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Book reviews

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Hud Hudson *A Materialist Metaphysics of the Human Person.*
(Ithaca NY: Cornell University Press, 2001). Pp. xii+202. £25.95 (Hbk).
ISBN 0 8014 3889 6.

Hud Hudson has written a technical yet innovative book. And while I disagree with most of Hudson's theses – I believe that most physicalists will refrain from choking down his central contention – this book places Hudson at the forefront of work in material composition; it is a 'must' read.

Hudson argues for a conditional, though he also defends the antecedent: if we accept six theses, then we must accept his view of human persons: (1) materialism regarding human persons; (2) human persons persist over time by either enduring or perduring (the latter is Hudson's position); (3) ontological vagueness is false; (4) classic logic is true, identity is absolute and is not sortal-relative; (5) necessitarianism is false; and (6) we ought to minimize bruteness in doing ontology. In light of these theses, Hudson develops his partist view to answer this question: 'To which space-time worms does "human person" refer?'

In chapter 1, Hudson poses the Problem of the Many and rejects ten solutions: a man named Legion is a material object sitting in a chair and composed of the primary set (all and only those material simples composing Legion). Now form the secondary set containing all the material simples in the primary set except Righty (an outermost simple on Legion's right hand) and no other simples except Lefty (a non-primary set simple in the vicinity of Legion's left hand). Let the fusions of the primary set and secondary sets be Tweedledee and Tweedledum, respectively. It seems like Tweedledee and Tweedledum are persons, and assuming that objects with different parts are non-identical, despite strong counter-intuitions, there are two persons in Legion's chair. How shall we solve the Problem of the Many?

In chapter 2, Hudson develops partism in light of this and three standard problems of material composition, and asserts partism's superiority when combined with four-dimensionalism and counterpart theory. The three problems are the Tib/Tibbles case (Tibbles the cat has Tib – Tibbles minus the tail – as an undetached proper part, Tibbles loses his tail, creating a situation in which

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Tib and Tibbles seem to be co-located objects with all and only the same proper parts and, thus, they seem identical); the Lump/Goliath case (Lump is the clay constituting the statue Goliath, both simultaneously come into existence and perish, they are co-located objects that share identical parts at all times they exist, and, thus, seem identical, yet they have different modal properties); and a fission case (assuming a psychological criterion of personal identity, Hannah has each brain hemisphere put into a different body, both wake up and identically share Hannah's psychology, so there seem to be two Hannahs but this cannot be).

Hudson's partism amounts to the claim that a physical object such as Legion can have simultaneously different parts in different places, and can exactly occupy simultaneously different spatial locations, as long as the 'different' objects overlap in the right way – there must be a time at which they share a space-time part and one location cannot be a sub-region of the other. Physical objects have parts and properties relative to (space-time) locations.

Hudson's 4D-partist view – a combination of partism and four-dimensionalism – is united with counterpart theory and applied to the puzzles. Regarding the Problem of the Many, Tweedledee is identical to Tweedledum and to Legion, so only one person is present even though the two fusions contain different parts and exactly occupy different places. Tib and Tibbles occupy distinct regions of space-time, one of which is a proper sub-region of the other, and both are larger than the post accident region. The post-accident temporal parts of Tib and Tibbles overlap and are identical. Lump and Goliath are two objects co-located in space-time and counterpart theory accounts for their different modal properties. In the fission case, there are two space-time worms identical to two persons that share space-time parts prior to the operation.

Hudson's treatment of the Tib/Tibbles case is instructive. He claims that a 3D-partist solution is inadequate for this reason. After the accident, Tib is identical to Tibbles, thus, prior to the accident this identity obtains, yet 3D-partism disallows this possibility because, even though it entails that a physical object may be at different locations at once, partism forbids one location being a sub-region of the other. Since 4D-partism does not face this problem, so it is superior to its 3D counterpart.

In chapter 3, Hudson argues persuasively that alleged ontological vagueness should be taken as linguistic or epistemic, most likely the latter. Since partism entails material simples, he also argues against material atomless gunk (material objects all of whose parts have proper parts), and he rebuts three arguments against universalism (that it is counter-intuitive, if universalism is true, then all objects have their parts essentially but this is not so, and that if universalism is true, one must allow for unrestricted mereological composition which, by way of an analogy with Russell's paradoxes for unrestricted set theory, generates problematic objects).

