

Detroit Baptist Theological Seminary

THE THEOLOGICAL VIABILITY OF MIDDLE KNOWLEDGE

by

Matthew A. Postiff

Seminar in Soteriology: 755, 11:20 A.M.

Dr. William W. Combs

April 18, 2006

Introduction

The aim of this paper is to examine the theological viability of middle knowledge.¹ The idea of middle knowledge is highly philosophical and so it is important, if somewhat difficult, to lay a proper groundwork for the inquiry into its viability. In order to accomplish this aim, the paper will first introduce the doctrine of middle knowledge. Then, some supporting arguments for middle knowledge will be reviewed. Third, some of the varied applications of middle knowledge will be outlined. Fourth, arguments against middle knowledge will be presented. Fifth, a Calvinistic variation of middle knowledge is critiqued. The paper then offers a short section on this author's view of God's knowledge of counterfactuals and ends with conclusions.

What is Middle Knowledge?

The doctrine of middle knowledge was first formulated by a Spanish Jesuit named Luis de Molina (1535–1600).² It is his name that is the source for the other common appellation for the doctrine, namely Molinism.³ Many modern theologians have embraced the doctrine of middle knowledge because of its practical utility in explaining the relationship between various doctrines of Scripture. The main proponents today are William Lane Craig⁴ and Alvin Plantinga.⁵

¹ The word viability as a description of something indicates that it is capable of success or longevity, that it is practicable. The primary measure of viability in theology is whether the doctrine agrees with the Scriptures. It is also helpful to examine whether the doctrine is consistent within itself (whether it agrees with Scripture or not) and whether it can be modified in order to be made viable if it is not.

² Luis de Molina, *On Divine Foreknowledge*, trans. Alfred J. Freddoso (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988). This book is a translation of part IV of Molina's *Concordia*, first published in 1588.

³ Turretin briefly notes that other Jesuits laid claim to the doctrine, namely Fonseca and Lessius. Molina obviously came to the fore as its inventor as history has attached his name to the doctrine. On this, see Francis Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, trans. George Musgrave Giger, ed. James T. Dennison, Jr., 3 vols. (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian & Reformed, 1992), 1:213.

⁴ Several of Craig's writings will be referenced throughout this article. For the reader who needs an introduction to middle knowledge, see the popular-level work by William Lane Craig, *The Only Wise God: The Com-*

Logical Priority of Three Types of God's Knowledge

Before describing the doctrine of middle knowledge, it is necessary to lay some groundwork. The doctrine assumes that God's knowledge can be divided into three logical parts, that is, a succession of three components in which the second part is logically conditioned upon the first, and the third upon the second. The three parts are organized logically according to priority, but this division is not temporal, as God's knowledge is not subject to a division according to time.

The first type of divine knowledge is called *natural* or *necessary knowledge*. It is this knowledge that is inherent in God, and by which he knows all necessary things. These things include knowledge of himself, of right and wrong, of logic, etc. It also includes knowledge of all possible states of affairs. This knowledge is essential to God, before any decision of the divine will.

The second type of divine knowledge will be addressed in the next section. Suffice it to say for now that it is called *middle knowledge* in that it stands between the first and third types.

The third logical type of divine knowledge is called *free knowledge*. This knowledge comes after God's decision to create the particular world in which we find ourselves. By this point in the logical ordering of God's knowledge, and because of God's decision, all the possible states of affairs have been reduced to the set of affairs that actually prevail in the current world. So God by his free knowledge knows all things as they actually are and will be. This is an impor-

patibility of Divine Foreknowledge and Human Freedom (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1987), pp. 127–52. This explains Molina's thoughts on a manageable level. A somewhat more technical article appears in William Lane Craig, "Middle Knowledge: A Calvinist-Arminian Rapprochement?" in *The Grace of God, the Will of Man*, ed. Clark H. Pinnock (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1989), pp. 141–64. More technical yet is William Lane Craig, *The Problem of Divine Foreknowledge and Future Contingents from Aristotle to Suarez* (Leiden, The Netherlands: E. J. Brill, 1988), pp. 169–206.

⁵ Alvin Plantinga, *The Nature of Necessity* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974).

tant point, because it distinguishes middle knowledge from open theism. Advocates of middle knowledge do not believe in an open future, where some decisions of free creatures are unknown to God ahead of time.⁶ Rather, logically after God's decision, and subsequent free knowledge that comes out of that decision, there is no more openness to the future. How this can be true in the middle knowledge view will be taken up in the next section.

Definition of Middle Knowledge

Molina defines the second type of divine knowledge, *middle knowledge*, as that knowledge standing between God's natural and free knowledge:

Finally, the third type is *middle* knowledge, by which, in virtue of the most profound and inscrutable comprehension of each faculty of free choice, He saw in His own essence what each such faculty would do with its innate freedom were it to be placed in this or in that or, indeed, in infinitely many orders of things—even though it would really be able, if it so willed, to do the opposite...⁷

In other words, God knows what every free agent *would* do in every combination of circumstances in which that agent might find himself. The various choices that the agent faces may not be equally advantageous or palatable, but according to Molina, the agent could select any way he desired—and the way he desired is part of the contents of God's middle knowledge. God knows therefore the virtually infinite number of propositions of the form “if agent A were in circumstances S, then he would freely do action Y.” Another way of putting this is that God knows

⁶ For a good introduction to open theism, see Gregory A. Boyd, “The Open-Theism View,” in *Divine Foreknowledge: Four Views* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2001), pp. 13–47. The introduction of that work and other sections will help the reader to distinguish between the open view and the middle knowledge view.

⁷ Molina, *On Divine Foreknowledge*, p. 168. In other literature, this is often cited this way: Molina, *Concordia*, 4.52.9. This specifies the major part of the Concordia (4), the disputation number (52), and the section of the disputation (9). I will specify quotes from Molina using the page numbers from Freddoso's translation.

*counterfactuals of creaturely freedom.*⁸

This type of knowledge is different than free knowledge in that it comes *before* any decree. It is also different than natural knowledge in that it is not essential to God but rather is sourced, in some sense, outside of himself. It is related to the free decisions of the creature. As such, this middle knowledge is not within God's control, but is dependent on how the free creature would decide in the various circumstances. By saying this, advocates of middle knowledge do not suggest this knowledge is really outside of God, but rather that God knows the creatures by knowing himself.⁹ The definition makes this clear by using the phrase "in His own essence."

Middle knowledge is also different than either natural or free knowledge in that it comprehends all the possible situations in which creatures may find themselves and the decisions that they *would* make in those circumstances. Natural knowledge does include possibilities, but middle knowledge further limits these possibilities to those which are in harmony with the free wills of creatures. And by the point that God's free knowledge has been "settled," there are no more open possibilities, but God knows all circumstances and all the decisions that free creatures will make in them.

The first part of Molina's definition says, "in virtue of the most profound and inscrutable comprehension of each faculty of free choice." In the literature this is called the doctrine of *supercomprehension*, that is, that God knows each creature so well that he knows what free choice

⁸ I make use of this definition of such counterfactuals throughout the first part of this paper, as it is the definition that prevails in the literature on the topic. It will become clear later that I hold to a more restricted view of counterfactuals.

⁹ John David Laing, "Molinism and Supercomprehension: Grounding Counterfactual Truth" (Ph.D. dissertation, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2000), p. 290. Thus is the phrase "outside of himself" qualified.

the creature would make in any possible circumstance.¹⁰ This does not mean, according to Molina, that the decision of the creature is or becomes fixed in some fatalistic way. God simply knows what the creature will do because his intellect so infinitely surpasses that of the creature. There are not any conditions that determine or limit the creature's free choice; he is free to choose whatever way he wants, yet God knows what way he will choose.

The next part of the definition mentions the creaturely faculty of free choice and the innate freedom of the creature. This is an important part of the definition, as already suggested earlier. Molina came to the task of reconciling divine sovereignty and human freedom with the presupposition that men are free in the libertarian sense of that word. This presupposition originates in his commitment to the dogma of the Roman Catholic Church, particularly that adherence to the doctrine of man's freedom is required by Trent. The doctrine of middle knowledge builds this freedom into God's knowledge so that the two can be reconciled with one another.

The definition also mentions the infinite number of possible situations that God can comprehend. This is no problem for God, as he is omniscient.

Finally, the definition says that God knows the decision of each creaturely free will, "even though it would really be able, if it so willed, to do the opposite." This undercuts the potential argument against middle knowledge that it only offers a hypothetical freedom that is never actual. That is, if God foreknows something, it seems necessary for it to come to pass. Notwithstanding, Molina says, the creature is free to do whatever it wants, and God's prior knowledge of that decision does not affect his true freedom as God saw it in his middle knowledge. We will have more to say on this later after we survey the arguments in favor of middle

¹⁰ Ibid., pp. 289–319 describes this doctrine of supercomprehension.

knowledge and some of its applications in the study of theology.

Arguments for Middle Knowledge

There are two main lines of support for middle knowledge, the Biblical and the philosophical. These will be examined in turn.

Biblical Support for Middle Knowledge

A number of Bible passages are used in support of middle knowledge. Following are the ones that are most commonly referenced.¹¹

1 Samuel 23:10–12: Then David said, ‘O LORD God of Israel, Thy servant has heard for certain that Saul is seeking to come to Keilah to destroy the city on my account. ¹¹Will the men of Keilah surrender me into his hand? Will Saul come down just as Thy servant has heard? O LORD God of Israel, I pray, tell Thy servant.’ And the LORD said, ‘He will come down.’ ¹²Then David said, ‘Will the men of Keilah surrender me and my men into the hand of Saul?’ And the LORD said, ‘They will surrender you.’

