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Volume 2 – 2009

**The Perseverance of the Saints:
How Predestination Upholds Freedom and Responsibility**

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Introduction: Westminster Confession of Faith

Westminster Confession of Faith
XVII. Of the Perseverance of the Saints

I. They, whom God has accepted in His Beloved, effectually called, and sanctified by His Spirit, can neither totally nor finally fall away from the state of grace, but shall certainly persevere therein to the end, and be eternally saved.

¹ See www.asu.edu. He has written *Reason and Faith in the Theology of Charles Hodge: American Common Sense Realism* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), *Augustine and the Ethics of Belief* (New Blackfriars, 2010); *The Presuppositions of Religious Pluralism* (Sophia, 2008); *Reason and Worldviews: Warfield, Kuyper, Van Til and Plantinga on the Function of Apologetics* (University Press of America, 2008); *The Clarity of God's Existence: The Ethics of Belief After the Enlightenment* (Wipf & Stock, 2008); *Benjamin B. Warfield and Right Reason* (University Press of America, 2005), and several articles in encyclopedias and journals. See <https://webapp4.asu.edu/directory/person/843137>.

II. This perseverance of the saints depends not upon their own free will, but upon the immutability of the decree of election, flowing from the free and unchangeable love of God the Father; upon the efficacy of the merit and intercession of Jesus Christ, the abiding of the Spirit, and of the seed of God within them, and the nature of the covenant of grace: from all which arises also the certainty and infallibility thereof.

III. Nevertheless, they may, through the temptations of Satan and of the world, the prevalency of corruption remaining in them, and the neglect of the means of their preservation, fall into grievous sins; and, for a time, continue therein: whereby they incur God's displeasure, and grieve His Holy Spirit, come to be deprived of some measure of their graces and comforts, have their hearts hardened, and their consciences wounded; hurt and scandalize others, and bring temporal judgments upon themselves.²

Does the sovereignty of God conflict with the freedom of the human will? If a human is preserved in the state of grace, is that person still free? Or conversely, if a person is free can they reject the grace they once accepted? The apparent conflict between a free will and the sovereignty of God has been a matter of debate and contention in all of the theistic religions. It is a matter of general revelation in that it concerns what can be known about God and human nature by all persons at all times. This is not essentially changed when the question involves the perseverance of the saints, although this adds special revelation subjects about the fall and redemption. Here I will consider high profile representatives of the view that pre-determination and freedom conflict and argue that these address, in kind, the sorts of objections that still populate the literature on the subject. I will make the case that the conflict is only apparent and rests on a faulty definition of *freedom* that requires i) things do not have natures; and ii) there are uncaused events. I will conclude that it is a false disjunction to ask: “do you believe in a free will or the sovereignty of God/predestination/predetermination,” and instead insist that humans can have a free will and be predestined, and even make the assertion that predestination is necessary for freedom and responsibility.

² Quotations of the Westminster Confession of Faith (WCF) used in this article can be found at: www.Reformed.org.

A. Intuitions About Freedom

In the contemporary debate, the discussion seems to be guided by strong intuitions that connect human responsibility to human freedom and deny that human freedom is compatible with predetermination. It is true that responsibility requires freedom of choice, and that this is the basis for human dignity. It is because of this that we can speak about human choice as either good or evil, and speak about it as choice at all rather than merely action and reaction.

Nevertheless, the assertion that responsibility requires freedom does not necessitate the claim that freedom means freedom from predetermination. In order to illustrate this intuition I will rely on a passage from William James. Although philosophers since his time have written voluminously on libertarian notions of free will and invented new terminology not readily at hand for James (indeterministically caused, agent causation, etc), he covers in kind all that is discussed in later literature. My argument in this section is that intuitions must be critically examined for meaning and coherence, and are not themselves final authorities.

B. The Dilemma of Determinism

The indeterminism I defend, the free-will theory of popular sense based on the judgment of regret, represents that world as vulnerable, and liable to be injured by certain of its parts if they act wrong. And it represents their acting wrong as a matter of possibility or accident, neither inevitable nor yet to be infallibly warded off. In all this, it is a theory devoid either of transparency or of stability. It gives us a pluralistic, restless universe, in which no single point of view can ever take in the whole scene; and to a mind possessed of the love of unity at any cost, it will, no doubt, remain forever unacceptable. A friend with such a mind once told me that the thought of my universe made him sick, like the sight of the horrible motion of a mass of maggots in their carrion bed.