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In chapter 4, Hudson invites us to consider a space-time worm with ten time slices and to which he assigns various names: Hopeful (t_1–t_{10}) the material object beginning at conception and ceasing some time after decomposition begins after death; Vital (t_2–t_9) the living human organism beginning with life and ending at death; Feeler (t_3–t_8) the sentient being; Thinker (t_4–t_7) the rational being; and Cheerful (t_5–t_6) the pleasant fellow. Hudson argues that Vital, not Hopeful, is the living human organism on the grounds that Vital is alive at all times he exists. Moreover, human persons are

> … those spacetime worms (1) that are not proper, temporal parts of other human persons; (2) that are maximal C possessors (something that actually possesses the characteristics constituting cognitive abilities at all moments it exists); (3) whose person-stages are united by a certain relation of psychological continuity and connectedness; and (4) whose later person-stages bear an appropriate causal-dependence relation to earlier person-stages. (141)

Thus, while Vital is the living human organism, Thinker is the person. In general, a human person is a human organism with a person as a proper part. Thinker is a human person by way of the overlap relation – Thinker stage shares all of his stages with a living human organism (128).

Chapters 5 to 7 present a four-page summary of Hudson's view of human persons, applies the view to important ethical questions, and defends the thesis that materialism is consistent with the truth of Christianity.

Hudson's book is erudite and sometimes brilliant. However, I remain unconvinced of the plausibility of 4D-partism. My first concern centres on Hudson's view of the relationship between physical objects like Legion and space. It is highly counter-intuitive to believe a physical object can exactly occupy two places at once, but the plausibility of this claim is not helped by the ad hoc nature of the overlap requirement and the claim that a living organism cannot exactly occupy one of its sub-regions. Hudson's living organisms bear important similarities to Armstrong's universals – multiply-located entities that exactly occupy the places of their instances. Since an Armstrongian universal is spatially located, one can distinguish it from a concrete particular or trope in that the latter are 'exhausted by one embodiment', but such a move is not available to Hudson. Given that Hudson's living organisms are multiply locatable, it is not clear why they must overlap or cannot exactly occupy one of their sub-regions.

Besides its ad hoc texture, the overlap requirement suffers from a partist form of closest-continuer argument. Consider a series of fusions F_a–F_z formed from Tweedledum in just the way Tweedledum was formed from Tweedledee. Let F_m be last fusion that satisfies the overlap condition relative to Tweedledee and F_n be the first fusion that fails to satisfy the condition relative to Tweedledee but which satisfies it relative to Tweedledum. Is F_n identical to Legion or not? Given the location of Tweedledee, it would seem not since in this case F_n does not satisfy the overlap condition. However, if we annihilate the part(s) uniquely composing

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Tweedledee, then F_n is identical to Tweedledum and, thus, to Legion. For those favourable to closest-continuer arguments, this situation presents a problem for partism.

Further, it is hard to see why a living organism or human person cannot have itself as a proper part exactly occupying one of its sub-regions. If such is possible, it would raise problems for Hudson's case. For example, Hudson's main argument against a 3D-partist treatment of the Tib/Tibbles case is that it entails that Tibbles has Tib as a proper part occupying a sub-region of itself. But if the metaphysical connection between an object and space allows the object to occupy two overlapping regions, it is not clear why the envisioned spatial situation cannot obtain. Why not just say that prior to the accident Tib is identical to Tibbles? For the partist, the reason cannot be that they have different parts or occupy different locations. Moreover, Hudson acknowledges that hunks of matter can have hunks of matter as proper parts, and since living organisms and human persons are hunks of matter, it is hard to see where the problem lies.

Hudson would respond that we have strong intuitions to the contrary. But this is like a used-car salesman asking for an honest deal when purchasing a computer. Early in Hudson's book we left ordinary intuitions far behind, and it seems question-begging to pull them out again at just the time they are needed. From the perspective of being material aggregates, there does not seem to be a problem. From a 'first-person perspective' there does not seem to be a problem if the knowledge we gain thereby is that we are material aggregates that exemplify mental properties. Given the plausible view that the mental/physical connection – causal, exemplificatory, or otherwise – is contingent, it is not clear why the same mental properties could not be exemplified by a aggregate occupying a sub-region of another aggregate exemplifying those same properties. The dualist will say that the knowledge we gain from the 'first-person perspective' includes knowledge of the self by acquaintance that we are uncomposed, unextended, immaterial simples, but apart from such a move, it is not clear what it is we gain from the 'first-person perspective' that is sufficient to justify this condition proffered by Hudson.