This is the classic passage claimed by supporters of middle knowledge. Clearly there are two options here for David because of the two possible actions of the men of Keilah. If these men were placed into a certain (threatening) situation with Saul surrounding their city, they would freely hand over David. However, this situation does not in fact come to pass because David used God’s guidance to remove himself from the region and thus not put the men of Keilah into those circumstances.

Matthew 11:21, 23: Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the miracles had occurred in Tyre and Sidon which occurred in you, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes...²³ And you, Capernaum, will not be exalted to heaven, will you? You shall descend to Hades; for if the miracles had occurred in Sodom which occurred in you, it would have remained to this day.

The counterfactual latent in the Matthew passage is this: ‘if Tyre, and Sidon, and Sodom

¹¹ All Scripture citations are taken from the 1995 update of the New American Standard Bible.

had been in a situation in which Jesus' mighty miracles had been visited upon them, then they would have freely repented of their sin." Obviously they were not placed in such a situation since Jesus was incarnated far later in history; but the Bible gives us the plain impression that had circumstances been different, their response also would have been different.

1 Corinthians 2:8: [The wisdom of God] which none of the rulers of this age has understood; for if they had understood it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

Here again we have a passage that asserts a counterfactual: "if the princes of this world had been placed into a situation where they were able to come to an understanding of God's wisdom, then they would have freely chosen to not crucify Christ."

There are other texts which can be used in support of middle knowledge. For instance, Exodus 13:17 shows that God knows if the Israelites experience war too soon, they would return to Egypt. Another example is found in Jeremiah. In chapter 38, Jeremiah urges Zedekiah to surrender to the king of Babylon. The implied counterfactual here has to do not with Zedekiah but with the king of Babylon. If the king is placed in circumstances in which Zedekiah surrenders, he would spare Zedekiah and the city. However, if the king is placed in other circumstances, wherein Zedekiah refuses to surrender, then he would destroy both Zedekiah and the city. This is what Jeremiah was trying to say to Zedekiah in these verses. Another implied counterfactual from the larger context is this: "if Zedekiah were placed in the circumstances where he could surrender or not, then he would freely chose to not surrender." This is made clear as the narrative unfolds.

Another passage used in support of middle knowledge is Joseph's flight from Bethlehem with Mary and Jesus. The implication of Matthew 2:13 is that if Joseph did not flee, Herod would kill Jesus. In other words, if Herod were in a situation in which he had access to Jesus, he would kill him.

All of these examples support the idea that God knows the *woulds* of situations that never did in fact come to pass.¹²

Philosophical Support for Middle Knowledge

The primary philosophical argument for middle knowledge can be called the *pragmatic* argument, namely, that it explains a number of theological problems so well that it could not be wrong. Craig offers this argument:

Does God, then, possess middle knowledge? It would be difficult to prove in any direct way that he does, for the biblical passages are not unequivocal. Nevertheless, the doctrine is so fruitful in illuminating divine prescience, providence, and predestination that it can be presumed unless there are insoluble objections to it.¹³

He continues by writing, “We have seen that the doctrine of divine middle knowledge, while having some biblical support, ought to be accepted mainly because of its great theological advantages.”¹⁴

A second argument in support of middle knowledge could be called the *common presupposition* argument, about which Craig writes:

¹² There are a number of other passages that might be used in support of middle knowledge. However, they do not seem to be as germane as the ones listed. For instance, in Jeremiah 42, when Johanan and company came to Jeremiah to ask if they should stay in the land or go down to Egypt, Jeremiah replied that if they stayed, God would bless them (v. 10). But if they went to Egypt, God would curse them (v. 13, 16). Clearly God knew which way the people would choose, but the text portrays the situation in such a way that the alternative was a genuine possibility known by God. The counterfactual that answers to this situation is this: “if the people were in a situation where they had to choose between Judah and Egypt, they would freely choose Egypt.” But this counterfactual is taught in the larger context, and is not taught in these particular verses. The *would* of these verses is that if the people acted a certain way, then God would freely bless (or judge) them. God is the one doing the choosing in this case. This supports the notion that God knows how he himself would decide, but does not support that he knows how the people will decide. Craig understands Molina to teach that God does know such conditionals about himself, but these are not part of his middle knowledge, but rather are part of his free knowledge. See Craig, *The Problem of Divine Foreknowledge and Future Contingents*, p. 182.

¹³ Craig, *The Only Wise God*, p. 137.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 151.

In fact, it is interesting how often ordinary Christian believers naturally assume that God has middle knowledge. For example, Christians regularly seem to presuppose divine middle knowledge when they pray for God's guidance. They assume that God knows which of two paths would be better for them to take...Or again, Christians have sometimes espoused middle knowledge when they reflect on the issue of the salvation of infants...The assumption, then, that God possesses such knowledge underlies, I think, the views of many ordinary Christians.¹⁵

In other words, middle knowledge must be true because it is almost universally accepted, even if many Christians do not consciously understand the implications of what they are saying.

A third philosophical argument is that God's infinite knowledge is so perfect that he must have middle knowledge of the free acts of his creatures. His perfections are "unlimited in every aspect."¹⁶

Fourth, Craig asserts that "providence and predestination presuppose middle knowledge. According to the doctrine of God's providence, God preordained and arranged all things to suit His purposes. But how could this be done for contingent causes apart from middle knowledge of what they would do under certain circumstances?"¹⁷ The obvious answer to his rhetorical question is that God *has* to have middle knowledge to explain these other doctrines (at least from his perspective).¹⁸

¹⁵ Ibid., pp. 137–8. The next major section of this paper, *Applications of Middle Knowledge*, grows out of this assertion.

¹⁶ Craig, *The Problem of Divine Foreknowledge and Future Contingents*, p. 183.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ There is a seeming circularity among these arguments. Among the theological advantages mentioned earlier is the fact that middle knowledge offers a handy explanation of providence and predestination. Middle knowledge is supposed to explain these doctrines, but here Craig says that middle knowledge is presupposed by these doctrines. Perhaps the circularity can be eliminated by saying that each doctrine entails the others as part of a coherent system.

Applications of Middle Knowledge

One of the alleged advantages of middle knowledge is that it can explain many other difficult doctrines. It is so effective in this way that some of Molina's opponents complained that he was destroying Biblical mysteries by his clever explanations. In the following subsections, we will examine how middle knowledge applies to some difficult theological problems to show why it is so attractive.

Middle Knowledge and the Imputation of Adam's Sin

The Bible teaches that all men were constituted as sinners when the one man Adam sinned (Romans 5:12–21). But the particular ground of this imputation has been debated. While some understand the imputation to be grounded in Adam's federal headship of the human race, others find this idea unfair in that it lays guilt on people who did not personally commit the first sin.

Middle knowledge provides one possible solution to this alleged unfairness. Shedd explains it this way: "The doctrine of middle knowledge has been employed to explain the imputation of Adam's first sin to his posterity. This sin is imputed because God foreknew that each one of the posterity *would* have committed it if he had been placed in Adam's circumstances."¹⁹ In other words, each person would have freely chosen to commit the same sin that Adam did if placed in the same circumstances. This use of middle knowledge is an extension beyond its normal use, wherein God simply uses middle knowledge to decide what world to instantiate. In this case, middle knowledge of a non-existent world is used to produce a real effect in our world.

¹⁹ William G. T. Shedd, *Dogmatic Theology*, ed. Alan W. Gomes, 3rd ed. (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian & Reformed, 2003), p. 287, emphasis supplied. See also p. 436.

Middle Knowledge and the Salvation of Infants and the Unevangelized

Another intensely-debated theological problem is the status of those who have not heard or are not able to understand the gospel message. Craig mentions a friend who ‘proposed that God judges persons who die in infancy on the basis of what they *would* have done if they *had* grown up. Those who would have had faith will be saved, but those who would not have believed will be lost.’²⁰

Regarding the status of unevangelized adults, Craig notes the approach of Campus Crusade for Christ which stated in a Great Britain flyer that God bases his judgment on the decision a person *would* have made if had that person heard the gospel in circumstances other than the ones that actually prevailed.²¹ This view, then, denies the need for a personal appropriation of the benefits of salvation through a conscious faith-commitment to the Lord Jesus Christ. Craig supports this notion, since he believes that some individuals could be saved by their response to general revelation, and others who did not respond positively and did not have access to information about Jesus can not complain. This is so because both sufficient grace was supplied and there was no world in which they would have freely accepted Christ anyway. God knew this by his middle knowledge and knew that it did not matter that they did not have all the information required. But those who would receive Christ were given the opportunity.²²

²⁰ Craig, *The Only Wise God*, p. 138.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Craig writes, ‘In conclusion, then, I think that a middle knowledge perspective on the problem of the exclusivity of the Christian religion can be quite fruitful. Since all persons are in sin, all are in need of salvation. Since Christ is God’ s unique expiatory sacrifice for sin, salvation is only through Christ. Since Jesus and his work are historical in character, many persons as a result of historical and geographical accident will not be sufficiently well-informed concerning him and thus unable to respond to him in faith. Such persons who are not sufficiently well-informed about Christ’ s person and work will be judged on the basis of their response to general revelation and the light that they do have. Perhaps some will be saved through such a response; but on the basis of Scripture we must

Middle Knowledge and Guidance

In appealing to the seemingly universal use of middle knowledge among Christians, Craig mentions that believers often pray for God's guidance by asking Him which of two paths, if followed, *would* lead to a better outcome. Craig's argument is that if God does not have middle knowledge, then he cannot give guidance to the person asking for it, for he would not know the outcomes in alternative circumstances.²³ Thus God must have middle knowledge.