But while I freely admit that the pluralism and the restlessness are repugnant and irrational in a certain way, I find that every alternative to them is irrational in a deeper way. The indeterminism with its maggots, if you please to speak so about it, offends only the native absolutism of my intellect,—an absolutism which, after all, perhaps, deserves to be snubbed and kept in check. But the determinism with its necessary carrion, to continue the figure of speech, and with no possible maggots to eat the latter up, violates my sense of moral reality through and through. When, for example, I imagine such carrion as the Brockton murder, I cannot conceive it as an act by which the universe, as a whole, logically and necessarily expresses its nature without shrinking from complicity with such a whole....

The spectacle of the mere word-grabbing game played by the soft determinists has perhaps driven me too violently the other way; and, rather than be found wrangling with them for the good words, I am willing to take the first bad one which comes along, provided it be unequivocal. The question is of things, not of eulogistic names for them; and the best word is the one that enables men to know the quickest whether they disagree or not about the things. But the word "chance," with its singular negativity, is just the word for this purpose. Whoever uses it instead of "freedom," squarely and resolutely gives up all pretense to control the things he says are free. For *him*, he confesses that they are no better than mere chance would be. It is a word of *impotence*, and is therefore the only sincere word we can use, if, in granting freedom to certain things, we grant it honestly, and really risk the game. "Who chooses me must give and forfeit all he hath." Any other word permits of quibbling, and lets us, after the fashion of the soft determinists, make a pretense of restoring the caged bird to liberty with one hand, while with the other we anxiously tie a string to its leg to make sure it does not get beyond our sight....

To this my answer must be very brief. The belief in free will is not in the least incompatible with the belief in Providence, provided you do not restrict the Providence to fulminating nothing but *fatal* degrees. If you allow him to provide possibilities as well as actualities to the universe, and to carry on his own thinking in those two categories just as we do ours, chances may be there, uncontrolled even by him, and the course of the universe be really ambiguous; and yet the end of all things may be just what he intended it to be from all eternity.³

C. Possibility, Necessity, and Freedom

The view for which James is a representative declares that in order for there to be freedom, then at the point of choice the possibilities must not have been set in advance. The alternative, compatibilism, is repugnant to James, and he attacks it with descriptions of maggots. We can sympathize with James while not accepting his view of freedom; he is responding not only to a misrepresentation of Calvinism, but also to naturalism which limits all of reality to physical causes. We must rule out naturalism for our discussion because it does not even admit of the existence of persons, but instead reduces the person to brain chemistry, and brain chemistry to the motion of atoms.

Is James responding to an accurate picture of predestination? Does the sovereignty of God rule out possibility? Is predestination the same as fatalism? The answer is 'no,' and it is unfortunate that

³ See www.des.emory.edu/mfp/JamesDilemmaOfDeterminism.html.

James made this mistake because it has undoubtedly been a factor in the past century of discussion that assumes as much. By way of contrast, consider this passage from the Westminster Confession of Faith, chapter 3, on God's Eternal Decree:

I. God from all eternity, did, by the most wise and holy counsel of His own will, freely, and unchangeably ordain whatsoever comes to pass; yet so, as thereby neither is God the author of sin, nor is violence offered to the will of the creatures; nor is the liberty or contingency of second causes taken away, but rather established.

Where fatalism focuses on the final outcome regardless of what persons choose in the meantime, predestination affirms the reality of the creation, that the creation is full of things that have their own nature, and that these natures follow patterns that can be described in terms of laws or "secondary causes."

A distinction must be made between "unchangeably" coming to pass, and necessarily coming to pass. God predestines but not out of necessity. God predestines:

I. By the decree of God, for the manifestation of His glory, some men and angels are predestinated unto everlasting life; and others foreordained to everlasting death

God freely chooses how to manifest His own glory. That is, nothing necessitates that God manifests His glory in one specific way. However, it cannot be said from this that God's choice to manifest Himself is uncaused. It is caused by his own "most wise and holy counsel," and this is not something besides God it is part of the nature of God.

In creating, God has created real things (the creation is not merely an illusion, nor is it part of God). These things have natures and therefore behave according to secondary causes related to their natures. For our purposes I am speaking about the human will. The human will has secondary causes related not only to human nature in general, but to the individual background and personality of the individual human.

