A Purified Middle Knowledge

Antonius Walaeus, Franciscus Gomarus, and Molina's Scientia Media

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Abstract

Antonius Walaeus (1573–1639) sat at the Synod of Dort and taught theology at Leiden, yet he admitted in God a knowledge of conditional events "before every decree," and he used for it the name Jesuit theologians had coined, *scientia media*. Did a leading Contra-Remonstrant quietly become a Reformed Molinist? My answer is no. Walaeus never names Molina. His named authority is his teacher Franciscus Gomarus, whose theses on predestination place this conditional knowledge inside God's knowledge of simple intelligence, and Walaeus kept that placement. He then purged the doctrine of the Jesuit errors: no merit in election, God acts really in conversion, and the knowledge is not a third kind. What remained is the object of God's decree, never its cause, and serves the Reformed doctrine of the decree instead of competing with it. He used it to honour Scripture's conditional statements and to explain how God permits sin without being its author, but not to explain prayer, and not in election, which he held to be unconditional. Reading his three texts beside Molina and Calvin, I answer Richard Muller's question for this one doctrine: continuity on Calvin's rule that God's knowledge of what will be rests on his decree, with a real departure in the reading of the conditional texts. What Walaeus took from the Jesuits was a question and a name, not their order of knowledge and decree. The freedom of the will remains the pressure point, and the paper takes it up, with an analogy offered as an illustration and not as a proof.

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1. The Puzzle

> The relationship of the Reformation to subsequent developments in Protestant thought, particularly to the "scholastic" or "orthodox" theology of the late sixteenth and the seventeenth century has, for more than a century, been an object of scrutiny by scholars and theologians in search of their Protestant heritage. In the analyses of Calvin and "Calvinism" especially there has been great interest in the question of continuity or discontinuity between the theology of the master and the doctrine of the successors. Did later writers disrupt the balance of Calvin's thought and produce a distortion of the system developed by the great Reformer of Geneva, or did they simply follow Calvin's lead as they defended and solidified the system of Reformed or Calvinist doctrine?[1]

Richard Muller put that question at the head of his study of Christology and predestination from Calvin to Perkins. This article asks it of one doctrine and one man. The doctrine is God's knowledge of what free creatures would do, and the man is Antonius Walaeus. John Calvin had taught that God foresees what is to come for no other reason than that he has decreed that it should come to pass.[2] Walaeus, half a century after Calvin's death, admitted in God a knowledge of conditional events "before every decree," and he used for it a name that Jesuit theologians had coined. So Muller's question takes a sharp form here. Does Walaeus's purified middle knowledge echo and develop the Reformed doctrine of God's knowledge and decree, or does it set that doctrine aside for a Jesuit borrowing? The answer has to come from his own texts, read beside Molina's and Calvin's.

Antonius Walaeus (1573–1639) was no friend of the Remonstrants, the followers of Jacob Arminius whose teaching the Synod of Dort condemned. He sat at that synod in 1618–1619, and from 1619 until his death he taught theology at Leiden, the university the Arminian controversy had torn apart.[3] Yet in his teaching on the doctrine of God he did something that has surprised readers ever since. He accepted a version of the doctrine that historians call *scientia media*, "middle knowledge." That doctrine was the work of Jesuit theologians of the late sixteenth

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[1] Richard A. Muller, *Christ and the Decree: Christology and Predestination in Reformed Theology from Calvin to Perkins* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 1.

[2] John Calvin, *Institutio christianae religionis* (Geneva, 1559), III.xxiii.6, in *Ioannis Calvini opera quae supersunt omnia*, ed. Guilielmus Baum, Eduardus Cunitz and Eduardus Reuss, 59 vols. (Brunswick and Berlin: C. A. Schwetschke, 1863–1900), hereafter CO, 2:703–704. The passage is quoted and discussed in Section 8. Walaeus's phrase "before every decree" is quoted from *Loci communes*, in *Opera omnia*, I, 175; see Section 5.4.

[3] J. C. van Slee, "Walaeus, Antonius," in *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie*, XL (Leipzig: Duncker & Humblot, 1896), 643–644. The date of death is also given in the caption to Walaeus's portrait in Antonius Walaeus, *Opera omnia*, I (Leiden: Franciscus Hackius, 1643), front matter: "obiit tertium Academiæ Rector magnificus ix Iulii A°. cIↃ IↃc xxxix" [1639]. Long s is given as s and VV as W; abbreviations are expanded in square brackets; accents and the ligatures æ and œ are kept as printed. The ampersand, and titles and references abbreviated with a full stop (such as D., Cl., Resp., vers.), are left as printed; otherwise Latin keeps the spelling and punctuation of the printed text, with [*sic*] where the print errs. Scripture is quoted from the English Standard Version (ESV).

century. Its most famous champion was Luis de Molina, and its best-known Protestant user was Arminius himself. Seen from Karl Barth's point of view, as Dolf te Velde puts it, it is "surprising or even astonishing" that Reformed theologians such as Gomarus and Walaeus admitted the idea at all.[4]

Before going further, the term needs a plain definition. *Scientia media*, or middle knowledge, is a knowledge in God of what free creatures *would* do in any set of circumstances, a knowledge that God is said to have before, and apart from, his decision about what will actually happen. If God knows, before he decides anything, that Peter would deny Christ if placed in the high priest's courtyard, and if God then decides to place Peter there, the knowledge that came first is middle knowledge. It is called "middle" because Molina set it between two other kinds of divine knowledge, which I will define when we meet them.

So the puzzle is this. Did a leading Contra-Remonstrant, a man who helped condemn Arminius's followers, quietly become a Reformed Molinist? My answer is no, and this article sets out why. Walaeus never names Molina. He names as his authority his own teacher, Franciscus Gomarus (1563–1641), Arminius's leading opponent. Gomarus's theses on predestination, printed after his death and undated, place this conditional knowledge inside God's *knowledge of simple intelligence*, that is, God's natural knowledge of everything that could possibly be, which he has simply by being God and apart from any decision of his will. Walaeus kept that placement. He then did something the theses do not do in so many words. He announced that the doctrine had to be purged of the errors of the Jesuits who abused it, and he purged it. What remained after the purge was a knowledge of conditional events that serves the Reformed doctrine of God's decree instead of competing with it. Walaeus kept the name *scientia media*, and the knowledge still comes, in order, between God's knowledge of what could be and his knowledge of what will be; but it is no longer a third kind of knowledge. It is a purified middle knowledge.

I want to make four things unmistakable. The first is Walaeus's own view: what he held, how he used it, and what value he claimed for it. The second is his sources: whom he names as his authority, and what can and cannot be said about where the idea reached him. The third is the comparison with Molina. The fourth is the time frames: the lives of the men involved, the dates of the key works, and when and through whom Walaeus met the idea, so far as the evidence allows. The conclusion answers each of the four in turn.

Three further sections widen the view. The first sets Walaeus and his teacher Gomarus beside Calvin, to ask where they kept to him and where they went beyond him. The second faces the question that no account of God's knowledge can get around: the freedom of the will and the

[4] R. T. te Velde, *Paths Beyond Tracing Out: The Connection of Method and Content in the Doctrine of God, Examined in Reformed Orthodoxy, Karl Barth, and the Utrecht School* (Delft: Eburon, 2010), 331: "From this perspective, it is surprising or even astonishing, to note that the theory of scientia media was also accepted in Protestant theology by some Reformed (Gomarus, Walaeus) and even more Lutheran theologians"; te Velde's "this perspective" is Karl Barth's, *Church Dogmatics*, II/1, 563–568, cited in te Velde, 331 n. 79.

responsibility of the one who wills. The third offers a mathematical picture of the possibilities, as an illustration and not as a proof. The conclusion then returns to Muller's question.

One clarification will spare the reader confusion later. In the texts discussed here, when Walaeus writes "Molinaeus," he never means Molina. He means the French Reformed theologian Pierre du Moulin, whose *Anatome Arminianismi* Walaeus defended in print.[5] Walaeus never names Molina in any of them.

2. Molina's Doctrine and Its Dates

Luis de Molina (1535–1600) was a Spanish Jesuit. His great work carried a long title that states its purpose: *The Harmony of Free Choice with the Gifts of Grace, Divine Foreknowledge, Providence, Predestination and Reprobation*. It is known simply as the *Concordia*, "the Harmony." It first appeared at Lisbon in 1588, and a second edition followed at Antwerp in 1595.[6] Its aim was to show that human freedom, in a strong sense, fits together with everything Scripture and the church teach about God's knowledge, his providence and his choosing of some to salvation.

Molina's solution rests on a threefold division of God's knowledge. He sets it out in Disputation LII, part of his commentary on question XIV, article XIII, of the First Part of Thomas Aquinas's *Summa theologiae*, and he opens with a warning:

> We must distinguish a threefold knowledge in God, unless we wish to go dangerously astray in reconciling the freedom of our choice and the contingency of things with divine foreknowledge.[7]

The first kind is God's *natural knowledge*. By it God knows everything his power could bring about, together with the natures of things and all their possible combinations. He knows contingent things by it, but only as things that could be or not be, not as things that will be. This knowledge could not have been otherwise, because it belongs to God's nature. The second kind is God's *free knowledge*, his knowledge of what will actually happen. God has it only after, and because of, the free decision of his will; had he decided differently, he would know differently. Between these two Molina places the third:

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[5] Antonius Walaeus, *Responsio ad censuram Ioannis Arnoldi Corvini in Cl. Viri D. Petri Molinaei Anatomen Arminianismi*, in *Opera omnia*, I, second pagination, title page; see also *Responsio*, 123: "recte notavit paragr. 8. Cl. Molinæus"; and Walaeus, *Loci communes*, in *Opera omnia*, I, 180: "Pet. Molinæus in examine suo."

[6] Luis de Molina, *Liberi arbitrii cum gratiae donis, divina praescientia, providentia, praedestinatione et reprobatione concordia*, first edition Lisbon, 1588; second edition Antwerp, 1595. I cite the new edition (Paris: P. Lethielleux, 1876), hereafter *Concordia*.

[7] Molina, *Concordia*, q. XIV, a. XIII, disp. LII, p. 317: "Triplicem scientiam oportet distinguamus in Deo, nisi periculose in concilianda libertate arbitrii nostri et contingentia rerum cum divina præscientia hallucinari velimus" (my translation).

> Third, finally, middle knowledge, by which, from a most high and inscrutable comprehension of each free choice in its essence, he intuited what it would do by its innate freedom if it were placed in this or that or even infinitely many orders of things, although it could, if it willed, in fact do the opposite.[8]

Two features of this definition matter for everything that follows. The first is its *place*. Middle knowledge is a third kind of knowledge, standing between the natural and the free. Molina explains that it is not free knowledge, because it comes before every free act of God's will and God cannot change what he knows by it. Nor is it natural knowledge in the full sense, because if the creature were going to choose otherwise, God would know otherwise. So it "partly has the condition of natural knowledge" and "partly has the condition of free knowledge."[9]

The second feature is its *ground*, that is, what makes the knowledge true. For Molina, what settles the content of middle knowledge is the creature's own free choice. He states this with complete clarity:

> From this it most plainly follows that the knowledge by which God, before he determines to create it, foresees what it will do on the hypothesis that it is placed in that order of things, depends on this: that it itself, by its freedom, will do this or that, and not the contrary.[10]

This is the heart of Molinism, and it is the point at which most Reformed theologians would part company with it. On Molina's account, what God knows about a creature's conditional choices is fixed by the creature. God finds it out; he does not decide it. God then chooses which order of things to create, knowing what every free creature would do in it, and his free knowledge follows.

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[8] Molina, *Concordia*, q. XIV, a. XIII, disp. LII, p. 317: "Tertiam denique mediam scientiam, qua ex altissima et inscrutabili comprehensione cujusque liberi arbitrii in sua essentia intuitus est, quid pro sua innata libertate, si in hoc, vel illo, vel etiam infinitis rerum ordinibus collocaretur, acturum esset, cum tamen posset, si vellet, facere re reipsa [*sic*] oppositum" (my translation).

[9] Molina, *Concordia*, q. XIV, a. XIII, disp. LII, p. 318: "eam nulla ratione esse dicendam liberam, tum quia antecedit omnem liberum actum voluntatis divinæ, tum etiam quia in potestate Dei non fuit scire per eam scientiam aliud quam re ipsa sciverit"; and "Dicendum ergo est partim habere conditionem scientiæ naturalis, quatenus prævenit actum liberum voluntatis divinæ, neque in potestate Dei fuit aliud scire, partim habere conditionem scientiæ liberæ, quatenus quod sit unius potius partis quam alterius, habet ex eo quod liberum arbitrium, ex hypothesi quod crearetur in uno aut altero ordine rerum, esset potius facturum unum quam aliud, cum utrumvis indifferenter posset facere" (my translation).

[10] Molina, *Concordia*, q. XIV, a. XIII, disp. LII, p. 318: "Inde vero apertissime sequitur, scientiam, qua Deus, antequam statuat eam creare, prævidet quid sit factura, ex hypothesi quod in eo rerum ordine collocetur, pendere ex eo quod ipsa pro sua libertate hoc vel illud sit factura et non e contrario" (my translation).

Molina was frank that he thought this solved everything. He admitted that, as far as he could recall, the Church Fathers had never used the terms "natural," "free" or "middle" knowledge.[11] But he counted it a mark of truth that the doctrine made the old problems easy:

> But surely, since truth agrees with truth, while truth quickly disagrees with the false, the fact that those four things cohere so easily and plainly with freedom of choice by way of middle foreknowledge is a manifest sign that we have handed down the whole and legitimate way of reconciling them all.[12]

The "four things" are foreknowledge, providence, predestination and reprobation. That is the value Molina claimed for middle knowledge: nothing less than the key to the whole relation of God and human freedom.

Molina also gave a clear account of his own chronology. In the next disputation he explains that he had taught the doctrine for three decades before the *Concordia*, but under a different name:

> For thirty years in private and public disputations, and for twenty in our commentaries on the First Part, we handed it down under the name of "natural knowledge," because it is not free in God and precedes every free act of the divine will, but most recently, more exactly than ever before, taught the same under the name of "middle knowledge" in this our *Concordia*.[13]

So by his own account the idea is older than its name. The name "middle knowledge" is the *Concordia*'s, and therefore dates from 1588. The substance, on Molina's word, goes back about three decades before the book. He was not the only Jesuit to claim an early date. Pedro da Fonseca, writing in 1596, recalled public lectures on divine providence and predestination that he had begun "thirty years before we wrote this," when, he says, the difficulties of the subject seemed best resolved by distinguishing two states of the contingent things that will truly be, "absolute, namely, and conditioned." Mário de Carvalho reports that historians take that passage as the date at which he began teaching the doctrine.[14] Both men, in other words, claimed to have

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[11] Molina, *Concordia*, q. XIV, a. XIII, disp. LIII, memb. II, p. 354: "præsertim cum sancti Patres, quamvis neque distinctione scientiæ liberæ, et naturalis in Deo, quod recorder, sub eis verbis fuerint usi, neque item scientiæ mediæ inter liberam et mere naturalem, unanimi tamen consensu docuerint [...]" (my translation).

[12] Molina, *Concordia*, q. XIV, a. XIII, disp. LIII, memb. II, p. 353: "At profecto cum verum vero consonet, a falso autem cito discrepet verum, quod tam facile ac perspicue illa quatuor ex capite præscientiæ mediæ cum arbitrii libertate cohæreant, signum est manifestum nos integram legitimamque rationem conciliandi ea omnia tradidisse" (my translation).

[13] Molina, *Concordia*, q. XIV, a. XIII, disp. LIII, memb. II, p. 354: "atque a triginta annis in privatis et publicis disputationibus, a viginti vero in nostris ad primam partem commentariis eam sub nomine scientiæ naturalis idcirco tradiderimus, quod libera in Deo non sit, omnemque divinæ voluntatis liberum actum antecedat, novissime autem exactius quam unquam antea sub nomine scientiæ mediæ eandem in hac nostra docuerimus Concordia" (my translation).

[14] Pedro da Fonseca, *Commentariorum in libros Metaphysicorum Aristotelis Stagiritae*, III (Cologne: Lazarus Zetzner, 1615), lib. VI, cap. II, q. IV, sect. VIII, 119: "Ante annos triginta, quam hæc scriberemus, (scribimus autem

been teaching the substance of the doctrine for about thirty years before they wrote. For this article it is enough to note that the doctrine was Jesuit in origin, older than its name by its authors' own account, and in print from 1588.

Why must God know what free creatures would do before he decrees anything? Molina gives his full answer three disputations before he names middle knowledge. In Disputation XLIX he is still calling this knowledge natural, or natural "in a certain way"; the name middle knowledge comes in Disputation LII. His first proof is from Scripture:

> It is proved, first, because it is established from the Holy Scriptures that God, best and greatest, has certain knowledge of some future contingents which depend on human free choice, and which nevertheless never were and never will be in the nature of things, and so do not exist in eternity either.[15]

His first text is Matthew 11:21, where Jesus says that if the mighty works done in Chorazin and Bethsaida "had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes." God knows, Molina reasons, that there would have been repentance in Tyre and Sidon on that hypothesis; yet, since the hypothesis was never in fact given, "that repentance never was, and never will be, in the nature of things, and yet it was a future contingent depending on the free choice of men."[16] His second text is David at Keilah (1 Samuel 23:11–12). David asked whether Saul would come down and whether the men of Keilah would hand him over, and the Lord answered, "He will come down," and, "They will surrender you." "Behold," Molina writes, "God knew those two future contingents, which depended on human choice, and revealed them to David; yet they never existed and never will exist in the nature of things."[17] He adds a

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anno Domini nonagesimo sexto supra millesimum & quingentesimu[m]) cum materiam de prouidentia diuina, & prædestinatione in publicis lectionibus essemus ingressi; multæque, ac graues difficultates; quæ in ea occurrunt, se nobis obiicerent, nulla faciliori via, & ratione putabamus explicari omnes posse, quam constituenda ea distinctione, quam paulo ante fecimus duplicis status eorum contingentium, quæ re vera futura sunt, absoluti scilicet, & conditionati" (my translation). The volume was first published at Évora in 1604, according to Mário Santiago de Carvalho, "Fonseca, Pedro da," in *Conimbricenses.org Encyclopedia*, ed. Mário Santiago de Carvalho and Simone Guidi (revised 29 January 2020), section "Fonseca, the theologian and philosopher (1561–1573)," https://www.conimbricenses.org/encyclopedia/fonseca-pedro-da/. Carvalho reports that historians base the date 1566 for Fonseca's first treatment of the "scientia conditionata" on this passage.

[15] Molina, *Concordia*, q. XIV, a. XIII, disp. XLIX, p. 289: "Probatur primo, quoniam ex Scripturis sanctis constat Deum optimum maximum habere certam cognitionem aliquorum futurorum contingentium, quæ ex libero arbitrio humano pendent; quæ tamen nec fuerunt, nec erunt unquam in rerum natura, ac proinde nec existunt in æternitate" (my translation). In the same disputation, p. 292, Molina calls the knowledge "scientiam quodammodo naturalem."

[16] Matthew 11:21, ESV. Molina, *Concordia*, disp. XLIX, pp. 289–290: "Quoniam Deus scit futuram fuisse in Tyriis et Sidoniis pœnitentiam in cinere et cicilio [*sic*], ex hypothesi quod in Tyro et Sidone factæ fuissent virtutes, quæ Corosain et Bethsaidæ factæ sunt, ut constat ex illo Matth. II [*sic*]: « Si in Tyro et Sidone factæ essent virtutes, quæ factæ sunt in vobis, olim in cilicio et cinere pœnitentiam egissent »: pœnitentia autem illa, cum hypothesis, ex qua erat futura, re vera data non fuerit, nunquam fuit, nec erit in rerum natura, et tamen erat futurum contingens ex libero hominum arbitrio dependens" (my translation).

[17] 1 Samuel 23:11–12, ESV. Molina, *Concordia*, disp. XLIX, p. 290: "Item I Reg. cap. xxi [*sic*]: Consuluit David Dominum, num Saul descensurus esset in Ceilam, et respondit Dominus: *descendet*. Iterum, consuluit num viri

confirmation from the Book of Wisdom, which he reads as Scripture. God, foreseeing the sins into which the just would fall if they lived long in this life, often mercifully takes them from the world, as it is written of the righteous man: "He was caught up, lest wickedness should change his understanding, or deceit beguile his soul."[18]

His second proof is from the perfection of God's knowledge. By his natural knowledge God comprehends himself and everything contained in him, including the free choice of every creature he could make. Therefore,

> before any free determination of his will, from the height of his natural knowledge, by which he infinitely surpasses each of the things he contains eminently in himself, he penetrates what the free choice of each creature would do by its innate freedom, given the hypothesis that he willed to create it in this or that order of things, with these or those circumstances or aids; although, if it willed, it could withhold the act or do the opposite.