Second, besides difficulties that accrue to Hudson's account of human persons by way of its association with four-dimensionalism, psychological criteria for personal identity, and causal chain analyses of personal identity, at least two epistemic infelicities follow from his perspective. First, if Hudson is correct, right now I cannot know which person I am or to which person this current person-stage belongs. For all I know, ten years from now I may undergo an operation in which several regions of my brain are implanted in different bodies such that many post-operation objects satisfy Hudson's conditions for sameness of person. In this case, this current person-stage belongs to several persons who overlap at the time of this writing.

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Further, Hudson acknowledges that one's psychology need not be housed in a living organism and, indeed, could belong to a physical substance at one time and a mental substance at another (131). Now suppose at death God transfers one's psychology to a mental substance in the intermediate state, or suppose that it is epistemically counterbalanced whether a disembodied intermediate state is the correct account relative to some physicalist alternative. According to Hudson, a person is a human person just in case it stage-shares all its stages with a living human organism (128). Now if a disembodied intermediate state is true, it follows that I am not a human person. And if such a state is epistemically counterbalanced, I have no grounds for knowing now that I am a human person (or the stage of a human person). However, it seems that I know now which person I am and that I am human.

Finally, I have concerns about Hudson's methodology both as a philosopher and as a distinctively Christian philosopher. Regarding philosophical methodology, it seems to me that when one is addressing core issues in analytic ontology, one ought to be guided by a strong commitment to common-sense intuitions – what Joshua Hoffman and Gary Rosenkrantz call propositions that constitute folk ontology – and by important analyses in the history of philosophy. Hudson's metaphysical method is the philosophical counterpart to Popper's bold conjectures, and Hudson states up front that his view 'requires some astounding revisions in our commonly accepted metaphysics of the human person' (2), and that, given the conjuncts in his conditional's antecedent he 'hope[s] to be able to develop a rather startling view, indeed'. He also acknowledges that due to his lack of 'sufficient expertise', his book gives little attention to the history of philosophy and, instead, is rooted firmly in contemporary, analytic philosophy (8–9).

No-one can be faulted for a lack of philosophical omniscience. But absent the controls of folk ontology and the history of philosophy, nowadays analytic ontology is too frequently practised within the confines of at least a mild form of scientism and naturalism. Methodologically, this situation often results in a reversal of the proper order between analytic ontology, whose central issues are epistemically and ontologically prior to and pervasive within science, and science itself.

Hudson seems guilty of this reversal. In my view, the widespread contemporary acceptance of physicalism and four-dimensionalism is largely due to this reversal, but more specifically, when Hudson develops his model of a living human organism, an obvious candidate is Neglected – the name for t_1–t_9 which begins at conception and ends at death. Hudson's only argument against Neglected is that his biology colleagues assure him 'that at *very* early stages after conception, there is just not yet the right kind of cell specialization … to qualify as a living human organism' (120). Those who have read the relevant literature know that matters aren't that simple. Indeed, I know of no scientific discovery about 'early stages after conception' that are the central issues in this debate.

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Second, Hudson's methodology starts with the presumption of physicalism, asserts certain intuitions about a relevant object (e.g. a living organism) and focuses on stating truth conditions consistent with those intuitions and apt for responding to counter-examples. What is missing is precisely what one finds in the literature on parts and whole written by Husserl and others in the phenomenology tradition. There one finds an ontological assay of how, say, an aggregate could sustain absolute identity through part replacement or loss. Such accounts employ separable and inseparable parts, universals immanent within those inseparable parts, relations among those universals, and so on. This is the sort of insight one needs into the central puzzles of analytic ontology, and it is lacking in Hudson's approach.

Third, at crucial points Hudson fails to respond to the best rivals to his position. In dismissing dualism on the grounds that it fails to tell us to which material object Legion's soul is causally related, Hudson only considers Cartesian dualism (19–20). Thomistic dualism presents a very different view of the body, one for which Hudson's argument fails. In arguing that one ought to minimize bruteness in one's response to the special composition question, he seems to think that in the absence of a single, univocal answer to the question, one has failed adequately to respect this mandate. But many philosophers believe there are different sorts of parts and whole requiring different accounts of their unity, and that this does not violate the need to minimize bruteness. In rebutting arguments against universalism, he does not consider what many take to be the best objection, viz. the problem of causal overdeterminism. And in identifying the source of universalism's counterintuitiveness, Hudson conveniently locates it lies in our rather arbitrary interests and concerns. But a more robust and formidable source is the intuition that some 'fusions' appear to have boundaries and to be constituted by homogenous properties spread throughout those boundaries, and others do not.