In the case of the Brockton murder, James is repulsed by the claim that this was preordained from eternity. This initial response cannot be allowed to pass. We can affirm freedom, contingency, and predestination. The murder came about freely in that the murderer willed it and was not restrained in what he willed, and it was a

contingent event (contingent on all kinds of other events: his upbringing, personality, historically situatedness, etc). There can both be secondary causes that admit of contingency and freedom, and the eternal decree of God by which all things come to pass unchangeably. James's reaction is based on a straw man and on an intuition that must be examined. The straw man is that this murder was predestined from eternity in itself, divorced from all the events leading to it and from the purpose for which it is permitted. The intuition is that a free will is a will that has no predetermining causation, or that causation undermines freedom and responsibility.

In order for James to make sense of his view of freedom he must deny that things have natures and permit uncaused events to take over (as if they could without introducing causation and the theory becoming self-refuting). This affects not only his view of humanity, but his view of God. It isn't that he rejects a view of humanity he dislikes and retains theism--James leaves theism for something like what is now called open theism. In this view, the future is unknown to God and remains "open." This is an attractive view for those that believe that freedom cannot exist with predestination.

We can thus leave the discussion of James by affirming that a thinker's view of human freedom will be a reflection of that person's view of God. James rejects the sovereignty of God to preserve an intuition he has about freedom and responsibility requiring no predetermination. We believe that if he had critically examined his presupposition about freedom he could have identified that freedom need not be defined as "free from cause" but "freedom of the will," free to act as one wills. This second definition is perfectly at home with the reality of individual and human nature, that these act according to their natures and secondary causes, and the sovereignty of God creating and upholding to manifest his glory.

The question of causation is so central to the free will discussion we must spend some time examining it more closely. To illustrate the viewpoint that claims freedom and causation cannot coexist I will rely on Immanuel Kant. I will argue that no matter how it is dressed up, an uncaused event is the only way to avoid predetermination, and an uncaused event is not only impossible but also unhelpful for human freedom and responsibility.

D. Critique of Practical Reason

When I say of a man who commits a theft that, by the law of causality, this deed is a necessary result of the determining causes in preceding time, then it was impossible that it could not have happened; how then can the judgement, according to the moral law, make any change, and suppose that it could have been omitted, because the law says that it ought to have been omitted; that is, how can a man be called quite free at the same moment, and with respect to the same action in which he is subject to an inevitable physical necessity? Some try to evade this by saying that the causes that determine his causality are of such a kind as to agree with a comparative notion of freedom. According to this, that is sometimes called a free effect, the determining physical cause of which lies within the acting thing itself, e.g., that which a projectile performs when it is in free motion, in which case we use the word freedom, because while it is in flight it is not urged by anything external; or as we call the motion of a clock a free motion, because it moves its hands itself, which therefore do not require to be pushed by external force; so although the actions of man are necessarily determined by causes which precede in time, we yet call them free, because these causes are ideas produced by our own faculties, whereby desires are evoked on occasion of circumstances, and hence actions are wrought according to our own pleasure. This is a wretched subterfuge with which some persons still let themselves be put off, and so think they have solved, with a petty word-jugglery, that difficult problem, at the solution of which centuries have laboured in vain, and which can therefore scarcely be found so completely on the surface. In fact, in the question about the freedom which must be the foundation of all moral laws and the consequent responsibility, it does not matter whether the principles which necessarily determine causality by a physical law reside within the subject or without him, or in the former case whether these principles are instinctive or are conceived by reason, if, as is admitted by these men themselves, these determining ideas have the ground of their existence in time and in the antecedent state, and this again in an antecedent, etc. Then it matters not that these are internal; it matters not that they have a psychological and not a mechanical causality, that is, produce actions by means of ideas and not by bodily movements; they are still determining principles of the causality of a being whose existence is determinable in time, and therefore under the necessitation of conditions of past time, which therefore, when the subject has to act, are no longer in his power. This may imply psychological freedom (if we choose to apply this term to a merely internal chain of ideas in the mind), but it involves physical necessity and, therefore, leaves no room for transcendental freedom, which must be conceived as independence on everything empirical, and, consequently, on nature generally, whether it is an object of the internal sense considered in time only, or of the external in time and space. Without this freedom (in the latter and true sense), which alone is practical a priori, no moral law and no moral imputation are possible. just for this reason the necessity of events in time, according to the physical law of causality, may be called the mechanism of nature, although we do not mean by this that things which are

subject to it must be really material machines. We look here only to the necessity of the connection of events in a time-series as it is developed according to the physical law, whether the subject in which this development takes place is called automaton materiale when the mechanical being is moved by matter, or with Leibnitz spirituale when it is impelled by ideas; and if the freedom of our will were no other than the latter (say the psychological and comparative, not also transcendental, that is, absolute), then it would at bottom be nothing better than the freedom of a turnspit, which, when once it is wound up, accomplishes its motions of itself.⁴

