

## **The Dilemma of Divine Foreknowledge and Human Free Will: A Critique of Swartz's 'Modal Fallacy' Solution**

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### **Abstract**

Reconciling divine foreknowledge with human free will has been a problem for theologians and philosophers for centuries. Every solution proposed to resolve the dilemma has been unsatisfactory in several terms. Each has a price to pay with significant consequences either for theism or human freedom. However, one of the most interesting treatments of the problem in recent years, is by Norman Swartz. While defending the compatibilist view that divine foreknowledge is compatible with human free will, Swartz alleges modal fallacy against the incompatibilists' argument. In this paper, besides examining two previous famous responses to this problem, we undertake a critical assessment of Swartz's argument, to determine the extent of its success in resolving the dilemma. The paper argues that Swartz's solution does not offer a satisfactory solution to the problem, as it undermines the doctrine of divine simplicity. Besides, the paper argues that the incompatibilists need not commit the alleged fallacy, since their argument can adopt the *causal* rather than the *logical* necessity implied in Swartz's modal fallacy charge.

**Keywords:** Foreknowledge, Freewill, Incompatibility, Necessary, Swartz

## Introduction

If God knows our future actions, then we have no free will! This argument, alleging the incompatibility between God's foreknowledge and human free will, has preoccupied religious thinkers and philosophers for centuries. Notwithstanding the array of theoretical proposals towards resolving it, it remains one of the most important and complicated philosophical problems confronting orthodox theism. Every proposed option appears nettled by inconsistencies and inadequacies, seemingly deeming the hope of a definitive resolution of the problem. In contemporary times, the problem has gained currency, especially, as most contemporary philosophers, theologians and jurists "are keen to preserve the viability of the concept of free will" (Swartz, 2004: 1), understanding that, "if there is no free will there can be no morality" (Stace, 2004: 48).

One of the recent interesting analysis and treatments of the problem is by the renowned philosopher, Norman Swartz. Defending the view that divine foreknowledge is compatible with human free will, Swartz alleges that the incompatibilist argument commits a subtle logical error of modal fallacy. In this paper, we explore two most popular previous responses to this enduring problem in philosophy namely, the Boethian, and the theological compatibilists – noting their weaknesses. We, particularly undertake a critical assessment of Swartz's recent 'modal fallacy' solution to the problem. We argue that

Swartz's solution is equally not rationally satisfying enough to address the problem.

### **The Problem of Divine Foreknowledge and Free Will**

The problem of divine foreknowledge and human free will, also known as the *paradox of free will* or *theological fatalism* is the argument that God's "infallible foreknowledge of a human act makes the act necessary and hence unfree" (Hunt and Zagzebski, 2022: 1). If God knows the entire future infallibly, then no human act is free. In other words, divine omniscience and freewill are incompatible, and any conception of God that incorporates both properties is, inconceivable. However, a basic part of classical or orthodox theism is the view that God is omniscient, that "God has foreknowledge, that is, knowledge of future events" (Evans and Manis, 2009: 43). It also maintains the view that "God has given human beings free will and thus human beings can choose right from wrong, and that wrongful acts are sinful and worthy of divine punishment, while good acts are righteous and worthy of divine reward" (Swartz, 2004: 1).

Assuming these two basic orthodox theism's beliefs to be true, a serious philosophical problem, emerges: If God possess foreknowledge of human free choices, does such knowledge not undermine the very freedom of those choices? In other words, if God knows what actions humans will perform in future – since God's foreknowledge is infallible – how then are we free? Do such human actions not occur of necessity? Moses Maimonides gets the credit for clearly and forcefully presenting this dilemma in the traditional way that describes the

conflict between divine omniscience and human free will in terms of good and evil actions:

Does God know or does He not know that a certain individual will be good or bad? If thou sayest 'He knows', then it necessarily follows that [that] man is compelled to act as God knew beforehand, he would act, otherwise God's knowledge would be imperfect.... (1966: 99-100)