Finally, I think Hudson's approach to the topic as a distinctively Christian philosopher falls short of what is needed. Hudson follows an approach, now widely employed, that physicalism is consistent or merely compatible with Christian theism (3). Hudson's chapter on this topic contains thirty-seven footnotes, but only three exegetical sources are cited. The vast majority of his sources involve interacting with other philosophers, especially other Christian materialists. One of his citations (170) mentions but fails to interact with the most important exegetical defense of dualism in recent years – John Cooper's *Body, Soul and Life Everlasting* (Grand Rapids MI: Eerdmans, 2000).

By contrast, in my view, two features ought to characterize the philosophical method of Christian philosophers. First, as disciples of Jesus they should hunger to believe what Jesus believed and teach what he taught. They ought to take the embracing and promoting of Jesus' worldview as an invitation to a flourishing life. Rather than seeking the minimum commitment consistent with being a

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Christian, they should do all they can to get clear on Jesus' views prior to their philosophical activity. I believe this would lead them to embrace a substantial, immaterial soul. Second, they ought to root their philosophical work in serious exegesis. In my view, Hudson's brilliance would greatly enhance the mission of the church if this methodology had been more central to the development of his views of human persons. In sum, this is a well-researched book, technically written and occasionally brilliant. But the main contours of Hudson's position will likely not be persuasive to many.

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James K. Beilby and Paul R. Eddy (eds) *Divine Foreknowledge: Four Views*. (Downers Grove IL: InterVarsity Press, 2001), (Carlisle: Paternoster, 2001). Pp. 221. ISBN 0 8308 2652 1 (USA), 1 84227 160 1 (UK).

This is a volume of new essays on the topic of divine foreknowledge, concentrating on the age-old question of whether it is compatible with human freedom. The contributors are all evangelical Christians: Gregory A. Boyd, formerly of Bethel College, represents 'open theism'; David Hunt of Whittier College argues for 'simple foreknowledge'; William Lane Craig from the Talbot School of Theology writes from a Molinist perspective, and Paul Helm of Regent College, Vancouver, gives the Calvinist line. The book seems to be aimed at undergraduates and the intelligent lay person, but graduate students and scholars will also appreciate the clear statements of each position. Each author writes a chapter varying from twenty-five to thirty-nine pages in length, and then writes for every other chapter a five-page response. In the 'companion volume' *God and Time: Four Views* (featuring two of the same contributors), each author then replies to the replies. This makes for a longer, but in some ways more satisfying, book. Although the obvious way to read the book is linearly, the reader might be better off reading each of the main essays first and then working through the replies. One reason for this is that often the authors in their replies refer to what they have said in their main essays.

Boyd, who opens the book after a brief introduction by the editors, is a theologian rather than a philosopher, and his chapter, which sits rather uncomfortably with the other three, tends to eschew philosophical argument for exegesis of biblical texts. His central thesis is that 'the reality that God perfectly knows not only excludes some possibilities as what might have been, but also includes other possibilities as what might be. Reality, in other words, is composed

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of both settled and open aspects' (14). Boyd never explains in detail what this means, but seems to think that future contingent propositions lack a truth-value. His essay is divided into three parts: in the first he argues that the Bible does not teach that 'the future is *exhaustively* controlled or foreknown as settled by God' (14, italics original); in the second he argues that the Bible 'depicts the future as partly open and known by God as such' (14); and in the third part he defends his view against objections.

In the first part, he insists that one may not infer from the many examples in the Bible of God's foreknowing some future event that He foreknows every future event. What baffles this reader is that Boyd is happy to affirm, for example, that Jesus foreknew that Peter would deny him and that Judas would betray him. These look like classic examples of what Boyd says is impossible: the infallible foreknowledge of future free actions. Boyd's explanation of these instances does not convince: he says

> … the Father knew and revealed to Jesus one solidified aspect of Peter's character that was predictable in the immediate future. Any one who knew Peter's character perfectly could have predicted that under certain highly pressured circumstances (which God could easily orchestrate if he needed to), Peter would act the way he did. (20)

Did Peter's character really determine him so precisely that he would betray Jesus three times before the cock crowed? As for Judas, Boyd denies that 'Jesus knew who would betray him from a time *before* the person decided' (21), answering the objection 'What if Judas had freely chosen not to betray Jesus?' by saying 'In this case the Lord would have found someone else to fill this role' (22). He does not consider the objection 'What if everybody had freely chosen not to betray Jesus?'. Boyd sums up his strategy by saying 'These passages only require us to believe that, when he so chooses, God can narrow the parameters within which certain people act out their freely chosen character' (22).

