed a confusion of operations and by consequence of natures.[77]

Edwards, like Turretin, ensured that the two natures were distinct while affirming that the principle which acted was one. As a consequence, Christ performed theandric acts because he was the theanthropos. Had Christ sinned, it would have been a theandric act

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[73] "Miscellanies," no. 1219, in *WJE*, 23:154.

[74] "The Free and Voluntary Suffering and Death of Christ," in *WJE*, 19:497.

[75] Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, 2:380.

[76] Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, 2:380.

[77] Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, 2:383.

and the theanthropos would have been guilty of sin. For these reasons, impeccability is properly grounded in the constitution of the person.

Although this conclusion appears warranted from Edwards's other writings, a case can be made that he explicitly affirmed such an idea. "Miscellanies," no. 830 addresses the topic of free will and addresses Christ's impeccability. There, Edwards writes, "And so, none of the holy excellent actions or voluntary sufferings of Jesus Christ are worthy of any reward or commendation, because he was naturally perfectly holy. He had a nature so strongly inclining him to holiness that it certainly and indeclinably determined him to holy actions."[78] The voluntary sufferings of Christ pertain to his work as the God-man and, for this reason, Christ could not sin. Christ's holiness, given Edwards other theological commitments and his more explicit statements, is human holiness coming forth from the theanthropic person which merits justification for sinners as Christ necessarily performs his duties of active and passive righteousness. Thus, it would be better to read Edwards as arguing that promises were given to one who could not sin because Christ was a theanthropic person rather than affirming that Edwards grounds Christ's impeccability in the promises. This is evident in his argument in *FOW*, when he writes, "The man Christ Jesus had his will infallibly, unalterably and unfrustrably determined to good, and that alone; but yet he had promises of glorious rewards made to him, on the condition of his persevering in, and perfecting the work which God had appointed him."[79]

The Christological Case for Continuity

Up to this point, I have argued for broad themes of continuity in Edwards's argument for compatibilism in order to demonstrate that Edwards made his case from

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[78] "Miscellanies," no. 830, in *WJE*, 18:541.

[79] *WJE*, 1:289–90.

common theological foundations. Edwards's argument for impeccability, so far, appears consistent with the Reformed understanding. He fails to employ novel reasoning or arguments for compatibilism from Christ's impeccability. Wherein, then, lies the difference between Edwards and the Reformed? Unfortunately, the arguments from Christ's impeccability have not been considered by Muller and *RTF*.

Consider how claims made by Muller and *RTF* about human freedom in general may be applied more specifically to the freedom of Christ. Dependent freedom rejects that Christ's will could be conditionally determined to one effect, nor can his will be determined by the intellect. His will must be able to reject the judgment of the intellect and possess a categorical ability to actualize contradictory and contrary potencies. The formula for the divine will and the human will requires that when God wills that Christ's human will will *p* concurrently with Christ's human will willing *p,* it is possible that God will that Christ's human will wills *not-p* concurrently with Christ's human will willing *not-p*.[80] According to *RTF*, the divine choice for *p* would be realized in Christ's human will's choice for *p* although Christ would retain a possibility for *not-p*.[81]

Assume *p* represents turning the stones into bread, throwing himself off the pinnacle of the temple, or bowing down and worshipping Satan. Christ's intellect could judge that he should actualize *not-p*, where *p* represents worshipping Satan. However, his will could reject this judgment. Christ must possess a "genuine" capacity to actualize *p* and *not-p*, he simply cannot actualize them at the same time and in the same way. In what sense is it possible that God will that Christ's human will will *p* where *p* is a sinful action? Could the divine choice for *p* be realized in Christ's actualization of *p*? Because

[80] Richard A. Muller, *Divine Will and Human Choice: Freedom, Contingency, and Necessity in Early Modern Reformed Thought* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2017), 308.

[81] Asselt, Bac, and te Velde, *Reformed Thought on Freedom*, 33.

Christ is a theanthropic person, this would be more than God's permission of *p* for it would render the theanthropos guilty.

Neither Muller nor *RTF* have espoused such a view. Given the opportunity, they may wish to express their views differently. I have merely tried to consistently apply their view of freedom to Christ's human freedom. These examples are warranted by the fact that Turretin and Perkins view Christ's human will as paradigmatic for freedom, as I demonstrate below. As a result, it appears difficult for Muller and *RTF* to affirm Christ's impeccability since their view of alternative possibilities requires a "genuine" possibility that cannot be restricted by antecedent conditions, logically or temporally. It may be that Muller and *RTF* have accurately depicted the historical view of the Reformed, which simply faces inconsistencies with regard to Christ's freedom. Or, it may be more plausible to assume that the Reformed argued for something akin to compatibilism.

As with many free will debates, the question often hinges on the ability to do otherwise. Helm believes that the term, as used by Muller, fails to account for the necessary nuance these terms require. Muller contends, "'Genuine liberty,' 'genuine contingency,' and 'genuine alternativity,' therefore, are also not underdescribed. The problem is not underdescription but a lack of correlation between traditional Reformed argumentation and modern compatibilism."[82] Muller and *RTF* merely assert that one cannot actualize contradictory or contrary potencies but that human agents possess a genuine possibility to do otherwise.