Middle Knowledge and Prescience, Providence, Predestination

Middle knowledge is also used to explain the doctrines of God's foreknowledge, sovereign control over the world, and predestination of individuals to salvation. The doctrine of God's foreknowledge is simply explained by Molinists in that God chose by his will one of the possible worlds presented to him by his middle knowledge. Once this possible world was selected, God knew all the details about it—including the future. He knew what decision every free creature would make. Thus his prescience is based on the middle knowledge and the divine will.

Molinism also maintains a place for God to guide the events of the world. It does so by using the middle knowledge and God's will (as above) along with what is called general concurrence. God's will includes his response to the various activities of his creatures. Some of his re-

say that such 'anonymous Christians' are relatively rare. Those who are judged and condemned on the basis of their failure to respond to the light of general revelation cannot legitimately complain of unfairness for their not also receiving the light of special revelation, since such persons would not have responded to special revelation had they received it. For God in His providence has so arranged the world that anyone who would receive Christ has the opportunity to do so. Since God loves all persons and desires the salvation of all, He supplies sufficient grace for salvation to every individual, and nobody who would receive Christ if he were to hear the gospel will be denied that opportunity. As Molina puts it, our salvation is in our own hands." See William Lane Craig, "No Other name: A Middle Knowledge Perspective on the Exclusivity of Salvation Through Christ," *Faith and Philosophy* 6 (April 1989): 186. Craig obviously does not understand the condemnatory nature of general revelation.

²³ Craig, *The Only Wise God*, p. 137.

sponses include directly bringing about certain (good) things. At other times, he simply permits (evil) things to occur. But to ensure that things happen the way they must according to his plan, he applies his general concurrence. This ‘is *not* an influence of God’s *on the cause* so that the cause might act after having been previously moved and applied to its act by that influence, but is instead an influence *along with the cause directly on the effect*..God concurs by acting to produce the effect.”²⁴ In this way, God’s providence over the world is maintained.

Middle knowledge also supplies a basis for explaining predestination. It is at this point that two streams of Molinist thought become visible. Molina believed that God decided to give prevenient grace to every person, and on the basis of middle knowledge he knew which people would respond in each possible world to that grace. This prevenient grace is a particular concurrence, in which God “acts *on* the will, not *with* it, to render it capable of responding freely to God’s initiative.”²⁵ God then decreed the particular world that he wanted, and on that basis has predestined those particular people to salvation. Ultimately predestination for Molina was based on how the creature would freely respond with the help of prevenient grace. Another Jesuit named Francisco Suarez (1548–1617) proposed what has come to be called Congruism, where God first decides to predestine certain individuals to salvation, and then using middle knowledge, can see what graces would elicit a free but saving response from each individual. These graces are called “congruent” graces, and thus these graces are effective for the individual. The graces might be different for each individual, but God still supplies grace sufficient for all to be saved (so that they have no excuse for rejecting God). The basic difference between the two

²⁴ Craig, “Middle Knowledge: A Calvinist-Arminian Rapprochement?” p. 154.

²⁵ Ibid., p. 157. Note the difference between general and particular concurrence.

streams of Molinist thought has to do with how middle knowledge is used to delimit the elect from the non-elect. However, the main point for purposes of this paper is simply that middle knowledge, when coupled with the divine will and particular concurrence, can be used to supply an explanation for predestination that maintains creaturely freedom.

It is interesting to note at this point that Arminius subscribed to the view of middle knowledge.²⁶ He writes,

That kind of God's knowledge which is called 'practical,' 'of simple intelligence,' and 'natural or necessary,' is the cause of all things through the mode of prescribing and directing, to which is added the action of the will and power; (Psalm civ, 24;) although that 'middle' kind of knowledge must intervene in things which depend on the liberty of a created will.²⁷

For Arminius, it was God's middle knowledge, not his foreknowledge, which formed the basis of predestination.

Middle Knowledge and Biblical Inspiration

Craig also integrates the concept of middle knowledge with the doctrine of Biblical inspiration. He writes,

... the traditional doctrine of the plenary, verbal, confluent inspiration of Scripture is a coherent doctrine, given divine middle knowledge. Because God knew the relevant counterfactuals of creaturely freedom, He was able to decree a world containing just those circumstances and persons such that the authors of Scripture would freely compose their respective writings,

²⁶ See John D. Laing, "The Compatibility of Calvinism and Middle Knowledge," *JETS* 47 (September 2004): 457, footnote 6. Dekker concludes, "Arminius not only mentions the theory of middle knowledge, but he also has incorporated it in his theology. It appears in all crucial formulations of his doctrine of divine knowledge..." See Eef Dekker, "Was Arminius a Molinist?" *Sixteenth Century Journal* 27 (Summer 1996): 337-52.

²⁷ James Arminius, *The Writings of James Arminius*, trans. James Nichols and W. R. Bagnall, 3 vols. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1977), 1:449.

which God intended to be His gracious Word to us. In the providence of God, the Bible is thus both the Word of God and the word of man.²⁸

This formulation of the doctrine of inspiration gives a significant place to the human element in the authorship of Scripture, but it is not clear whether there is a miraculous work of God at the moment of the writing of the Scripture, as indicated in 2 Timothy 3:16 and 2 Peter 1:21.

Middle Knowledge and Perseverance

Yet another area of theology that is touched by middle knowledge is the area of the perseverance of the saints. Craig again writes,

in the moment logically prior to creation, God via His middle knowledge knew who would freely receive Christ as Savior and what sorts of warnings against apostasy would be extrinsically efficacious in keeping them from falling away. Therefore, He decreed to create only those persons to be saved who He knew would freely respond to His warnings and thus persevere, and He simultaneously decreed to provide such warnings. On this account the believer will certainly persevere and yet he does so freely, taking seriously the warnings God has given him.²⁹

So the doctrine of perseverance is intertwined with that of inspiration, so that God knew what warnings to place in the Scriptures, and the world he decided to create was the one in which all true believers would heed such warnings. But the warnings themselves are not a means of perseverance as they might be for a Calvinist. Later Craig writes, ‘Nevertheless, it does seem to me that those who interpret the warnings of Scripture as the means by which God ensures the perseverance of the saints have abandoned the classic understanding of that doctrine and have

²⁸ William Lane Craig, “Men Moved By The Holy Spirit Spoke From God’ (2 Peter 1.21): A Middle Knowledge Perspective on Biblical Inspiration,” *Philosophia Christi* NS 1 (1999), par. 115, accessed 15 April 2006, available from <http://www.leaderu.com/offices/billcraig/docs/menmoved.html>. Internet.

²⁹ William Lane Craig, “Lest Anyone Should Fall’: A Middle Knowledge Perspective on Perseverance and Apostolic Warnings.” *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 29 (1991), par 43, accessed 15 April 2006, available from <http://www.leaderu.com/offices/billcraig/docs/lest.html>. Internet.

adopted instead a middle knowledge perspective on perseverance.”³⁰ In order to avoid this Calvinistic “unintentional slip” back into middle knowledge, something else is necessary:

The classical defender of perseverance must, it seems, if he is to distinguish his view from Molinism, hold to the intrinsic efficacy of God's grace and, hence, the causal impossibility of the believer's apostasy. But in that case, the warnings of Scripture against the danger of apostasy seem to become otiose and unreal.³¹

It is in this way that Craig defends the doctrine of perseverance apart from efficacious grace and thus maintains the Arminian view that true believers can apostatize.

Middle Knowledge and the Problem of Evil

Middle knowledge is also used to explain the problem of evil. In short, evil is a “cost” associated with having free creatures. They can freely decide for or against the good. God knows by his middle knowledge what each creature will choose and thus how the world will be in light of those choices of evil. This serves to distance God from culpability in the origination of evil in the universe. It is fully the fault of the free creatures that evil entered.

This free-will versus evil tradeoff is the basis of what is called the “Free Will Defense” which is an explanation of how evil can exist at the same time God exists. The atheistic argument against God's existence goes something like this: if God exists, he is omnipotent, omniscient, and good, but (it is claimed) the existence of suffering is incompatible with the existence of God. And since we know that suffering exists, God therefore must *not* exist. The free will defense of God's existence rebuts this argument by stating that God can exist at the same time that evil exists because God had good reason, namely the moral freedom of his creatures, for allowing

³⁰ Ibid., par. 44.

³¹ Ibid., par. 42. The word “otiose” indicates that the warnings serve no useful purpose. They are there but really do not do anything.

evil.³² He values that freedom more highly than the existence of some evil. Plantinga explains the free will defense slightly differently: “The Free Will Defender claims that..God is omnipotent and it was not within his power to create a world containing moral good but no moral evil.”³³ Otherwise, God is not creating creatures that are significantly free. In other words, the assumption of free creatures forms a limitation on the worlds that are possible to God: once he decides to create a world with good, this entails also that the world contains at least some evil, because God so values creaturely freedom. And since God does not have power over creaturely free decisions, he cannot prevent all evil from happening.

Middle knowledge provides a tidy explanation of these matters in that it allows for creaturely freedom and therefore it allows for evil without implicating God.