William Watt, similarly, describes this dilemma as evident in the Christian revelation: "... Scripture holds before us two great counter-truths - first, God's absolute sovereignty (cf. Rome. 9, 20ff.), and secondly, man's responsibility. Our intellects cannot reconcile them" (1946: 124). Using the example of the proposition *Q*, the basic argument for theological fatalism can be logically formulated as follows:

1. Yesterday, God infallibly knew choice "Q" that a human would claim to "make freely". (Supposition of infallible foreknowledge)
2. It is now necessary that yesterday, God knew *Q* (Principle of the Necessity of the Past).
3. Necessarily, if yesterday God knew *Q*, then *Q* (Definition of "infallibility")
4. So, it is now-necessary that *Q* (Transfer of Necessity Principle)
5. If it is now-necessary that *Q*, then *Q* cannot be otherwise (Definition of "necessary")
6. If you cannot do otherwise when you act, you do not act freely (Principle of Alternate Possibilities)
7. Therefore, when you do an act, you will not do it freely.

But it seems clear that we are responsible only for those actions that we perform freely; for, if a man has no freedom to choose what he will do, then all moral precepts would in such case be meaningless. Hence, “if divine knowledge undermines human freedom, then it seems to follow that God is not just in holding us accountable for our actions” (Evans and Manis, 2009: 45). The challenge, then, is to find a way to reconcile between divine foreknowledge and human free will; for, it seems to be that either: (i) God’s foreknowledge does not exist, or (ii) Free will does not exist, or (iii) God’s foreknowledge is incompatible with the exercise of human free will. A difficult dilemma, thus, faces anyone who thinks it important to argue for the consistency or compatibility of the two claims that: God is omniscient, and that human beings have free will.

Some philosophers have thought it possible to resolve the puzzle either by invoking unique properties of God or attributing a ‘special way’ of knowing to God, or by weakening one or the two claims. But such solutions are, generally, unsuccessful in their own terms. Others have, outrightly thought it impossible to reconcile the two claims (Zagzebski, 1985: 279). Those who argue that there is a way to consistently maintain both claims are called compatibilists about infallible foreknowledge and human free will. Such philosophers seek either to identify a false premise in the argument for theological fatalism or show that the conclusion does not follow from the premises (Todd, 2016a; Zimmerman, 2010; Swartz, 2004). On the other hand, the incompatibilists philosophies argue for the incompatibility of God’s

infallible foreknowledge and human free will and deny either infallible foreknowledge or free will in the sense targeted by the argument (Hunt and Zagzebski, 2022: 1; Kenny, 1979: 39; Yarizadeh *et al.*, 2020: 683). Before examining Swartz's argument, it may be pertinent to consider two earlier famous compatibilists arguments and their weaknesses.

### **The Boethian Solution**

One famous way of trying to resolve the of divine foreknowledge and human free will is by appealing to divine eternity. According to this view, theological fatalism misrepresents God's relation to time by situating God's knowledge within time (temporal order) as is the case with man. What this view, therefore, denies is not that God knows infallibly, and not that God knows the content of proposition *Q* (as indicated in the logical formulation arguments of theological fatalism above), but that God knew *Q* *yesterday* (as implied in arguments 1 and 2). For the proponents of this view, God's perception or relation to time is different, and this is relevant to our understanding of our own free will. Accordingly, "God is not in time and has no temporal properties, so God does not have beliefs or know at a time" (Hunt and Zagzebski, 2022: 2.3). This solution originated with the 6<sup>th</sup> century Christian philosopher Boethius, who in his work, *Consolatio Philosophiae*, cited in Row and William (1998: 24) proposes the view that "divine eternity should be understood as timelessness".