The second part of Boyd's essay is devoted to discussing Bible passages that he claims talk of 'God's creative flexibility in responding to open aspects of his creation' (23). Boyd finds six major instances of this theme: 'God confronts the unexpected' (24), 'God experiences regret' (26), 'God expresses frustration' (28), 'God speaks in conditional terms' (30), 'God tests people "to know" their character' (31), and 'God changes his mind' (33). Boyd claims that his 'openness' approach is superior to the other approaches in that they must take the passages he quotes non-literally, whereas he takes, he claims, both these passages and the ones giving examples of infallible definite foreknowledge literally. Boyd never considers that there might be other literal interpretations of his texts: for instance, every single one could be interpreted literally, but as denying middle knowledge rather than foreknowledge. His refrain here is 'if God can't convince us by explicitly saying he can and does change his mind, experience regret and so on, *how could he convince us if he wanted to?*' (38, italics original). An answer to

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this question that Boyd doesn't consider is 'By not including passages suggesting that he cannot change his mind and so on'.

In the final part of his essay, he considers five objections, first that 'the passages used to support the openness view are anthropomorphic and phenomenological' (37), secondly that 'the openness view contradicts Scripture' (40), thirdly that 'the openness view undermines God's omniscience' (42), fourthly that 'the openness view undermines God's sovereignty' (43) and fifthly that 'the openness view is discomforting' (45). A final problem for Boyd is that he holds that God is in time, free (conceived in a libertarian manner), and can change His mind. Hence God cannot know what He will freely do tomorrow. Furthermore, God is still, for Boyd, omnipotent. So God can freely destroy the universe tomorrow and, presumably, cannot know whether or not He will. So God cannot know even whether there will be a universe tomorrow. To avoid this, Boyd will have to maintain that God cannot change His mind in many respects.

Hunt defends the traditional doctrine that God has infallible, exhaustive, and definite foreknowledge against three arguments: the argument that such foreknowledge and freedom are incompatible ('the problem of human freedom'), the argument that God's having such foreknowledge is incompatible with His being a personal, intentional agent ('the problem of divine agency'), and the argument that God's having such foreknowledge does not help His providential government of the world ('the problem of divine providence'). This last hardly falsifies the doctrine, but it has nevertheless been defended in the literature. Hunt gives four arguments for the claim that God has such foreknowledge: first a Biblical one, secondly from the claim that God is a perfect being, thirdly from divine sovereignty, and fourthly from Christian tradition. He admits that these arguments are not absolutely compelling, but insists that they may not be just ignored either.

To solve the first problem he uses what he claims is Augustine's way out – arguing that it is possible that our future actions be both accidentally necessary and free. Hunt draws a parallel here between the freedom–foreknowledge arguments and Zeno's arguments against motion, claiming that in each case we can say that the arguments are bad even though we cannot say why: 'there is something fishy about the idea that Adam's action, while in every other respect satisfying the most exacting requirements for free will, might nevertheless count as unfree *simply* because God foreknew what he would do' (81, italics original). This seems to get things the wrong way round: it is not that God's foreknowledge makes a future action unfree, it is that it is impossible to foreknow free actions. Hunt then writes

> … the mere absence of alternate possibilities is irrelevant. Causing, forcing or coercing someone interferes with that person's agency; simply knowing what the person will do is not an interference of any sort, and its implications for free agency are benign … . Divine foreknowledge deprives Adam of alternatives, but we just can't believe that it deprives him of free will. (88)

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It is not clear, however, that he has satisfied even his own intuitions that there is something fishy about the argument: many readers will find that they just cannot believe that divine foreknowledge deprives Adam of alternatives. As for the problem of divine agency, Hunt claims that while it is necessary that God have intentions, it is not necessary that He acquire them, and, further, that foreknowledge gives one merely a propositional belief about what will happen, whereas 'what one comes to believe as a result of intention-acquisition is a *practical* belief about *what to do*' (95, italics original). Hunt then turns to the problem of divine providence, rejecting the suggestion that God's acting on the basis of his foreknowledge necessarily leads to an explanatory circle.