> Indeed, given the way in which Perkins and other Reformed writers understand the capacities of the will, it could be otherwise if the will, in the same moment, willed otherwise. Inasmuch as God is eternal, eternally willing and knowing all things, God eternally knows everything when it is—so that things and events that could

[82] Richard A. Muller, "Neither Libertarian nor Compatibilist: A Response to Paul Helm," *Journal of Reformed Theology* 13, no. 3–4 (2019): 285.

> have been otherwise prior to their actualization are, in their actualization, necessary by a necessity of the consequence: the actualization must be what it is when it is.[83]

This strong sense of alternativity advocated for by Muller and *RTF* does not appear to be able to account for Christ's impeccability. However, as Helm rightfully asserts,

> "Genuine contingency" and "genuine liberty", which as long as they are not spelled out, are question-begging, impeding discussion. If it refers to unconditional alternativity then it is hard to see how he distinguishes his account of RO such as Turretin from the position of Vos, the Jesuits, and the Arminians, those committed to Franciscan freedom.[84]

Thus, it appears that the impeccability of Christ might favor a conditional understanding for which Helm advocates. Any liberty of contrariety or contradiction that involved sin, Christ was necessarily unable to actualize. Impeccability requires this. Further, Christ necessarily had to actualize certain potencies out of obedience to God. This explains why the Reformed failed to include the alternative possibilities condition, as understood by Muller and *RTF*, in their definitions of free will.[85]

In what follows, I attempt to argue that compatibilism has greater explanatory power than dependent freedom. The writings of Perkins and Turretin are examined since both used Christ's freedom to explain questions related to free will. For this reason, the decree, Christ's freedom, impeccability, and relationship between the divine and human will are examined throughout what follows. The interpretations put forth by Muller and *RTF* are applied for consistency.

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[83] Richard A. Muller, *Grace and Freedom: William Perkins and the Early Modern Reformed Understanding of Free Choice and Divine Grace* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2020), 174.

[84] Helm, *Reforming Free Will*, 157.

[85] This was argued in chapter 2.

William Perkins

In *A Treatise on God's Free Grace and Man's Free Will*, Perkins discusses "the harmony or consent of both wills."[86] Speaking of their consent, he says,

> There is an excellent harmony, and generally it stands in this: that God's will has a sovereign lordship over the will of man, and man's will stands subject to it absolutely and simply depends upon it. And by this means where man has a will, God has an antecedent will; and where man's will has any stroke or action, there God's will formerly had his stroke and action.[87]

Man's will depends upon God's antecedent will with respect to sustentation, determination, and government. Of Perkins's view of determination, Muller writes, "An act of determining renders something definite, but the determination is not a matter of causality."[88] He continues,

> The usage and meaning of the term is crucial to the argument, given that Perkins does not allow that a divine determination of the will—in this case, the regenerate will—removes the basic liberties of contradiction and contrariety, the will's capabilities of electing and rejecting its objects. There would be no freedom in the creature if it were not established by the divine willing. God's determinations in human choices, whether to good or evil, take the form of a physical premotion that undergirds the will's own self motion together with inducements and hindrances. The act of willing is made definite, the good is brought about by gracious inducement, the evil or sin is not hindered, the state of the regenerate will remains capable of sinning and capable of not sinning, and the end determined by God is furthered.[89]

A compatibilist can affirm that divine determination fails to infringe human freedom. Should this entail a categorical ability to do otherwise, the compatibilist would object. Muller appears to argue this way and advocate for a view of determination that is not a matter of causality and does not determine the will to one effect as a consequence, which would allow for conditional alternativity. He continues to describe Perkins's view of the

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[86] William Perkins, *A Treatise on God's Free Grace and Man's Free Will*, in *The Works of William Perkins*, vol. 6, ed. Joel R. Beeke and Greg A. Salazar (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2018), 428.

[87] Perkins, *God's Free Grace and Man's Free Will*, 6:428–29.

[88] Muller, *Grace and Freedom*, 164.

[89] Muller, *Grace and Freedom*, 164. Admittedly, this quote addresses the will in a state of grace, however, it does illuminate Muller's understanding of determination. Muller dedicates little space to the discussion of free will in the state of grace (see pp. 153–54).

determination, saying, "The decree determines, namely, renders definite, the condition of the actions of secondary causes, determining some to be necessary, others to be contingent and still others to belong to the subject of contingency, freedom. And free causes, by definition, are not determined to one effect."[90] Regarding determination, it is difficult to discern whether Muller means that a free cause cannot be causally determined to one effect or that a free cause cannot be rendered definite to one effect. [91]

In summary, Muller puts forth several claims concerning Perkins's description of harmony between the divine and human will. First, determination is not a matter of causality. Second, determination is a form of physical premotion. Third, free causes cannot be determined to one effect. These claims will now be evaluated in light of Perkins's statements concerning Christ's freedom, his temptation and passion, and his subjection to providence, all of which are governed by the fact that Christ was impeccable.

In *An Exposition of the Creed*, Perkins discusses Christ in his state of humiliation, specifically regarding the passion of Christ under Pontius Pilate. He begins with the efficient cause of the passion, saying,

> The cause efficient. The principal cause of the passion as it is the price of our redemption was the decree and providence of God, as Peter says expressly that Christ was delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God [2:23]. The impulsive cause that moved God to work our salvation by this means was nothing in man (for all mankind was shut up under unbelief and therefore unable to

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[90] Muller, *Grace and Freedom*, 165.