Applying this to the problem of divine foreknowledge and human free will, Boethius argues that since 'God is outside time', God does

not, strictly speaking *foreknow* anything. Rather, "every moment within creation is immediately present to God" (Evans. and Manis, 2009: 46). That is, all temporal events are before the mind of God at once. It is therefore a mistake to say God knew yesterday, or knows today, or will know tomorrow. Rather, God's means of knowing what we will do in the future is the same as His means of knowing what we are doing now: He simply observes it. And, since this kind of action is passive (observing something does not itself *actively bring about* that which is observed), there is no reason to think that God's foreknowledge of our future actions, renders those actions necessary, or otherwise not free. Thomas Aquinas adopted the Boethian solution as one of his ways out of theological fatalism. In his *Summa Contra Gentiles*, he compares the way a timeless God is present to each and every moment of time to the way in which the center of a circle is present to each and every point on its circumference (I, 66). In contemporary philosophy an important defense of the Boethian idea that God is timeless was given by C. S. Lewis, who applied it explicitly to the foreknowledge dilemma. In his book *Mere Christianity*, Lewis argues that God is actually outside time and therefore does not "foresee" events, but rather simply observes them all at once:

But suppose God is outside and above the Time-line. In that case, what we call "tomorrow" is visible to Him in just the same way as what we call "today". All the days are "Now" for Him. He does not remember you doing things yesterday, He simply sees you doing them: because, though you have lost yesterday, He has not. He does not "foresee" you doing things tomorrow, He simply sees you

doing them: because, though tomorrow is not yet there for you, it is for Him. You never supposed that your actions at this moment were any less free because God knows what you are doing. Well, He knows your tomorrow's actions in just the same way – because He is already in tomorrow and can simply watch you. In a sense, He does not know your action till you have done it: but then the moment at which you have done it is already "Now" for Him (1980: 149).

The problem for the Boethian solution, however, is the untoward implications it seems to have for divine sovereignty. In order for the solution to work, it must be, as noted by Evans and Manis, "it must be that "God's knowledge of creaturely free choices is passive" (2009: 46). But should this be the case, then it appears that divine creation involved an enormous limitation of the sovereignty of God. If God is outside time, there is no literal time before which God knows what creatures will do; there is in fact, no time before creation. God's knowledge of creaturely choices could not have guided His choice about how to create, on the Boethian view. By implication, God could not, in creating free creatures, guarantee that things would turn out all right; there was not way that He could ensure that His purpose in creation would be fulfilled. Of course, this is incompatible with the orthodox doctrine of divine sovereignty. It seems then that even if God is in fact, outside time, something else in His divine nature must be operative to successfully reconcile His foreknowledge with human freedom. Again, Zagzebski has argued (1991: 44) that the timelessness move does not avoid the problem of theological fatalism; for, if God is not in time, the key issue would not be the necessity of

the past, but the necessity of the timeless realm. Accordingly, the timeless realm is as much out of our reach as the past; and this being the case, we cannot now do anything about the fact that God timelessly knows future human free choices  $Q$ . This is because, if there is nothing we can do about a timeless state, there is nothing we can do about what such a state entails. It follows that we cannot do anything about the future (as implied in premise 4 of the argument for theological fatalism).

### **Theological Compatibilists Solution**

One of the basic approaches of the compatibilists to this problem is the denial of the truth of future contingent propositions. This approach, which takes its impetus from Aristotle's famous Sea Battle argument in his *De Interpretatione* 9 – where he was concerned with the implications of the truth of a proposition about the future, and not the problem of infallible knowledge of the future (1963: 50-53) – is set against logical determinism seemingly involved in the argument for theological fatalism. The compatibilists deny that the future contingent can be true; that is, that the proposition  $Q$  (as indicated in the logical formulation for theological fatalism above) can be true. According to them, “no proposition about the contingent future is true: such propositions are either false (given Bivalence), or neither true nor false” (Hunt, and Zagzebski, 2022: 2.1). This argument rejects the terms in which the problem of theological fatalism is set up. Since God would not know a proposition unless it were true, premise (1) is, on this account, a non-starter. The idea behind this argument is usually

that propositions about the contingent future become true when and only when the event occurs that the proposition is about. If the event does not occur at that time, then the proposition becomes false. Dale Tuggy, for instance, argues that future contingents are neither true nor false (2007: 28). Patrick Todd offers a vigorous defense of this approach against various objections (2021). Statements about the future, especially the contingent future, would then arguably lack the grounding necessary for truth.