I argue that Kant's view of freedom requires uncaused events and therefore cannot be of help in protecting morality and responsibility. Kant recognized that causality is unavoidable in time, whether we consider this from the material/external perspective or the internal/psychological perspective. He held on to the intuition that a free will is one that is not predetermined, and therefore claimed that if there is freedom it must be transcendental freedom, not anything related to the empirical whether internal or external. He argued for this kind of freedom by claiming that it is necessary for the moral law and moral imputation (responsibility); this is to say that it is a postulate of practical rationality.

Kant must uphold both freedom and causality in order to defend both morality and physics. Kant's solution was to locate freedom in the noumenal realm, and causality in the phenomenal realm. The problem is that either in some sense the noumenal realm causes the phenomenal realm or it does not. If it does not, then there is no relationship between the two, and uncaused freedom in the noumenal realm is irrelevant to choices in the phenomenal realm. If the noumenal realm does cause the phenomenal realm then this undermines Kant's hope in an uncaused freedom.

Kant asserted that we cannot know the noumenal realm, we only know the phenomenal realm. This is a form of skepticism that claims knowledge is not possible; we cannot know reality, only the appearance of reality. However, he did not consistently hold to this; Kant tells us we cannot know about the noumenal but then tells us many things about the noumenal such as causation does not apply to it. If we cannot know anything about the noumenal then we do not know if causation applies or not. If we can know some things about

⁴ See <http://praxeology.net/kant4.htm>.

the noumenal then this is contrary to Kant's "copernican revolution" wherein he claims that the human mind shapes the noumenal into the phenomenal world that we know.

We can use a form of argument that Kant relied upon, although go in a different direction than Kant. In order to protect morality we must protect causation. Kant's use of a transcendental argument is helpful as a formal example. This is the form of argument that asks about the necessary prerequisites for something else to exist. Kant claims that freedom (defined as uncaused) is a necessary prerequisite for responsibility and morality. The form of approach is helpful. However, is it true that uncaused choices (actions, decisions) are necessary for morality? Indeed, isn't it just the opposite. If a choice is uncaused then in what sense can it be a moral act, or an act for which a person is held responsible?

The Kantian view of being an uncaused agent, or what has come to be called agent causation, involves a problematic desire. To be undetermined requires being independent in a way that is not possible for finite and temporal beings. To be independent in this way is to desire to be the sole explanation for all of one's actions; it is the search to be one's own creator, to not be dependent on anything else, to be God. A shifting of responsibility is often seen in the argument: if I am created by God then it is God's fault that I sin (the pot blaming the potter--why have you made me so?); and on the other hand there is the demand to be the uncaused causer, to be responsible in any degree requires being undetermined.

A final example of the kind of freedom that relies on uncaused events and natureless beings is called counterfactual freedom. This view says that a person is free only if that person could have done otherwise than he/she actually did. This is how responsibility is understood when the emphasis is placed on ability, or what H.L.A. Hart spoke of as capacity and opportunity. He is the final example we will use here, and he will be contextualized by a work about him by J.L. Mackie because the latter was known for attempting to explain a form of compatibilism and offers some suggestions about how to proceed in general, while offering now help about the sovereignty of God.

E. Doing Otherwise and the Grounds of Responsibility

An action is voluntary when what the agent does is controlled by his will; or, when what he wants straightforwardly determines what he does; or, when his desires issue in action.’ It would be natural to give some such account as these, preserving the etymological connection between ‘voluntary’ and will, want, or desire, but also somehow indicating the double relation between the wanting and what is done, that the former both brings about the latter and is fulfilled by it. And we could sketch a related but more complicated account of intentional action. But Professor Hart (in the lectures and essays collected in *Punishment and Responsibility*) repeatedly criticizes account of this sort, on two main grounds. He does not believe that such an analysis can be coherently developed or applied in an illuminating way. But also, even in so far as it does point correctly to certain psychological elements, it focuses attention on the wrong things. What is important as a ground for liability to legal penalties is not that agents should “have in their minds” the elements of foresight or desire for muscular movement. These psychological elements are not *in themselves* crucial. . . . What is crucial is that those whom we punish should have had, when they acted, the normal capacities, physical and mental, for doing what the law requires . . . and a fair opportunity to exercise those capacities” . . . Capacity and opportunity, Professor Hart holds, are what matter, rather than foresight and the execution of desire as such. . . .