[91] Muller states, "Perkins begins his comment on the dependence of human willing on God's determination with the observation that no one can do anything apart from the will of God. The point is related to the [sic] Perkins's view on divine sustentation, but it carries the issue a bit further: not only does the will depend for its existence on God, but the actual motions of the will also could not occur with the will of God in some sense determining that they occur." Muller, *Grace and Freedom*, 159. Again, Muller is somewhat vague. Does this determination ensure that that the event occur such that it could not be otherwise? He does not appear to think so. Further, what does it mean that God's will "in some sense" determines that particular events occur? Do the motions require that God determine motions occur or that that God determines the motions to a particular effect? At times, Muller writes in a manner consistent with compatibilism, but he also wants to avoid the conclusions of compatibilism, creating questions like these.

> procure the least favor at God's hands), but the will and good pleasure of God within himself.[92]

Perkins, contra Muller, associates efficient causality with the decree and providence of God. God's determinate counsel is not void of causality. Muller's statement seeks to preserve the natural constitution of the human will but assumes that the causal implications associated with determinism destroy the natural faculties. The assumption not only begs the question against compatibilism but fails to comport with Perkins's own writings that the passion of Christ, in which he was free, finds its efficient cause in God's decree and providence.

Returning to *A Treatise on God's Free Grace and Man's Free Will*, Perkins addresses those who allege "that man's will loses his liberty and ceases indeed to be will if it stand subject to the necessary and unchangeable decree of God."[93] Perkins responds with several arguments, including the death of Christ. He writes,

> That Christ should die when He died, it was necessary in respect to God's decree; yet if we respect the constitution of His nature, He might still have prolonged His days. And if we consider the will of Christ, He died most freely and willingly. Otherwise, His death had been no satisfaction for sin. God himself does some things of an absolute necessity, and yet with perfect freedom of will. Now then if absolute necessity does not abolish freedom of will, much less shall conditional necessity, depending on God's decree, do it.[94]

Perkins acknowledges Christ's freedom as paradigmatic for the view he puts forth. The death of Christ and its timing were necessary according to the decree and yet Christ's acted freely, satisfying for sin. Muller acknowledges this example and states, "There can be necessity in relation to the divine decree but contingency and freedom in the order of secondary causes."[95] But, in Perkins's view, a different antecedent and efficacious decree

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[92] William Perkins, *An Exposition of the Creed*, in *The Works of William Perkins*, vol. 5, ed. Ryan Hurd (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2017), 138–39.

[93] Perkins, *God's Free Grace and Man's Free Will*, 6:430.

[94] Perkins, *God's Free Grace and Man's Free Will*, 6:430.

[95] Muller, *Grace and Freedom*, 164.

is required for an event in the created order to be otherwise; yet, the natural constitution of the faculties remains intact despite one's inability to do otherwise unless a different condition obtains.

Perkins elsewhere discusses God's bringing about his purposes in Christ Jesus as efficacious. In *The Combat between Christ and the Devil Displayed*, Perkins attributes the authorship and efficiency of Christ's temptation to the Holy Spirit. He writes, "The author or efficient cause of Christ's going forth; to wit, the Holy Ghost, noted in these words, 'was led by the Spirit.'"[96] It was the Spirit of God "that moved Christ to go into the wilderness."[97] Commenting on Mark 1:12, Perkins states that this verse, "Gives us further to understand, that this motion in Christ from the Spirit, was a peculiar motion, not forced or constrained, by voluntary, and yet *very strong and effectual*."[98] Perkins identifies the Spirit's work with providence, which Christ was subject to according to his humanity. He writes, "Now as Christ was a man, He was subject to God's providence, and so was led and guided by the Holy Ghost; but as He is God, he is not subject to providence, but is the author thereof, and is not Himself led or sent, but together with the Father sends the Spirit."[99] By the efficacious work of the Spirit, the incarnate Son voluntarily entered into a time of temptation, having his human will subject to the divine will.

Perkins explores the human will of Christ by examining his request in Mark 14:35–36, where Christ says, "All things are possible for You; remove this cup from Me; yet not what I will, but what You will." Perkins anticipates the questioner who seeks to understand how Christ can pray this prayer without sin. Perkins acknowledges that

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[96] William Perkins, *The Combat between Christ and the Devil Displayed*, in *The Works of William Perkins*, vol. 1, ed. Stephen Yuille (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2014), 90.

[97] Perkins, *Combat between Christ and the Devil Displayed*, 1:90.

[98] Perkins, *Combat between Christ and the Devil Displayed*, 1:90.

[99] Perkins, *Combat between Christ and the Devil Displayed*, 1:91.

Christ's request arises from the weakness and infirmity of his human nature, yet he reasons,

> These words proceed not from any sin or disobedience to His Father's will [John 12:27], but only from a mere perturbation of mind, causes only by an outward means—namely, the apprehension of God's anger, which neither blinded His understanding nor took away His memory, so as He forgot His Father's will, but only stopped and stayed the act of reasoning and remembering for a little time.[100]

Perkins reasons from the assumption that Christ cannot fail to understand or forget his Father's will. Nor can the incarnate Son sinfully petition that the passion be other than God decreed it to be. Further, the Son's will cannot be contrary to or contradict his Father's will, to which it is subject. As Perkins writes, "It may be objected that Christ's will is flat contrary to the will of His Father. *Answer*. Christ's will as He is man and the will of His Father in this agony were not contrary but only diverse, and that without any contradiction or contrariety."[101] Using Paul's desire to preach in Asia and Bithynia as an example, Perkins contends that one can will something diverse to God's will without having a will contradicts or is contrary to God's will. The difference between Christ and Paul is this: Christ could never will contradictory or contrary to God's will. Christ's prayer in the Garden should not be understood as a sinful request, but a diverse will of Christ toward a general good, the preservation of his life since he could never will contradictory or contrary to his Father's will.