Arguments Against Middle Knowledge

In this section, I will outline several objections to the doctrine of middle knowledge.³⁴

³² There is another explanation for the existence of evil which is called the greater-good theodicy in which God allows evil to exist to bring about greater good than if evil did not exist. This is not really the same as the free-will theodicy, but the free-will theodicy could be explained in those terms, namely that creaturely freedom is the greater good God sought.

³³ Plantinga, *The Nature of Necessity*, p. 184. See also Laing, “Molinism and Supercomprehension,” pp. 159-63.

³⁴ Paul Helm, *The Providence of God* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1994), pp. 55–61 offers a helpful critique of middle knowledge. Charles Hodge also summarizes a number of objections to the doctrine in Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, 3 vols. (reprint of 1952 ed., Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1999), 1:398-400. There is also a very technical series of articles in the Christian philosophical journals in which the debate over Molinism is expressed. The articles, in order of their publication, are as follows:

1. Robert M. Adams, “An Anti-Molinist Argument,” in *Philosophical Perspectives* 5 (1991): 343–53.
2. William Lane Craig, “Robert Adams’s New Anti -Molinist Argument,” *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 54 (December 1994): 857–61.
3. William Hasker, “Middle Knowledge: A Refutation Revisited,” *Faith and Philosophy* 12 (April 1995): 223–36. This work follows the same author’s earlier chapter entitled “A Refutation of Middle Know 1-

Such objections arose soon after Molina's publication of the *Concordia* in 1588. By 1594, the debate was so intense that Pope Clement VIII ordered a "Commission on Grace" which began ten years of study (1598–1606) of Molina's work.³⁵ Somewhat later, Reformed scholar Francis Turretin (1623–87) wrote a section against middle knowledge in his *Elenctic Theology*.³⁶ Several modern proponents of middle knowledge have dealt with these objections and their responses will be included at the appropriate points below.³⁷

Inconsistency in the Possible Worlds of Middle Knowledge

One problem with middle knowledge as formulated by Molina is that it states God's natural knowledge is the knowledge of all possibilities, and his middle knowledge is his knowledge of what worlds, given creaturely freedom, can be made actual. But, as Frame asks, "What is the difference between these? Are there worlds that are genuinely possible, but which God cannot

edge" in William Hasker, *God, Time, and Knowledge* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1989), pp. 39–52.

4. William Hasker, "Explanatory Priority: Transitive and Unequivocal, A Reply to William Craig," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 57 (June 1997): 389–93.
5. William Lane Craig, "On Hasker's Defense of Anti-Molinism," *Faith and Philosophy* 15 (April 1998): 236–40.
6. William Hasker, "Anti-Molinism is Undefeated!" *Faith and Philosophy* 17 (January 2000): 126–31.

Articles or chapters mentioned in #1 through #4 are available in a single volume: William Hasker, David Basinger, and Eef Dekker, eds., *Middle Knowledge: Theory and Applications* (Frankfurt am Main; New York: Peter Lang, 2000). This compilation is available in the DBTS library. None of #1 to #4 are available from their original sources in the DBTS library. The collection of *Faith and Philosophy* is missing 2000–2002, 2004–2006, and some are also missing in the 1980s and 1990s.

³⁵ Craig, *The Problem of Divine Foreknowledge and Future Contingents*, pp. 169–70, and Alfred J. Fredoso, preface to *On Divine Foreknowledge*, by Luis de Molina, pp. vii–viii. For a detailed timeline of events surrounding this commission, see Laing, "Molinism and Supercomprehension," pp. 354–58 (Appendix 1).

³⁶ Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, 1:212–18.

³⁷ Craig, *The Problem of Divine Foreknowledge and Future Contingents*, pp. 190–198 deals with six objections to middle knowledge.

make actual?”³⁸ In other words, if a world cannot be made actual, is it possible in the first place?

Related to this objection is that middle knowledge treats some possibilities differently than others. The decisions of free creatures and the possibilities that those decisions raise are made a special case compared to other possibilities that God knows as part of his natural knowledge. Why this should be so is unclear, unless it simply grows out of the assumption that creatures are at some level independent of the Creator. Said another way, why is there a distinction between possibilities that are possible for God and possibilities that are only possible for his creatures?

Inconsistency in the Prevolitional Part of Middle Knowledge

There is another problem latent in the definition of middle knowledge, which states that God knows what each “faculty of free choice” would do with its freedom. Immediately therefore the definition presupposes that any creatures who do not have free choice are not contemplated by God in his design of the universe. That is, God has already decided that only creatures with a faculty of free choice are among those that he wishes to create. Therefore though its proponents claim middle knowledge comes before *any* act of the divine will, at least *one* decision has already been willed by God, namely to create only creatures which have a free will.

It might be objected at this point that God did not have to *will* anything because non-free creatures are simply not possible creatures in God’s natural knowledge. After all, how can non-free creatures be responsible for sinful acts? But it seems far-fetched to say that it would be impossible for God to create creatures with some type of restricted free will. In fact, compatibilists

³⁸ John M. Frame, *The Doctrine of God* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian & Reformed, 2002), p. 503.

teach this very idea, while not removing responsibility from the creature. There are other creatures with such restrictions (in the animal kingdom). In addition, *we* can certainly think of the possibility of non-libertarianly free creatures; why could not God do the same? In sum, it is reasonable to assume that, if middle knowledge were true, God did himself freely choose not to allow for the possibility of non-free creatures and thus middle knowledge is not fully prevolitional.

Limitations of the Bible Passages That Supposedly Teach Middle Knowledge

The basic problem in using the passages cited earlier is that the advocates of middle knowledge try to prove too much with these texts. Nowhere in them are the following propositions stated: a) that a libertarian free will is a necessity or in fact exists; b) that God knows counterfactuals in all other possible worlds; and c) that there is only one possible (middle knowledge) explanation for the texts. In fact, all of those propositions are actually undercut by these texts.

Consider first the proposition that humans have a libertarian free will. The 1 Samuel passage about the men of Keilah certainly does not support this. They are faced with a choice to either give up David to Saul, or face a siege by Saul's army in which they will be destroyed. The choice is obviously very constrained. The men of Keilah do not have a free choice in this situation. Only a remarkably principled leader would not turn over David to Saul in face of the odds.

The second proposition, that God knows counterfactuals in all other possible worlds, is not supported by the texts either. In fact, the 1 Corinthians 2:8 passage mentions the princes *of this world*, not some other possible world, or all other possible worlds. The way these situations are presented in the Bible relate to this present world and slight variations that might be envisioned in it. In no way do these situations suggest an infinity of other possibilities that God envi-

sioned beforehand. Even though God knows at least some *woulds* (the texts say that he does) it is a stretch to say this proves God has full-blown middle knowledge, as Craig admits.³⁹

The third proposition, that there is only one possible explanation of these texts, also goes far beyond what the texts actually say. In fact, it is easy to come up with other explanations. For example, God knew the nature or purpose of the men of Keilah so well as they existed at the time David made his request, that he knew how they would respond if faced with such a difficult situation.⁴⁰ The point of the “Woe” in Matthew 11:21, 23 is not to teach middle knowledge, but rather to show the hardness of heart of present unbelievers as compared with the people of Tyre, Sidon, and Sodom. God also knew the character of the people of Tyre, Sidon, and Sodom and the effect that such preaching and miracles by Christ would have had on them had it been available. Whether their repentance would have been true or just temporary is not really at issue here because the Lord was not incarnate at the time of the existence of those civilizations and thus the “if part” of the counterfactual could never have happened. The point is that their response would have been somehow positive in the hypothetical case, and thus would demonstrate their relative responsiveness compared to the hardened unbelievers in the Lord’s audience.

In addition, the idea that God used such middle knowledge in the logical moment prior to his decree is certainly not taught by these texts, for the texts themselves are not trying to teach a thorough formulation of God’s omniscience or even a part thereof.

³⁹ Craig, *The Only Wise God*, p. 137, which was quoted earlier.

⁴⁰ Rolland D. McCune, “Systematic Theology I” (class notes, Detroit Baptist Theological Seminary, Fall 2001), p. 107.

Bible Passages that are Problems for the Middle Knowledge View

Another difficulty with middle knowledge is that there are some very plain texts in the Scripture that teach against it. Isaiah 46:11, Romans 9:11, and Ephesians 1:11 all teach a very strong doctrine of God's omnipotence, plan, and purpose. The Romans passage specifically tells us that God's election of Jacob over Esau was according to his own purpose, and not the works or free choices of either of the children. Ephesians 1:11 asserts the same basic truth regarding the election of believers to salvation.

Taking the Ephesians passage as an example, proponents of middle knowledge would explain that God does indeed purpose and execute his will so that it comes to pass. He simply plans it through the use of his middle knowledge, and brings it to pass either by his general or particular concurrence. They can affirm that God does this by using his knowledge of the actions free creatures in all possible circumstances and then selecting which set of circumstances to bring about.

In reply, note that the Ephesians passage does not offer any room for the idea that God contemplated the free choices of individuals before formulating his purpose or plan. Certainly the Romans 9:11 passage does not allow for free creaturely choice as a basis for God's election.

Argument Against Libertarian Freedom

Yet another argument against middle knowledge has to do with its reliance upon libertarian freedom. There are no limitations upon this freedom in Molina's view,⁴¹ so that the decisions

⁴¹ Note that Molina is committed to the Catholic doctrine of man's freedom. This view has infiltrated the whole middle knowledge stream of thinking so that other types of freedom are ruled out immediately. But when approaching the problem of sovereignty and free will, the whole question boils down to what kind of freedom is possessed by humans. The Molinist answer to the problem is simply to assume libertarian freedom.

made by the creature seem to be totally arbitrary. In support of this notion, Molina asserts that “free decisions of the will exceed the nature of the subject willing them; that is to say, a subject’s nature does not determine which decision the will shall make—otherwise, the decision would not be free and contingent.”⁴² But it is obvious, if from nothing more than experience, that the nature of a person does affect his decisions, so that his decisions are not free in the libertarian sense.