It is not likely, however, that the denial of future contingent truth by the compatibilists is sufficient to avoid the problem of theological fatalism. Hunt, argues, for instance, that future contingents that fail to be true for presentist reasons alone might nevertheless qualify as “quasi-true” and that the quasi-truth of God’s beliefs about the future is enough to generate the problem (2020: 229). According to the definition of infallibility used in the basic argument, if God is infallible in all his knowledge, then it is not possible that God knows  $Q$  and  $Q$  is false. But there is a natural extension of the definition of infallibility to allow for the case in which  $Q$  lacks a truth value but will acquire one in the future: If God is infallible in all his beliefs, then it is not possible that God knows  $Q$  and  $Q$  is either false or becomes false. If so, and if God knows  $Q$ , we get an argument for theological fatalism that parallels our basic argument. Premise (3) would need to be modified as follows:

(3') Necessarily, if yesterday God know  $Q$ , then  $Q$  will become true.

(4) becomes:

(4') It is now-necessary that  $T$  will become true.

Thus, there are no good reasons to reject the claim that many future contingents (all future contingents in the case of God) can be, and more especially *are, known* prior to the events they refer to. It is now open to the compatibilists to maintain – on the pain of theological and logical contradiction – that God has no knowledge about the contingent future because he does not infallibly know how it will turn out, and that this is compatible with God's being infallible in everything he does know. The same contradiction is with God's omniscience, if omniscience is the property of knowing the truth value of every proposition that has a truth value, and where truth is a conceptual requirement for knowledge. But clearly, this argument by the compatibilists “restricts the range of God's knowledge, so it has religious disadvantages in addition to its disadvantages in logic” (Hunt, and Zagzebski, 2022: 2.1).

Another approach of the compatibilists involves the denial of the *principle of alternate possibilities* (premise 6 used in the basic argument) – which claims that freedom requires being able to do otherwise – and holding, instead, that an agent can be morally free even when there is only one that is within the agent's power to perform. For the compatibilists, an action is free is the act is one that the agent is not compelled or forced to do, but rather, is one the agent does because he *wants* to do it. Alternate possibilities are required only in the only in the sense that there are other acts the agent could

have performed *if* the agent's desire had been different. However, given the agent's actual desires, there was only one action that was truly within the agent's power to perform. St. Augustine maintains this view in his *City of God*, arguing that, since "a man does not therefore sin because God foreknew that he would sin" (2003: 10) and, also in his *On Free Choice of the Will*, that since "God's foreknowledge does not force the future to happen" (1993: III.4), man's future action can still be regarded as free despite God foreknowing it. God's foreknowledge, plays no role at all in leading the agent to perform the action (Frankfurt, 1969: 836).

This solution faces a serious problem of accounting for the existence of evil in the world. Some compatibilists try to draw a distinction between what "God efficaciously causes" and what he "willingly permits" (Evans and Manis, 2009: 48). However, it is difficult to see how the distinction can be sustained, given the compatibilists' assumption. They can only maintain this position at the pain of theological and logical contradiction, that God is the efficacious cause of every event, but then go on to argue that a person's actions on some occasions can be evil, whereas God's causing the person to perform the action can be good.

### **Swartz's Modal fallacy Solution**

One of the recent solutions preferred to the dilemma of theological fatalism is that offered by Norman Swartz, an American philosopher and professor emeritus of philosophy, Simon Fraser University in British Columbia, Canada. Arguing on the side of the compatibilists,

Swartz contends that the above arguments for theological fatalism commits the modal fallacy. The modal fallacy is a special type of fallacy that occurs in modal logic, which studies ways in which propositions can be true or false, the most common being *necessity* and *possibility*. Some propositions are necessarily true/false, and others are possibly true/false. A proposition is considered necessarily true if and only if it is impossible for the statement to be untrue and that there is no situation that would cause the statement to be false, in all possible worlds. Same goes for a proposition that is necessarily false. On the other hand, a statement is said to be possibly true or false, when it is not logically necessary that it is so: its truth or falseness is *contingent*.