Perkins elaborates on this discussion by examining three ways in which the mind, will, and affections may interact to further bolster his claim that Christ's prayer was without sin. He writes,

> There may be three kinds of combats: the one between reason and appetite, and this fight is always sinful and was not in Christ. The second is between the flesh and the Spirit, and this may be in God's child, who is but in part regenerate. But did not befall Christ, who was perfectly holy. The third is the combat of diverse desires, upon sundry respects drawing a man to and fro. This may be in man's nature

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[100] Perkins, *An Exposition of the Creed*, 5:147.

[101] Perkins, *An Exposition of the Creed*, 5:147.

> without fault, and was in Christ in whom the desire of doing His Father's will, striving and struggling with another desire whereby nature seeks to preserve itself, caused Him to pray in this manner.[102]

Christ ultimately submitted to his Father's will, allowing his enemies to apprehend him. "By this," Perkins writes, "It is manifest that Christ yielded Himself to death willingly and not of constraint; and unless His sufferings had been voluntary on His part, they could never have been a satisfaction to God's justice for our sins."[103] Christ freely, voluntarily, and unable to will contradictions and contraries, offered himself to death.

Having examined relevant writings from Perkins on free will, the consent of the divine and human will, and the death of Christ, we can now summarize Perkins's view of Christ's freedom and contrast it with the model put forth by Muller. First, the death of Christ occurred because of the efficacious decree and providence of God, who, by determinate counsel and foreknowledge, determined that Christ would be delivered for the sins of his people. Returning to Muller's description of Perkins's view, one can see how his view of the determination falls short. God's determination of a particular event, such as Christ's death, is accompanied by the efficacious work of the decree and providence. Second, the divine will is antecedent to the human will of Christ. Determination consists in more than physical premotion. A particular event necessarily occurs because of an efficacious and antecedent will of God. Third, the efficacious decree and providence combined with the antecedent will of God render the death of Christ necessary upon the condition of the decree. Fifth, Christ knew his Father's will concerning his death and could not will anything contrary or contradictory, ultimately yielding his life as an act of obedience by his own free will. Christ could not have sinned and he necessarily yielded obedience to his Father's will, yet he did so most freely, knowing what he was determined to do. On the one hand, Christ's human will, like all

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[102] Perkins, *An Exposition of the Creed*, 5:147.

[103] Perkins, *An Exposition of the Creed*, 5:145.

wills, consents to the divine will as it is subject to the efficacious work of God. On the other hand, Christ's human will, unlike other humans, could not violate God's will of precept by willing contrarily or contradictory to his Father's will. Since Christ's freedom serves as a paradigm for the consent between divine and human will, Muller must explain how Christ's obedience could have been otherwise without altering the conditions upon which Christ's death rests. These conditions include: the efficacious decree and providence, the antecedent will of God, Christ's knowledge of and obedience to his Father's will, and Christ's inability to will contradictories and contraries.

Francis Turretin

Turretin addresses Christ's impeccability in X.iii, which asks, "Whether the formal reason of free will consists in indifference or in rational spontaneity. The former we deny; the latter we affirm against the papists, Socianians, and Remonstrants."[104] Here, Turretin intends to address free will as it belongs to every creature rather than the free will of a creature in a particular state. He addresses what is true about free will across every state. This differs from X.iv, where he states, "Now we treat of the same relatively (as to the state of sin and its powers in the genus of morals). There we saw what it is; now we are to see what it can do in reference to good."[105] Since Christ's impeccability is treated under the formal reason of free will, it serves as a paradigm for the kind of freedom humans possess across various states.

Turretin clarifies the statement of the question concerning free will and indifference. He is not addressing indifference "in the first act or in a divided sense, as to simultaneity of power."[106] Instead of discussing the natural constitution of the will, he intends to focus on the role of indifference in "the second act and in a compound sense

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[104] Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, 1:665.

[105] Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, 1:668.

[106] Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, 1:665.

(as to simultaneity of power called active and subjective)."[107] His opponents affirm indifference in the compound sense whereas Turretin rejects it since no free agent possesses such an indifference to opposites, including the impeccable Christ. According to Turretin, Christ "obeyed God most freely and yet most necessarily because he could not sin."[108] Shortly after this brief statement, Turretin elaborates on Christ's freedom and impeccability, saying,

> That Christ, although he never sinned, still was not absolutely unable to sin; and that it is not repugnant to his nature, will or office to be able to sin? This is the blasphemy of Episcopius and other Remonstrants have not blushed to put forth. We answer that far be it from us either to think or say any such thing concerning the immaculate Son of God whom we know to have been holy (*akakon*), undefiled (*amianton*), separate from sinners; who not only had no intercourse with sin, but could not have both because he was the Son of God and because he was our Redeemer (who if he could have sinned, could not also have saved us). Nor if he could be miserable could he for the same reason be a sinner. Misery for a time is not opposed to a most holy nature and contributed to the execution of his office because he was bound to pay the punishment of our sin and so to bear it by suffering. But he could not deserve it.[109]

Turretin's statement on impeccability affirms that Christ did not sin and could not have sinned because of the constitution of his person and the mission which he came to fulfill. He necessarily and freely obeyed God in all things while remaining impeccable.