Consider first of all that when we say someone has a libertarian free will, we are not saying that he can do anything he wants. For instance, a physical limitation prevents him from choosing to jump to the moon if that desire is presented to his mind. Similarly, if there is a fork in the road, but one of the directions has a sign that says “Thru Traffic Only,” then there is a constraint on his choice of which direction to travel.

If such physical, external limitations exist, why are not immaterial and spiritual factors also limiters to one’s freedom? In fact, such *are* preventers to free choice. Consider Romans 8:7, “Because the carnal mind *is* enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.” Or again Romans 3:11, “There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God.” The supposedly (unbelieving) free agent, if faced with the general choice to please God or please himself, will ultimately choose to please himself. He cannot subject himself to the law of God.

In sum, the Bible’s view of man as a sinner by nature is a significant reason to reject libertarian free will.⁴³

⁴² Craig, *The Problem of Divine Foreknowledge and Future Contingents*, p. 181.

⁴³ For an extended argument against libertarian freedom, see Lynne Rudder Baker, “Why Christians Should Not Be Libertarians: An Augustinian Challenge,” *Faith and Philosophy* 20 (October, 2003): 460–478.

God's Foreknowledge Is Incompatible with Libertarian Freedom

Another notable objection to middle knowledge is its relationship to God's knowledge of future events. Simply stated, if God knows that a future action will invariably occur, how can the agent making a choice to do that action be totally free to do so? In other words, *God's foreknowledge limits freedom*.⁴⁴ If the action will occur, the agent is in some sense constrained to make the decision that he does. Thus, the freedom offered by middle knowledge seems to be only hypothetical—the agent is somehow free in God's reckoning before the divine decree, but at the point of decision the agent really has no choice in the matter. The creature's freedom is significantly reduced.

As an example of this, Luke 24 tells us that the Lord *had* to suffer before entering his glory (v. 26). The Old Testament Scriptures *had* to be fulfilled (v. 44). It was *necessary* that Christ suffer and rise again the third day (v. 46). Freedom as it relates to the involvement of other people in the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus Christ seems to have been severely restrained.

Grudem puts the objection this way,

Craig's view does not sustain a view of freedom in the sense Arminians usually maintain: that no cause or set of causes made a person choose the way he or she did. On Craig's view, the surrounding circumstances and the person's own disposition *guarantee* that a certain choice will be made—otherwise, God could not know what the choice would be from his exhaustive knowledge of the person and the circumstances. But if God knows what the choice will be, and if that choice is guaranteed, then it could not be otherwise. Moreover, if both the person and the circumstances have been created by God, then ultimately the outcome has been determined by God. This sounds very close to freedom in a Calvinist sense, but it is certainly not the kind of freedom that most Arminians would accept.⁴⁵

This problem is recognized by Craig when he writes,

⁴⁴ In other words, God's foreknowledge is a *preventer* to an agent's free decision.

⁴⁵ Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), p. 349.

Given that God has foreknown an event, His foreknowledge is, in the composed sense, incapable of being otherwise. But considered in itself apart from temporal considerations, it is, in the divided sense, able to be different. Similarly, given that an event is future, it is, in the composed sense, incapable of not occurring. But apart from temporal considerations, it is, in the divided sense, able to not occur. Hence, it is difficult to see why, if a future event is in a certain sense contingent [the divided sense], God's foreknowledge is not in the same sense contingent. But Molina eschewed this conclusion because, as we have seen, he felt it undermined the certainty of God's foreknowledge.⁴⁶

Craig's defense requires some additional explanation. When he says that God's foreknowledge, in the "composed sense," is incapable of being otherwise, he means that the combination of God's knowledge, middle knowledge, and decree all taken together do not allow for the possibility of something else happening. That is, once God has decreed this particular world to come into existence, the future is closed. What is to be will be. This composed sense, however, is irrelevant to the issues of contingency and freedom, Craig asserts.⁴⁷

The relevant sense is the "divided sense," in which "we are as perfectly free in our decisions and actions as if God's foreknowledge did not exist."⁴⁸ In other words, Craig claims that the only way we are allowed to consider human freedom is to look back and consider how God saw it before the decree to instantiate the world. In a logical sense, before the decree of how things would actually be, God did not foreknow anything about it. In the absence of foreknowledge, we can consider creatures to be free and not constrained by God's foreknowledge. Once

⁴⁶ Craig, *The Problem of Divine Foreknowledge and Future Contingents*, pp. 189–90. On p. 190 he writes, "Because God's knowledge thus depends on the creature's will and does not produce its effect without a determination of the divine will, it does not produce its effects necessarily." On p. 199 he continues, "While it is impossible in the composed sense, given God's foreknowledge, for anything to happen differently than it will, this sense is irrelevant to contingency and freedom. In the relevant, divided sense we are as perfectly free in our decisions and actions as if God's foreknowledge did not exist. Middle knowledge therefore supplies not only the basis for divine foreknowledge, but also the means of reconciling that foreknowledge with creaturely freedom and contingency."

⁴⁷ Craig, "Middle Knowledge: A Calvinist-Arminian Rapprochement?" p. 152.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

this sense is combined with his will to produce the “composed sense,” it is only then that freedom is basically eliminated.

Working against Craig’s defense is the fact that our whole existence is circumscribed by this “composed sense.” We have no access to the divided sense: only God had access to it in eternity past. So our own freedom is indeed not available to us!

While actual freedom is limited in this composed sense, Craig avoids fatalism by explaining that if a free agent were to choose differently, then God’s middle knowledge would have been different.⁴⁹ Thus, God’s foreknowledge does not, Craig says, make the action happen invariably because God’s will is based on his middle knowledge of the decision of the creature’s will. He therefore avoids saying that foreknowledge of an event necessarily entails the occurrence of the event. For the middle knowledge advocate, it basically has to be this way to avoid fatalism.

Looking at the problem another way, *true human freedom would limit God’s foreknowledge*. Craig almost admits this when he says that God’s foreknowledge is in a sense (the divided sense) contingent. Molina did not want to admit such a contingency because it seemed to make God uncertain of the future. And indeed, true non-hypothetical human freedom precludes God’s ability to plan and execute the future, for God would not know how the creature would choose

⁴⁹ Craig, *The Problem of Divine Foreknowledge and Future Contingents*, p. 192 writes “Therefore, the divine foreknowledge which exists is, indeed, incompatible with the event’s not occurring, but it is perfectly compatible with the event’s being *able* to not occur. For if that possibility were to be actualized, the divine foreknowledge would always have been different.” But on page 198 he writes, “Hence it is within Peter’s power to refrain from sin, but it is not within his power to affect God’s foreknowledge, even though it is necessarily true that where [sic] he to refrain from sin God would always have foreknown differently.” We’ve already shown that according to Molinists, God has no power over his middle knowledge. But if Peter does not have power over it either, then it seems that it is totally outside the realm of anyone’s control!

until the choice was actually made.⁵⁰

In addition, advocates of middle knowledge portray God's middle knowledge as completely certain knowledge. But *true freedom undermines middle knowledge itself*.⁵¹ Why? Because middle knowledge teaches that God certainly knows what the creatures would freely do; however *true* freedom means that no conditions can determine human actions, arbitrary as they are. Therefore God could not be sure of what the creature will decide and thus his middle knowledge is also uncertain.

The Grounding Objection

Another argument against middle knowledge has to do with the truth of the counterfactual propositions allegedly known by God in his middle knowledge. One simple way to put the objection is to say that middle knowledge seems to clog up God's mind with all sorts of facts that are not really true. Further, God does not "know" facts that are false, so it seems that these "facts" are not objects of God's knowledge. The worlds that were never to be do not seem to provide any basis for "truth" and so could not provide any "knowledge" to God. Turretin states it

⁵⁰ Indeed, in the Molinist account, not even the creature knows what he would choose ahead of time, for neither the circumstances nor the nature of the creature are determinate in the choice. Of course, Molinists assert the doctrine of supercomprehension at this point, saying that "God just knows." It is not really clear how he knows such an arbitrary choice, but he knows. Turretin writes, "The middle knowledge can have no certainty because it is occupied about an uncertain and contingent object." On this, see Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, 1:215.

⁵¹ Robert L. Reymond, *A New Systematic Theology of the Christian Faith* (Nashville: Nelson, 1998), p. 189. See also Helm, *The Providence of God*, p. 61 and Frame, *The Doctrine of God*, p. 778. See also David M. Ciocchi, "Reconciling Divine Sovereignty and Human Freedom," *JETS* 37 (September 1994): 406, who argues a different way. If God knows Judas will betray Christ given circumstances C, there is no possible world in which Judas will *not* betray Christ given circumstances C. Thus libertarian free will is incompatible with middle knowledge. Ciocchi suggests that compatibilist free will is the only type of freedom that can work with middle knowledge (but see below).

this way: “Things not true cannot be foreknown as true.”⁵² Thus the basis or ground of why the counterfactuals are true seems to be missing.⁵³

Craig has written much on this very subject to attempt to refute the grounding objection.⁵⁴ His basic argument is that grounding objectors have not been able to formulate a convincing case for the grounding objection, as well as the fact that it seems reasonable that counterfactuals are true from our perspective, even granting that the situations that give rise to the counterfactuals will never obtain. He offers the “liver and onions versus chocolate chip cookies” example in which most people will freely choose the cookies over the liver if offered the choice. It is certainly not far-fetched to think that this counterfactual has some truth to it!