A modal fallacy involves making a formal argument invalid by confusing the *scope* of what is actually necessary or possible (Bennett, 1993: 1). It is the fallacy of “placing a proposition in the wrong modal scope, most commonly, confusing the scope of what is *necessarily* true with what is *possibly* true (Bennett, 1993: 1). Basically, it is the inference from “Necessary, if  $p$  then  $q$ ” to “if  $p$  then, necessarily,  $p$ ”. This is indeed a modal fallacy. That  $p$  entails  $q$  and, that  $p$  happens to be true, does not imply that  $q$  is necessarily true; that is, trye in all possible worlds. The relevance of this fallacy to the dilemmatic problem of divine foreknowledge and free will lies in the fact that the incompatibilists argue (as earlier indicated in the logical formulation for theological fatalism above) – as follows:

1. Yesterday, God infallibly knew choice "Q" that a human would claim to "make freely". (Supposition of infallible foreknowledge)
2. It is now necessary that yesterday, God knew Q (Principle of the Necessity of the Past).
3. Necessarily, if yesterday God knew Q, then Q (Definition of "infallibility")
4. So, it is now-necessary that Q (Transfer of Necessity Principle)
5. If it is now-necessary that Q, then Q cannot be otherwise (Definition of "necessary")
6. If you cannot do otherwise when you act, you do not act freely (Principle of Alternate Possibilities)
7. Therefore, when you do an act, you will not do it freely.

However, Swartz, contends that the above argument, which suggest epistemic determinism – alleging incompatibility of divine foreknowledge and free will – “commits the modal fallacy” (2004: 6). For him, “once the logical error is detected, and removed, the argument for epistemic determinism simply collapses, and the alleged incompatibility evaporates” (2004: 6). In his reasoning, premises 1 - 2, are all true. The latter, 3-4, are false and commit **the modal fallacy**. The fallacy occurs in its assigning the modality of necessity to the truth of Q. It makes us believe that if God knew Q, then it is impossible for Q to be false. According to Swartz, it **is** possible for Q to be false, because Q is a *contingent* proposition. Even if the falsity of Q is guaranteed by the truth of some other proposition [in this case God knew Q], Q does **not** ‘become’ necessarily true or impossible: it ‘remains’ contingent, and thereby possible. Swartz takes the following

to be a paradigmatic argument for incompatibilism, due to Maimonides:

Does God know or does He not know that a certain individual will be good or bad? If thou sayest 'He knows', then it necessarily follows that [that] man is compelled to act as God knew beforehand, he would act, otherwise God's knowledge would be imperfect (1966: 99-100).

The core of this argument, according to Swartz, can be symbolized using “ $\therefore$ ” for “it necessarily follows”; and “ $\Box$ ” for “compelled”; and “D” for the proposition describing what some particular person does tomorrow:

$$\begin{array}{c} gKD \\ \hline \hline \therefore \Box D. \end{array}$$

That is, God knows D,  
It necessarily follows that D cannot be otherwise

Swartz considers such an argument to be *enthymematic* because, “there seems to be (at least) one premise missing” (2004: 6). According to Swartz, one tacit assumption of this argument is the necessary truth: “it is not possible both for God to know that D and for D to be false”, or, in symbols, “ $\sim\Diamond(gKD \ \& \ \sim D)$ ”. Hence, including this, the argument becomes:

$$\begin{array}{c} gKD \\ \sim\Diamond(gKD \ \& \ \sim D) \\ \hline \hline \therefore \Box D \end{array}$$

However, even with this adjustment, Swartz maintains that the argument remains invalid, as “conclusion does *not* follow from the two premises” (2004: 6). To derive the conclusion, a third premise is

needed, and it is easy to see what it is. For Swartz, most persons, such as the incompatibilists – with hardly a moment’s thought, virtually as a reflex action – often tacitly assume that the second premise is logically equivalent to, “Necessarily, if God knows D, then D”, symbolized as:

$$gKD \supset \Box D$$

and will tacitly (/unconsciously) add this further premise, so as to yield, finally:

$$\begin{array}{c}
 gKD \\
 \sim\Diamond(gKD \& \sim D) \\
 gKD \supset \Box D \\
 \hline
 \therefore \Box D
 \end{array}$$