Muller and *RTF* use this section to describe Turretin's views of free will without taking into consideration how Turretin employs Christ's impeccability to make his case. Commenting on the nature of human freedom in X.iii, Muller writes, "The will can have, simultaneously, potencies to opposite or contradictory effects—what it cannot do is simultaneously act on opposite or contradictory potencies."[110] And, "In other words,

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[107] Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, 1:665.

[108] Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, 1:666.

[109] Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, 1:666.

[110] Muller, *Divine Will and Human Choice*, 257.

potencies to do otherwise are resident, but incapable of actualization at the same time as their contraries and contradictories."[111] Similarly, in *RTF*, it is argued,

> A potency of simultaneities regards two simultaneous, i.e., synchronous, objects of will, which can be willed. Now, if by these objects of will are meant contradictory objections, it is clear that they cannot be willed simultaneously. That is to say that such a potency cannot exist. For example, a person cannot will to simultaneously sit and run. No person has such a potency. However, a potency itself can be simultaneous with another potency, even if the objects of the potency are contradictory.[112]

In their interpretation of X.iii in Turretin, Muller and *RTF* argue that will possesses the power to actualize multiple potencies but that it cannot actualize contrary or contradictory potencies simultaneous.

The interpretations of X.iii presented above do not seem to cohere with Turretin's argument from Christ's impeccability for three reasons. First, Turretin is not concerned with Christ's ability to actualize contrary or contradictory potencies. The impeccability of Christ is unnecessary to refute the absurdity that multiple potencies could be *simultaneously* actualized. Second, Christ could not actualize certain potencies given prevailing conditions, such as Satan's temptations. Episcopius and the Remonstrants did not argue that Christ could actualize contrary or contradictory potencies, such as obeying God and not obeying God, but that he could actualize sinful potencies, which Turretin labels blasphemous. Third, the reason why Christ could not actualize certain potencies resides in the constitution of his person, his holy human will, and the mission he came to fulfill. It would be reasonable to conclude that Turretin would include these items in Christ's requisites for action given the context. Thus, the thrust of Turretin's argument does not seem to be that the human will cannot actualize contrary or contradictory potencies; rather, he seems to argue that the will possesses a certain power according to its nature, but various conditions may render one unable to actualize certain

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[111] Muller, "Neither Libertarian nor Compatibilist," 277.

[112] Asselt, Bac, and te Velde, *Reformed Thought on Freedom*, 193.

potencies and he uses Christ as an example. If this is the case, Turretin argues for much more than one's inability to actualize contrary or contradictory potencies simultaneously. Instead, he argues that the categorical ability to actualize certain potencies is not a requisite for a free choice.

Having addressed Christ's freedom as described by Turretin in X.iii, we will now shift to examine how Christ's freedom relates to the decree and its execution. The issue at hand concerns the concurrence of the divine will and Jesus's human will. Christ's human will could transgress neither God's will of decree nor the will of precept. Turretin distinguishes between will and precept as two wills that concern different objects.[113] God's will of decree is what God intends to bring about whereas God's will of precept reveals what man ought to do. Some texts in Scripture refer to God's will of decree and others his will of precept, however, according to Turretin, "There are also some in which both wills of God are signified at the same time (i.e., Jn. 6:38, where Christ says, 'I came down to do the will of him that sent me' [i.e., to fulfill the things decreed by God and to obey the command of the Father])."[114] In this way, Christ differs from Herod and Pontius Pilate who followed God's will of decree but violated God's precepts. Just as Christ merited righteousness by fulfilling God's decree and obeying his Father's precepts, Herod and Pontius Pilate followed God's will of decree and incurred guilt for breaking God's law. "Therefore," Turretin writes,

> Although they fulfill the decretive will, they are not to be esteemed the less guilty because they sin against the preceptive will by violating most iniquitously the law laid down for them. Thus, Herod and Pontius Pilate (with the Jews) did not escape incurring the guilt of a most terrible crime by their crucifixion of Christ, although they did nothing but what the hand and counsel of God had already decreed before should be done.[115]

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[113] Recall from chapter 1, God's will of precept should be understood metaphorically in Turretin's thought.

[114] Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, 1:220.

[115] Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, 1:322.

The thing decreed for Christ to accomplish was also that which he was to obey whereas the thing decreed for Herod and Pontius Pilate involved their violation of God's precepts. Given Turretin's view of impeccability, the death of Christ entailed a twofold necessity: of decree and obedience.

How might Turretin describe the necessity of Christ's obedience to God's decree? Consider Turretin's definition of necessity as that which cannot be otherwise.[116] This definition of necessity arises as Turretin seeks to answer the question, "Does the decree necessitate future things?"[117] Turretin affirms that the decree necessitates future things and begins to consider how a thing might be necessary. Things are either necessary in God or in themselves. Those things necessary in God are either absolute, such as his nature, or hypothetical, "arising from the hypothesis of the divine decree, which, being made the effect itself willed, must necessarily follow."[118] Those things which are absolutely necessary pertain to the being of God whereas those things which arise from a hypothetical necessity do so because of the will of God. Things hypothetically necessary are so in virtue of the immutable decree and God's infallible foreknowledge.[119] Those things which are necessary in themselves are necessary because they are either physical and internal, such as a fire that, by necessity, burns. Or, a thing may be necessary due to coaction. Lastly, the thing itself may be considered hypothetically necessary, which Turretin defines as, "Hypothetical of the event of dependence through which a thing, although naturally mutable and contingent cannot but be (on account of its dependence upon the ordination of God whose will cannot be changed nor his foreknowledge

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[116] Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, 1:320.