To deny this, Molina says, would be "unworthy of the height and perfection of divine knowledge, indeed impious." It would be to say "that God does not know what I would do by the freedom of my choice if he had placed me in another order of things," or had given me "greater or lesser aids" than he did, or "a longer life," or "had permitted heavier temptations."[19] His third proof is short. God does not receive his knowledge from things; he knows all things in himself and from

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Ceilæ, qui tantum beneficium a Davide acceperant, tradituri eum essent, et viros qui cum ipso erant, in manus Saul, et respondit Dominus: *tradent*. [...] Ecce, Deus duo illa futura contingentia quæ ab humano arbitrio pendebant, agnovit, et revelavit Davidi; quæ tamen nunquam in rerum natura extiterunt aut existent, ac proinde neque in æternitate" (my translation). "I Reg." is the Vulgate's First Book of Kings, which is 1 Samuel; the passage is chapter 23.

[18] Molina, *Concordia*, disp. XLIX, p. 290: "Confirmatur præterea, quoniam Deus prævidens peccata in quæ laberentur justi, si diu in hac vita perseverarent, sæpe eos misericorditer tollit de hoc mundo juxta illud Sapientiæ IV: « Raptus est, ne malitia mutaret intellectum ejus, aut ne fictio deciperet animam illius. »" (my translation). The text is Wisdom 4:11, which Molina, with the Roman Church, received as Scripture; it is not in the Protestant canon, and the translation is mine from Molina's Latin.

[19] Molina, *Concordia*, disp. XLIX, p. 290: "Secundo, Deus per scientiam naturalem se ipsum comprehendit, et in se ipso omnia quæ in ipso eminenter sunt, atque adeo liberum arbitrium cujuscunque creaturæ quam per suam omnipotentiam potest condere: ergo ante ullam liberam determinationem suæ voluntatis ex altitudine suæ scientiæ naturalis, qua infinite superat singula quæ in seipso eminenter continet, penetrat quid liberum arbitrium cujusque creaturæ, data hypothesi quod velit illud creare in hoc vel in illo ordine rerum cum his vel illis circumstantiis, aut auxiliis, pro sua innata libertate sit facturum; cum tamen, si vellet, posset continere actum, aut facere oppositum"; p. 291: "indignum namque altitudine et perfectione divinæ scientiæ, imo et impium, minimeque cohærens cum comprehensione liberi arbitrii singularum creaturarum, esset asserere, Deum ignorare quid ego pro libertate mei arbitrii essem facturus, si me constituisset in alio ordine rerum, vel si in hoc ipso, in quo me constituit, statuisset conferre mihi majora aut minora auxilia, quam re ipsa donare statuit, vel si concessisset mihi longiorem vitam, aut graviores tentationes permisisset" (my translation).

himself. The existence of things, whether in time or in eternity, therefore contributes nothing to God's certain knowledge of what will or will not be.[20]

His fourth proof is from providence and predestination, and it is the heart of the matter. There is providence and predestination in God concerning future contingents. So there must be in God a certain foreknowledge by which he knows, before anything exists, what would or would not come about "on the hypothesis and condition" that he used this or that aid or means, or disposed things in this or that way. Molina compares God to a craftsman:

> For just as a craftsman, unless he first understood the form the artefact would later have from the hands and the tools of the trade being applied in one way or another in making it, would not know how to apply such means so that the artefact turned out such as he wills it to be; so also, unless God, before he determined by the free decree of his will to apply means and to dispose things in the way in which they are in fact ordered, foresaw what would come of such a disposition and order, he would certainly not know how to order things to their ends by that decree, as he must. Things would rather turn out, as it were by chance and beyond God's antecedent knowledge, in one way or another indifferently, and he would learn from their existence how they had turned out: things which, as they are plainly most absurd and most impious, so they must be judged.[21]

The same argument, he adds, is confirmed by God's permission of sin. God permits sins, and "a person is said to permit what he foresees will happen unless he himself prevents it, when he can prevent it and yet does not will to." Sins are future contingents, so God must know them with certainty, on the hypothesis that he does not will to prevent them, before they exist in time or in eternity.[22] Molina then states his result. Before the free decree God knows future contingents "by a knowledge in a certain way natural," on the hypothesis that he wills to create and dispose

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[20] Molina, *Concordia*, disp. XLIX, p. 291: "Tertio, Deus non accipit cognitionem a rebus, sed id [*sic*] seipso atque ex se ipso cognoscit omnia: ergo existentia rerum, sive in tempore, sive in æternitate, nihil confert, ut Deus certo sciat quid futurum aut non futurum sit" (my translation).

[21] Molina, *Concordia*, disp. XLIX, p. 291: "Quarto, in Deo est providentia, et prædestinatio circa futura contingentia: ergo est præcognitio certa, qua præcognoscit, antequam quicquam existat, quid futurum, aut non futurum sit, ex hypothesi ac conditione, quod hoc vel illud auxilium aut medium adhibeat, vel quod hoc aut alio modo res disponat"; p. 292: "Ut enim artifex, nisi prius intelligeret modum, quem postea habere deberet artefactum ex eo quod uno aut altero modo in ejus confectione manus et instrumenta fabrilia admoverentur, nesciret hujusmodi media applicare, ut tale evaderet artefactum, quale illud esse vult: ita etiam nisi Deus, antequam decreto libero suæ voluntatis constitueret adhibere media, et disponere res eo modo, quo re ipsa ordinatæ sunt, prævideret quid ex tali dispositione et ordine esset futurum, nesciret profecto decreto illo res, ut ad fines oportet ordinare, quin potius quasi casu, et præter antecedentem scientiam Dei, res secundum esse existentiæ uno aut altero modo indifferenter evaderent; ex earum vero existentia deprehenderet quales evasissent; quæ plane absurdissima atque impiissima ut sunt, ita et judicari debent" (my translation).

[22] Molina, *Concordia*, disp. XLIX, p. 292: "Potest confirmari præcedens ratio, quoniam Deus permittit peccata: id autem dicitur quis permittere, quod prævidet futurum, nisi ipse impediat, et potest impedire, nec tamen vult" (my translation).

things in this or that way; in the free decree itself, "which as a cause precedes the existence of future contingents both in eternity and in time," he knows them "absolutely, and without any hypothesis or condition."[23]

Molina is careful to deny that this knowledge competes with providence. Middle knowledge, he says, is of every effect only "on the hypothesis of a predetermination of the divine will" to create this or that order and to provide in it in this or that way. Far from removing or hindering providence, it "is the light and knowledge prerequisite in God, on the side of his intellect, for the most perfect and most exact providence." Its certainty comes "from the height and unlimited perfection of the divine intellect, by which it knows with certainty what is in itself uncertain."[24] He applies the same pattern to sin. It must not be said, he writes, that God predestined or predetermined evil actions; yet some predeterminations of God were needed for them to be possible at all. When Peter denied Christ, there was needed "a predetermination to permit him, for the best end which God himself intended by that permission, that evil action which he foresaw Peter would do in those circumstances by the freedom of his choice; that is, a predetermination not to vary the circumstances, nor to give him other aids with which, by the same freedom of choice, he would not have fallen into that denial."[25]

This is Molina's case, and it deserves to be heard in its strength. He appeals to the same texts the Reformed would cite. He insists that God's providence is exact and that nothing escapes it, and he refuses to make God the author of evil. What makes it Molinism is the point already quoted from Disputation LII: the content of this knowledge depends on what the creature by its freedom would do, "and not the contrary."

Finally, Molina used middle knowledge where it mattered most to him, in predestination. His example is a moving one. Augustine and others had said that the prayers of Stephen, the first

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[23] Molina, *Concordia*, disp. XLIX, p. 292: "Quo fit, ut, antequam quicquam existat, præcognoscat Deus certo futura contingentia, ante illud quidem decretum liberum suæ voluntatis, per scientiam quodammodo naturalem, atque ex hypothesi quod hoc vel illo modo velit res creare, et disponere; in illo vero decreto libero, quod tanquam causa antecedit existentiam futurorum contingentium tam in æternitate, quam in tempore, absolute, et absque ulla hypothesi et conditione" (my translation).

[24] Molina, *Concordia*, q. XIV, a. XIII, disp. LIII, memb. III, p. 365: "attamen ita eam mediam scientiam esse omnium horum effectuum, ut nullius sit nisi ex hypothesi præfinitionis divinæ voluntatis, quod hunc vel illum ordinem velit condere, atque hoc vel illo modo eo ipso ordine mediisve et circumstantiis illius velit providere et adjuvare"; "Non ergo ejusmodi scientia tollit aut impedit divinam providentiam; quin potius est lumen et notitia prærequisita in Deo ex parte sui intellectus ad perfectissimam atque exactissimam providentiam"; and "Certitudinem vero scientiæ illius mediæ provenire dicimus ex altitudine illimitataque perfectione intellectus divini, qua certo cognoscit quod in se est incertum" (my translation).

[25] Molina, *Concordia*, disp. LIII, memb. III, p. 364: "Licet autem dicendum non sit Deum prædestinasse aut præfinivisse actiones malas, affirmandum tamen est necessarias fuisse aliquas Dei præfinitiones, ut illæ per creatum arbitrium in rerum natura esse possint"; and "Præterea necessaria fuit præfinitio permittendi illi ad optimum finem, quem Deus ipse ea permissione intendebat, actionem illam malam quam sub illis circumstantiis pro libertate arbitrii Petri futuram prævidebat, hoc est, non variandi circumstantias, conferendive illi alia subsidia, cum quibus pro eadem libertate arbitrii in eam negationem non incideret" (my translation).

martyr, were a means of the conversion of Paul, who was standing by while Stephen was stoned. Molina explains how God could have ordained it so:

> For God, by the free act of predestination, to ordain the prayers of one just man as a means to the salvation of another (as Augustine and others affirm of the prayers of Stephen the protomartyr in relation to Paul), it was enough that, while predestining Stephen and Paul, he foreknew by middle knowledge, between free and merely natural knowledge, that if he willed to create both in the order of things and circumstances in which he placed them, Stephen would pray for his persecutors amid the blows and crash of the stones; which prayers he would ordain as a means of the predestination and salvation of Paul, the chief persecutor, and on account of which he would decree to call and help him so magnificently.[26]

Here middle knowledge explains predestination and gives prayer its place in God's plan, and it does both by making God's choice depend on what he foresaw free creatures would do. To sum up Molina in three marks: middle knowledge is a *third* kind of knowledge; its content *depends on the creature's free choice*; and it is the *key to predestination and grace*. Hold these three marks in mind. Walaeus's purge strikes at the first and the third; on the second, as we shall see, he is silent.

3. The Route to Leiden

Walaeus was born at Ghent in 1573. His family moved to Middelburg in Zeeland, and from 1596 to 1599 he studied at Leiden, where his teachers included Franciscus Junius, Lucas Trelcatius and Franciscus Gomarus. He then served as a minister in Zeeland, first at Koudekerke and from 1605 at Middelburg. He was a delegate to the Synod of Dort, and in 1619 he was called to a chair of theology at Leiden, which he held until his death on 9 July 1639.[27] His collected works, the *Opera omnia*, were published in 1643, four years after his death, with a dedication signed by his son Johannes.[28]

These dates matter, because they show that Walaeus's student years at Leiden came *before* the idea of middle knowledge arrived there. The arrival is usually credited to Jacob Arminius (1559–

[26] Molina, *Concordia*, q. XXIII, aa. IV–V, disp. I, memb. VIII, p. 485: "Ut enim Deus, actu libero prædestinationis, orationes justi unius in medium salutis alterius ordinaret (ut de orationibus Stephani protomartyris comparatione Pauli Augustinus et alii affirmant) satis erat, ut dum Stephanum et Paulum prædestinabat, per scientiam mediam inter liberam et mere naturalem præcognosceret, si utrumque in eo ordine rerum et circumstantiarum creare vellet, in quo eos collocavit, futuras inter ictus et crepitus lapidum orationes Stephani pro suis persecutoribus, quas in medium prædestinationis et salutis Pauli præcipui persecutoris ordinaret, atque propter quas tam magnifice eum vocare et adjuvare decerneret" (my translation).

[27] Van Slee, "Walaeus, Antonius," 643–644.

[28] Walaeus, *Opera omnia*, I (Leiden: Franciscus Hackius, 1643), title page and front matter. The dedication to Jacob Cats is dated "Ex Academia Batava V. Kalend. Aprilis" 1643, that is, 28 March 1643, and is signed by his son Johannes Walaeus.

1609). Dolf te Velde, summarizing the work of Eef Dekker on Arminius, reports that Arminius became acquainted with Molina's ideas around 1597, but did not publicly embrace them; te Velde also lists the writings of Roman Catholic authors, "especially Molina," among the influences on Arminius during his years as a pastor in Amsterdam.[29] In 1603 Arminius was appointed professor of theology at Leiden, and in the same year his theses *On the Nature of God* included the concept of middle knowledge, which, te Velde writes, Arminius "borrowed from Luis de Molina." According to te Velde, Arminius counted among the objects of God's knowledge "the hypothetical entities and the order, connections and other aspects they could have," cited 1 Samuel 23:11–12 and Matthew 11:21, and used related concepts that show his dependence on Molina.[30] Te Velde adds a telling detail: the inclusion of middle knowledge in Arminius's theses "did not provoke any discussion," probably because Molina's theory was not yet widely known among Reformed theologians.[31]

That route is real, and it explains how Molina's idea reached the Dutch Reformed world. But it is not the route Walaeus himself points to. Walaeus himself names, twice, the authority he follows: Gomarus.[32]

Franciscus Gomarus was the man who led the opposition to Arminius at Leiden. He had been Walaeus's teacher there. Among his *Disputationes theologicae*, printed in his collected works after his death, is Disputation X, *On the Divine Predestination of Men*. In it Gomarus sets out a doctrine of God's foreknowledge that closely resembles Walaeus's. He begins with the familiar Reformed division. God's foreknowledge is twofold. One kind is of things that simply *can* happen, "defined neither way," that is, neither decreed to happen nor decreed not to happen; this kind is called "indefinite, and of simple intelligence," and also "natural and necessary," because

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[29] Te Velde, *Paths Beyond Tracing Out*, 507 n. 112, summarizing Eef Dekker, *Rijker dan Midas: Vrijheid, genade en predestinatie in de theologie van Jacobus Arminius (1559–1609)* (Zoetermeer: Boekencentrum, 1993), 76–103: "Concerning the proliferation of Molina's ideas, Dekker points to the fact that Arminius became acquainted with these around 1597, but did not publicly embrace them." Te Velde, *Paths Beyond Tracing Out*, 507, item 4, lists among the influences on Arminius in Amsterdam "cognizance of the writings of Roman Catholic authors (Bellarmine, but especially Molina) on the doctrine of grace."

[30] Te Velde, *Paths Beyond Tracing Out*, 507: "Besides traditional statements on the nature of divine knowledge, Arminius introduces the concept of 'middle knowledge' (scientia media) borrowed from Luis de Molina. Besides pure possibilities and realized facts, Arminius counts among the objects of God's knowledge the 'hypothetical entities and the order, connections and other aspects they could have.' Arminius's formulation, the quotations from Scripture (1 Samuel 23:11-12; Matthew 11:21), and related concepts such as conservatio, motus, auxilium, concursus, permissio, evidence his dependence on Molina's theory of middle knowledge."

[31] Te Velde, *Paths Beyond Tracing Out*, 507: "It is an intriguing fact that the inclusion of middle knowledge in Arminius's theses did not provoke any discussion; probably Molina's theory was not yet widely known among Reformed theologians."

[32] Walaeus, letter to Johannes Polyander, *Consilia et epistolae*, in *Opera omnia*, I, second pagination, 406; Walaeus, *Loci communes*, in *Opera omnia*, I, 175. Both passages are discussed in Section 4.

"it would belong to God even if he had decreed nothing at all." The other kind is "definite," because it concerns things as defined by God's decree.[33] Then comes the crucial step:

> But under indefinite foreknowledge, which regards all the modes of simple possibles, is contained also that which is commonly called conditioned.[34]

Gomarus defines this conditioned foreknowledge as the knowledge "by which God, from the infinite light of his knowledge, foreknew certain future things, not absolutely, but on a certain condition being posited."[35] He explains what he means:

> Just as, if a certain series of things and circumstances were posited, he most certainly foreknew what outcome (not by Stoic fate, but according to the nature of the causes) would be, necessary or contingent: whether that series, God's decree following, be defined, or remain undefined. Because this indefinite foreknowledge does not at all depend on the defining decree; but necessarily (as its object, its adjunct) precedes it in the order of nature.[36]

His examples are David at Keilah, where God foreknew that Saul would come and the citizens would hand David over if David stayed, though neither happened because David fled (1 Samuel 23:11–12), and the foreign nations who would have listened to Ezekiel if he had been sent to them (Ezekiel 3:6).[37] His example from predestination is Adam. God foreknew that if he created men in Adam in the state of original righteousness, gave them the command about the tree, did

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[33] Franciscus Gomarus, *Disputationes theologicae*, Disp. X, "De divina hominum praedestinatione," th. XXVI–XXVII, in Gomarus, *Opera theologica omnia, maximam partem posthuma*, 2nd ed. (Amsterdam: Joannes Janssonius, 1664), *Disputationes* (separately paginated), 27. The disputation is printed without date or respondent. Th. XXVI speaks of things "quæ simpliciter fieri possunt: seu quæ, in neutram partem (neque ut fiant, neque ut non fiant) sunt definita." Th. XXVII: "Unde prior, præscientia indefinita ac simplicis intelligentiæ: & naturalis etiam ac necessaria dici consuevit: quod Deo nihilominus conveniret, etiamsi nihil omnino decrevisset: posterior verò, definita nominatur: quod circa res, tanquam decreto definitas, occupetur" (my translation).

[34] Gomarus, Disp. X, th. XXX, *Opera theologica omnia* (1664), *Disputationes*, 27: "Sub indefinita autem præscientia (omnes, simpliciter possibilium, modos respiciente) etiam illa, quam vulgò, conditionatam, nuncupant, continetur" (my translation).

[35] Gomarus, Disp. X, th. XXXI, *Opera theologica omnia* (1664), *Disputationes*, 27: "Ea autem est, quâ Deus, ex infinito, scientiæ suæ, lumine, quædam futura, non absolutè, sed certa conditione posita, prænovit" (my translation).

[36] Gomarus, Disp. X, th. XXXII, *Opera theologica omnia* (1664), *Disputationes*, 27: "Quemadmodum, si certa, rerum ac circumstantiarum, series poneretur, quisnam inde eventus (non fato Stoicô, sed pro causarum ratione) necessarius, aut contingens, esset futurus, certissimè præscivit: sive ea series, succedente Dei decreto, sit definita, sive indefinita manserit. Quoniam præscientia hæc indefinita, à decreto definiente, minimè dependet; sed illud necessariò (tanquam objectum, suum adjunctum) naturæ ordine, antecedit" (my translation).

[37] Gomarus, Disp. X, th. XXXIII, *Opera theologica omnia* (1664), *Disputationes*, 27, with printed references to 1 Samuel 23:11–12 and Ezekiel 3:6: "Ac posterioris modi, in re indefinita, exemplum (præter alia) illustre primum est, quòd Deus præsciverit futurum, ut David, si modo in urbe Kehila maneret, à Saule invaderetur, & à civibus traderetur: quorum neutrum tamen, ob Davidis fugam, perpetratum. Alterum vero, quod Deus similiter prænôverit, ac prædixerit futurum, ut gentes exteræ Ezechielem, si ad ipsas mitteretur, audirent: quamvis etiam, nec res ipsa, neque rei futuræ conditio antecedens, evenerit" (my translation).

not hinder Satan's temptation, and directed them in keeping with his holy power and human liberty, then they would abuse their liberty and fall.[38]

Three things about Gomarus's doctrine should be noticed, because Walaeus will repeat all three. First, the conditioned knowledge is *not a third kind*. It is "contained under" the knowledge of simple intelligence. Gomarus keeps the twofold Reformed division and finds room for conditional knowledge inside its first half. Second, its source is "the infinite light" of God's own knowledge. Nothing is said about the creature's choice fixing its content. Third, it precedes God's decree only in the way an object precedes a choice: as the thing about which the decree is made, not as its cause. Gomarus's doctrine is a Reformed reworking of the Jesuit idea.

I cite these theses from the second edition of Gomarus's collected works, published at Amsterdam in 1664, largely from his papers after his death. The theses carry no date in this edition; his students' *Apologia* of 1650 dates the disputation to Groningen in 1630 (see Section 9.2).[39] What matters here is that Walaeus names Gomarus's "Theses on predestination," as we shall see, and that his own teaching tracks the printed theses closely.