This argument translates as follows:

1. God know D
2. It is not possible for God to know that D and for D to be false
3. If God knows D, then D cannot be otherwise
4. It follows follow necessarily that D cannot be otherwise

According Swartz, this third premise, is false: “it commits the modal fallacy. Without this premise, Maimonides’ argument is *invalid*; with it, the argument becomes *valid* but *unsound* (that is, has a false and essential premise [namely the third one]). Either way, the argument is a logical botch” (2004: 6). Once the logical error is detected, and removed, the argument for epistemic determinism simply collapses and the incompatibilists argument disappears. Swartz maintains that, if some future action/choice is known prior to its occurrence, that event does not thereby become “necessary”, “compelled” or “forced”. Inasmuch as its description was, is, and will remain

forever *contingent*, both it and its negation remain *possible*. Of course, only one of the two was, is, and will remain true; while the other was, is, and will remain false. But truth and falsity, *per se*, do not determine a proposition's modality. Whether true or false, each of these propositions was, is, and will remain *possible*. Hence, "knowing – whether by God or a human being – some future event no more forces that event to occur than our learning that dinosaurs lived in (what is now) South Dakota forced those reptiles to take up residence there" (2004: 6).

### **Critique of Swartz's Solution**

Swartz believes that his argument has offered a decisively response to the incompatibilists argument, and has, thereby, resolved the dilemmatic problem of reconciling God's foreknowledge and human free will. The core of Swartz's modal collapse argument against the incompatibilists is, is that their basic argument invalidly transfers the modality of *necessity* from God's foreknowledge of future human actions to the actions, which are, themselves, *contingent* in mode: "Necessarily, if yesterday God knew *Q*, then *Q*". This invalidly makes such actions necessary, determined, and forced, and their occurrences imply lack of human free will. Swartz concludes that such modal collapse argument is invalid and unsalvageable.

However, a critical look at Swartz's solution reveals some inherent theological and logical problems that predictably collapse its chance of succeeding. In the first instance, his argument clearly undermines the idea of God's simplicity. In fact, Swartz's argument of modal

fallacy or modal collapse against the incompatibilists can only succeed at the expense of the doctrine of God's divine simplicity, which is the hallmark of God's transcendence of all else. The doctrine of divine simplicity is a central component of classical or orthodox theism, which basically maintains that "God is utterly unified, not admitting of division into parts, partitions, or parties" (Waldrop, 2022: 161). Thus, according to Joseph Schmid, "God is completely devoid of physical, metaphysical, and logical parts. He is identical to his essence, existence, attributes, action, power, and so on" (2022: 3). That is, the being of God is identical to the "attributes of God". As Augustine famously put it, God is what he has (2003: XI, 10). This doctrine denies of any form of composition in God, be it physical or metaphysical. As Katherin Rogers puts it, the doctrine of divine simplicity "denies that God has any properties at all. God is an act... an eternal, immutable, absolutely simple act. ... God simply is an act, and all the words we use to describe God refer to this act" (1996: 166). Aquinas, cited in Nicholas Wolterstorff (1991: 532), in his *Summa theologica*, before drawing the general conclusion that God is simple, dismisses various specific modes of composition. He argues, among other things, that (1) God is not distinct from God's essence; that (2) God's existence is not distinct from God's essence; and that (3) God has no property distinct from God's essence. In other words, God is the divine nature itself and has no accidents (properties that are not necessary). There is no real division or distinction in this nature. Thus, the entirety of God is whatever is attributed to Him.