While the grounding objection is admittedly difficult to fully grasp, it seems to this author that the ground of counterfactual truths has to be placed in God’s design of the existent universe. Truth originates in God, after all. To say that someone would choose cookies over liver presupposes that we are talking about someone who has a defined set of desires as created by God, and that the offer of liver or cookies will not in itself change those desires from what we observe in our world apart from such an offer. So the truth of a counterfactual rests on the correspon-

⁵² Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, 1:214.

⁵³ Craig defines the grounding objection thus: “It is the claim that there are no true counterfactuals concerning what creatures would freely do under certain specified circumstances...since there is nothing to make these counterfactuals true. Because they are contrary-to-fact conditionals and are supposed to be true logically prior to God’s creative decree, there is no ground of the truth of such counterfactual propositions. Thus, they cannot be known by God.” See William Lane Craig, “Middle Knowledge, Truth-Makers, and the ‘Grounding Objection,’” *Faith and Philosophy* 18 (July 2001): 337–52, accessed 17 April 2006, available from <http://www.leaderu.com/offices/billcraig/docs/grounding.html>. Internet.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 337–52, and Craig, *The Only Wise God*, pp. 139–145.

dence of the circumstances to how things are by God's design.⁵⁵

The Problematic Relation of Middle Knowledge to God's Omnipotence

To consider yet another objection to middle knowledge, think for a moment about open theism. In that system of thought, God is said to be omniscient, i.e. he knows everything, but there are certain things that are not objects of knowledge. The classical view of omniscience would say this is a subtraction from God's omniscience. But open view simply claims that those things "subtracted" were never and could never be objects of knowledge in the first place. No being, including God, could know them.⁵⁶

Now the doctrine of middle knowledge is definitely different from the open view in that the decisions of free agents are definitely included in God's middle knowledge, based as they are on God's supercomprehension of the finite free will. However, Molinism is similar to open theism in at least one respect: while open theism removes some things from the set of all things could know, so Molinism removes the decisions of free creatures from the realm of God's power.⁵⁷ God simply knows about those free decisions but can do nothing about that knowledge.

⁵⁵ I would say just the opposite of Craig on this. In *The Problem of Divine Foreknowledge and Future Contingents*, p. 176, he writes, "[God] does not, for example, first know what Peter will do in the actual circumstances that will exist and then on this basis know what Peter would have done had he been placed in some other set of circumstances. Rather, the opposite is true: prior to God's decision to create any set of circumstances, He knows what Peter would do within any possible order of circumstances; then, given the decision of His will to bring about a certain set of circumstances, God knows what Peter will in fact do." Counterfactuals to this author seem to rest on the way things are, rather than abstractly just existing as possibilities in God's mind. By instantiating the present world, God brings relevancy and truth to some counterfactuals and not others.

⁵⁶ James K. Beilby and Paul R. Eddy, introduction to *Divine Foreknowledge: Four Views*, ed. James K. Beilby and Paul R. Eddy (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2001), p. 10. They write, "...the open view holds that the future is partly open to God, for God cannot foreknow the decisions that free agents shall make. God is omniscient...for he perfectly knows all reality. But the reality God perfectly knows is partly composed of possibilities, 'maybes.'"

⁵⁷ Craig writes, "But we have seen that it is not within God's power to determine what decisions creatures would freely take under various circumstances." See Craig, *The Problem of Divine Foreknowledge and Future Con-*

One might think that this limitation on God's power is only temporary, during the early (logical) moments of his deliberations about the creation of the world. That is, God had no power over what his middle knowledge tells him, but that in actually making the creative decision to instantiate one of the possible worlds, he regains control over everything and can influence the free will in such a way as to make any decision that God desires, since God can put that agent in whatever circumstances he desires. However, this is not the case. In fact, God has *no* power over the decisions of free creatures. According to Molina and as suggested by Craig in the area of salvation, this works out in that, "There are some possible persons who would not freely receive Christ under any circumstances."⁵⁸ In other words, God could not construct any set of circumstances to bring those possible persons to Christ. This is plainly a denial of God's omnipotence and makes God omnipotent over everything except human beings.⁵⁹ To this, Reymond responds,

.. if there were one square inch of this entire universe not under his sovereign governance, God is neither absolutely sovereign nor omniscient since that one square inch would have equal claim to its own sovereignty to do as it willed.. This construction [of middle knowledge] cannot be squared with the biblical passages that teach that God did in fact foreordain whatever comes to pass, knows all things infallibly, and providentially governs all his creatures and all their actions to bring about his own holy ends (see, e.g., Acts 2:23; Rom. 9:16; Eph. 1:11; Phil. 2:13).⁶⁰

tingents, p. 200. A variant of Molinism which says that God does have power over these counterfactuals is defended by Jonathan Kvanvig, "On Behalf of Maverick Molinism," *Faith and Philosophy* 19 (July 2002), accessed 17 April 2006, available from <http://www.Missouri.edu/~kvanvig/papers/onbehalfofmaverickmolism.htm>, Internet. This view is claimed to be incoherent, however, in Thomas P. Flint, *Divine Providence: The Molinist Account* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1998), pp. 65–70, and in Thomas P. Flint, "The Multiple Muddles of Maverick Molinism," *Faith and Philosophy* 20 (January 2003): 91–101.

⁵⁸ Craig, *The Only Wise God*, p. 147. He explains, "In other words, some people, no matter how much the Spirit of God worked on their hearts, no matter how favorable their upbringing, no matter how many times or ways they heard the gospel, would still refuse to bow the knee and give their lives to Christ.. I believe that it probably is in fact true.. Hence, it is possible that God is not, after all, able to create a world in which all persons freely receive Christ."

⁵⁹ See the fifth objection in Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, 1:215.

⁶⁰ Reymond, *A New Systematic Theology of the Christian Faith*, p. 190.

God Does Not Have Middle Knowledge of Himself

Another problem with the idea of middle knowledge is that God cannot have middle knowledge of his own actions, although he is also a free being. This is admitted by advocates of the view, since ‘Molina believes that if God had middle knowledge of His own actions, that is to say, if God knew what He would do under any circumstances prior to the determination of His own will, then God would not be free to will whatever He wished under those circumstances.’⁶¹ In other words, God has middle knowledge of his creatures to preserve the freedom of his creatures, but he does not have middle knowledge of himself, for this would eliminate his own freedom. This seemingly contradictory idea arises from the nature of God’s supercomprehension of his creatures, which supercomprehension he cannot have of himself because he simply knows himself and does not have a ‘higher’ knowledge of his will than he himself does. That is, God knows the creaturely will infinitely better than the creature knows himself; but God’s knowledge does not infinitely exceed his own will.

However, God does know what he would do in other circumstances, but this knowledge is located in his free knowledge, not in his middle knowledge (of himself).⁶² In this way Molina and Craig are able to explain this problematic concept. But another objection arises in that we as people seem to have some sort of middle knowledge of ourselves. We know what we would do in circumstances other than those that obtain. This fact seems to limit our freedom, just as if God had middle knowledge of himself, that would limit his freedom. For if we are eventually placed in those circumstances that we previously contemplated, we would have already made up our

⁶¹ Craig, *The Problem of Divine Foreknowledge and Future Contingents*, p. 180.

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 182.

mind as to what to do and we would not be free to will whatever we wish.

Summary of Objections

In summary, there are nine strong objections to the doctrine of middle knowledge. Since the basic idea is flawed, it is unnecessary to go into the details of how each application of middle knowledge is also flawed. The doctrine of middle knowledge thus lacks viability in its basic formulation. But these very flaws have given rise to a variation of the doctrine of middle knowledge which is common among moderate Calvinists. Its viability is the subject of the next section.

Calvinistic Middle Knowledge

Some soft determinists or compatibilists have embraced a version of middle knowledge and integrated it into their theology of God's omniscience. Ware, for instance, says that God utilizes a Calvinist version of middle knowledge which he calls

“compatibilist middle knowledge,” knowledge of what compatibilistically free creatures *would* do, which is middle between God's knowledge of merely what *could* be and his knowledge of specifically what *will* be. Both Terrance Tiessen and John Frame have, in recent years, urged this concept, even if not with the same terminology.⁶³

Tiessen devotes a large portion of his book to the defense of a Calvinistic version of middle knowledge.⁶⁴ Frame does agree that God has knowledge of hypothetical matters, but he rejects the “radical libertarianism” of Molina.⁶⁵ To Ware's list we could add John Feinberg.⁶⁶

⁶³ Ware, *God's Greater Glory*, p. 27.

⁶⁴ Terrance Tiessen, *Providence & Prayer: How Does God Work in the World?* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), pp. 289–362.

⁶⁵ Frame, *The Doctrine of God*, p. 151. Frame writes as a critic of middle knowledge and does not seem (at least to this author) to label his view as a “variant” of the middle knowledge view. He simply says God knows hypotheticals. He clearly distances himself from Molina when he writes, “. . . God does take human nature into account when he formulates his eternal plan for us. But that is only one perspective! The other perspective is that God's knowledge of our nature is itself dependent upon his plan to make us in a particular way. God's will is based on his

Middle Knowledge, But With Differences in Definition

This variant of middle knowledge is ‘middle’ in that it is between natural and free knowledge, but is it so in the same sense as Molina defined? There are several reasons why we must say that it is not the same.