The result is an irony worth stating plainly. The Molinist idea entered Leiden with Arminius. The version of it that Walaeus accepted is the one he credits to Gomarus, Arminius's chief opponent, and Walaeus would use it against the Remonstrants.

4. Walaeus's Three Texts, in Order

Walaeus treats the question in three places. The letter to Polyander is undated but was probably written in 1616 or soon after, which would make it the earliest of the three. The reply to Corvinus, approved for printing by the Leiden faculty in August 1625, is the only one of the three meant for the press in his lifetime. The *Loci communes* give the fullest and most guarded account. Taken together, they show one consistent view.

4.1 The letter to Polyander

The earliest is probably a letter to his friend Johannes Polyander (1568–1646) at Leiden, printed among Walaeus's *Consilia et epistolae*. The letter is undated. It is printed immediately before a letter to Polyander from the French Reformed statesman Philippe du Plessis-Mornay, dated 31

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[38] Gomarus, Disp. X, th. XXXIV, *Opera theologica omnia* (1664), *Disputationes*, 27: "Siquidem Deus, inter alia, pro immensâ suâ scientiâ, prænovit, si homines, ex iis, quos creare poterat, certos (nempe eos, qui fuerunt, sunt, & erunt) in recto justitiæ originalis statu, in Adamo crearet, daretque, de abstinentia arboris scientiæ boni & mali, mandatum, Satanæ tentationem non impediret, & consentaneè suæ sanctæ potestati, atque hominum libertati (ut fecit) dirigeret; prænovit (inquam) futurum, ut boni specie ac voluntatis libertate abusi, mandati transgressione laberentur, ac justitiam originalem excuterent" (my translation).

[39] *Apologia*, in Gomarus, *Disputatio theologica de divinæ prædestinationis hominum obiecto, cum necessaria & modesta pro eodem apologia* (Amsterdam: Joannes Janssonius, 1650), 44: "Deinde anno 1630. in prolixâ illâ & accuratissimâ disputatione de Prædestinatione, à Thesi 17, ad 43." The theses that follow (pp. 44–48) are those of Disp. X; see Section 9.2.

May 1616, and it asks Polyander for a copy of letters du Plessis-Mornay had sent him on the Dutch controversies. If these are the letters meant, Walaeus wrote in or after mid-1616.[40] Polyander had sent round a set of theses on the providence of God, and Walaeus writes to say that he has read them gladly and that Polyander's view agrees with his own. He then turns to the hard question: how can God govern all things, including the free acts of men, without destroying their freedom?

He first rejects one answer. Some, he says, "though not quite ours," fall back on God's "bare foreknowledge," as if God simply foresaw which way the human will would bend in all its actions, "apart from any antecedent decree of his," and then undertook only to govern the outcome from outside. Walaeus calls this "absurd and impossible":

> For a future thing as future could not be foreseen by God unless it were already future; and it could not be future unless God had decreed at least to permit it to happen.[41]

He adds that the view is not free of sacrilege, because it makes the human will so much the master of its own actions that it is ruled by nothing but itself, "which is above the condition of a created will and proper to God alone."[42]

Having cleared that away, Walaeus names two acceptable ways forward:

> Here, then, it seems to me that we must either, with Chytraeus, frankly confess our ignorance [...] or, with Dr Gomarus, fall back on that middle or conditioned foreknowledge which many Scholastics and more recent writers posit, although Dr

[40] Walaeus, letter headed "Johanni Polyandro A. Walæus. Leydam.", *Consilia et epistolae*, in *Opera omnia*, I, second pagination, 405–407. The letter is undated. It is printed immediately before a letter from du Plessis-Mornay to Polyander dated "De Saumur ce dernier jour de May 1616." The letters in this collection are not printed in order of date: the letter ending on p. 404 is dated "7. Calend. Maii 1613," and the letter from Hugo Grotius on p. 408 is dated 5 June 1615; and the editor's preface to the reader ("Lectori," front matter) says that Walaeus seldom kept copies of his letters and that friends supplied some of those printed. In a postscript Walaeus writes: "Intellexi Cl. Vir. ex D. Druzæo, literas à D. Plessæo super controversiis Hollandicis ad te esse datas," and asks Polyander to send him a copy of them "cum responsione tua." The occasion is given at the start: "Theses quas de providentia Dei nuper emisisti [...] libenter legi" (my translation).

[41] Walaeus, letter to Polyander, *Opera omnia*, I, second pagination, 406: "Propter has difficultates quidam, etsi non plane nostri, recurrunt ad nudam Dei præscientiam, ac si Deus prævidisset quorsum voluntas humana se in omnibus actionibus suis esset flexura, citra ullum antecedens decretum suum, eventum vero rei solum extra hominem statuisset gubernare. Sed hæc sententia meo judicio absurda est & ἀδύνατος, quia res futura ut futura à Deo prævideri non potuit, nisi jam futura esset: futura autem esse non potuit, nisi Deus eam ut fieret saltem permittere decrevisset" (my translation).

[42] Walaeus, letter to Polyander, *Opera omnia*, I, second pagination, 406: "ut taceam, sententiam hanc non carere sacrilegio, quia facit voluntatem ita suarum actionum dominam, ut à nullo quam à se ipsa regatur; quod supra conditionem est creatæ voluntatis, & soli Deo proprium" (my translation).

> Ames undeservedly hisses it off the stage, since many examples of it exist in Holy Scripture.[43]

The first way is the confession of ignorance handed down from Melanchthon through his student David Chytraeus: "That all things are governed by God, I know; that there is also contingency and liberty in things, I see; but how these two are reconciled, I do not know."[44] The second is Gomarus's conditioned foreknowledge. Walaeus clearly prefers the second, and he explains how it works:

> For just as God knew within himself, by the infinite light of his knowledge, the series of all things and causes which he could produce, and what could infallibly follow from what, so also before every decree he foreknew how the will of man would incline itself this way or that, this or that being posited, without violation of its liberty, provided he himself brought those causes into act, did not hinder external occasions, and put no obstacles in their way.[45]

And he adds a warning that anticipates everything he will say later:

> Here, however, this must also be observed: that this infinite treasury of things known by the divine mind is not to be made the cause of any decree afterwards made by God, as the Stoics and the Remonstrants, for different ends, contrive; but only an indeterminate object, from which the divine will, directed by its wisdom, freely selected some part, passing over and omitting the rest.[46]

This short letter already contains Walaeus's position in outline. It names his authority, Gomarus; acknowledges a wider pedigree among "many Scholastics and more recent writers"; and names

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[43] Walaeus, letter to Polyander, *Opera omnia*, I, second pagination, 406: "Videtur hic ergo omnino mihi, aut cum Chytræo, ignorantia nostra ingenue profitenda, [...] Aut cum D. Gomaro recurrendum ad præscientiam illam mediam seu conditionatam, quam multi Scholastici & recentiores scriptores ponunt, etsi à D. Amesio immerito explodatur, cum in Scriptura Sacra multa ejus exempla extent" (my translation).

[44] Walaeus, letter to Polyander, *Opera omnia*, I, second pagination, 406: "qui ex præceptore suo hæc verba sæpe audivisse se scribit; Quod omnia à Deo gubernentur, scio: quod etiam contingentia sit, & libertas in rebus, video: quomodo aute[m] hæc duo concilientur, ignoro" (my translation). On p. 407 Walaeus gives his reference: Chytraeus, *De vita aeterna*, under the title "de corpore Christi glorioso," p. 515, where Melanchthon is reported as often repeating a saying of his own teacher, Franciscus Stadianus, to the same effect.

[45] Walaeus, letter to Polyander, *Opera omnia*, I, second pagination, 406: "Quemadmodum enim Deus apud se cognovit infinito scientiæ suæ lumine omnium rerum & causarum, quas ipse posset producere, seriem, & quid ex quo infallibiliter sequi possit: ita etiam ante omne decretum præscivit, quomodo voluntas hominis se huc aut illuc, his aut illis positis esset inclinatura, sine violatione suæ libertatis modo ipse causas illas in actum deduceret, occasiones externas no[n] impediret, & obstacula iis nulla poneret" (my translation).

[46] Walaeus, letter to Polyander, *Opera omnia*, I, second pagination, 406: "Hic tamen & illud observandum est, infinitum hunc rerum à mente divina cognitarum Thesaurum, non esse statuendum causam ullius decreti à Deo deinde facti, ut Stoici & Remonstrantes diverso fine comminiscuntur, sed objectum solum indeterminatu[m], ex quo voluntas divina per sapientiam suam directa partem aliquam libere selegit, præteritis & omissis reliquis" (my translation).

an orthodox critic, William Ames. It grounds the knowledge in "the infinite light" of God's knowledge, Gomarus's own phrase. It builds God's own action into the conditions: *if* God brings these causes into act and puts no obstacle in the way. And it makes the knowledge an "object" of the decree, never its "cause." The value claimed is modest: one of two honest ways of holding together God's government and human freedom, and the more scriptural of the two.

4.2 The reply to Corvinus

The second text is Walaeus's reply to Johannes Arnoldi Corvinus, a Remonstrant minister who had attacked Pierre du Moulin's *Anatome Arminianismi*. The reply's title presents it as a defence of the doctrine explained and established at the Synod of Dort. The Leiden theology faculty, Polyander, André Rivet and Antonius Thysius, approved it (in its first part) for publication on 18 August 1625.[47] This is the statement Walaeus prepared for publication in the years just after Dort, and it is written directly against the Remonstrants.

Three passages bear on our subject. The first concerns God's permission of sin. Walaeus distinguishes the permission by which a particular act is permitted to the will. That permission, he says, presupposes a determination of the will to this act rather than that, a determination the will makes when left to itself in a given order of things. He then allows a foreknowledge of such a determination:

> We do not exclude from the decree of permission a foreknowledge of this hypothetical determination in wicked acts; provided this is added: that this prevision of a determination future on a hypothesis is not the cause of the decree by which such an act is permitted, since God, even when he permits it, could prevent it by grace, as he mostly does in his elect; but that it has only the character of an object, about which the free decree of providence, and specifically of this permission, is concerned.[48]

The second passage is the clearest single statement of Walaeus's doctrine anywhere in his works. Corvinus had appealed to foreknowledge to support the permissive decree. Walaeus answers:

> As for the support you fetch for this permissive decree from foreknowledge: as we noted before, we do not simply deny it, provided you understand the knowledge of

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[47] Walaeus, *Responsio*, in *Opera omnia*, I, second pagination, title page, where the title continues *et ad scripta Remonstrantium, qui ad Synodum Dordracenam citati sunt, pro defensione doctrinae in eadem synodo explicatae et stabilitae*. The faculty approval on the following leaf is signed by Johannes Polyander, Andreas Rivetus and Antonius Thysius and dated "Lugduni Batavorum, xv. Cal. Septemb." 1625, that is, 18 August 1625. It approves the prefatory questions and the first article.

[48] Walaeus, *Responsio*, c. "De divina providentia," in *Opera omnia*, I, second pagination, 114, left column. The determination is one "quæ ab ipsa sic sibi relicta, & non à permittente fit." The passage continues: "cujus determinationis hypotheticæ in actibus pravis præscientiam ex decreto permissionis non excludimus; modo hoc addatur, prævisionem hanc determinationis ex Hypothesi futuræ non esse causam decreti, quo permittitur ejusmodi actus; cum Deus eum etiam tum cum permittit per gratiam impedire possit, quemadmodum in electis suis ut plurimum impedit; sed habere rationem objecti tantum, circa quod decretum liberum Providentiæ, & speciatim permissionis hujus versatur" (my translation).

> simple intelligence, to which we refer that hypothetical knowledge which precedes the decree and is the decree's object. For absolute knowledge can have no place in God except after the decree has already been made, as you yourself confessed in the preceding chapter.[49]

Every element of Gomarus's doctrine is here: the hypothetical knowledge belongs to simple intelligence; it comes before the decree; it is the decree's object; and knowledge of what will actually happen comes only after the decree.

The third passage introduces a term we must now define. A *hypothetical decree* is a decree of God that is stated with a condition. The phrase can be read in two ways, and I shall argue that Walaeus needs both. Here it means a decree whose content includes a condition, such as God's decree to promise life *if* a person believes. In the *Loci*, I suggest, it functions as a decree God is *supposed* to make when we reason about what would follow "if God decreed this." Another reading is possible: that Walaeus means an actual conditional decree there too and has left a tension unresolved. In the first sense Walaeus accepts the phrase, but he refuses the Remonstrant version of it:

> If orthodox men said that God's promises, as explained in paragraph 8, and accordingly also his threats, are a hypothetical decree of God, it could be admitted by us in a sound sense: namely, that God decreed to promise us his benefits and life under this or that condition. Hence we also gladly confess that some decrees of God include a condition, whose fulfilment is nonetheless also certain to God, whether he wills to bring it about that the condition is fulfilled by the creature, or wills to permit that it is not fulfilled.[50]

But the Remonstrants, he goes on, "introduce conditional decrees of God whose outcome depends on uncertain human choice," so that the outcome is uncertain to God himself until he foresees how the human will decides. That makes God's decrees changeable, "some contrary to others, and succeeding one another as man inclines himself by free choice," which Walaeus calls "plainly untheological and close to blasphemy."[51] On the same page he adds that foreknowledge

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[49] Walaeus, *Responsio*, in *Opera omnia*, I, second pagination, 120, right column: "Quod enim à præscientia huic decreto permissivo subsidium arcessis, nos id, ut antea monuimus, non simpliciter negamus, modo scientiam simplicis intelligentiæ intelligas, ad quam hypotheticam illam referimus, quæ decretum antecedit, & decreti objectum est: nam absoluta scientia in Deo locum habere non potest, nisi post decretum jam factu[m], ut ipse superiori capite es confessus" (my translation).

[50] Walaeus, *Responsio*, in *Opera omnia*, I, second pagination, 123, left column: "Promissiones vero Dei ut paragr. 8. explicatur, ac proinde & comminationes, esse Dei decretum hypotheticum si à viris orthodoxis diceretur, sensu sano à nobis admitti posset, quia nempe Deus decrevit sub hac aut illa conditione nobis beneficia sua & vitam promittere: unde & libenter fatemur, Dei quædam decreta conditionem includere, cujus tamen complementum Deo quoque sit certum, sive velit efficere ut conditio impleatur à creatura, sive velit permittere ut non compleatur" (my translation).

[51] Walaeus, *Responsio*, in *Opera omnia*, I, second pagination, 123, left column: "quia conditionalia Dei decreta introducitis, quorum exitus pendeat ab incerto arbitrio humano; ac proinde quorum eventus ipsi Deo sit incertus, nisi post humani arbitrii determinationem prævisam. Quo respectu & decreta Dei mutabilia, atque alia aliis contraria, &

properly so called depends on the decree, so that on the Remonstrant view God, who first willed a man's salvation, "on seeing that he will not believe, changed his counsel and afterwards decreed his death."[52] Here he sides openly with du Moulin, whom he says had "rightly noted" the point.[53]

The reply to Corvinus shows us what Walaeus was guarding against. He can accept a hypothetical knowledge, because it is God's knowledge and it serves God's decree. He cannot accept a conditional decree that waits on the creature, because that would make God's plan follow the human will.

4.3 The *Loci communes*

The third and fullest treatment comes in Walaeus's *Loci communes*, the "common places" of theology in which he set out the whole of Christian doctrine. The section on God's knowledge carries no date. It answers Conrad Vorstius and the Socinians. The *Loci communes* were first printed about 1641, two years before the *Opera omnia*, and the *Opera* of 1643 gives a text revised against Walaeus's manuscript, which is the text cited here.[54] The discussion runs from page 172 to page 176.

He begins with the old problem of future contingents, events that could go either way, such as a free human choice. How can such events have a certain truth before they happen? Walaeus reviews two answers. Some say everything is present to God's eternity. Others say that, though each cause taken by itself is contingent, the whole order of causes under God's providence yields infallible outcomes. He then gives his own preference:

> But the safest course is to refer this whole matter to the infinity of the light of divine knowledge, by which it comes about that it penetrates not only the possible modes of contingent things but also those that will certainly be; although this happens in a way incomprehensible to us.[55]

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sibi mutuo, prout se homo per liberum arbitrium inclinat, succedentia constituitis; quæ omnia plane sunt ἀθεόλογα, & blasphemiis affinia" (my translation).

[52] Walaeus, *Responsio*, in *Opera omnia*, I, second pagination, 123, right column: "quia præscientia proprie dicta pendet ex decreto, ut supra ipse es fassus. [...] & qui antea voluit ac decrevit homini salutem, cum videt non crediturum, mutavit consilium & decrevit postea ejus mortem" (my translation).

[53] Walaeus, *Responsio*, in *Opera omnia*, I, second pagination, 123, left column: "Sed eo quo à vobis urgetur sensu admitti non potest, quemadmodum recte notavit paragr. 8. Cl. Molinæus" (my translation).

[54] Preface to the reader ("Lectori"), in Walaeus, *Opera omnia*, I (1643), front matter: "Sed de his Locis Communibus insuper monendu[m] est, eos ante biennium ab hoc ipso Typographo excusos esse, editionisque curam viro erudito incubuisse"; and, of the text now printed: "totum opus ad autoris manuscriptum denuo contulimus, innumera restituimus suis locis, & ipsum opus plus centenis locis limatius auctiusque reddidimus" (my translation).

[55] Walaeus, *Loci communes*, "De Dei scientia," in *Opera omnia*, I, 172, right column: "Tutissimum vero est, hoc totum referre ad infinitatem luminis divinæ scientiæ. quo fit, ut penetret non tantum modos possibiles rerum contingentium, sed etiam certo futuros; etsi id fiat ratione nobis incomprehensibili" (my translation).

He supports this with Romans 11:33, "Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God!"[56] Walaeus's first move, then, is not a theory but a confession: God knows future contingent events, and the way he knows them is beyond us.

A little later he answers the objection that if events are infallibly certain, prayer and effort are useless. We will return to this passage in Section 6, because it shows where Walaeus refused to use middle knowledge. At the end of it he promises: "Of the *scientia media* which some call in to help here, we shall treat expressly later, and it will be seen how far it can or cannot be granted."[57] The very wording tells us that his acceptance will be limited.

He then lays down the Reformed division of God's knowledge. God's knowledge is divided into the knowledge of *simple intelligence* and the knowledge of *vision*:

> The knowledge of simple intelligence is that by which God knows all things in their nature and in their ideas: whether possible or impossible, true or false, necessary or contingent. That of vision is the knowledge by which God from eternity knows all future things as future, or beholds them as present or past.[58]

The first is also called indeterminate and necessary, and it is natural to God. The second is called determinate and *free*, because God, "out of that infinite treasury of things known to him from eternity," chose by his free will what he willed to happen, and could have chosen otherwise.[59] Walaeus's knowledge of vision is what Molina called free knowledge.

Which comes first, then, God's knowledge or his decree? Walaeus answers that simple intelligence "precedes absolutely," because it is natural to God and is the guide and object of his will, while the knowledge of vision "necessarily follows the act of will, or decree, in the order of eternity." The reason is that things could not be future unless God decreed that they should be, "unless we wish to introduce a self-standing being before God's decree, which is absurd and

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[56] Romans 11:33, ESV. Walaeus cites Romans 11:33 and Psalm 147:5 at *Loci communes*, in *Opera omnia*, I, 172.

[57] Walaeus, *Loci communes*, in *Opera omnia*, I, 172–173: "De scientia media quam nonnulli hic in auxilium vocant, postea ex professo agetur, & quatenus ea concedi possit aut non possit, videbitur" (my translation).

[58] Walaeus, *Loci communes*, in *Opera omnia*, I, 174, left column: "Scientia simplicis intelligentiæ est, quâ Deus res omnes in sua natura, & in suis ideis novit; sive eæ sint possibiles sive impossibiles; sive veræ sive falsæ; sive necessariæ sive contingentes. Visionis vero vocatur, qua Deus ab æterno res omnes futuras ut futuras novit, aut qua eas ut pręsentes aut præteritas intuetur" (my translation).

[59] Walaeus, *Loci communes*, in *Opera omnia*, I, 174, left column: "Prior vocatur quoque scientia indeterminata, & necessaria, quæ Deo simpliciter coëssentialis & naturalis est. Posterior determinata & libera vocatur, quia nempe Deus ex infinito illo rerum sibi ab æterno cognitarum thesauro, per liberam voluntate[m] suam selegit & determinavit quę fieri voluit: libera autem dicitur, quia Deus potuisset ea non seligere, ac proinde ea hoc modo non scire, aut aliter seligere, atque aliter scire" (my translation).

blasphemous."[60] This is the Reformed conviction that governs the whole discussion: nothing is future apart from God's decree.