I think, then, that a coherent account of voluntariness and intentionality can be developed on fairly traditional lines and in a way that preserves the close connection between voluntariness and will, want, and desire. But does it lead, or allow, us to draw the boundaries of responsibility in the right places? Or is it easier to do this if we work, as Professor Hart recommends, with the notion of capacity and opportunity, asking ‘Could he have done otherwise?’ or “Had he any real choice?’

One problem concerns duress and ‘necessity’. Actions performed under duress or necessity--where acting otherwise would have led with practical certainty to the death of the agent himself, or of persons close to him, or to some similar disaster--are clearly voluntary in our stronger sense; but we may well feel inclined to excuse them on the ground that the agent had, in the circumstances, no real choice. . . . Instead of taking duress or necessity as negating responsibility because it deprives the agent of any real choice, we should see each of these as helping to determine the precise act for which he is responsible, as adding justifying or mitigating circumstances to the description of what he intentionally did.⁵

What does it mean to say that a person is able to do something? There are at least two senses we can consider here. One is that the person could have done otherwise in that nothing predetermined the

⁵ J.L. Mackie, “The Grounds of Responsibility” in *Law, Morality and Society* (Clarendon, 1977).

action. This is called the libertarian view of free will, and it assumes that a choice is free only if it was not predetermined. However, it is hard to see how this can be the relevant sense of ability for Hart in relation to responsibility. If a person makes a choice, then that person could only have done otherwise if his/her desires and beliefs leading to the choice had also been different. Thus, this condition for freedom becomes: persons are free if they can do otherwise, and they would have done otherwise if other factors had been different.

I argue that we must reject counterfactual freedom for two reasons: it requires uncaused events, or it amounts to an unhelpful tautology (things would have been different if things were different). In order to preserve counterfactual ability, some libertarians appeal to indeterminate causation where the desires and beliefs do not guarantee the given choice, some other choice could have also been the result. Or, there is an appeal to agent causation in which it is agreed that the desires and beliefs resulted in a choice, but that the agent himself/herself is not predetermined in a way that guarantees beliefs or desires that produce the choice. This amounts to positing an uncaused agent, and so does not get away from the problem of uncaused events.

As noted above, it is not clear that this form of freedom protects ability in a way that is helpful for responsibility. A person can hardly be responsible for an uncaused event, or for an undermined action that might have come out in some other way (the reader can look up Frankfurt style cases). By way of contrast, a second sense in which ability can be understood is in terms of the nature of a being. A mineral does not have the ability to commit murder, and this is not because of a lack of counterfactual freedom, but because it is not the kind of being that can choose to commit murder. When asking if a defendant had the capacity and the opportunity to commit a crime, it is unhelpful to posit the existent of uncaused events. Instead, what is sought for is whether this person had the opportunity circumstantially and is culpable of making an immoral or illegal choice.

But what if this choice was necessitated from eternity, isn't punishing such a person the same as punishing them for doing what was of necessity or under duress of an eternal causal stream? The question is commonly posed this way and yet I want to point out that it begs the question with regard to freedom. It assumes that if a

choice is predetermined it is necessitated, as opposed to being contingent and free. I'll quote from the Confession on free will to introduce the idea of a four-fold relationship between ability and freedom (WMC, IX. Of Free Will):

I. God has endued the will of man with that natural liberty, that is neither forced, nor, by any absolute necessity of nature, determined good, or evil.

II. Man, in his state of innocency, had freedom, and power to will and to do that which was good and well pleasing to God; but yet, mutably, so that he might fall from it.

III. Man, by his fall into a state of sin, has wholly lost all ability of will to any spiritual good accompanying salvation: so as, a natural man, being altogether averse from that good, and dead in sin, is not able, by his own strength, to convert himself, or to prepare himself thereunto.