First, it specifically calls out libertarian freedom as an impossibility. Ware goes on to say,

I agree fully with these men and others who argue that Molinist middle knowledge, predicated on libertarian human freedom, is not possible. How can God know what a free agent *would* do in some state of affairs if, all things being just what they are, the agent can do A or not-A? Knowing and controlling the circumstances in which free creatures act only exerts control over the range of possible choices, but in no way does it indicate just what choice would in fact be made. And, as seen earlier, since these libertarianly free choices have no choice-specific reasons for them, neither God nor the agent could know why he chooses specifically and exactly what he does. How, then, is God to know what an agent *would* choose?⁶⁷

This is to say that the Calvinistic version of middle knowledge teaches that God does know *counterfactuals*, but not counterfactuals *of creaturely freedom*, because creatures are not libertarianly free.

Second, the Calvinistic version of middle knowledge is also different than Molina’s middle knowledge because it starts God’s middle knowledge with a ‘seed’ situation which, since God knows how the agent will respond in that situation, will allow him to know the agent’s re-

knowledge, and his knowledge is based on his will.” Nowhere does Frame allow for God’s knowledge to be dependent upon creatures in a sense apart from His will.

⁶⁶ John S. Feinberg, “God Ordains All Things,” in *Predestination & Free Will: Four Views of Divine Sovereignty & Human Freedom* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1986), p. 34. He writes, “Though I agree that God has middle knowledge...” In a later work, he says, “Moreover, I don’t believe God has middle knowledge, if middle knowledge includes knowledge of what humans would freely do in the libertarian sense. On the other hand, if one holds some form of determinism as I do, there is no reason to deny that God has middle knowledge of what humans would do (compatibilistically) freely...So, while I doubt that an indeterminist could consistently hold that God has middle knowledge, I see no reason for a determinist to deny this.” See Feinberg, *No One Like Him*, p. 752.

⁶⁷ Ware, *God’s Greater Glory*, p. 27.

sponse in largely similar but slightly different situations. Ware explains:

But if we really do make our choices for prevailing reasons, if the conditions (both internal and external) surrounding a particular choice present to us the individually necessary and jointly sufficient conditions for making just the choices we do..if this is so, then it follows that God can know what choices *would be made* by knowing just exactly the set of conditions..that gives rise to particular choices and actions. So, he can envision an agent in one situation, and knowing all the factors true in that situation can know from these factors what choice the agent *would make here*, and he can envision a slightly different situation, and again, in knowing all the factors true in that situation he can know what the agent *would do*, instead, *there*.⁶⁸

For instance, if God knows initially that I will choose Wendy's because it is closer to my present location than the nearest Burger King and I have no preference between the two, then he could also know that if the situation were changed so that Burger King were closer, all else being equal, I would choose Burger King. This is in contrast to pure Molinism, in which God simply knows all the *woulds* simultaneously without logically first knowing any seed cases.

Furthermore, the Calvinistic version of middle knowledge is different from Molinism in that it presumes that given a set of conditions, the agent's behavior can be determined with certainty. Pure Molinism does not allow the conditions to so constrain the agent: remember that it is God's supercomprehension of the agent's will, not his understanding of the conditions, that allows God to know how the agent would respond.

Based on these differences, it should be evident that the Calvinistic version of middle knowledge is not really middle knowledge as Molina formulated it because it does not allow for libertarian human freedom. Rather, it emphasizes that God knows counterfactuals within a soft determinist or compatibilist framework. Frame makes this point when he writes, 'If we abandon libertarianism, we abandon the traditional meaning of middle knowledge, and then, as I said ear-

⁶⁸ Ibid., pp. 27–28.

lier, there is no reason to distinguish God’s knowledge of contingencies from his necessary knowledge of himself.”⁶⁹

The Infeasibility of Calvinistic Middle Knowledge

But setting aside matters of terminology and definition, Calvinists cannot legitimately salvage middle knowledge for themselves, even when compatibilist freedom is included.⁷⁰ To see why, we must go back to a version of the grounding objection. The grounding objection, it will be recalled, states that there is no way to ground the truth of counterfactuals, and thus they must be false and cannot be known by God, since God only knows true things. We’ve shown from the Scriptures that God does know at least some counterfactuals, so the grounding objection is not bulletproof.⁷¹ However, when examining the claims of the middle knowledge Calvinist, we can ask upon what is the truth of such counterfactuals grounded. Such a line of questioning will serve to bring to light the inconsistency of Calvinist middle knowledge.⁷²

Suppose we have a proposition of the form ‘if agent A were in circumstances C, he would compatibilistically freely choose to do X.’ It would seem that the truth of this is grounded

⁶⁹ Frame, *The Doctrine of God*, p. 151.

⁷⁰ See Laing, “The Compatibility of Calvinism and Middle Knowledge,” who makes this case in detail.

⁷¹ If the Scripture asserts that God knows the counterfactuals, then they must be true, regardless of anyone’s appeal to a grounding objection. This may seem to be contradictory to my earlier acceptance of the grounding objection as having validity as an argument against middle knowledge. To resolve the apparent contradiction, note that the grounding objection applies specifically to Molinism because of its claim that counterfactual truths exist before any action of the divine will. But if we accept that an action of the divine will precedes the counterfactuals, then it is easy to ground them: their ground is in God’s will. Apart from that, it seems counterfactual truths must be grounded in the creature which does not yet exist.

⁷² The inconsistency is pointed out by Laing, “The Compatibility of Calvinism and Middle Knowledge,” pp. 462–3. He says that most compatibilists do accept the grounding objection, yet when they embrace a compatibilist version of middle knowledge, they do not realize that the grounding objection applies equally well to their version of middle knowledge.

in God's will, because A, C, and X are all contemplated as existing, which would require God's willing them to exist. Furthermore, the very notion that A has some level of freedom to choose X in circumstances C assumes that God has willed the agent to have such freedom, i.e. that he has already willed agent A to have a certain kind of freedom. So, if the truth of the counterfactual is grounded in God's will, or in God's will of how the creature would be, then this type of middle knowledge is not prevolitional, that is, before any decree of God. But the prevolitional idea is a key pillar to middle knowledge—if it is removed, the knowledge is not in the middle of anything. It is actually posterior to the divine will to create and is thus part of God's free knowledge.

But if the truth of the example proposition is not grounded in God's will, then it must be grounded in the creature somehow.⁷³ Besides the obviously problematic nature of grounding any truth outside of God, this view is basically the same view as propounded by Arminian middle knowledge advocates. That is to say, if the truth of the counterfactual is generally grounded in the creature, it seems that it would have to be specifically grounded in the creature's own decision-making capacity. This is what the Calvinist was trying to avoid in the first place! Laing ties together the loose ends in this way:

Thus, although we may be sympathetic to the theological concerns of those who attempt to combine middle knowledge with moderate Calvinism, we must reject it as an ultimately untenable position. The soft determinist may claim that God possesses knowledge of counterfactuals of compatibilist freedom, but she cannot claim that such knowledge is prevolitional; it must be part of God's free knowledge."⁷⁴

⁷³ Ibid., p. 467, admits the possibility that one could say the truth of counterfactuals need not be grounded at all, but that would not solve the compatibilist's problem that no matter where he grounds counterfactual truth, he is not left with either his Calvinism or a knowledge that is in the middle of anything.

⁷⁴ Ibid. This agrees with his earlier dissertation, in which he writes, "Tiessen characterizes his own position as a middle knowledge Calvinist position. It is doubtful that any such position exists, for by definition, the content of middle knowledge must be prevolitional; that is, it must be true [sic] independent of God's will." See Laing, "Molinism and Supercomprehension: Grounding Counterfactual Truth," p. 347. Laing believes in libertarian freedom and

Frame attempts to ground the knowledge of counterfactuals in a third way—in God’s natural or necessary knowledge.⁷⁵ He suggests that such knowledge of the creature *is* prevolitional, because it is a part of God’s knowledge of all possibilities. But it should be noted that creatures are not a part of God’s necessary knowledge, for creatures themselves are not necessary. God could or could not have created them. In any case, Frame agrees that within his understanding of God’s knowledge, middle knowledge is not a third separate type of knowledge.

The point of all of this is to say that if a Calvinist wants to hold to something he calls middle knowledge, he must significantly change the definition of it to remove libertarian freedom and all of the problems associated therewith, and he must take care to avoid the pitfalls of improper grounding of counterfactual truth, lest he fall back into pure Molinism. Furthermore, he must admit that the middle knowledge is only middle in the sense that it has to do with counterfactuals, not in the sense that it stands between two other types of God’s knowledge.

God’s Knowledge of Counterfactuals

It seems necessary to mention something more about God’s knowledge of counterfactuals. God does know contrary-to-fact conditionals, as many Bible passages demonstrate. But even though God knows counterfactuals, this does not mean God has middle knowledge in the sense

denies the validity of the grounding objection. He bases this on the notion that free creatures exist in the mind of God as ideas, and God supercomprehends their wills.