[117] Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, 1:319.

[118] Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, 1:320.

[119] Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, 1:320.

deceived)."[120] Turretin employs Christological texts, such as Matthew 26:54; Luke 22:22; Acts 2:23, 4:28, to argue that these future events were necessitated by the decree to one particular effect and cannot but be. One can see from Turretin's writings that Christ necessarily acted in a holy manner and necessarily fulfilled specific acts.

Muller labors to argue that, "Free causes, by definition, are not determined to one effect."[121] However, Turretin appears to argue differently. The cross of Christ, as to the decretive and preceptive will of God, was a particular effect that was determined such that it could not be otherwise with regard to the event and Christ's obedience. Just as physical and internal necessity as well as coaction determine the thing to one effect such that it could not be otherwise, so does a hypothetical necessity, which is an effect determined by God. The necessity is the same but the conditions that make it necessary differ. If a human agent is determined to one particular effect by the decree, the agent acts freely insofar as the necessity is neither physical nor coaction. The decree is neither physical nor coactive; therefore, a free agent may be determined to one effect by the decree.[122] Turretin appears to make this point explicit when he writes,

> That which maintains a determination to one thing by a physical necessity or a necessity of coaction, takes away liberty and contingency; but not that which maintains it only by a hypothetical necessity. For the certainty does not arise from the nature of second causes, which are free and contingent, but extrinsically from the immutability of the decree (which so determines the futurition of the event as not to change the nature of things, but permits necessary things to act necessarily, free things to act freely).[123]

Where Muller argues that a free cause cannot be determined to one effect, Turretin seems to argue that a free cause can be determined to one effect. Determination to one effect does not rule out a free action if it was not determined physically or by coaction. If, on

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[120] Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, 1:320.

[121] Muller, *Grace and Freedom*, 165.

[122] Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, 1:320.

[123] Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, 1:321.

the other hand, it was determined to one effect by a hypothetical necessity, then it is free even though it could not be otherwise. Turretin may call these free causes contingent with respect to the proximate cause even though it is necessary with respect to the decree.[124] It is contingent with respect to the human will in its mode of operation because the will did not act from physical necessity or coaction. God is able to preserve the will's mode of operation while determining it to one particular effect, such as the crucifixion of Christ.

The line of reasoning presented above is strengthened when one seeks to discern how the divine will and Christ's will concur such that they bring about a particular effect, such as Christ's death. Turretin writes,

> That two free wills may be joined together and agree to elicit the same common action at the same time and immediately (and proximately and undividedly) and that not casually and fortuitously but infallibly and so certainly as to imply a contradiction for one to elicit such an action with the other, either both ought to be conjoined by a very powerful superior cause to elicit the same action in the same point of time or both are by their own nature determined to that operation so that they cannot help producing it; or one determines the operation of the other and consequently determines the other cause to act.[125]

Turretin does not allow for two free wills to casually produce the same action, otherwise the cross of Christ would not have been certain. It cannot be a cause superior to the divine and human wills, nor were the two wills determined by their own operation such that they could not help but produce that action. The divine will determines the human will. Applied to Christ, his human will freely and meritoriously obeyed God's will of decree and precept, being determined by the divine will to one effect such that the cross and Christ's obedience to it could not be otherwise.

Turretin's writings challenge the interpretations of Muller and *RTF* since their interpretation of X.iii merely requires that Christ cannot actualize contradictory or contrary potencies at the same time. However, Turretin argues for more than that as the

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[124] Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, 1:321.

[125] Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, 1:508.

context shows. Christ could not actualize certain potencies because the requisites for action, his holy human nature, rendered him unable to do so. Christ's relation to the decree further confirms this point since Christ could not frustrate God's immutable decree or his will of precept. Turretin employs Christological texts to argue that the decree necessitates future events and argues that Christ was efficaciously determined to one effect that could not be otherwise on the supposition of the decree and Christ's obedience. The divine and human will bring about the same effect because the divine will determines the human will and causes it to act.

Conclusion

Compatibilism serves as simple explanation for Christ's free, necessary, and praiseworthy actions. Edwards employed arguments from Christ impeccability against his Arminian opponents in a manner consistent with his compatibilist convictions. Like the Reformed, he argued against Episcopius, drew from themes of promise and the covenant of redemption, and grounded Christ's impeccability in the constitution of his person rather than the theme of promise or operative attributes. In this theological argument, Edwards appears to fit comfortably within the tradition as a compatibilist.

Dependent freedom, as espoused by Muller and *RTF* faces conceptual difficulties when their views are applied to Christ's impeccability. However, I also argued that dependent freedom faces interpretive challenge when applied to the arguments from Perkins and Turretin that centered around Christ's impeccability and his obedience. Both theologians viewed Christ's freedom as paradigmatic for human freedom and argued that Christ's human will submitted to God's decree. Perkins specifically argued that Christ could not will contrary or contradictory to his Father's will. Turretin contended that the will of decree and will of precept may be signified at the same time, such as when referring to the purpose for which Christ came. Christ submitted his human will to the will of decree and precept and was able to produce the same effect

as the divine will which determined it to its action. In all of this, Christ was free, impeccable, morally praiseworthy, and determined to one effect.