IV. When God converts a sinner, and translates him into the state of grace, He frees him from his natural bondage under sin; and, by His grace alone, enables him freely to will and to do that which is spiritually good; yet so, as that by reason of his remaining corruption, he does not perfectly, or only, will that which is good, but does also will that which is evil.

V. The will of man is made perfectly and immutably free to do good alone in the state of glory only.

Here, freedom is defined in terms of a free (unbound) will. In the first state, man has the ability and freedom to sin; in the second state man has the freedom not to sin but not the ability to not sin; in the third state man has the freedom not to sin and the ability not to sin; in the fourth state man has the freedom not to sin but not the ability to sin. In each state, man can do as he wills. However, what man wills in each state differs depending on what man believes to be good. In section three it says “a natural man, being altogether averse from that good, and dead in sin”. This is culpable ignorance in that it is clear what is good and what is not good. It is clear, for instance, that knowing God is good. And yet, in the state of sin man rejects God and therefore rejects the good.

I want to focus on this culpable ignorance. This is an ignorance due to neglecting the ordinary means of knowing, and avoiding whatever might bring this neglect to mind. This culpable ignorance carries with it responsibility and consequences: by rejecting God one does not come to know God and does not partake in that summum bonum. The consequence of not having this light of the mind is

darkness and emptiness which must be filled in some way but will not be satisfied with anything but the infinite Creator. This lack of fulfillment leads to excess and guilt. These are not the same kinds of punishments Hart is thinking of when considering the judicial system—rather, these are inherent consequences that cannot be avoided.

The objection will be posed in this way: if God made me so, why does he still find fault? This question can be understood in two ways: it could be an information gathering question, asking for an explanation of God’s purpose in permitting moral evil and about the necessary relationship between moral evil and spiritual death. Or it could be, and usually is, an attempt to find a contradiction. “If God made me to hate good and love evil then he should not find fault.” However, the “fault” lies in the inherent consequences, so this person is really saying “If God made me to hate good and love even then I should be permitted to do so without inherent consequences.” That would be a contradiction.

The objector might reply “I simply want out of spiritual death.” Yet this cannot be achieved apart from not doing what gets one into spiritual death. What it usually comes down to is: I can’t believe in God because of (the problem of evil, I believe only matter exists, I believe only mind exists, fill in the blank), and this really does raise the relevant issue. Is it clear that God exists so that there are no excuses for failing to know God? Does the human mind have the capacity to show all excuses to be faulty, inconsistent, irrational?

Although answering this question would take us in a different direction than the purpose of this paper, we can note that the Confession affirms that it is clear that God exists from the very first sentence “the light of nature, and the works of creation and providence, do so far manifest the goodness, wisdom and power of God so as to leave men unexcusable.” This is the real sense of responsibility. Humans have failed to use reason (the light of nature) to know God. This is called spiritual death. In such a condition, humans cannot use reason to understand that they need to use reason. Rather, than must be restored to life first, they must be regenerated.

And so after considering the twists and turns of discussing free will, we are able to focus on the question of perseverance. The problem is whether one can lose their “salvation.” However, posed differently the problem is easily resolved: “can one lose their

regeneration?” Just like regeneration was not the result of a human action, but is instead the restoring to life of the human so that he/she can will what is good, so too no human action can take way regeneration. It is the ground out of which choices are made.

A final consideration to tie together many ideas in this article: the question of freedom is often posed as “can I freely choose God to be saved,” and being saved means meeting necessary conditions to get into heaven. We can avoid many problems if we reorient ourselves to the actual chief end of man, which is to glorify God. This is not the same as heaven. God can be glorified now, not only in the future. God must be known to be glorified. As one knows God one understands the glory of God. The perseverance of the saints can be changed from “what if I loose my salvation and go to hell,” to “God has renewed my heart so that I can know him.” If it is clear that God exists, then I can know God if I seek to know, that is, I can get what I want and so I am free.

Conclusion

To make progress in understanding free will and predestination we cannot give ourselves over to unexamined intuitions. The claim that a predestined will is not a free will, or that a world that is unchangably controled by the eternal decree of God is contrary to human dignity or a moral law. This is also true in the case of perseverance, which is criticized as taking away a person’s freedom to choose otherwise. Once we dismiss the possibility of doing otherwise as relying on uncaused events and natureless beings we can address the intuition about predetermination. Predestination does not contradict freedom, rather it makes a free will possible by upholding the relationship between what I want to do and the action my will causes. At the most basic level, with reference to knowing God, we always get what we want.



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