Only now does Walaeus pose the question of middle knowledge:

> But now another question is raised: is there not some *scientia media* in God which precedes the decree? That is called middle knowledge by which future things are known on a hypothesis, although they are not absolutely future, or are not yet: for example, did not God foreknow that Adam would abuse his liberty if God created him such, adorned him with such gifts, permitted him to be tempted, etc., even before he decreed to create him and adorn him with such gifts? And so of the other events of free choice, which depend on the choice of angels or men.[61]

The example is Gomarus's, almost to its parts: creation, gifts, permitted temptation. Walaeus then reports that the orthodox are divided. Some "do not admit it, because some infallibility seems to be set up in things apart from God's decree."[62] But others support it:

> Yet there are some among the orthodox, and among others Franciscus Gomarus in his Theses on predestination, who think it must by all means be posited; both because of certain places of Holy Scripture that seem to assert it; and so that the immutability of all God's decrees can be preserved; and so that it can in some way be explained how God, through his decree, is not the author or cause of evil.[63]

Here is Walaeus's named authority a second time, together with the three reasons Gomarus's side gave: Scripture, the unchangeableness of God's decrees, and the defence of God against the charge of authoring sin. Walaeus then gives four arguments of his own, which I will set out in

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[60] Walaeus, *Loci communes*, in *Opera omnia*, I, 174, right column: "Simplex intellectus, seu scientia simplicis intelligentiæ omnino antecedit, quia Deo naturalis est, & causa directrix, & objectum voluntatis. [...] Sed scientia visionis, qua res intuetur ut certo futuras, in ordine æternitatis necessario sequitur voluntatis actum seu decretum"; and "futuræ autem esse non potuerunt, nisi quum Deus decrevit ut futuræ essent: nisi velimus αὐτουσίαν introducere ante Dei decretum, quod absurdum & blasphemum est" (my translation).

[61] Walaeus, *Loci communes*, in *Opera omnia*, I, 174, right column, with the marginal heading "3. Quæstio. De scientia media in Deo": "Sed hic jam alia quæstio movetur: An non sit aliqua scientia media in Deo quæ decretum antecedat? Vocatur autem scientia media, qua ex hypothesi res futuræ cognoscuntur, etsi absolute futuræ non sint, aut nondum sint: ut exempli causa, An non Deus præsciverit Adamum sua libertate esse abusurum, si Deus eum talem conderet, donis ejusmodi ornaret, tentari permitteret, &c. etiam antequam eum creare & ejusmodi donis ornare, &c. decrevit? & sic de cæteris liberi arbitrii eventibus, ex angelorum aut hominum arbitrio pendentibus" (my translation).

[62] Walaeus, *Loci communes*, in *Opera omnia*, I, 174–175: "Video inter Orthodoxos scriptores esse, qui eam non admittunt, quia videtur aliqua infallibilitas in rebus constitui, citra Dei decretum, in ipsis rebus, aut rerum infallibili à se mutuo dependentia" (my translation).

[63] Walaeus, *Loci communes*, in *Opera omnia*, I, 175: "Sunt tamen inter Orthodoxos nonnulli, atque inter alios Franciscus Gomarus in Thesibus de prædestinatione, qui eam omnino statuendam putent; tum propter quædam S. Scripturæ loca quæ hoc videntur asserere; tum ut immutabilitas omnium Dei decretorum possit servari: & aliquo modo explicari possit, quomodo Deus per decretum suum non sit author aut causa mali" (my translation).

Section 6, answers an objection by appealing to a presupposed hypothetical decree, and finally purges the doctrine of its Jesuit abuses. To the purge we now turn.

5. The Purge, and an Honest Tension

Walaeus announces the purge in one plain sentence:

> Because, however, certain Jesuits, and others following them, abuse this middle knowledge, this opinion must be purged of their errors.[64]

The printed margin gives the passage its heading: a "vindication" of the opinion about God's middle knowledge "from the abuse of certain men." Walaeus names no Jesuit. He does not mention Molina, Fonseca or anyone else. But the three errors he removes strike at Molina's use of the doctrine in election, its use in conversion, and its claim to be a third kind of knowledge.

5.1 First: no merit in election

The first error concerns predestination:

> First, against those who, through this opinion about middle knowledge, pave the way for setting up human merits in electing and saving. For this is what they want: that God, before he elected a man, saw through how that man would or would not assent by free choice if this or that prevenient and concomitant grace were offered to him in this or that order of things, or in this or that state; so that free choice determines God's grace for them, not the reverse.[65]

"Prevenient" grace is grace that comes first and goes before a person's response; "concomitant" grace is grace that accompanies the response. Walaeus's complaint is precise. On the Jesuit use, God looks ahead to see how each person would respond to each possible offer of grace, and then chooses accordingly. The final word lies with the creature's choice. Walaeus answers with Romans 9:16: "So then it depends not on human will or exertion, but on God, who has mercy."[66] Middle knowledge, whatever else it may be, can never be the ground of God's choosing.

5.2 Second: God acts really in conversion

The second error concerns the way God converts a sinner:

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[64] Walaeus, *Loci communes*, in *Opera omnia*, I, 175: "Quia tamen Iesuitæ quidam, & alii eos sequentes, hac media scientia abutuntur, ideo ab eorum erroribus hæc sententia est repurganda." The marginal heading reads: "Vindicatio istius sententiæ de media Dei scientia ab abusu quorundam" (my translation).

[65] Walaeus, *Loci communes*, in *Opera omnia*, I, 175: "Primo adversus eos, qui per hanc sententiam de media scientia viam sternunt ad merita humana in eligendis & servandis statuenda. Nam hoc volunt illi, nempe Deum, priusquam hominem elegit, pervidisse, quomodo, si hæc aut illa gratià præveniens & concomitans in hoc aut illo ordine rerum, vel in hoc aut illo statu, homini offerretur, ille per liberum arbitrium ei esset assensurus aut non adsensurus, adeo ut liberum arbitrium gratiam Dei eis determinet, non contra" (my translation).

[66] Romans 9:16, ESV. Walaeus, *Loci communes*, in *Opera omnia*, I, 175: "quia non est volentis nec currentis, sed miserentis Dei. Rom. 9. vers. 16."

> Next, against those who propose this opinion about middle knowledge before the decree is fixed, in order to remove from man's will every real action of God, which they call physical, in man's conversion. For it will be shown later that God acts in man's will not only morally but also physically when he converts him.[67]

The terms need explaining, because "physical" here has nothing to do with the body. A *moral* action is the kind of influence one person has on another by persuading, inviting, warning or offering reasons; it works from outside and leaves the decision to the one persuaded. A *physical* action, in this old sense, is a real action by which God himself works within the will and changes it. If God knows in advance exactly which persuasion will succeed with which person, he need do no more than supply it; the rest is left to the will. That, in Walaeus's view, is how middle knowledge was being used: to reduce grace to persuasion. Against this he cites Philippians 2:13: "for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure."[68]

5.3 Third: not a third kind of knowledge

The third point concerns the structure of God's knowledge itself:

> Finally, it is also not necessary that this hypothetical knowledge be posited as some third species of knowledge, because it belongs to the knowledge of simple intelligence. For it is absolutely necessary that God from eternity beheld all possible modes of secondary causes, whether they act alone or with others; and accordingly what would infallibly happen or not happen on each certain hypothesis posited, if he produced those causes, concurred with them in this or that way, or disposed them or allowed them to be disposed in this or that way: this no Christian will deny.[69]

Here Walaeus does what Gomarus's theses do: he keeps the Reformed twofold division of God's knowledge and puts the hypothetical knowledge inside its first part. He also shows *why* it belongs there. The "hypothesis" in every case includes God's own action: *if* God produced these causes, *if* he concurred with them in this way, *if* he disposed them or let them be disposed in that way. "Concurrence" is the Reformed term for God's working together with every creature's action, so that no creature acts without him. The conditional knowledge, then, is never

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[67] Walaeus, *Loci communes*, in *Opera omnia*, I, 175: "Deinde adversus eos, qui hanc sententiam de media scientia ante decretum firmatum proponunt, ut omnem realem actionem Dei, quam Physicam vocant, in hominis conversione ex ejus voluntate tollant. Nam postea demonstrabitur, Deum non tantum moraliter, sed etiam physice in hominis voluntate agere, quando eum convertit" (my translation).

[68] Philippians 2:13, ESV, cited by Walaeus at *Loci communes*, in *Opera omnia*, I, 175.

[69] Walaeus, *Loci communes*, in *Opera omnia*, I, 175: "Denique non est etiam necessarium, ut hæc scientia hypothetica statuatur tertia aliqua species scientiæ; quia illa ad scientiam simplicis intelligentiæ pertinet. Nam illud est absolute necessarium, ut Deus omnes modos possibiles causarum secundarum, sive solæ sive cum aliis agant, ab ęterno co[n]spexerit; ac proinde quid ex unaquaque certa hypothesi posita infallibiliter fieret, vel no[n] fieret, si causas illas produceret, eis hoc aut illo modo co[n]curreret, vel hoc aut illo modo disponeret aut disponi sineret: hoc nemo Christianus negabit" (my translation).

knowledge of what creatures would do apart from God: the conditions always include God's own possible ways of acting. That is why Walaeus can count it part of God's knowledge of all possibilities. He does not give up the name *scientia media*, and he still places this knowledge before every decree. What he denies is only that it is a third kind of knowledge.

Walaeus goes on to distinguish two kinds of conditional truth. Some follow from rules God has already laid down. God has decreed that whoever believes in Christ will be saved; so if an upright man believed, he would be saved. God has decreed that there is only one gospel; so if even an angel from heaven preached another, he would be accursed. Such conditionals are known through the knowledge of vision, because they follow from what God has actually decreed. "The whole difference, then," Walaeus says, "lies in singular instances," such as the men of Keilah, which do not follow from any general rule; and in these too, "a conditional decree of God must necessarily be understood."[70]

So the purge removes three things: the third kind, the use in predestination, and the use that makes grace wait on the creature's choice. What is left is a purified middle knowledge.

5.4 The tension

Fairness requires me to state a tension in Walaeus's account just as plainly. In his first argument from Scripture he concludes that there is "some such hypothetical knowledge in God, before every decree of his."[71] Yet when he answers the objection that this sets up an infallibility in things apart from God's decree, he says:

> This is denied, because a hypothetical decree must also necessarily be presupposed here. For it cannot be said, "this will happen if this is posited," unless that very thing is posited by God's decree; for it cannot posit itself, much less be posited or happen rashly or by chance.[72]

He had already said the same in passing: "We grant, however, that a conditional decree is also included in those conditional predictions, as will be seen later; but that does not remove the thing

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[70] Walaeus, *Loci communes*, in *Opera omnia*, I, 175–176: "Exempli causa, Deus decrevit, ut, quicunque credit in Christum, servetur; ergo, si probus aliquis crederet, servaretur. Item decrevit ut unicum tantum esset salutis Euangelium; ergo, si vel Angelus de cœlo aliud Euangelium prædicaret qua[m] quod Paulus ex Dei voluntate prædicavit, anathema esset. Tota ergo differentia est in exemplis singularibus, quæ ex ejusmodi regulis jam à Deo constitutis non pendent, sicut antea dictum, in quibus tamen, ut antea quoq[ue] monuimus, Dei conditionale decretum necessario intelligi debet" (my translation).

[71] Walaeus, *Loci communes*, in *Opera omnia*, I, 175: "Ergo ex illis & similibus locis manifestum est, esse talem aliquam hypotheticam scientiam in Deo ante omne decretum ejus, de eo quod certo futurum fuit" (my translation).

[72] Walaeus, *Loci communes*, in *Opera omnia*, I, 175, with the marginal heading "Nec ideo ponitur infallibilitas in rebus citra Dei decretum": "Resp. Hoc negatur, quia decretum hypotheticum hic necessario quòque supponendum: nam non potest dici, hoc fiet si hoc ponatur, nisi illud ipsum ex Dei decreto ponatur; se ipsum enim ponere non potest, multo minus temere aut fortuito poni, aut fieri" (my translation).

itself."[73] How can a knowledge be "before every decree" and at the same time presuppose a decree?

The best answer, I believe, is this. The "hypothetical decree" is not an actual decree that God has made. It is the supposition *if God were to decree* this. When God knows that the men of Keilah would hand David over if David stayed, the condition includes God's own decree to place David and the men of Keilah in those circumstances and to act in them as he acts. God knows what would follow *on the supposition* that he so decreed. The knowledge comes before any actual decree; what it presupposes is a possible decree. This reading fits Walaeus's language elsewhere: in the letter the knowledge holds "provided he himself brought those causes into act," and in the purge the hypothesis is "if he produced those causes, concurred with them," and so on. It also fits the *Responsio*, where the hypothetical knowledge is the "object" of the decree, not its product. This is my reading, not Walaeus's own formula, and it does not fit every passage equally well. His concession that "a conditional decree is also included" in conditional predictions, and his statement that in singular instances "a conditional decree of God must necessarily be understood," read more naturally as speaking of an actual conditional decree; it may be that Walaeus is simply uneven here. Dolf te Velde, more cautiously, suggests that "it could well be argued" that Gomarus and Walaeus accepted middle knowledge as "a structural moment in God's knowledge, logically situated 'between' God's knowledge of mere possibilities and God's knowledge of actuality," while never treating conditional futures as becoming actual "apart from a determinate decree of God." My reading is consistent with his, but goes beyond it.[74]

That reading removes the contradiction, but not every difficulty. If God knows what a free creature would do on the supposition that he decreed to act in a certain way, what makes that conditional true? Molina had a clear answer: the creature's own free choice. Walaeus does not adopt that answer, and he offers nothing in its place. He appeals to the infinite light of God's knowledge, and, speaking of God's knowledge of future free acts in general, he confesses that God knows them "in a way incomprehensible to us."[75] His *Enchiridion*, a short handbook of doctrine, makes the same move without using the term middle knowledge at all. There he writes that if anyone can tell him how God foresees the outcomes of free causes without violating their freedom, "by the same effort I will tell him how God governs such outcomes without violating

[73] Walaeus, *Loci communes*, in *Opera omnia*, I, 175: "Fatemur tamen, decretum conditionale in illis prædictionibus conditionalibus quoque includi, ut postea videbitur: sed illud rem ipsam non tollit" (my translation).

[74] Te Velde, *Paths Beyond Tracing Out*, 331 n. 80: "It could well be argued that they accepted middle knowledge in the sense of a structural moment in God's knowledge, logically situated 'between' God's knowledge of mere possibilities and God's knowledge of actuality, but that they never viewed the 'conditional futures' with which middle knowledge is concerned as a category that becomes actual apart from a determinate decree of God."

[75] Walaeus, *Loci communes*, in *Opera omnia*, I, 172: "etsi id fiat ratione nobis incomprehensibili" (my translation). The passage concerns God's knowledge of future contingents that will certainly be; conditional knowledge is deferred to p. 174.

liberty."[76] Walaeus holds that God knows conditional truths and that God's decree governs every actual outcome, and he declines to explain how the first is grounded. That is not a contradiction. It is an honest limit, and Walaeus marks it himself.

6. What Walaeus Used It For, and What He Would Not Use It For

We can now answer directly the question of use and value. Walaeus used hypothetical knowledge for five purposes. He refused to use it for two.

6.1 Five uses

First, to honour Scripture's conditional statements. The Bible sometimes tells us what *would* have happened under conditions that never came about. The clearest case is David at Keilah. David asked the Lord, "Will the men of Keilah surrender me and my men into the hand of Saul?" And the Lord said, "They will surrender you" (1 Samuel 23:12). David left, and they never did. Jesus says that if the mighty works done in Chorazin and Bethsaida "had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes" (Matthew 11:21).[77] He tells Peter that he could appeal to his Father, who "will at once send me more than twelve legions of angels" (Matthew 26:53).[78] Walaeus adds the passage he cites as "Ezekiel 2:16," which is most likely a misprint for Ezekiel 3:6, the text Gomarus used: "Surely, if I sent you to such, they would listen to you." He then gives a second set of conditional texts (Deuteronomy 7:3, 1 Kings 11:2, Matthew 24:22 and Galatians 1:8).[79] From these he concludes that God has a certain knowledge of what would have been. He answers two evasions. Some say such statements are only guesses or comparisons. They are "not to be heard," he says, "because certain truth undoubtedly underlies those assertions." Others say God foretells these things from causes already fixed on their course. That will not do either, "because free causes can always change their purpose as long as the effect is in their power."[80]

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[76] Walaeus, *Enchiridion*, "De providentia Dei," in *Opera omnia*, I, fol. 32, right column: "imo dicat mihi aliquis, quo pacto Deus hos eventus, qui ex causis liberis pendent, prævideat; ego illi eadem opera dicam, quomodo Deus ejusmodi eventus, sine violatione libertatis gubernet. Nam eodem modo Deus eos ad fines suos gubernat, quo eos contingere posse ante omnem gubernatione[m] suam, infallibiliter prævidit" (my translation).

[77] 1 Samuel 23:12 and Matthew 11:21, ESV. Walaeus cites both at *Loci communes*, in *Opera omnia*, I, 175.

[78] Matthew 26:53, ESV, cited by Walaeus at *Loci communes*, in *Opera omnia*, I, 175.

[79] Walaeus, *Loci communes*, in *Opera omnia*, I, 175, where the reference is printed "Ezech. 2.16"; compare Gomarus, Disp. X, th. XXXIII, *Opera theologica omnia* (1664), *Disputationes*, 27, printed reference: Ezekiel 3:6. Ezekiel 3:6 is quoted from the ESV. The second argument, on the same page, cites Deuteronomy 7:3, 1 Kings 11:2, Matthew 24:22 and Galatians 1:8.

[80] Walaeus, *Loci communes*, in *Opera omnia*, I, 175: "Exc. Quæ vero ad hæc à nonnullis respondentur, non videntur tollere vim argumenti. Nam qui putant hæc tantum affirmari ex conjecturá, aut per comparationem aliquam, audiendi non sunt: quia sine dubio certa veritas iis assertionibus subest. Qui dicunt, id prædici ex cognitione causarum jam ad id determinatarum, quoque non satisfaciunt: quia causæ liberæ semper mutare propositum possunt, quamdiu effectus est in eorum potestate" (my translation).

Second, to hold that God knows every truth. His third argument is a short syllogism: "Every truth is an object of divine foreknowledge. But in those conditionals, on whatever causes they depend, there is some truth. Therefore, etc."[81] If God is all-knowing, he knows true conditionals too.

Third, to protect the unchangeableness of God's decrees across the covenants. This is Walaeus's most distinctive argument, and it does not appear in the theses of Gomarus discussed above. Reformed theology spoke of two covenants: the *covenant of works*, in which God promised life to Adam on condition of perfect obedience, and the *covenant of grace*, in which after the fall God promises life on condition of faith in Christ. Walaeus argues:

> Finally, without this hypothetical knowledge preceding God's decrees, the immutability of the divine decrees can hardly, it seems, be defended. For God first determined to set life before man under the condition of legal obedience, but after the fall under the condition of faith in Christ. Therefore either this hypothetical knowledge of the fall must be placed before the legal covenant, to which God afterwards subordinated the other; or it would have to be said that God, having decreed and foreknown the first covenant, only then, after man's fall, changed his purpose and substituted the other covenant.[82]

The point is simple and strong. If God did not know beforehand that Adam would fall if placed under the covenant of works, then the covenant of grace would look like a second plan, adopted when the first failed. Walaeus will not allow that God ever changes his plan. So God must have known, before his decree, what Adam would do; and he ordered the two covenants together, the second already in view when he made the first.

Fourth, to relate God's permission of sin to his decree without making him its author. In the reply to Corvinus, as we saw, Walaeus allows God a foreknowledge of the way a wicked will would determine itself if permitted, and he insists that this foreknowledge is the object and not the cause of the permitting decree. He also reports that this was one of Gomarus's reasons: to explain "in some way" how God, through his decree, "is not the author or cause of evil."[83] God does not make a man sin; he knows what the man would do if left to himself, and he decrees whether to permit it or to prevent it by grace.

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[81] Walaeus, *Loci communes*, in *Opera omnia*, I, 175: "omnis veritas est objectum divinæ præscientiæ. At in conditionalibus illis, ex quibuscumque causis pendeant, est aliqua veritas. Ergo &c." (my translation).

[82] Walaeus, *Loci communes*, in *Opera omnia*, I, 175: "Denique sine hac hypothetica scientia decreta Dei antecedente, immutabilitas divinorum decretorum vix videtur posse defendi. Nam Deus primo statuit homini vitam proponere sub conditione legalis obedientiæ, post lapsum vero sub conditione fidei in Christum. Ergo vel hanc hypotheticam scientiam lapsus oportet legali fæderi præponere, cui postea Deus alterum subordinavit: vel dicendum esset, Deum primo fædere decreto & præcognito, tum demum post lapsum hominis, mutasse propositum, & alterum fædus substituisse" (my translation).