Dependent freedom faces significant challenges conceptually and historically. Edwards's argument utilizes compatibilism with ease, and it appears that compatibilism offers greater explanatory power when interpreting the Reformed view of Christ's freedom.

CHAPTER 6
CONCLUSION

Summary of Argument

This dissertation addressed two claims. First, the Reformed espoused dependent freedom rather than compatibilism. Second, Edwards marks a departure from the Reformed view of free will. I argued that in *FOW*, Edwards employs theological arguments for compatibilism that were consistent with and common among the Reformed. I examined relevant sections of the anthropology, theology proper, and Christology of the Reformed and Edwards.

Chapter 1 defined key terms related to free will debates and outlined three different positions on the Reformed view of free will and Edwards's relationship to the tradition. *RTF* and Fisk contend that Calvin and Edwards were necessitarian while others in the tradition espoused dependent freedom, grounded in synchronic contingency. Muller argues that the Reformed were eclectic and contends that continuity exists from Calvin to Turretin, but that Edwards departed from the tradition. Helm and Preciado contend that Calvin, the Reformed, and Edwards, were compatibilists. I concluded the chapter with an evaluation of Muller's work. He contends that the Reformed held to dependent freedom and genuine alternativity defined as simultaneity of potency. A free will cannot be determined to one effect nor determined by the intellect, for this would violate freedom. My evaluation of Muller's work found the notion of dependent freedom vague. Muller goes to greater lengths to distance the Reformed from compatibilism while not sufficiently distancing dependent freedom from libertarian free will. Further, his version of PAP_{All} implies that compatibilism fails to account for alternativity, which it

can with PAP_{If}. As a result, Muller begs the question and imposes an unnecessary philosophical presupposition unto Reformed views of alternativity.

Having offered a preliminary critique of Muller's work, I then applied his criteria to the writings of Vermigli, Calvin, Perkins, Owen, and Turretin. These Reformed thinkers consistently defined a free agent as one who acts from his reason and with his will. Necessities that violate freedom either undermine the role of the intellect or the function of the will. If the intellect functions as a fire that necessarily burns or animal instinct, then the agent is not free. Should the agent's will be impeded, then the agent is not free. This version of free will is consistent with a compatibilist reading. Muller's definition of free will goes beyond definitions of the Reformed and is either definitionally or functionally equivalent to the Reformed view of independent freedom, which they rejected. The Reformed argued that the will can be determined to one effect without violating its essential nature. I concluded chapter 2 with a lengthy analysis of Turretin's writings. He argued that the intellect determines the will to the greatest apparent good.

Chapter 3 began the evaluation of Edwards's work, *FOW*. Muller argues that Edwards departed from the faculty psychology of the Reformed and failed to positively utilize key distinctions such as indifference, simultaneity of potency, and the divided and compound sense. However, as was argued in chapter 2, Calvin and Perkins also failed to utilize these distinctions, yet Muller considers them as representatives of the Reformed tradition. I argued that Edwards's departure from faculty psychology does not entail a departure from the tradition since he provides a robust view of the understanding that is functionally equivalent to the theoretical and practical intellect. His more precise statements differentiate the intellect from the will, which is especially evident in his treatments on moral responsibility and the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit. His broad definition of a cause allows for formal and final causality, which he employed in *FOW* and may be found in his "Miscellanies." Edwards also allows for a qualified sense of indifference and grounds alternative possibilities in his moral and natural distinction. The

Reformed argued that free choice is undermined if the intellect functions like an inanimate object or brute instinct. Edwards develops his anthropology in a manner that fails to violate the Reformed view of the understanding. The Reformed and Edwards granted the will the capacity to actualize contraries and contradictions as to its essential function. Muller and *RTF*'s view of alternativity is not required.

Chapter 4 examined the theology proper of the Reformed and Edwards in light of their view of fate, foreknowledge, and freedom. The Reformed did not reject fate because of their commitment to PAP_{All}. Rather, they rejected forms of fate that bound God to a series of causes, denied his wise governance over all things, or worked against a will. Edwards rejected these forms of fate for similar reasons. Both the Reformed and Edwards argued for an antecedent and immutable decree that terminates *ad extra* and ensures God's infallible foreknowledge of an event such that it could not be otherwise on the account of God's decree and foreknowledge. These commitments present several problems for Muller and *RTF*. Contra Muller, the Reformed view of the decree and its execution requires an alternative condition for an event to be otherwise than God decreed or foreknows, rending PAP_{If} a more likely reading of the Reformed. Contra *RTF*, the decree not only determines truth values of propositions but is also causal. Like Muller, *RTF*'s commitment to PAP_{All} creates inconsistencies when applied to the Reformed view of the decree and its bearing upon free will. Edwards, like the Reformed, affirmed *A*-foreknowledge, distinguished between God's knowledge of simple intelligence and vision, upheld an antecedent decree that God executes in time, and identified the decree as the reason why future propositions possess a truth value. I answered the objection that Edwards failed to properly employ the distinction between the necessity of the consequence and the necessity of the consequent. I argued that Edwards accurately employed this distinction in his writings and that his trinitarian theology reveals that it is a distinction with a difference.