Swartz's solution tends to contradict, if not, outrightly deny this basic attribute of God. Take, for example, the argument due to Craig and Moreland, which explains this fact:

If God is identical with his essence, then God cannot know or do anything different from what he knows and does. He can have no contingent knowledge or action, for everything about him is essential to him. But in that case all modal distinctions collapse, and everything becomes necessary. Since God knows that  $p$  is logically equivalent to  $p$  is true, the necessity of the former entails the necessity of the latter. (2003, p. 525).

Thus, divine simplicity, inevitably leads us back to the incompatibilist thesis and theological fatalism, according to which everything that happens does so, not with temporal necessity, but with logical necessity, following from God's omniscience. We can render the argument as follows, to make this point clearer:

- (1) Necessarily, God exists
- (2) Necessarily, if God knows  $p$  then God essentially knows  $p$  (God's divine simplicity)
- (3) Necessarily, God knows  $p$  if and only if  $p$  is true (knowledge involves truth)
- (4) Therefore, necessarily,  $p$  is true if and only if  $p$  is necessarily true

Where (1) is the expression of God's existence as absolute necessity, (2) is taken to be a deliverance of the doctrine of divine simplicity, where His action of knowing is identical to His essence/existence (3) expresses the truism that knowledge entails truth, and (9) is the conclusion of the argument, which, given our understanding of the

divine simplicity, is taken to entail that until  $p$  is necessarily true, it cannot be foreknown by God, and the necessity of  $p$  being true, emanates not just from God foreknowing  $p$  infallibly, but from God's divine simplicity, whose existence is not distinct from His essence. In other words,  $p$  is necessary true, as it is, identical with something that exists of necessity, namely, God. Thus, Swartz's charge of modal fallacy charge against the incompatibilist thesis collapses in the face of divine simplicity. Swartz would have to device a way to address this issue before his argument can be considered successful. Otherwise, with his argument, we would be dealing with the puzzling claim that God's existence is distinct from His essence.

Furthermore, Swartz's argument would be right on target, if the incompatibilists were limited to arguing in this way he assumes. But this does not seem to be the case; and to assume, that the incompatibilists are limited to arguing this way is incorrect. For one thing, the incompatibilists do not need to show a human free action foreknown by God is *logically necessary*, but only that such an action must be *causally necessary* (or unpreventable) if foreknown by God. Hence, a counter argument could be advanced, as follows, to repair the incompatibilists thesis and to demonstrate how it is immune from the charge of commit the modal fallacy:

1. God know D
2. It is not possible for God to know that D and for D to be false
3. Unpreventably, God knows D
4. It follows follow unpreventably, that D cannot be otherwise

Premise (1) follows from the thesis of divine foreknowledge; premise (2) follows from the supposition of divine knowledge (i.e., that God knew in the past that D) together with the fact that the past cannot be altered; premise (3) follows from the God's foreknowledge, His divine necessity and His Providential control over creation. From these, premise (4) seems to follow. From this, it is clear the incompatibilist argument need not commit the modal fallacy alleged by Swartz. For this reason, Swartz's argument does not seem satisfactory to lay to rest the problem of theological fatalism.

## **Conclusion**

Is it clear that there is no easy solution to the problem of divine foreknowledge and human free will, and whichever solution one adopts is confronted with problems and will have significant repercussions for one's broader theology. There is a price to be paid for each solution. Swartz's compatibilist argument alleging modal fallacy (modal collapse) against the basic argument of the incompatibilists is unsatisfactory. As exposed in the paper, it primarily undermines God's divine simplicity, and also that his charge of modal fallacy can be easily avoided by using the causal necessity in place of logical necessity as the incompatibilists need not commit the said modal fallacy. It does not seem, therefore, that we have found in Swartz's argument evidence for a rationally satisfying solution to the dilemmatic problem of God's foreknowledge and human free will (theological fatalism). However, as we continue to reflect on the nature of human freedom and moral responsibility, it may be helpful

to embrace a careful revision, refinement or qualification of our views on such theological concepts as divine foreknowledge, sovereignty, creation, and many other concepts used to qualify God. To be sure, this recognition of the fallibilism of our cognitive endeavours in such matters must not be construed as an open invitation to a sceptical abandonment of atheism and its concerns.

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