[83] Walaeus, *Loci communes*, in *Opera omnia*, I, 175: "& aliquo modo explicari possit, quomodo Deus per decretum suum non sit author aut causa mali" (my translation).

Fifth, to hold together God's government and human freedom. This is the use in the letter to Polyander. The knowledge lets Walaeus say that God governs the free acts of men "without violation of their liberty," because God knows how each will would incline under each set of conditions God might bring about, and by his decree fixes one way rather than another.[84]

6.2 Not for prayer

Walaeus's refusals are as telling as his uses. The first concerns prayer. Molina, as we saw, used middle knowledge to explain how Stephen's prayers could be a means of Paul's salvation. Walaeus faced the same question, the old objection that if all events are certain, prayer is pointless. His answer does not use middle knowledge at all:

> The consequence is denied. That infallible existence of events also presupposes that all these things will exist infallibly and yet freely. For God ordained not only the ends but also the means to the end, and ordained them by the same decree. [...] Just as the best ends together with the best means are known to him in the knowledge of simple intelligence, so he also confirmed both by the same decree, and at the same time the mode in which these means would produce such an effect, namely contingently or necessarily.[85]

His examples are Hezekiah's recovery in Isaiah 38 and Paul's shipwreck in Acts 27:30, where God promised that all would be saved and yet the sailors had to stay in the ship. Prayer matters because God decreed it as a means together with the end it obtains. The one decree includes both. There is no need for God to look ahead to discover what a creature would do and then fit his plan around it. It is at exactly this point that Walaeus defers middle knowledge to a later discussion, "and it will be seen how far it can or cannot be granted."[86] He did not need it here.

6.3 Not for election

The second refusal concerns election, and it is absolute. The first point of the purge rules out any election based on foreseen response to grace. Walaeus's chapter on election confirms it. There he

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[84] Walaeus, letter to Polyander, *Opera omnia*, I, second pagination, 406: "sine violatione suæ libertatis" (my translation).

[85] Walaeus, *Loci communes*, in *Opera omnia*, I, 172–173: "Resp. Negatur consequentia: quia existentia illa eventuum infallibilis, etiam hæc omnia infallibiliter & tamen libere extitura supponit. Deus enim non tantum fines, sed etiam media ad finem ordinavit, & eodem quidem decreto ordinavit, (vide exemplum Esa. 38. vers. 1. &c. in exemplo Esechiæ, & Act. 27.30 in exemplo Pauli & cum ipso navigantium,) quum Deus proprie non moveatur à fine ad media indaganda, nec per media ad finem constituendum: sed quemadmodum illi in scientia simplicis intelligentiæ optimi fines cum optimis mediis sunt cogniti, ita quoque eodem decreto utrumque firmavit, & simul quoque modum quo hæc media talem effectum essent productura, nempe vel contingenter vel necessario" (my translation).

[86] Walaeus, *Loci communes*, in *Opera omnia*, I, 172–173: "& quatenus ea concedi possit aut non possit, videbitur" (my translation).

rejects the view that God elects individuals "only incompletely, conditionally and revocably," depending on whether they fulfil a condition:

> For although we will not deny that the conditions of faith, repentance, perseverance, etc. are contained in this decree of election taken as a whole, yet we deny that the firmness and outcome of election are suspended on those conditions.[87]

Faith, repentance and perseverance are real conditions, and God's decree includes them. But they are included as things God gives to the elect, not as things he waits to see. The only place where hypothetical knowledge touches the order of God's saving decrees is the covenant argument: God knew beforehand that Adam would fall, and ordered the covenant of grace to follow the covenant of works. That is knowledge of the fall. It is never knowledge of who would believe, used to decide whom to save.

6.4 The value he claimed

What value, then, did Walaeus claim for the doctrine? The answer is: a modest one. He never said, as Molina did, that it held the key to all the problems of grace and freedom. The margin beside his Scripture proofs says only that Scripture "seems to admit" it.[88] In the letter it is one of two acceptable options, set beside an honest confession of ignorance. In the *Loci*, before he even states the question, he warns that "it will be seen how far it can or cannot be granted." His first word on the whole problem of future contingents is that the "safest" course is to refer it to the infinity of God's knowledge, in a way "incomprehensible to us." And in the purge he says it is "not necessary" to treat it as a third kind of knowledge.

Its value, for Walaeus, was defensive. It let him honour Scripture and guard God's decrees while conceding nothing to the Remonstrants' conditional decrees. That is a real value, but a limited one, and Walaeus meant it to be limited.

7. Walaeus and Molina Side by Side

The comparison can now be set out in one table. Page references are to the editions cited in the notes: Molina's *Concordia* (1876); Walaeus's *Loci communes* and *Responsio* and his letter to Polyander (*Opera omnia*, 1643).

Point	Molina	Walaeus
Name	*Scientia media*, knowledge	Uses *scientia media* to name the

[87] Walaeus, *Loci communes*, "De electione," in *Opera omnia*, I, 326, left column, with the marginal heading "Quorundam exceptio de electione conditionata & incompleta, adeoque pro re nata revocabili, refutatur." The rejected view: "quia Deus singulares personas, quas elegit dum hic vivunt, peremptorie & complete non elegerit, sed incomplete tantum, conditionatim & revocabiliter." Walaeus's answer: "Quia, etsi non inficiemur, conditiones fidei, resipiscentiæ, perseverantiæ &c. in hoc electionis ὅλως sumpto decreto contineri: tamen negamus, ab illis conditionibus electionis firmitatem & eventum suspendi" (my translation).

[88] Walaeus, *Loci communes*, in *Opera omnia*, I, 175, margin: "Quam Scriptura videtur admittere" (my translation).

Point	Molina	Walaeus
	"between" natural and free (*Concordia* 317)	question (*Loci* 174); prefers "hypothetical knowledge" (*Loci* 175; *Responsio* 120) and "middle or conditioned foreknowledge" (letter, 406)
Definition	God's knowledge, from his comprehension of each free will, of what it would do in any order of things (*Concordia* 317)	Knowledge by which future things are known on a hypothesis, though not absolutely future (*Loci* 174)
Proof texts	Matthew 11:21 and 1 Samuel 23:11–12, confirmed from Wisdom 4:11 (*Concordia* 289–290)	1 Samuel 23:12, Matthew 11:21, Matthew 26:53, "Ezekiel 2:16" (for 3:6) and others (*Loci* 175)
Place	A third kind, partly natural and partly free (*Concordia* 317–318)	Not a third kind; belongs to simple intelligence (*Loci* 175; *Responsio* 120), as in Gomarus (Disp. X, th. XXX)
Ground	The creature's free choice: the knowledge depends on what the creature would do, "and not the reverse" (*Concordia* 318); God knows it by comprehending each free will (*Concordia* 317)	Not stated. He appeals to the infinite light of God's knowledge (letter, 406) and insists that the conditions include God's acts and a presupposed decree (*Loci* 175–176)
Relation to the decree	Comes before every free act of God's will; God cannot know otherwise by it (*Concordia* 318)	Comes before the decree only as its object, never its cause (letter, 406; *Responsio* 114, 120); knowledge of what will be follows the decree (*Loci* 174)
Freedom	The creature could always do the opposite (*Concordia* 317)	Liberty without violation (letter, 406), but the will is never its own master apart from God (letter, 406); God acts physically in conversion (*Loci* 175)
Predestination	Used positively: Stephen's foreseen prayers ordained for Paul's salvation (*Concordia* 485)	Excluded as a ground of election (*Loci* 175, 326)
Prayer	Given its place through middle knowledge (*Concordia* 485)	Given its place by the one decree of ends and means (*Loci* 172–173)

Point	Molina	Walaeus
Providence	"Prerequisite" for "most exact providence"; without it God could not order means to ends (*Concordia* 291–292, 365)	Lets God govern free acts "without violation of their liberty" (letter, 406)
Sin	God permits what he foresees would happen unless he prevented it (*Concordia* 292); Peter's denial is permitted by a predetermination not to vary the circumstances (*Concordia* 364)	Foreknowledge of a will's determination if permitted, as object of the permissive decree (*Responsio* 114)
Covenant	No covenant argument in the passages examined; the nearest counterpart is the use for providence as a whole (*Concordia* 291–292, 365)	Needed to keep God's decrees unchanged from the covenant of works to the covenant of grace (*Loci* 175)
Value claimed	"The whole and legitimate way" of reconciling freedom with foreknowledge, providence, predestination and reprobation (*Concordia* 353)	Modest and defensive: Scripture "seems to admit" it; "how far it can or cannot be granted" (*Loci* 172–173, 175)

Three differences stand out, and they are differences of structure, ground and use, though on the ground Walaeus is least explicit.

The difference of *structure* is the plainest. For Molina, middle knowledge is a third kind of divine knowledge. The whole point of the name is that it stands in the middle. For Walaeus, there are still only two kinds, simple intelligence and vision, and the hypothetical knowledge belongs to the first. He keeps the name "middle knowledge," and he still places the knowledge before every decree, so that in order it comes between God's knowledge of what could be and his knowledge of what will be. What he denies is only that it is a third kind of knowledge.

The difference of *ground* is where Walaeus is least explicit. Molina says in as many words that the knowledge depends on the creature's choice, "and not the reverse." Walaeus never says so; he speaks instead of the "infinite light" of God's knowledge and insists that the conditions always include God's own acts: his producing, his concurring, his disposing, and the decree by which anything at all is posited. But his letter still speaks of how a man's will "would incline itself" under given conditions, "without violation of its liberty." The object of the knowledge is the same as Molina's; what differs is where Walaeus puts it and what he will let it do. It is worth noticing that both men use the phrase "not the reverse," and they use it in opposite directions. Molina says the knowledge depends on the creature's choice, "and not the reverse." Walaeus complains that the Jesuit view makes free choice determine God's grace, "not the reverse."

The difference of *use* is the easiest to see. Molina's great application is predestination, and he uses middle knowledge to give prayer its place in God's plan. Walaeus bars middle knowledge from predestination entirely and handles prayer without it. His positive uses are ones Molina did not make central: the unchangeableness of God's decrees across the two covenants, and God's permission of sin.

What they share should also be said. Both men believed that God knows what free creatures would do in circumstances that never arise. Both took its object to include the free choices of angels and men. Both appealed to Scripture's conditional statements. Both placed this knowledge, in some sense, before God's decree. Walaeus's quarrel was with its place, its relation to the decree and its use.

The time frames can be set out in the same way.

Date	Event
1535	Luis de Molina born
Late 1550s to 1560s	The period in which, by their own later claims, Molina and Fonseca began teaching the substance of the doctrine
1573	Antonius Walaeus born at Ghent (3 October)
1588	Molina's *Concordia*, first edition (Lisbon); the name "middle knowledge" appears in print
1595	*Concordia*, second edition (Antwerp)
1596	Fonseca writes his claim of thirty years' priority
1596–1599	Walaeus studies at Leiden under Junius, Trelcatius and Gomarus
c. 1597	Arminius, a pastor in Amsterdam, becomes acquainted with Molina's ideas (as reported by te Velde)
1600	Molina dies
1603	Arminius professor at Leiden; his theses *On the Nature of God* include middle knowledge (as reported by te Velde)
1605	Walaeus minister at Middelburg
c. 1616	Walaeus's letter to Polyander (undated; printed immediately before a letter of 31 May 1616): middle knowledge "with Dr Gomarus"
1618–1619	Synod of Dort; Walaeus a delegate
1619	Walaeus professor of theology at Leiden
1625	Reply to Corvinus approved for printing (18 August)
1639	Walaeus dies (9 July)
c. 1641	*Loci communes* first printed (Leiden: Hackius)
1643	*Opera omnia* printed, including a revised text of the *Loci communes*

The range for Molina and Fonseca is my own arithmetic from their claims. Fonseca's thirty years before 1596 give 1566; Molina's thirty years before the *Concordia* give the late 1550s or the mid-1560s, depending on the edition in which he wrote the words. Gomarus's theses do not appear in the table, because the posthumous edition from which I cite them gives no date for them (Section 9.2 dates the disputation to 1630 from his students' *Apologia*). The date of the first printing of the *Loci communes* is reckoned from the preface to the *Opera omnia*, which says they had been printed two years before.

Read in this way, the dates tell a clear story. Walaeus was a student at Leiden before the idea arrived there. Arminius knew the idea by about 1597 and put it into his Leiden theses in 1603. Walaeus's earliest surviving statement, probably of 1616 or later, comes more than a decade later, and it names Gomarus as its authority, not Arminius or Molina. His statement for publication was approved in 1625, after Dort, in a book written against the Remonstrants. His fullest statement was printed after his death. At no point in this record does Walaeus name Molina or Arminius as his authority.

8. Walaeus, Gomarus and Calvin

Muller sharpened his opening question on the first page of his second chapter: "The question that needs to be asked is not whether Calvin is a scriptural theologian and the Reformed scholastics unscriptural rationalists, but whether the doctrinal motifs drawn by Calvin from scripture are echoed, elaborated, developed, or neglected and set aside by the systems of the 'orthodox' or 'scholastic' thinkers of subsequent generations."[89] Those verbs fit the present case. To use them we need Calvin's own words on three matters: how God's foreknowledge relates to his decree, how providence governs what human beings do, and how he read the conditional texts on which Molina, Gomarus and Walaeus all relied.

8.1 Calvin on foreknowledge and the decree

Calvin distinguished God's foreknowledge from his predestination, and he refused to make either depend on the other in the way his opponents did. "We indeed place both in God," he wrote, "but we say that it is backward to make the one subject to the other." By foreknowledge he meant that "all things always have been, and perpetually remain, under his eyes, so that to his knowledge nothing is future or past, but all things are present."[90] When he came to the objection that God's foreknowledge lays a necessity on sinners, he declined the usual answer that foreknowledge by itself causes nothing. That answer, he said, would be to the point if God merely foresaw human events and did not also dispose and order them by his will:

[89] Muller, *Christ and the Decree*, 17.

[90] Calvin, *Institutio* (1559), III.xxi.5, CO 2:682–683: "Ac nos quidem utramque in Deo statuimus; sed praepostere dicimus alteram alteri subiici. Praescientiam quum tribuimus Deo, significamus omnia semper fuisse ac perpetuo manere sub eius oculis; ut eius notitiae nihil futurum aut praeteritum, sed omnia sint praesentia" (my translation).

> But since he foresees the things that are to come for no other reason than that he decreed that they should come to pass, it is vain to raise a dispute about foreknowledge, when it is plain that all things come about rather by his ordination and bidding.[91]

He said the same of the fall. No one can deny that God foreknew what end man would have before he made him, "and foreknew it because he had so ordained by his decree."[92] In Calvin's order, then, God's foreknowledge of what will be rests on his decree. He allows no knowledge of actual events that stands apart from the decree and informs it.

The providence chapters of the *Institutes* say the same thing from another side. Creatures are "so ruled by the secret counsel of God that nothing happens except what is decreed by him, knowing and willing." Providence is not the kind by which God "idly watches from heaven what happens in the world," but the kind by which, "holding the helm, as it were, he governs all events"; "for many babble very ignorantly of bare foreknowledge."[93] Calvin will not let permission take the place of providence either. Those who "put bare permission in place of the providence of God," he writes, "trifle and talk nonsense, as if he sat in a watchtower awaiting chance events, and his judgments thus depended on the choice of men."[94]

8.2 Calvin on the conditional texts

Molina's two texts, Matthew 11:21 and 1 Samuel 23, are also the texts of Gomarus and Walaeus.[95] Calvin commented on both, and he handled them differently. On Matthew 11:21 he warns against a speculative reading:

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[91] Calvin, *Institutio* (1559), III.xxiii.6, CO 2:703–704: "Si hominum eventa praevideret Deus duntaxat, non etiam suo arbitrio disponeret ac ordinaret, tum non abs re agitaretur quaestio, ecquid ad eorum necessitatem valeat ipsius praevidentia. Sed quum non alia ratione quae futura sunt praevideat, nisi quia ita ut fierent decrevit, frustra de praescientia lis movetur, ubi constat ordinatione potius et nutu omnia evenire" (my translation).

[92] Calvin, *Institutio* (1559), III.xxiii.7, CO 2:704: "infitiari tamen nemo poterit quin praesciverit Deus, quem exitum esset habiturus homo, antequam ipsum conderet, et ideo praesciverit, quia decreto suo sic ordinarat" (my translation).

[93] Calvin, *Institutio* (1559), I.xvi.3–4, CO 2:147: "sed arcano Dei consilio sic regi, ut nihil contingat nisi ab ipso sciente et volente decretum"; "providentiam vocari, non qua Deus e coelo otiosus speculetur quae in mundo fiunt, sed qua veluti clavum tenens, eventus omnes moderatur"; and "Nimis enim inscite nugantur multi de nuda praescientia" (my translation).

[94] Calvin, *Institutio* (1559), I.xviii.1, CO 2:168: "nugari eos et ineptire, qui in locum providentiae Dei nudam permissionem substituunt, ac si in specula sedens exspectaret fortuitos eventus, atque ita eius iudicia penderent ab hominum arbitrio" (my translation).

[95] For Matthew 11:21, Gomarus, *Illustrium ac selectorum ex Euangelio Matthæi locorum explicatio*, on Matthew 11:20–22 ("Capitis undecimi versuum 20, 21, & 22. illustratio," beginning on p. 55), in *Opera theologica omnia* (1664), first pagination, 56: "Quod autem de futura hac Tyriorum, posita illa conditione, pœnitentia asserit, illius veritas ex indefinita divinæ ipsius naturæ præscientia constat, qua novit, quidnam, quo posito antecedente, fuisset secuturum, etiamsi neutrum evenerit"; he adds, "Similis autem locus est Ezech. 3. v. 6. 7." For 1 Samuel 23, see Gomarus, Disp. X, th. XXXIII, *Opera theologica omnia* (1664), *Disputationes*, 27.

> But lest anyone raise thorny questions about the secret judgments of God, it must be held that this saying of the Lord is accommodated to the common capacity of the human mind. Comparing the citizens of Bethsaida and their neighbours with the Tyrians and Sidonians, he does not dispute what God foresaw would become of these or those, but what the one people would have done, so far as could be perceived from the thing itself.[96]

On the saying about Sodom two verses later he repeats the point. Christ speaks "in a human way," and does not bring forth "from the heavenly sanctuary" what God foresaw would have happened had he sent some prophet to the people of Sodom.[97] His homily on David at Keilah goes further:

> Moreover, we must not dispute subtly whether they would or would not have handed David over if he had waited for Saul's coming; yet in this idle question many are accustomed to show off the sharpness of their wit with sophistical imaginings. [...] But here we must observe the counsel of God, incomprehensible to us, concerning the things that could have happened. For whatever men call accidental and fortuitous are nevertheless most certain decrees of God.[98]

The Lord's answer to David, Calvin goes on, is not to be understood "as if the Lord could not dispose otherwise and bend the hearts of the inhabitants," but as a warning to David of their treachery, "so that he would not rashly entrust himself to them."[99]

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[96] Calvin, *Commentarius in harmoniam evangelicam*, on Matthew 11:21, CO 45:312: "Caeterum ne quis spinosas de arcanis Dei iudiciis quaestiones moveat, tenendum est, ad communem humanae mentis captum accommodari hunc Domini sermonem. Comparans cives Bethsaida et eorum vicinos cum Tyriis et Sidoniis, non disputat, quid praeviderit Deus futurum de iis vel illis, sed quid facturi fuerint alteri, quatenus ex re ipsa percipi poterat" (my translation).

[97] Calvin, *Commentarius in harmoniam evangelicam*, on Matthew 11:23, CO 45:313: "Supra admonuimus, Christum humano more loqui, non autem ex coelesti adyto proferre, quid praeviderit futurum, si Sodomitis prophetam aliquem misisset" (my translation).

[98] Calvin, *Homiliae in primum librum Samuelis*, hom. LXXXIII, on 1 Samuel 23:7–18, CO 30:457–458: "Porro subtiliter non est disputandum, fuerintne illi Davidem nec ne traditurі, si Saulis adventum exspectasset, in qua tamen otiosa quaestione multi sui ingenii acumen sophisticis imaginationibus ostentare solent. [...] Sed incomprehensibile nobis Dei consilium hic observandum est, de iis quae contingere potuerunt. Nam quaecunque homines accidentia dicunt et fortuita, sunt tamen certissima Dei decreta" (my translation). The *Homiliae* were preached in French, and the French is not known to survive; the Latin is a translation by David Claudus, printed posthumously at Geneva in 1604 (Gabriel Carterius), from the sermons as a scribe took them down from Calvin's mouth ("a certo scriba ab ipsius populum docentis ore fideliter exceptae"). See the editors' prolegomena, CO 29:237–239.