In chapter 5, I examined Edwards's argument for compatibilism from Christ's impeccability. Edwards developed his argument from Christ's impeccability on the promises of Scripture. In doing so, he contended against a common Reformed opponent in Episcopius, employed arguments from the promises of Scripture and the covenant of redemption, and good reasons exist to assume that he grounded impeccability in the constitution of the theanthropos. His argument contains significant similarity with Reformed categories and fails to violate fundamental tenets of Reformed free will. Then, I evaluated Muller and *RTF*'s writings on free will to demonstrate that they have conceptual problems when applied to Christ's impeccability. I then examined Perkins and Turretin's writings on Christ's free will and inability to sin. Perkins explicitly argued that Christ could not will that which was contrary or contradictory to his Father's will and that Christ's human will was subject to divine determination and efficacious works of providence. Turretin's writings present significant challenges to Muller and *RTF*'s interpretation since he employed Christ's impeccability to argue that Christ could not actualize sinful potencies, yet he was still free. Turretin also reasons from God's efficacious decree and the prophecies in Scripture concerning Christ. I concluded with Turretin's explanation of how two wills may work together to produce the same effect, using the divine will and Christ's human will, which must obey God's will of decree and precept. Compatibilism provides the most plausible explanation for Christ's impeccable yet free will. Edwards argued that Christ was impeccable, free, and praiseworthy in a compatibilist manner without violating Reformed views of free will. Dependent freedom does not appear to have a mechanism to account for Christ's impeccability and faces significant challenges when compared to the writings of Perkins and Turretin. For these reasons, compatibilism serves as the most plausible explanation of the Reformed view of Christ's freedom and Edwards's view fits more naturally with the Reformed than dependent freedom.

In summary, the Reformed view of anthropology does not require PAP_{All}. It merely requires that the agent act from his reason and with his will. Edwards reasoned similarly and failed to undermine the role of the understanding or the power of the will as outlined by the Reformed. The theology proper of the Reformed allowed them to affirm that the will can be determined to one effect and the agent may be considered free, as did Edwards. Finally, in Christology, Edwards's compatibilist view of Christ's impeccability serves as a more plausible interpretation of the Reformed view than dependent freedom. As a result, Edwards's compatibilism should be seen as consistent with Reformed views of free will.

Areas of Further Research

Three areas of further research remain. First, this dissertation primarily focused on the metaphysical issues of free will without considering the impact of the moral issues. While libertarian Calvinism has been challenged on philosophical and confessional grounds, dependent freedom should be critiqued in light of the Reformed doctrine of original and actual sin as well as effectual calling in order to determine the relevance of synchronic contingency and simultaneity of potency. If dependent freedom is the Reformed view, it must be consistently applied to various theological loci.

Second, a detailed treatment of Petrus van Mastricht's writings on free will, the decree, and foreknowledge, would greatly benefit this discussion. Such an examination is lacking in the contemporary literature and would shed further light on the Reformed view of free will and Edwards's relation to the tradition. Edwards considered Turretin and van Mastricht preeminent Calvinist theologians. An evaluation of their respective views of free will would allow their works to be compared and contrasted with libertarian Calvinism, dependent freedom, and compatibilism.

Finally, Edwards's view of the problem of evil, God's authorship of sin, privation, and divine permission could be compared to other theologians in the Reformed

tradition. Edwards, like the Reformed, faced the charge that the Calvinist system makes God the author of sin. A careful examination of his answers would further illuminate dissimilarities or similarities between Edwards and the tradition.

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ABSTRACT

A THEOLOGICAL EVALUATION OF EDWARDS'S
FREEDOM OF THE WILL: A CASE
FOR CONTINUITY WITH THE
REFORMED TRADITION

Andrew Brian Day Sparks, PhD
The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2022
Chair: Dr. Bruce A. Ware

Recent scholarship claims that the Reformed tradition was neither libertarian nor compatibilist with regard to free will and, as a consequence, Jonathan Edwards's work, *Freedom of the Will*, represents a departure from the tradition. However, good reasons exist to dispute both claims. In this dissertation, I argue that in *Freedom of the Will*, Edwards employs theological arguments for compatibilism that were consistent with and common among the Reformed. In order to defend this thesis, I compare the arguments for compatibilism in *Freedom of the Will* with the anthropology, theology proper, and Christology of the Reformed. Edwards's anthropology differed from the faculty psychology of the Reformed, but these differences are not substantial as Edwards can still distinguish the intellect from the will and argue, with the Reformed, that the intellect determines the will to the greatest perceived good. In theology proper, Edwards utilized the reasoning of his Reformed forebearers as he argued from God's foreknowledge of future events to demonstrate that free will is compatible with moral necessity and the necessity of the event. Finally, Edwards used classic Reformed Christological categories and the covenant of redemption in order to argue that Christ's will was determined to the good. The theological arguments for compatibilism found in the Reformed were consistently developed by Edwards in *Freedom of the Will*.

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"Edwards on Free Will." In *The Jonathan Edwards Miscellanies Companion*, vol. 2, edited by Robert L. Boss and Sarah B. Boss, 441–64. Fort Worth: JESociety Press, 2021.

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"Jonathan Edwards's Reception among Compatibilists." Southwest Regional ETS Meeting, New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, New Orleans, Louisiana, March 2019.

"Turretin and Human Freedom: A Test Case for Muller and Helm." Annual ETS Meeting, San Diego, California, November 2019.

"Disharmony for Harmony's Sake: An Edwardsian Answer to the Problem of Evil." Global Jonathan Edwards Congress, Belgium 2020. [Canceled due to COVID-19]

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