⁷⁵ Frame, *The Doctrine of God*, p. 503. What I am saying here is an inference from what he has written. What pointed me in this direction was Frame’s statement about God’s knowledge of possibilities: “God knows what creatures and what creaturely actions are possible, simply because he knows himself. He knows what he can bring about. God knows these possibilities simply by knowing his own nature. And his knowledge of his own nature is necessary.” This is the opposite of what Laing said, that the knowledge of possibilities must be a component of God’s *free knowledge* because it is post-volitional. Frame argues the other way—that God knows simply because he knows as part of his nature. I conclude therefore that Frame does not ground counterfactuals in the creature or in God’s will, but in God himself, in his nature and natural knowledge.

that middle knowledge proponents insist, namely that a) he knows the infinite number of possible situations in which free creatures might find themselves; b) he knows the decisions they would make in those situations, yet without being able to influence them; and c) he uses that knowledge in his decision to create the universe.⁷⁶

On the contrary, God could simply know so well the intentions of morally responsible agents *as he has created them* that he knows what they would do. Or, he could know the limited number of relevant counterfactuals in this world which he has created, again based on his own design of things, but not be required to know them in all other possible worlds. In any case, God's knowledge of counterfactuals is based in his will of things. He knows them as possibilities and not as actual facts, for they will never come to be. Their truth is grounded in God's will as to how he made things, and how his creatures would respond in slightly different circumstances than those that prevail. Middle knowledge proponents do not, to this author's knowledge, demonstrate that this is not a viable explanation to the passages they cite in support of their view.

The strength of the Calvinist Molinist position is that it recognizes the problem with libertarianism. But it does not go far enough. The idea of "middle" knowledge should be dropped altogether and instead God's counterfactual knowledge should be placed either in his natural

⁷⁶ This paper previously mentioned the author's belief that the definition of "counterfactual" should properly be more restricted than allowed for by the middle knowledge proponent. The problem lies not so much in the definition "if agent A were in circumstances S, then he would freely do action Y," but rather with all the baggage that underlies that statement in the middle knowledge system, namely pure libertarian freedom, the infinite number of such propositions that are postulated, the lack of power that God has over such decisions, and his use of that "ahead of time" in creating the universe. The definition can be used without all of that baggage if it is simply used in the limited Biblical sense without the middle knowledge baggage: "if the men of Keilah were in circumstances that they had David in their possession, they would freely turn him over to Saul." The remainder of this section qualifies what the "Biblical sense" means.

knowledge (Frame) or his free knowledge (Laing).⁷⁷ The latter seems best to this author.

Conclusion

This paper provided an introduction to the doctrine of middle knowledge and reviewed some of its supporting arguments and theological applications. It then demonstrated that the doctrine of middle knowledge as formulated by Molina is based on the assumption of libertarian freedom. Many insurmountable objections come with this presupposition. In addition, several other problems with the doctrine were outlined. Taken together, these arguments demonstrated that middle knowledge is not viable. The many applications of middle knowledge which were outlined, clever as they are, cannot be sustained.

This paper also explained how several Calvinist theologians have proposed an alternative definition of middle knowledge that is based on compatibilist freedom, but this definition departs fundamentally from the idea of middle knowledge as proposed by Molina and others. The Calvinistic variation is similar in that it suggests that God knows what *would* happen in circumstances other than those that prevail, but this knowledge shares neither of the main characteristics of middle knowledge, namely its prevolitional and libertarian character. Therefore, it is not really middle knowledge after all. In addition, Calvinist Molinism cannot handle the grounding objection effectively without moving either in the direction of pure Arminian Molinism or a simple compatibilist account of freedom.

Thus I conclude that middle knowledge is not a theologically viable position, for neither its stock definition nor the Calvinistic variation on that definition hold together.

⁷⁷ Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, 1:214, agrees: natural and free knowledge embrace all knowable things. What God knows by middle knowledge actually belongs in one of the other two categories.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Arminius, James. *The Writings of James Arminius*. Translated by James Nichols and W. R. Bagnall. 3 vols. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1977.
- Baker, Lynne Rudder. "Why Christians Should Not Be Libertarians: An Augustinian Challenge." *Faith and Philosophy* 20 (October, 2003): 460–478.
- Basinger, David, and Randall Basinger, eds. *Predestination & Free Will: Four Views of Divine Sovereignty & Human Freedom*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1986.
- Basinger, David. "Divine Control and Human Freedom: Is Middle Knowledge the Answer?" *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 36 (March 1993): 55–64.
- Beilby, James K. and Paul R. Eddy, eds. *Divine Foreknowledge: Four Views*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2001.
- Ciocchi, David M. "Reconciling Divine Sovereignty and Human Freedom," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 37 (September 1994): 395–412.
- J. A. Crabtree, "Does Middle Knowledge Solve the Problem of Divine Sovereignty?" in *The Grace of God, the Bondage of the Will*, vol. 2, *Historical and Theological Perspectives on Calvinism*. Edited by Thomas R. Schreiner and Bruce A. Ware. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1995.
- Craig, William Lane. "Lest Anyone Should Fall": A Middle Knowledge Perspective on Perseverance and Apostolic Warnings." *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 29 (Apr 1991): 65–74. An on-line version of this paper is available. Accessed 15 April 2006. Available from <http://www.leaderu.com/offices/billcraig/docs/lest.html>. Internet. This is not available in the DBTS library.
- _____. "Men Moved By The Holy Spirit Spoke From God' (2 Peter 1.21): A Middle Knowledge Perspective on Biblical Inspiration," *Philosophia Christi* NS 1 (1999): 45–82. An on-line version of this paper is available. Accessed 15 April 2006. Available from <http://www.leaderu.com/offices/billcraig/docs/menmoved.html>. Internet. This is not in the DBTS library.
- _____. "Middle Knowledge: A Calvinist -Arminian Rapprochement?" In *The Grace of God, the Will of Man*. Edited by Clark H. Pinnock. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1989.
- _____. "Middle Knowledge, Truth-Makers, and the 'Grounding Objection'" *Faith and Philosophy* 18 (July 2001): 337–52. An on-line version of this paper is available. Accessed 3

- April 2006. Available from <http://www.leaderu.com/offices/billcraig/docs/grounding.html>. Internet. This is not in the DBTS library.
- _____. “No Other name’: A Middle Knowledge Perspective on the Exclusivity of Salvation Through Christ.” *Faith and Philosophy* 6 (April 1989): 172–188.
- _____. “On Hasker’s Defense of Anti -Molinism.” *Faith and Philosophy* 15 (April 1998): 236–240.
- _____. *The Only Wise God: The Compatibility of Divine Foreknowledge and Human Freedom*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1987.
- _____. *The Problem of Divine Foreknowledge and Future Contingents from Aristotle to Suarez*. Leiden, The Netherlands: E. J. Brill, 1988.
- Dekker, Eef. *Middle Knowledge*. Leuven: Peeters, 2000.
- _____. “Was Arminius a Molinist?” *Sixteenth Century Journal* 27 (Summer 1996): 337-52.
- Feinberg, John S. *No One Like Him*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2001.
- Fischer, John Martin, ed. *God, Foreknowledge, and Freedom*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1989.
- Flint, Thomas P. *Divine Providence: The Molinist Account*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1998.
- _____. “The Multiple Muddles of Maverick Molinism.” *Faith and Philosophy* 20 (January 2003): 91–100.
- Frame, John M. *The Doctrine of God*. Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian & Reformed, 2002.
- Grudem, Wayne. *Systematic Theology*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994.
- Hasker, William, David Basinger, and Eef Dekker, eds. *Middle Knowledge: Theory and Applications*. Frankfurt am Main; New York: Peter Lang, 2000.
- Hasker, William. “Anti -Molinism is Undefeated!” *Faith and Philosophy* 17 (January 2000): 126–131.
- _____. Review of *Divine Providence: The Molinist Account*, by Thomas P. Flint. *Faith and Philosophy* 16 (April 1999): 248–53.
- _____. Review of *The Only Wise God: The Compatibility of Divine Foreknowledge and Human Freedom*, by William Lane Craig. *Faith and Philosophy* 6 (April 1989): 223–226.
- Helm, Paul. *The Providence of God*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1994.

- Hodge, Charles. *Systematic Theology*. 3 vols. Reprint of 1952 ed. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1999.
- Kane, Robert, ed. *The Oxford Handbook of Free Will*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002.
- Kvanvig, Jonathan. "On Behalf of Maverick Molinism." *Faith and Philosophy* 19 (July 2002): 348–357. An on-line version of this paper is available. Accessed 17 April 2006. Available from <http://www.Missouri.edu/~kvanvigj/papers/onbehalfofmaverickmolism.htm>. Internet.
- Laing, John D. "The Compatibility of Calvinism and Middle Knowledge," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 47 (September 2004): 455–467.
- _____. "Molinism and Supercomprehension: Grounding Counterfactual Truth." Ph.D. dissertation, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2000.
- McCune, Rolland D. "Systematic Theology I." Class notes, Detroit Baptist Theological Seminary, Fall 2001.
- Molina, Luis de. *On Divine Foreknowledge*. Translated by Alfred J. Freddoso. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988.
- Perszyk, Kenneth J. "Molinism and the Consequence Argument: A Challenge." *Faith and Philosophy* 20 (April 2003): 131–151.
- Plantinga, Alvin. *The Nature of Necessity*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974.
- Reymond, Robert L. *A New Systematic Theology of the Christian Faith*. Nashville: Nelson, 1998.
- Shedd, William G. T. *Dogmatic Theology*. Edited by Alan W. Gomes. 3rd ed. Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian & Reformed, 2003.
- Tiessen, Terrance. *Providence & Prayer: How Does God Work in the World?* Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000.
- Turretin, Francis. *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*. Translated by George Musgrave Giger. Edited by James T. Dennison, Jr. 3 vols. Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian & Reformed, 1992.
- Ware, Bruce A. *God's Greater Glory: The Exalted God of Scripture and the Christian Faith*. Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway, 2004.