[99] Calvin, *Homiliae in primum librum Samuelis*, hom. LXXXIII, CO 30:458: "Caeterum in istiusmodi scripturae phrasibus observandum Deum se ad nostri captus modulum accommodare"; and "hanc ob causam quum Dominus dicit Davidem, si mansisset in urbe Ceila fuisse prodendum ab incolis, non intelligendum est quasi Dominus non posset aliter disponere, et animos incolarum flectere, sed Deum monuisse Davidem de incolarum perfidia ne temere se ipsis committeret" (my translation).

8.3 Where Walaeus kept to Calvin, and where he went further

Set beside these texts, Walaeus keeps to Calvin on the matter that governs everything else. For Calvin, God foresees what will be because he has decreed it. For Walaeus, the knowledge of what will be follows the decree. The hypothetical knowledge is not a third kind but belongs to God's knowledge of simple intelligence; it is the object of the decree and never its cause; and it can never be the ground of election (Sections 5 and 6). Walaeus treats God's permission as itself a decree, with the foreseen determination of the will as its object, so he does not put bare permission in the place of providence. And where he cannot explain, he stops where Calvin stopped. Calvin speaks of the counsel of God "incomprehensible to us"; Walaeus says that God knows the future free acts of creatures "in a way incomprehensible to us" (Section 5.4).

But Walaeus also goes beyond Calvin, and here the sources require care. In the passages examined here Calvin nowhere builds a doctrine on the conditional texts. He treats the Keilah question as idle and the saying about Tyre and Sidon as speech accommodated to human capacity, and he expressly denies that Christ is there disclosing what God foresaw. Walaeus reads the same texts as evidence of a knowledge in God "before every decree of his." He even rejects, as "not to be heard," those who take such sayings as conjecture or as a comparison, "because certain truth undoubtedly underlies those assertions" (Section 6.1). Calvin's reading of Matthew 11:21 is close to the comparison that Walaeus refuses. Walaeus does not name Calvin there, and I do not suggest that he had Calvin in mind. But on the exegesis of these texts the difference is real, not slight.

It is also bounded. Calvin does not deny that God knows what would have happened. He speaks of God's counsel "concerning the things that could have happened," and he sets even events that men call accidental under God's decrees. What he refuses is curious disputation. Walaeus steps into the question that Calvin declined to pursue, and he does so with Calvin's guard in place: the conditions always include God's own possible acts, a hypothetical decree is always presupposed, and nothing in the knowledge makes the creature's choice the master of God's decree. Fairness requires one more observation. Molina too says that middle knowledge is of every effect only on the hypothesis of some possible predetermination of God's will. The difference between Molina and Walaeus is therefore not that one counts God's possible acts among the conditions and the other does not. It lies where Section 5.4 placed it, in what makes the conditional true, and in what the knowledge is used for.

On this locus, then, the answer to Muller's question is neither simple repetition nor distortion. Walaeus echoes Calvin's rule that God's knowledge of what will be rests on his decree, and he elaborates it by giving the knowledge of conditionals a defined place under simple intelligence. He departs from Calvin's reading of these texts while keeping Calvin's rule: he treats them as a disclosure of God's knowledge, a reading Calvin had declined, and indeed denied. What he does not do is set Calvin's rule aside. What he took from the Jesuits was a question and a name; the

order of knowledge and decree remained Calvin's on the points Calvin addressed (knowledge of what will be, election, permission).

9. How Calvin's Heirs Received Middle Knowledge

Walaeus knew that his view was not shared by all his colleagues. In the letter to Polyander he says that William Ames "undeservedly hisses it off the stage," and in the *Loci* he mentions orthodox writers who do not admit it, "because some infallibility seems to be set up in things apart from God's decree."[100] Dolf te Velde, surveying the Reformed orthodox doctrine of God, puts the matter in one sentence: "Generally spoken, the Reformed orthodox reject the theory of middle knowledge."[101] That verdict is broadly right. But Muller's question asks for more than a head count. It asks how Calvin's heirs handled the idea, and on what grounds. This section therefore reads the heirs in their own words. Three results emerge. The two sides agreed on more than is usually said. Gomarus stood where he is not usually placed. And the sharpest division ran, not through the definition of God's knowledge, but through the reading of three short passages of Scripture.

9.1 The shared ground

The fullest Reformed refutation of middle knowledge is Francis Turretin's. In the first part of his *Institutio theologiae elencticae* (Geneva, 1679) he devotes the thirteenth question of the third topic to it, under the title: "Besides natural and free knowledge, is there in God a certain middle knowledge? We deny, against the Jesuits, the Socinians and the Remonstrants." Before he argues, he states what is *not* in dispute:

> The question is not whether God knows conditional future things. For it is agreed among all that God knows from eternity, by some knowledge, not only the things themselves but all their combinations and connections, whether present, past or future, whether necessary or contingent. The question is whether they belong to a certain middle knowledge distinct from natural and free knowledge; which we deny.[102]

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[100] Walaeus, letter to Polyander, *Opera omnia*, I, second pagination, 406: "etsi à D. Amesio immerito explodatur"; Walaeus, *Loci communes*, in *Opera omnia*, I, 174–175: "Video inter Orthodoxos scriptores esse, qui eam non admittunt, quia videtur aliqua infallibilitas in rebus constitui, citra Dei decretum" (my translation).

[101] Te Velde, *Paths Beyond Tracing Out*, 156. See also 155 n. 29: "Because of this association of positions, the Reformed combate [*sic*] vehemently even the more moderate positions on middle knowledge."

[102] Francis Turretin, *Institutio theologiae elencticae*, pars I (Geneva, 1679), locus III, q. XIII, title and §V, cited from the Edinburgh edition (Edinburgh: John D. Lowe, 1847), I, 192–193. Title: "An præter Scientiam Naturalem, et Liberam, detur in Deo Scientia quædam Media? Neg. contra Jesuitas, Socin. et Remonst." §V: "Non quæritur; An Deus futura conditionata cognoscat, convenit enim inter omnes Deum scientia aliqua, non tantum res ipsas, sed omnes earum combinationes et connexiones, sive præsentes, præteritas et futuras, sive necessarias et contingentes ab æterno scire. Sed, An pertineant ad Scientiam quandam mediam distinctam a naturali et libera; quod negamus" (my translation).

He then narrows the question further. He sets aside conditionals whose outcome follows by necessity, which fall under God's natural knowledge if the condition is merely possible and under his free knowledge if God has decreed it. What is disputed is the free case, such as what John would say or do if he were in Paris, and whether such things "can be known certainly and determinately antecedent to the decree of God; which we deny."[103]

This is the ground on which the whole Reformed discussion stood. No Reformed writer examined here denies that God knows whatever is true about what would happen under conditions that never come about. They differ over what makes such statements true and over where that knowledge stands in relation to God's decree. Three narrower questions divided them. Is this knowledge a third kind, "middle" between God's natural and free knowledge? Does God know, before any decree of his, how a free creature would choose under a given condition? And what may be built on such knowledge? On the first question every Reformed text examined here, including those of Gomarus and Walaeus, answers no: there are two kinds of divine knowledge, not three. On the third, all of them refuse to make it the ground of election. The second question is where they part.

The Leiden faculty's own textbook does not settle the matter. The *Synopsis purioris theologiae* of 1625, the disputations published jointly by Polyander, Rivet, Walaeus and Thysius, says in its disputation on the nature of God that God knows "all things," whatever can be and whatever he wills or permits, together with their causes, modes and circumstances, "by a simple and single, immutable, infinite and eternal act." It says nothing of a middle or conditioned knowledge.[104] That disputation was Thysius's, so the silence proves little. It does show that the doctrine was not written into the faculty's common textbook at the place where one would look for it.

9.2 Gomarus: the teacher who said it first

Franciscus Gomarus is often remembered as the Reformed theologian who rejected middle knowledge outright. The memory is understandable. Gomarus was Arminius's chief opponent at Leiden, and he fought loudly and for decades against two doctrines of Arminius and the Remonstrants that sit close to middle knowledge. The first is conditional predestination. In his Leiden theses of 1604, printed in Dutch in 1610, he wrote that predestination "cannot without contradiction be said to be conditional, that is, to have been made on a condition."[105] The second

[103] Turretin, *Institutio*, III, q. XIII, §VI (1847 ed., I, 193): "Sed agitur de futuris conditionatis contingentibus, quæ posita conditione, possunt esse et non esse, v. g. si Johannes esset Lutetiæ, loqueretur vel peccaret, et sim.: An certo et determinate possint cognosci antecedenter ad decretum Dei; quod negamus" (my translation).

[104] *Synopsis purioris theologiae*, Disp. VI (praeses Antonius Thysius), th. XXXII–XXXIII, ed. H. Bavinck (Leiden: Donner, 1881), 56–57. Th. XXXII says that God knows "omnia, se ipsum scilicet, et extra se universa et singula, quae esse possunt, quaeque esse vult et ipse facit, aut a creaturis fieri vult vel permittit," with their "causas, modos et circumstantias"; th. XXXIII adds: "Scit autem simplici et uno, immutabili, infinito et aeterno actu" (my translation).

[105] Gomarus, disputation on predestination, th. XII, in *Twee disputatien vande goddelijcke predestinatie: d'eene by Doct. Franciscus Gomarus, d'ander by Doct. Iacobus Arminius* (Leiden: Ian Paedts Iacobszoon, 1610), the

is election on the ground of foreseen faith. Answering the first Remonstrant article, he denied that faith, obedience and perseverance are "a condition in the object to be elected, foreseen before election," or a "cause without which not." They are, he said, "the proper effect of election."[106] Elsewhere he insisted that God's definite foreknowledge "does not flow from future things, but from God's decree determining future things."[107] A reader who remembers these passages will naturally remember a Gomarus hostile to anything that looked like Arminius's conditional knowledge.

None of these passages, however, is about conditional knowledge. The first rejects a decree made on a condition; the second rejects foreseen faith as the ground of election; the third concerns God's knowledge of what will actually happen. When Gomarus turns to what God knows about what *would* happen, he says something different, and he says it consistently over more than a quarter of a century.

The groundwork is already in the 1604 theses. There he speaks of "the indefinite foreknowledge of God's understanding," which he defines as "a knowledge of possible things that are not yet destined to happen, whether they are future or not," with the Latin gloss in the margin, "things indefinitely foreknown."[108] This is the category into which he would later place conditional knowledge.

By about 1616 Walaeus could already write, in the letter to Polyander, that one honest way through the problem of God's government and human freedom was to fall back, "with Dr Gomarus," on "that middle or conditioned foreknowledge."[109] Walaeus had been Gomarus's student at Leiden. He was a minister at Middelburg when, according to Gomarus's students, Gomarus lectured there on Romans from September 1613, and those lectures treated the object

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disputations held "int Iaer 1604," sig. A4r (unpaginated): "Ende daeromme en can de predestinatie sonder teghenstrijdicheyt niet geseyt worden conditionel te wesen / dat is / op conditie gheschiet te zijn" (my translation).

[106] Gomarus, *Judicium* on the first Remonstrant article, antithesis, th. 6, in *Opera theologica omnia* (1664), 278: "Fides enim, obedientia illius, perseverantia in ea, non est objecti eligendi conditio ante electionem prævisa; nec causa sine qua non: sed electionis effectum proprium, ex ea promanans, Act. 13. 48. Rom. 8. 30. & 2. Thess. 2. vers. 13. & 1. Petr. 1. 2." The Remonstrant thesis it answers reads: "Fides enim, obedientia illius & perseverantia, ut ab homine præstita, & à Deo prævisa, est conditio in objecto eligendo prærequisita, ac causa sine qua non, cui decretum electionis innititur" (my translation).

[107] Gomarus, *Conciliatio doctrinæ orthodoxæ de providentia Dei*, cap. VI, in *Opera theologica omnia* (1664), 129: "Nam definita Dei præscientia non à rebus futuris promanat, sed à determinante futura decreto Dei. [...] Itaque non res futuræ, sed æternum de futuris decretum, præscientiæ definitæ causa est" (my translation).

[108] Gomarus, 1604 theses, th. X, *Twee disputatien* (1610), sig. A3v (unpaginated): "de onbepaelde voorwetenschap des verstants Godes (t'welcke is een kennisse der mogelijcke dingen en[de] die noch niet zijn bestemt te sullen geschieden / het zy of de selvighe toecomende zijn ofte niet)"; margin: "Indefinitè præscitis" (my translation).

[109] Walaeus, letter to Polyander, *Opera omnia*, I, second pagination, 406: "Aut cum D. Gomaro recurrendum ad præscientiam illam mediam seu conditionatam, quam multi Scholastici & recentiores scriptores ponunt" (my translation). On the date of the letter, see Section 4.1.

of predestination.[110] What they said about conditional knowledge is not known. What the letter shows is that by 1616 Walaeus linked the conditioned foreknowledge with his teacher's name.

The explicit statement is the disputation on predestination that I cited in Section 3 from the collected works of 1664, where it is printed without a date. It can now be dated. The *Apologia* printed with Gomarus's disputation on the object of predestination in 1650 reports that he set out this doctrine at Groningen "in the year 1630, in that long and most careful disputation on predestination, from thesis 17 to thesis 43," and reprints those theses.[111] These are the theses quoted in Section 3. Conditional foreknowledge is "contained under" indefinite foreknowledge; it is the knowledge by which God, "from the infinite light of his knowledge," foreknew certain things "not absolutely, but on a certain condition being posited"; and it "does not at all depend on the defining decree, but necessarily, as its object, precedes it in the order of nature." The examples are David at Keilah and the nations who would have listened to Ezekiel.[112] Gomarus then uses the knowledge in the doctrine of predestination itself. God foreknew that if he created men in Adam in original righteousness, gave the command about the tree, did not hinder Satan's temptation, and governed them in keeping with his holy power and their liberty, they would fall; and he foreknew that this would be "a wholly fitting way" to the glory both of his merciful and saving grace and of his avenging justice.[113]

Gomarus says the same thing in a different kind of writing, his exposition of Matthew 11:20–22. The truth of what Christ says about the repentance the Tyrians would have shown, "that condition being posited," rests on God's "indefinite foreknowledge," by which he knew "what would have followed if the antecedent were posited, even though neither happened." Everyone knows that one of the two outcomes would have occurred, since two opposites cannot both be true, "but which of them would have been future, since the matter was contingent, he alone foresaw who sees all things by his infinite knowledge." He adds, "A similar passage is Ezekiel

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[110] *Apologia*, in Gomarus, *Disputatio theologica de divinæ prædestinationis hominum obiecto, cum necessaria & modesta pro eodem apologia* (Amsterdam: Joannes Janssonius, 1650), 43: "In Illustri Schola Theologica Reip. Middelburgensis, uti liquet ex lectionibus in Epist. ad Rom. quas inibi, à 5. Septemb. anni 1613. habuit: quarum tabulæ Synopticæ ipsa magni viri manu scriptæ penes nos. Ubi Lect. 124, 125. & 126. de hoc argumento agit" (my translation). "Hoc argumentum" is the object of predestination.

[111] *Apologia* (1650), 44: "Deinde anno 1630. in prolixâ illâ & accuratissimâ disputatione de Prædestinatione, à Thesi 17, ad 43. ubi sic loquitur" (my translation). The theses follow on pp. 44–48. In th. XXXI the 1650 reprint reads "ex infinito, sententiæ suæ," and omits "lumine"; the 1664 text, "ex infinito, scientiæ suæ, lumine," is followed here.

[112] Gomarus, Disp. X, th. XXX–XXXIII, *Opera theologica omnia* (1664), *Disputationes*, 27; the Latin of th. XXX–XXXIII is given in the notes to Section 3. Th. XXXII: "Quoniam præscientia hæc indefinita, à decreto definiente, minimè dependet; sed illud necessariò (tanquam objectum, suum adjunctum) naturæ ordine, antecedit."

[113] Gomarus, Disp. X, th. XXXIV, *Opera theologica omnia* (1664), *Disputationes*, 27; the Latin of the first part of the thesis is given in the notes to Section 3. The thesis ends: "atque ita viam omninò idoneam (cum ad misericordis ac salutiferæ suæ gratiæ, tum ad vindicis justitiæ gloriam) adfuturam" (my translation).

3:6-7."[114] In the same place he refuses the use the "Papists and Innovators" made of the text. They argued that the grace offered to the Galilean towns was sufficient, needing only the free assent of the human will to become faith. Gomarus answers, "we deny that sufficient grace to believe in Christ was given to the Galileans."[115]

Where, then, does Gomarus stand? He did not reject conditional knowledge outright; no text of his that I have read does so, and the texts that seem to do so address other questions. Nor was he inconsistent. From the distinction between definite and indefinite foreknowledge, through the 1604 theses, to the 1630 disputation and the Matthew exposition, the position grows more explicit but does not change. He accepted a knowledge in God of what free creatures would do under conditions. He placed it under God's natural or indefinite knowledge, not in a third kind. He called it by its common name, "conditioned," and not "middle." And he refused its Jesuit and Remonstrant uses: sufficient grace, conditional predestination, and election on foreseen faith. When Walaeus names him twice as his authority, he is not stretching a loose remark. The *Loci* cite Gomarus's "Theses on predestination," and the one place where Gomarus states the doctrine in theses is the disputation of 1630.[116]

In one respect Gomarus goes further than Walaeus. He says that this foreknowledge "does not at all depend on the defining decree," and that God knows the outcome "according to the nature of the causes." He counts God's own possible acts among the conditions, as the Adam example shows, but in none of these texts does he say that a decree must be presupposed. In structure, therefore, his doctrine stands closer to Molina's than Walaeus's does, even though he never uses Molina's name for it and refuses every use Molina's followers made of it.

9.3 Walaeus's purge compared

Walaeus kept the whole of Gomarus's frame. The hypothetical knowledge belongs to simple intelligence and is not a third kind; it is the object of the decree and never its cause; it is shown by Keilah and by Ezekiel 3:6 (Sections 4 to 6). What he added is the part of the doctrine that

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[114] Gomarus, *Illustrium ac selectorum ex Euangelio Matthæi locorum explicatio*, on Matthew 11:20–22, in *Opera theologica omnia* (1664), first pagination, 56: "Quod autem de futura hac Tyriorum, posita illa conditione, pœnitentia asserit, illius veritas ex indefinita divinæ ipsius naturæ præscientia constat, qua novit, quidnam, quo posito antecedente, fuisset secuturum, etiamsi neutrum evenerit. Nam posita ea conditione alterutrum fuisse eventurum, ut aut pœnitentiam agerent, aut non agerent, omnibus notum est, ex principio illo, quod duo opposita non possunt simul esse vera; sed utrum eorum fuisset futurum, cum res fuerit contingens, solus prævidit, qui infinita sua scientia omnia videt, nec solum necessaria, sed etiam futura contingentia certò prædicit. Similis autem locus est Ezech. 3. v. 6. 7." (my translation).

[115] Gomarus, *Explicatio*, on Matthew 11:20–22, *Opera theologica omnia* (1664), first pagination, 56: "Hisce jam expositis non difficulter Pontificiorum & Novatorum nodus, quem hic nectere conantur, dissolvitur. Probare enim hinc student, Deum, homines, ad fidem in Christum, convertere, non gratia merè perficiente, sed sufficiente, quæ demum, quando accesserit liber humanæ voluntatis assensus, fidem efficiat [...]. Verum negamus Galilæis gratiam collatam fuisse sufficientem, ad credendum in Christum" (my translation).

[116] Walaeus, *Loci communes*, in *Opera omnia*, I, 175: "Sunt tamen inter Orthodoxos nonnulli, atque inter alios Franciscus Gomarus in Thesibus de prædestinatione, qui eam omnino statuendam putent" (my translation).

answers the objection of the orthodox writers he mentions. They feared that the doctrine set up "some infallibility in things apart from God's decree." Walaeus replies that this does not follow, "because a hypothetical decree must necessarily be presupposed here as well: for it cannot be said, this will happen if this is posited, unless that very thing is posited by God's decree; for it cannot posit itself, much less be posited or happen at random or by chance."[117]

That sentence is the difference between teacher and student. Gomarus left the conditional knowledge standing on "the nature of the causes." Walaeus ties it to what God would decree. To this he added the rest of the purge set out in Section 5: no merit in election, a real act of God in conversion, and no third species of knowledge. He added the covenant argument of Section 6, and he refused, as Section 6 also showed, to use the knowledge in the doctrine of election. The Reformed acceptance of conditional knowledge thus came in two degrees. Gomarus held it in a form that echoed Molina's structure while refusing Molina's uses. Walaeus held it in a form built to meet his own side's strongest objection.

9.4 The rejection

The rejection came early and lasted. I take the writers roughly in the order of their careers.