William Lane Craig defends the Molinist view that God has middle knowledge (the knowledge for every libertarianly free agent of what that agent would freely do in every circumstance), presenting three arguments: one biblical, one theological, and the last philosophical. In the theological argument Craig distinguishes between the question of whether exhaustive, definite, and infallible foreknowledge is compatible with freedom (conceived in a libertarian manner) and the question of *how* God knows future contingents. Craig complains that the view that such foreknowledge and such freedom are incompatible 'posits a constraint on human freedom that is unintelligible' (129). Like Hunt's remarks, this misses the point; the claim is not that such foreknowledge causes or somehow makes the foreknown actions not free, but that it is impossible infallibly to foreknow a free action (conceived in a libertarian manner). Craig then argues that the claim that God's past beliefs are temporally or accidentally necessary boils down either to the claim that they are unalterable, or to the claim that they are outside our causal power. In response he points out that the future is unalterable too, and, while the past is outside our causal power, he claims, it is not outside our counterfactual power, which is all we need to show the compatibility of exhaustive, infallible, and definite foreknowledge with freedom (conceived in a libertarian manner). Craig then turns to the question of *how* God knows future contingents, rejecting the 'perceptualist' model of divine belief in favour of the 'conceptualist' model, and claiming that God's foreknowledge is based on his knowledge of his own decree and his middle knowledge, which arises because 'God, being omniscient, simply discerns all the truths there are' (133). But if this is so, why does God not directly discern the future contingent truths, rather than taking an inferential detour via counterfactuals of freedom? Craig's final theological argument is concerned with divine providence: open theism is here too weak, Calvinism too strong, but Molinism just right. His first philosophical argument is that since there are true future contingents the openness theist has to substitute a new and unsatisfactory definition of omniscience. He then argues vigorously against the 'grounding objection' (that counterfactuals of creaturely freedom lack a truth-maker and, consequently, a truth-value), giving as examples many other propositions that he claims lack truth-makers in the same way.

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In his response to Lane Craig, Boyd styles himself a neo-Molinist. He does this because he claims that open theism 'expands the content of God's middle knowledge to include ''might-counterfactuals''' (144). But Boyd later (147–148) says 'In the neo-Molinist view, there simply is no eternal settledness to libertarian free actions. There are only eternal possibilities of what they might or might nor do' – in other words, that there are no would-counterfactuals that are true of libertarianly free actions. It is therefore wrong to associate the word 'Molinism' with his position.

Helm defends the 'Augustinian/Calvinist' view that God knows what we shall freely do tomorrow because He has (directly or indirectly) determined what we shall freely do tomorrow. Helm is thus a compatibilist concerning freedom and determinism, though he is an incompatibilist concerning divine foreknowledge and free will, conceived in a libertarian manner. Helm presents three arguments for the view that Christianity requires a compatibilist view of free will, the first of which starts from the assumption that God's grace is essentially efficacious since we are incapable of responding to God without it. Since we don't have the power to respond to God or to reject His grace, says Helm, we don't have a will that is free on a libertarian view. This seems a bit quick; why shouldn't it be that we have freedom as libertarians think of it in other areas (e.g. how to sin) but just not to respond to or reject God? His second argument is 'for the consistency of divine foreknowledge and human compatibilist freedom from the idea of divine perfection and the principle of simplicity' (162). This is strangely put: nobody doubts that the view that God has definite, exhaustive, and infallible foreknowledge is consistent with the view that humans have freedom if freedom is compatible with determinism. Moreover, considerations of divine perfection and simplicity do not so much motivate an argument for their consistency as for their joint truth, their consistency being deduced from this. Helm, in fact, spends most of this section arguing that God, by efficaciously permitting evil actions, can foreknow them without causing them, and he likens the difference between God's causation and His permission to the difference between an action and an omission. Since, on Helm's view, God set up the laws that determine what will happen if something is omitted and the initial causes that lead to that outcome, it seems that this distinction is of no moral relevance. Helm also claims that a compatibilistic account of freedom is simpler, since it is more in line with the determinism that confronts us in the rest of nature, though he does acknowledge in a footnote the possibility of physical indeterminism on the quantum scale. Helm's third argument is for the conclusion that the view that God has definite, exhaustive, and infallible foreknowledge is not consistent with the view that humans have a freedom that is incompatible with determinism, using the traditional route of the accidental necessity of God's foreknowledge being transmitted to the foreknown action. (It might have been better to couch this entirely in terms of forebelief rather than foreknowledge.)

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The glossary is reasonably helpful, though the entries under 'backtracking counterfactual', 'fatalism', and 'Fixed Past Principle' are misleading. There is a general index and a Scripture index. Unfortunately, every entry in the latter is incorrect – add one to the page number to get the correct reference. The UK edition misspells the name of one of the editors in each statement of copyright.

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