William Ames. Walaeus's letter shows that by about 1616 Ames had already rejected the conditioned foreknowledge. His *Medulla theologica*, first published in the 1620s and cited here from the edition of 1656, gives the reason briefly. What God knows by the knowledge of vision he knows "by his own efficiency, or by the decree of his own will." Middle knowledge, "by which God is imagined by some to have known, before the decree of his will and on a hypothesis," that free causes placed in certain conditions would bring about certain merely contingent events, "cannot stand with the supreme perfection of God," because it makes events certainly future "independently of God's will" and makes some of God's knowledge "depend chiefly on its object."[118] This is exactly the objection Walaeus's hypothetical decree was built to meet.

Johannes Maccovius. Maccovius was professor of theology at Franeker from 1615 until his death in 1644. His *Distinctiones*, published after his death, dismiss the doctrine in a few lines. God's knowledge is twofold, of vision and of simple intelligence. Vision "rests on God's decree. For God knows future things because he decreed them." The Arminians, he says, "invented a third

[117] Walaeus, *Loci communes*, in *Opera omnia*, I, 175: "Resp. Hoc negatur, quia decretum hypotheticum hic necessario quòque supponendum: nam non potest dici, hoc fiet si hoc ponatur, nisi illud ipsum ex Dei decreto ponatur; se ipsum enim ponere non potest, multo minus temere aut fortuito poni, aut fieri" (my translation).

[118] William Ames, *Medulla theologica*, I.vii, th. 27–28 (Amsterdam: Joannes Janssonius, 1656), 27–28. Th. 27: "quæ verò novit per scientiam visionis, novit per suam efficientiam, vel Decreto suæ propriæ voluntatis." Th. 28: "Scientia media, per quam Deus, à nonnullis ante Decretum suæ voluntatis ex Hypothesi novisse fingitur tales eventus merè cõntingentes [*sic*] futuros, si tales causæ liberæ cùm talibus conditionibus ponantur; quum & statuat eventus certò futuros independenter à Dei voluntate, & scientiam aliquam Dei ab objecto præcipuè pendere faciat; Hujusmodi (inquam) scientia cum summa Dei perfectione stare non potest" (my translation).

species of divine knowledge," middle or conditioned, "when God knows that something will happen which he never decreed. But it is absurd. For nothing happens which God has not decreed." His proof text is Lamentations 3:37: "Who has spoken and it came to pass, unless the Lord has commanded it?"[119] Maccovius does not pause over the conditional texts or over any purified form. For him the idea is Arminian, and that settles it.

William Twisse. The most thorough Reformed attack on the doctrine is Twisse's *Dissertation on Middle Knowledge*, published at Arnhem in 1639, the year of Walaeus's death. Its third book answers the Jesuit Francisco Suárez. Twisse's rejection is the strongest of all, because he denies that there is anything for such a knowledge to know. "I acknowledge no conditional decree of God," he writes. Leaving aside a decree of God, "I freely grant that God cannot have knowledge of conditionals concerning future contingents." Such statements, taken apart from God's will, have no truth: "if those conditionals had any truth, they would without doubt be known by God, as the supreme perfection of the divine essence requires; but we deny that they contain any truth."[120] Twisse is also the one writer in this survey who appeals to Calvin by name, and he does so for the principle on which his whole rejection rests. In his preface he takes up an opponent who wished to draw Calvin and "the Censors" into his own opinion. Twisse answers that Calvin and the Censors "teach that God knows future contingents from his own decree and ordination," and that nothing follows from this against God's knowledge of contingent things as contingent.[121]

Gisbert Voetius and Matthias Nethenus. At Utrecht, Voetius refuted middle knowledge in his disputation on the knowledge of God. There is no middle knowledge, he says, "except the purely indefinite, that is, the knowledge of simple intelligence." The conditions attached to such knowledge are either future or not. If they are future, they fall under the knowledge of vision; if

[119] Johannes Maccovius, *Distinctiones et regulae theologicae ac philosophicae*, ed. Nicolaus Arnoldi (Amsterdam: Ludovicus Elzevir, 1653), cap. IV, XXV, 47–48: "Scientia in Deo duplex est, Visionis & Simplicis intelligentiæ. Visionis dicitur scientia futurorum, quæ nititur decreto Dei. Ideo enim Deus scit futura, quia decrevit. [...] Cæterum sciendum est, Arminianos confinxisse tertiam speciem scientiæ divinæ, & vocare illam scientiam mediam, sive conditionatam, quando scil. Deus novit aliquid eventurum quod nunquam decrevit. Sed absurda illa est. Nam nihil evenit quod Deus non decrevit. Tren. 3. vers. 37." (my translation). Lamentations 3:37 is quoted from the ESV.

[120] William Twisse, *Dissertatio de scientia media tribus libris absoluta* (Arnhem: Jacobus à Biesium, 1639), III, 472–473. P. 472: "Ego verò decretum Dei conditionatum agnosco nullum." P. 473: "secluso autem istiusmodi decreto, libenter fateor non posse Deum habere scientiam conditionalium, de futuris videlicet contingentibus procedentium [...] certè si conditionata ista veritatem aliquam haberent, proculdubiò cognoscerentur à Deo, exigente istud summa essentiæ divinæ perfectione; sed negamus ullam ista veritatem continere" (my translation). Twisse does allow that some conditional statements are true because they arise from God's absolute decree (472–473).

[121] Twisse, *Dissertatio*, preface (unpaginated): "Mox Calvinum & Censores ipsos in eandem sententiam trahere cupit idem Author, qui tamen futura contingentia non modo Deo præscita esse profitentur, sed & unde præsciantur produnt, nempe ex decreto atque ordinatione Dei [...]. At inquam nihil dici potuit inconsequentius, quasi verò sic argueret: Docent Calvinus & Censores, Deum cognoscere futura contingentia ex suo ipsius decreto atque ordinatione; ergo negant Deum cognoscere futura contingentia quà talia" (my translation).

not, under simple intelligence. "Therefore there is no middle knowledge."[122] In December 1643 his student Matthias Nethenus defended a full disputation, *On Conditioned or Middle Knowledge in God*, which Voetius printed in his *Selected Disputations* of 1648. It presents the doctrine as a novelty. "This controversy is recent," it says, not handled by the Fathers, the Scholastics or the philosophers, but stirred up a few years before by the Jesuits at Salamanca, against the Dominicans, and spread from there to other universities. Pedro da Fonseca first brought it forth in secret; Molina "first of all brought it before the eyes of all in writing, in the year 1588."[123] Then comes a sentence that matters for this section:

> As soon as it was known, our doctors exploded it as a trifle full of Jesuit delirium, a deceitful plaster for abominable Pelagianism and a mockery of true theology; except that one or two went against the stream of the doctors. Of these, however, we know that at least two dissented from the orthodox in the appearance of their words and in their manner of explaining, rather than in substance, and had no thought of helping or plastering over Pelagianism and Semi-Pelagianism.[124]

The disputation does not name these dissenters. They may well include Gomarus and Walaeus, both of whom had died by 1643 and both of whom had taught a conditional knowledge in print or in the lecture hall. But the text does not say so. What it does show is that the Utrecht school, while rejecting the doctrine, judged its Reformed defenders orthodox in substance.

Francis Turretin. Turretin's question, already quoted, gives the history in one word: the Jesuits Fonseca, Lessius and Molina "devised" a third kind of knowledge.[125] His objection is Ames's and Twisse's. If God knew the free choices of creatures certainly before his decree, then "a

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[122] Gisbert Voetius, *Selectarum disputationum theologicarum pars prima* (Utrecht: Joannes à Waesberge, 1648), "De scientia Dei," §8, 257: "Scientiam mediam ex professo refutavimus Dissertat. de Termino Vitæ arg. 15. pag. 275. edit. in 4. ubi ostendimus eam nullam esse nisi purè indefinitam seu simplicis intelligentiæ: [...] Prima, Conditiones quæ apponuntur, ut dicatur scientia conditionalium, vel sunt futuræ, vel non. Si prius, jam sunt objectum scientiæ visionis: Sin posterius, jam sunt objectum scientiæ simplicis intelligentiæ. Ergo nulla est scientia media" (my translation).

[123] Matthias Nethenus (author and respondent), Voetius presiding, "De conditionata seu media in Deo scientia," sectio I, 9 December 1643, in Voetius, *Selectae disputationes*, I, 264–265: "Recens est hæc controversia nec in antiquis PP. Scholasticorum aut Philosophorum libris & commentariis Theologicis agitata: sed ante paucos annos à Lojolæ posteris [...] in Academia Salmanticensi primum contra Monachos Dominicanos, mota [...]. Primus hunc scientiæ conditionatæ fœtum, Pelagianismo gravidus, clam enixus est Petrus Fonseca Iesuita [...]. Ex quibus Molina eam primus omnium scripto de Concordia libro in conspectum omnium protulit anno 1588." (my translation). On p. 264 Voetius introduces the piece as the work of one of his students.

[124] Nethenus, "De conditionata seu media in Deo scientia," in Voetius, *Selectae disputationes*, I, 266: "A nostris DD. simul ut cognita, simul tanquam plenum delirii Iesuitarum nugamentum, tanquam fallax abominabilis Pelagianismi tectorium & veræ Theologiæ ludibrium explosum fuit: nisi quod contra torrentem DD. ivit unus atque alter; quos tamen, saltem duos ex iis, scimus verborum specie & explicandi modo potius, quam reipsa ab orthodoxis dissensisse, nihilque de juvando aut incrustando Pelagianismo & Semi-Pelagianismo cogitasse" (my translation).

[125] Turretin, *Institutio*, III, q. XIII, §II (1847 ed., I, 192): "Præter duas hasce Scientiæ divinæ species, Tertiam excogitarunt Jesuitæ Fonseca, Lessius, Molina" (my translation).

reason for predestination could be assigned outside God, besides his own purpose and good pleasure," namely the foreseen consent of the creature's will.[126]

Petrus van Mastricht. Mastricht, Voetius's successor at Utrecht, closes the line. His *Theoretico-practica theologia*, first published in the 1680s and cited here from the edition of 1724, says that two Spanish theologians, Fonseca and Molina, contended over the honour of fathering "this discovery," and that "the Reformed explode this novelty as idle, false and injurious to the divine perfection." A thing considered as merely possible belongs to natural knowledge; considered as connected with second causes, and so as future if those causes were set up, it belongs to "the knowledge that rests on the decree." Otherwise, he adds, it would more rightly be called "conjecture than knowledge." He refers the reader to Twisse.[127]

Te Velde reports two further refutations among the fullest of the period, those of Samuel Maresius and Johann Heinrich Heidegger, and counts Johann Heinrich Alsted among those who accepted the doctrine in some form.[128]

9.5 Hard rejection, soft rejection and purified acceptance

The rejecters did not all reject the same thing. If we ask the question on which the parties really divided, whether God knows before any decree how a free creature would choose under a given condition, the texts fall into three groups rather than two.

The first group is a *hard rejection*. Twisse denies that conditionals about free creatures have any truth at all apart from God's decree. Maccovius denies the category, since "nothing happens which God has not decreed." Mastricht allows God to know such conditionals only through the decree, and calls anything else conjecture.

The second group is a *soft rejection*. Voetius and Turretin grant that conditionals belong to God's knowledge. Voetius files them under simple intelligence. Turretin says that "all agree" God knows every combination and connection of things. But both deny that God knows, apart from

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[126] Turretin, *Institutio*, III, q. XIII, §XIV (1847 ed., I, 195): "Sexto, posita hac scientia, assignari posset ratio Prædestinationis extra Deum præter ipsius propositum et εὐδοκίαν, quia consensus prævisus voluntatis Jacobi in tali dispositione constituti, esset saltem conditio sine qua non Deus potius Jacobum quam Esavum ad salutem prædestinaret" (my translation).

[127] Petrus van Mastricht, *Theoretico-practica theologia*, editio nova (Amsterdam: Sumptibus Societatis, 1724), II.xiii, §§XX–XXI, 148. §XX: "Super gloria paternitatis, hujus εὑρήματος, contendunt duo Hispanienses Theologi, Petrus Fonseca & Ludovicus Molina. Reformati novitium istud εὕρημα, velut otiosum, falsum & perfectioni divinæ injuriosum, explodunt." §XXI: "Si enim consideretur, ut merè possibile: procul dubio, subest scientiæ naturali: si, ut connexionem habens, cum his & illis causis secundis, adeoque ut futurum, si illis causis secundis construatur, licet nunquam actu futurum, illi exponitur scientiæ, quæ nititur decreto"; and, reason 8, "conjectura rectius dicetur, quam scientia." The end of §XXI (149) reads "Conf. Twissus de Scientia media" (my translation).

[128] Te Velde, *Paths Beyond Tracing Out*, 156 nn. 30–31. Note 31 names "the most extensive refutations of scientia media by Turrettini, Institutio, 188-197; Maresius, Collegium theologicum, 34-36; Heidegger, Corpus theologiae, 82-86; Maccovius, Loci communes, 158-166." Note 30 lists Alsted, Walaeus, Gomarus (with a reference to Richard Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics*, III, 420) and, tentatively, Mastricht among those who accepted it.

the decree, which way a free creature would in fact go. When Voetius meets a conditional statement, he says that it states "not what is determinately future, but what is absolutely possible, or what the consequence of things is."[129] Ames belongs with this group in what he grants, since his own division names only simple intelligence and vision, and with the first in the force of his objection. The line between hard and soft rejection is not sharp.

The third group is *purified acceptance*. Gomarus and Walaeus say what the others refuse to say: that God knows which of two contingent outcomes would have followed. "Which of them would have been future," in Gomarus's words, "he alone foresaw."[130] They agree with the rejecters that there is no third kind of knowledge and that nothing in it may ground election. Walaeus, by requiring a hypothetical decree, comes as close to the soft rejecters as a defender of the doctrine could.

This is why the Utrecht disputation could say that the Reformed dissenters differed "in words and manner of explaining rather than in substance." Between Walaeus and Voetius that judgment is nearly fair. Between Gomarus and Turretin it is too generous. Gomarus's claim that the conditional foreknowledge "does not at all depend on the defining decree" is the very thing Turretin denies.

9.6 Keilah, Tyre and Sidon, and Ezekiel 3:6

The division is clearest in the exegesis. Gomarus and Walaeus read three passages as a disclosure of what God knows would have happened. At Keilah the Lord answered David that Saul "will come down" and that the men of Keilah "will surrender you" (1 Samuel 23:11–12). Christ said that if the mighty works done in Chorazin and Bethsaida "had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes" (Matthew 11:21). And the Lord told Ezekiel that if he had been sent to peoples of foreign speech, "they would listen to you" (Ezekiel 3:6). Walaeus, as Section 6 showed, had already answered two ways of evading these texts. Those who take them as conjecture or comparison "are not to be heard." Those who say that God foretold the outcome from causes already set on their course "do not satisfy either."[131]

Turretin and Mastricht took exactly these two ways. Turretin says that the Keilah passage "is not so much a prediction of future things as a revelation of hidden things that already existed then, namely the plans being laid among the men of Keilah for handing David over." Christ's words

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[129] Voetius, *Selectae disputationes*, I, "De scientia Dei," 258: "hæc propositio dicit, non quid determinatè futurum sit, sed quid absolutè sit possibile, seu quæ sit consequentia rerum" (my translation).

[130] Gomarus, *Explicatio*, on Matthew 11:20–22, *Opera theologica omnia* (1664), first pagination, 56: "sed utrum eorum fuisset futurum, cum res fuerit contingens, solus prævidit" (my translation).

[131] Walaeus, *Loci communes*, in *Opera omnia*, I, 175: "Nam qui putant hæc tantum affirmari ex conjecturá, aut per comparationem aliquam, audiendi non sunt: quia sine dubio certa veritas iis assertionibus subest. Qui dicunt, id prædici ex cognitione causarum jam ad id determinatarum, quoque non satisfaciunt" (my translation). The scripture texts are quoted from the ESV.

about Tyre and Sidon "are not to be pressed to the letter"; they are "a hyperbolic and proverbial way of speaking," like a teacher who says to a slow pupil, "if I had taught an ass for so long, it would know this." Of Ezekiel 3:6 he says, "A similar passage."[132] Mastricht says that God foresaw the Keilah outcome by his free knowledge, from his decree to set up the order of things in which it would follow, "for this is the order of things, that an enemy hands over an enemy, if only he can."[133]

Here the connection with Section 8 becomes plain. Calvin had called the Keilah question idle and had said that Christ's saying about Tyre and Sidon was accommodated to the common capacity of the human mind, not a disclosure of what God foresaw. On these texts, Turretin and Mastricht stand nearer to Calvin's reading than Gomarus and Walaeus do. Turretin does not name Calvin in these paragraphs, but his reading of Matthew 11:21 is close to Calvin's. As Section 8 put it, Walaeus departs from Calvin's reading of these texts while keeping Calvin's rule that God's knowledge of what will be rests on his decree. Gomarus did the same, for his teaching that God's definite foreknowledge flows "from God's decree determining future things" is Calvin's rule in scholastic dress. Turretin and Mastricht kept both Calvin's rule and Calvin's reading. That is the real shape of the division.

9.7 The answer to Muller

How, then, did Calvin's heirs handle middle knowledge? They divided, and the division went deep.

One group refused the doctrine. It included Ames, Maccovius, Twisse, Voetius, Turretin and Mastricht, and it was the larger group. Only Twisse, among the texts examined here, appeals to Calvin by name, and he does so for the rule that God knows future contingents from his decree. The others argue from God's perfection and from the priority of his decree, and they mark the doctrine as new. It is recent, says the Utrecht disputation; the Jesuits devised it, says Turretin; the Arminians invented it, says Maccovius; it is a novelty, says Mastricht. Their fidelity to Calvin is therefore, except in Twisse, a matter of substance rather than citation. They held to his rule, and those whose exegesis of the conditional texts has been examined here, Turretin and Mastricht, read those texts much as he had read them. They can fairly be described as the group that thought

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[132] Turretin, *Institutio*, III, q. XIII, §§XV–XVI (1847 ed., I, 195–196). §XV: "Locus, 1 Sam. xxiii. 11, 12, non potest facere ad Scientiam mediam adstruendam, quia non tam est prædictio futurorum quæ adhuc essent in fieri, quam revelatio occultorum quæ jam tum erant, puta consiliorum quæ inter Kehelitas agitabantur de tradendo Davide, si ibi substitisset." §XVI: "Verba Christi, Matth. xi. 22, 23. [...] non sunt ad literam urgenda, quasi ageretur de re aliqua quæ sub hac vel illa conditione determinate esset futura. Nam est hyperbolicum et proverbiale loquendi genus [...] quomodo si præceptor tardum aliquem et bardum discipulum alloquens diceret; si tandiu asinum docuissem, hoc non ignoraret [...]. Similis locus est Ezech. iii. 6" (my translation). Turretin's reference "Matth. xi. 22, 23" is as printed; the saying about Tyre and Sidon is Matthew 11:21.

[133] Mastricht, *Theoretico-practica theologia* (1724), II.xiii, §XXII, 149: "Resp. Prævidit scientiâ liberâ ex decreto, quo Deus constituit, rebus omnibus, suo tempore eum conferre ordinem, per quam, ex hac rerum constructione, talis esset secuturus eventus, si modo ordinarius concursus Dei accederet. [...] Est enim hic rerum ordo, ut inimicus inimicum tradat, si modo possit" (my translation).

it was staying true to Calvin by rejecting any such novelty, though only Twisse says so in as many words.

The other group was smaller: Gomarus, who said it first, and Walaeus, who said it most carefully. They were more open to giving Calvin the appropriate nuances. They kept Calvin's rule about God's knowledge of what will be, and they refused every Jesuit and Remonstrant use of the conditional knowledge. But they read the conditional texts as a real disclosure of God's knowledge, a reading Calvin had declined, and indeed denied, and they gave that knowledge a place before the decree as its object.

The depth of the split is why Muller's question has no simple answer here. The split did not run between the Reformed and their Remonstrant opponents. It ran through the anti-Remonstrant party itself, between Arminius's chief opponent and his student on one side and Ames, Twisse and Voetius on the other. Both sides could claim Calvin's rule, and both sides did hold it. They parted over whether that rule leaves room for a knowledge of conditionals before the decree, and over how to read passages that Calvin had treated as speech accommodated to human capacity. The rejecters' own spokesman at Utrecht judged the dissent a difference of words more than of substance. On Walaeus's form of the doctrine that judgment is close to the truth. On Gomarus's it is not. Either way, the Reformed who accepted a conditional knowledge accepted not the Jesuit doctrine but a Reformed restatement of one part of it, designed to keep God's decree sovereign over every actual event. The surprise te Velde describes from Barth's perspective, that Reformed theologians accepted middle knowledge at all, therefore rests on too quick a reading. Te Velde doubts "whether Barth gives a satisfactory exposition of Gomarus's and Walaeus's views of scientia media," and the texts bear him out.[134]

10. The Question No One Can Get Around: Freedom and Responsibility

One question remains that no account of God's knowledge can get around: the freedom of the will and the responsibility of the one who wills. If God knows what I would do in every circumstance, and decrees the circumstances, in what sense is my choice my own, and my guilt my own? This is the pressure point that middle knowledge was meant to relieve.

Molina relieved it by putting the creature's free determination ahead of God's decree about that choice. He did not deny God's providence or his predeterminations; as we have seen, he held that nothing comes about without them. But he held that the certainty of God's foreknowledge of the good and evil acts of created choice does not come "from the predeterminations alone" of aids and concurrence, because, with nothing in them hindering it, "choice can turn itself to the contrary side." It comes "from middle knowledge," by which God knew, before every act of his will, "which way choice would turn by its freedom."[135] The creature's freedom settles what God

[134] Te Velde, *Paths Beyond Tracing Out*, 331 n. 80.

[135] Molina, *Concordia*, disp. LIII, memb. III, p. 365: "consequenter dicimus, certitudinem totam divinæ scientiæ, qua actus tam bonos quam malos arbitrii creati absolute futuros esse prænoscit, non provenire ex solis

knows by that knowledge, and God decrees in its light. In Molina's order, freedom is secured by being placed before the decree.

Walaeus tried to keep the order the other way round. God's decree is first. His conditional knowledge serves the decree as its object; it never causes election, and it never makes grace wait on the creature's choice. But Walaeus, as Section 5.4 showed, does not say what makes a conditional about a free creature true, and he confesses the limit. The pressure, then, is real, and it has to be taken seriously. It will not do to relieve it Molina's way, by making God's knowledge depend on the creature; nor will it do to deny that the creature's choice is truly free and truly its own. In a separate paper on asymmetric dual-frame compatibilism I have set out the reasons I believe the freedom of the will must be taken seriously.[136] I give them here, and the next section offers a picture that may help the reader hold the two orders together.

10.1 What I mean by freedom of the will

This section deals with several items I claim make libertarian freedom of the will necessary. Before beginning to address these items, I need to define what I mean by libertarian freedom of the will (LFW). For this definition, I take the work of Tim Stratton where he defines this terminology: "If a person's choice, action, evaluation, or judgment is neither random nor determined by something or someone else, then this person possesses libertarian freedom. It can also be expressed this way: Libertarian freedom is the ability to choose or act such that antecedent conditions are insufficient to causally determine or necessitate one's choice or action."[137] Stratton adds that this is "That's a fancy way of saying the ability to do otherwise" (same page). I agree with that definition within the confines of the parameters of the created universe within which we live, what we call reality, so one can say that is what I mean in the use of the term and concept. I deny the accusation that this definition means creatures do or can operate independently of divine control.

Throughout this section, "libertarian freedom" / LFW means (L2), second-cause contingency under the decree: relative to the creature's proper antecedents the choice is not necessitated, and the will is not coacted. It is freedom *sensu diviso*, not composite power to overturn a fixed decree (*sensu composito*). That is the freedom Stratton's definition names inside the created order; it is not the desert-aseity (L1) that the first part of my paper on asymmetric dual-frame compatibilism refuses, and it is not Molinist middle-knowledge architecture.

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præfinitionibus conferendi auxilia et concursus; quoniam, eis nihil impedientibus, potest arbitrium se inflectere in partem contrariam; sed provenire ex scientia media, qua ante omnem actum suæ voluntatis cognovit in quam partem arbitrium pro sua libertate se esset flexurum" (my translation).

[136] Gerald Milton Smith, Jr., "Asymmetric Dual-Frame Compatibilism: Asymmetric Antecedence and the Refusal of an Impossible Demand" (unpublished manuscript, 2026). Sections 10.1 and 10.2 give the text of its appendix on the necessity of libertarian freedom, with cross-references adjusted and Scripture quoted from the ESV.

[137] Timothy A. Stratton, *Human Freedom, Divine Knowledge, and Mere Molinism*, 2nd ed. (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2026), 6.

10.2 Twelve reasons freedom must be taken seriously

This understanding of LFW (L2), and I will utilize Dr. Stratton's acronym, is necessary for the list that follows.

1. I begin with the issue of temptation. In order for temptation to be a reality, and to involve an enemy of our souls as a tempter, we must have the ability to do otherwise in choosing an alternative possibility. To deny such a definition of freedom makes the subject of temptation nothing more than theater, illusion, and an unnecessary plot mechanism in the story of God's dealings with humanity. This seems to be little more than common sense. Theologically, temptation is an inner or outer inducement, trial, or enticement that incites a moral agent to rebel against God's law, distrust his goodness, or choose a lesser, creaturely good over God's stated will and purpose. The classic example is also the original example found in the temptation of the first pair in Genesis 3. No one reading that interprets it in any way other than that Eve, then Adam, had the ability to do otherwise. The later Biblical narrative gives too much weight to the results of the pair's failure there to view their temptation as anything other than real, thus not just theater. The same is true of the other temptation that serves as a classic example, that of Christ in Matthew 4, Mark 1, and Luke 4. There Christ is correcting the original failure as the "second Adam", thereby through his active obedience and resisting of temptation, securing for those who come in faith to him, a status of righteousness by which we may be appropriately clothed in God's presence in eternity.

2. A second reality that best fits with LFW (L2) as defined here is the reality of God's permissive will. In order to correctly deny that God is the author or cause of sin, nor that he coerces human agents to sin, Augustinian thought developed the idea of God's permissive will that would be further developed in the later history of the church (note the appropriate cites in the Enchiridion and the City of God). Augustine would assert that God's permission is not a failure of power when he says, "Nothing, therefore, happens but by the will of the Omnipotent, He either permitting it to be done, or Himself doing it" (Enchiridion, chapter 95).[138] Calvin and the later Reformers would further develop this concept, but my point here is that it is a concept at all. This fact that it is a concept fits only with LFW and the Biblical portrayal that God intended such liberty on the part of his creatures in order to accomplish his multi-faceted and dynamic purposes. Why does there need to be a "permissive" will if God's decree negates LFW? Again, this is little more than common sense.

3. A third reality or question that necessitates LFW (L2) surrounds the question God asks in 1 Kings 22:20, "Who will entice Ahab, that he may go up and fall at Ramoth-gilead?"[139] If God has not decreed a set of circumstances wherein LFW are a reality on every creaturely level, where does this question come from? The question supposes a genuine interaction, and the development and acceptance of a genuine plan to influence Ahab.

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[138] The English of *Enchiridion* 95 is J. F. Shaw's: Augustine, *The Enchiridion; or, On Faith, Hope, and Love*, trans. J. F. Shaw, in *A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, ed. Philip Schaff, 1st ser., vol. 3 (Buffalo: The Christian Literature Company, 1887), 267.

[139] 1 Kings 22:20, ESV.

How can one make sense of such passages without LFW? It is an impossibility. That is not to say that most compatibilist accounts come close by logically maneuvering concepts to fit, but that does not seem necessary if we stay with the text. That is not to say that the logical explanations are unnecessary, but it is a claim that they have not been pressed far enough by not being required to take into account both the purposes of God and the creator/creature distinction. If I was pressed to choose a side, I would choose one of the compatibilist camps because of their emphasis on the priority of God in their understanding, but I find they all fall short regarding LFW, so I disagree. This passage, and the others like it, i.e. Job 1, etc., would be more theater and not reality.

4. Another related reality that requires LFW (L2) is the hypothetical circumstances showcased in 1 Samuel 23:10–13. What God essentially says there is that if the circumstances are changed, an alternative possibility will prevail. In the passage, David prays asking God if Saul would come to the city of Keilah where he was staying, and if the people of the city would hand him over. In both questions, God answers in the affirmative, that is Saul would come to the city and the people in the city would hand him over to Saul. Yet, when in response to the answered prayer David leaves the city, none of what God said in his answers to David happened. This hypothetical and/or theoretical situation serves to show how God governs and is not challenged by LFW, and also how LFW might be exercised in alternative possibilities.

5. A fifth reality surrounds the Noahic flood and the necessity for that reality. If divine determinism negates LFW (L2), why was there the need for that event? I know that the answer most compatibilists will give is that it was simply the decreed plan of God, and I agree, but look at how it is presented to the reader in God's Scriptural revelation of himself. Genesis 6:3, 5–8 says, "Then the LORD said, 'My Spirit shall not abide in man forever, for he is flesh: his days shall be 120 years.' [...] The LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And the LORD regretted that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him to his heart. So the LORD said, 'I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land, man and animals and creeping things and birds of the heavens, for I am sorry that I have made them.' But Noah found favor in the eyes of the LORD."[140] A couple of things leap out here, things which are hard to explain without LFW, and a different understanding of the divine deterministic decree. One is the "regret" language. You can't legitimately explain that away just because it doesn't fit your chosen systematic narrative. A second is the statement that Noah "found favor in the eyes of the LORD", a statement that has the force of being juxtaposed against God's regret over the rest of humanity.

6. Another issue arises with the statement in Romans 9:17, saying "For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, 'For this very purpose I have raised you up, that I might show my power in you, and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth.'"[141] That very important verse describing the authority of God in election and pursuing his purposes makes no sense if it

[140] Genesis 6:3, 5–8, ESV.

[141] Romans 9:17, ESV.

is true of every agent's every choice as it would be in the sense it is here if LFW (L2) were not reality, and if divine determinism negates LFW. Now, you can say that this same statement is true of every agent's every choice, but you cannot say it with an equivalence with this passage, because this passage shows a unique redemptive-historical intensification of providence, not the ordinary dual-frame pattern in which God normally governs without becoming a rival intramundane second cause, but an exceptional bringing-about of his purpose through this individual, in whom he forms the decisions that led him to do what he did. That is part of the point of the passage: God is sovereign and has the right to do as he chooses. My paper on asymmetric dual-frame compatibilism (II.8) still refuses the cartoon that God must ordinarily "enter time" as a second influencing frame; it does not forbid rare, purpose-driven special providence within the temporal theater he created.

7. If LFW (L2) is not true or reality, then Adam's veiled accusation in Genesis 3:12 misses the bigger better accusation by a mile. Scripture says there: "The man said, 'The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate.'"[142] Adam was blaming the woman, but he was also blaming God for giving her to him. This classic approach to our sin that we all experience and express was and is the best opportunity to make the real and more obvious accusation if there were no LFW. If that were the case, Adam could have and should have said, "well you ordained this, so how is it my fault?" Again and again, LFW is the only position that makes complete sense of the Scriptural revelation.

8. Then one might ask, why the example of dual causation found in Genesis 50:20? There we read, "As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today."[143] Showcased there is the causation of the brothers as well as the simultaneous causation of God. This is unlike the example with Pharaoh in my opinion, but more like the statement of Paul in Romans 8:28 where Paul promises, "And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose." In these verses, God reveals himself to be working behind the scenes of free choices, intervening and contravening where necessary, to bring about that which is best for his people in the pursuit of his purposes. How does that square with a determination that negates LFW (L2)? How does the decree have to work around anything if it is indeed a decree that negates LFW? These verses seem to clearly indicate that God is not only working through creaturely actions, but also around those actions. It seems this is how he has chosen to showcase and fulfill his purposes.

9. A ninth consideration is the juxtaposed comparison found at Nehemiah 9:33: "Yet you have been righteous in all that has come upon us, for you have dealt faithfully and we have acted wickedly."[144] There God's complete faithfulness is juxtaposed with our complete wickedness, a comparison that is gutted of its full significance without LFW

[142] Genesis 3:12, ESV.

[143] Genesis 50:20 and Romans 8:28, ESV.

[144] Nehemiah 9:33, ESV.

(L2). Without LFW, we are also in danger of gutting the reality of the repentance being expressed. More thought and consideration should be given to this than I am prepared to give it here, but without LFW, this verse and the surrounding passage makes little sense.

10. Then consider the realities of justice, and mercy, and grace. If LFW (L2) is anything less than the above definition, if it's some version of modern compatibilism, then we find ourselves possibly undermining the definitional depth of these realities. At this point, I will say what I did not make clear in the body of that paper, namely that I do not believe the Westminster or 2nd London Confessions did this in their language of God establishing the necessity of secondary causes. That language allows for, and in my opinion even demands, the interpretation that I am proposing. Keep in mind that my proposal comes from the perspective of fully embracing Dort's five points in my soteriology, and I embrace a full Reformed view of God's sovereignty. I just do not believe that modern compatibilists, nor Luther and Calvin, nor the Reformed orthodox, ever gave a full treatment to these realities that added anything to our understanding beyond what we can find in the apostolic fathers through to Augustine. More importantly, I believe the position I am proposing is Biblical, taking into account all of the Biblical revelation and seeking to understand that in terms that best account for the whole corpus. Justice and mercy and grace are definitionally deeper than we can imagine, such that the life and death and resurrection of Christ alone fully plumbs their depths, and without LFW I don't see that.

11. Denying LFW (L2) would also seem to require a rewrite of purpose passages like Ephesians 3:10. There Paul writes, "so that through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places."[145] I could say the same about other purpose passages pointing out different but similar realities, but here Paul describes God as deliberately showcasing his "manifold wisdom". If divine determinism, a reality I fully embrace, determines human decisions without LFW, then it seems to me the passage should have said that God was deliberately showcasing his "great power", and not "wisdom", because the wisdom required to work through and around and contrary to creatures with LFW is obviously much greater than the wisdom required to deterministically bring about the decisions that he alone wants. That would be much easier and showcase his power more than showcasing his wisdom. I believe LFW more fully expresses God's wisdom and power in the reality he has created. And I believe that the wisdom required to accomplish this is so beyond fascinating that the angels are curious and fascinated by it, as Peter says in 1 Peter 1:12, "things into which angels long to look."

12. Finally, denying or limiting LFW (L2) seems to make God's decree the central issue of the discussion without considering the primary focus of the decree. All of the argumentation on both sides of this debate focus on the substance, and timing, and extent of the decree, consistently without focusing on the purpose of the decree in Christ. There is a very real sense then in which it feels as if the decree replaces Christ in our thinking. My point is that Christ is central and not the decree in the same sense, i.e. the decree is central in that and because it is God's work to showcase and eternally focus on Christ.

[145] Ephesians 3:10 and 1 Peter 1:12, ESV.

I accept Stratton's definition of libertarian freedom (L2) within the parameters of the created order argued in that paper. I do not accept the Molinist framework from which he often deploys it. The constructive claim here is different: the decree itself establishes the environment in which creatures possess that freedom, so that God's purposes are carried through real second-cause liberty rather than through middle-knowledge management of what undetermined creatures would do. In that sense the proposal is a compatibilism, but not the modern soft-determinist kind that thins freedom to unforced desire, and not a forced re-labeling of older Reformed Orthodoxy under today's isms. It is decree-constituted libertarian second-cause contingency (L2) inside a determined order of providence.

These reasons do not come from Walaeus, and he would not have used this vocabulary. But they show why the question of freedom cannot be set aside as a Jesuit problem that the Reformed may simply dismiss. They do not settle how the two orders fit together, and the next section offers no settlement either, only a picture.

11. An Analogy for Picturing the Possibilities

The last section argued that the pressure between God's decree and the creature's freedom is real. This section offers a picture that may help the reader see the possibilities involved, both physical and metaphysical. It is an illustration and not a proof, and nothing in the argument of this article depends on it. It comes from the same paper on asymmetric dual-frame (ADF) compatibilism. There I first proposed an "enclosed-brane" analogy for nested created orders, borrowing the mathematics of higher-dimensional spacetime. My good friend Risley W. Mabile then pressed the mathematics hard, showed which parts of it do no work, and proposed a simpler picture in its place. Both texts follow in full, with their equations and their figure. In them, references to lettered appendices, to sections such as II.7 and II.8, and to "the paper" are to the ADF paper; the bracketed numbers in Mabile's response refer to the list of works at its end. In Mabile's response, "Appendix G" is the ADF appendix "On the Necessity of Libertarian Freedom," printed above as Section 10, and "Appendix H" and "the paper" mean my earlier dual-frame draft and its brane appendix.

11.1 The enclosed-brane analogy

Nested Created Orders: An Enclosed-Brane Analogy

Gerald Milton Smith, Jr.

September 23, 2026

Purpose. This note proposes a more rigorous *analogy* for nested created orders, one order enclosed inside a larger one, so that lower creatures cannot peer into the higher order, while the higher order can reach the lower. It is offered for conceptualization, not as a proof of Asymmetric Dual Frame (ADF), and not as laboratory physics.

Bar. Mathematical possibility. String / brane / extra-dimension language is used as a tool for leaving the observational bubble of our 3+1 spacetime. Analogy ≠ proof. Nested created orders ≠ the Creator's atemporal decree.

1. What this is for

ADF needs a picture of *asymmetric access* between created frames: the lower cannot see or resolve the higher; the higher can access the lower. The older phase-space / symplectic overlay used in Appendix H invited a Laplacean reading (a state that already contains the whole history). That reading is the wrong kind of "whole." This note replaces that machinery with an Enclosed-Brane Model (EBM): our intact 3 space + 1 time worldvolume nested inside a larger bulk with extra *spatial* dimensions.

Soft one-way mutualism is allowed: the higher may leave a *felt mark* on the lower. Access still stays one-way. The lower cannot resolve the source. Peer / equal-frame mutualism is refused.

2. Picture in plain words (Flatland first)

Imagine Flatland: beings of a plane. A three-dimensional visitor can see their whole plane, including "interiors" they cannot see of one another, while they see only cross-sections. That is already one-way *sight*.

Now harden the picture for nested *created orders*:

- Lower order (W). Our familiar world: 3 space + 1 time. Matter and light of this order are *pinned* to this worldvolume (think open-string / Dirichlet endpoints). They do not roam freely through the higher dimensions.
- Higher order / Bulk (M). A larger spacetime with extra spacelike dimensions. Observers or agencies native to the Bulk can, in principle, resolve lower observables.
- Blindness. Lower instruments only ever register lower observables. Distinct Bulk states can agree on every lower measurement. Inference from odd marks is not perception of the source.
- Felt mark without resolved source. Coupling from higher to lower may leave a mark the lower feels. The lower still cannot peer-access the higher frame.

This is eyesight / access, not ground. Ground (decree) is a different register and must not be smuggled in as geometry.

3. Formal skeleton (axioms of the sketch)

These are design axioms of a consistent sketch, not theorems that "prove heaven."

1. Bulk. Smooth Lorentzian manifold (M, G) of dimension $n \geq 5$ (one time, at least four space). Extra dimensions are spacelike. No second time dimension.
2. Lower worldvolume. Smooth 4-manifold W with a smooth timelike embedding $\iota: W \hookrightarrow M$. Induced metric $h = \iota^* G$ has signature $(-, +, +, +)$. Lower history is the image of W.

3. Pinning (preferred). Lower light/matter degrees of freedom are intrinsic worldvolume fields on W (Dirichlet / support pinning), not ordinary smooth Bulk fields sitting only on a thin set. Tunneling of lower matter into the Bulk is excluded *by postulate* for the strict-confinement reading of this analogy. A finite potential well is at most a toy; exact confinement is not derived from a generic finite barrier.
4. Observable algebras. Unital C*-algebras $\mathcal{A}_W \subsetneq \mathcal{A}_M$ (common unit), with an explicit embedding or common representation. $\mathcal{A}_M$ is generated by $\mathcal{A}_W$ together with at least one surplus Bulk generator not in $\mathcal{A}_W$. Proper inclusion is by construction, not a universal claim about every proper C*-inclusion.
5. Blindness (existential). Because surplus generators exist, there exist distinct Bulk states that restrict to the same lower state. Lower instruments cannot tell them apart. The claim is existential, not "every Bulk degree of freedom is forever unreconstructible under all dynamics."
6. Soft one-way access. Every lower generator is available upstairs; surplus Bulk generators are not available downstairs. Algebraic reach is not the same as causal reach. Soft one-way mutualism: mark allowed; peer mutualism refused. Gravity-leak is demoted as the one-way *channel* (it may still illustrate mark-without-resolved-source).
7. Dual time without two-time physics. One Bulk time t. Lower proper time τ is induced from the worldvolume metric. For a warped product with brane locus $y = Y(t)$, use

$$d\tau = \sqrt{n(Y)^2 - \dot{Y}^2}\, dt$$

only under the axiom $n(Y)^2 - \dot{Y}^2 > 0$ so induced time stays timelike. Static brane is the safe default. This is not a second independent time dimension.
8. Optional causal widening. Warps that let Bulk curves connect brane events outside the *induced* brane light-cone are optional decoration, gated on energy/chronology conditions. Drop them and the model still stands.
9. Symplectic secondary layer (repaired). If a phase-space toy is kept, the lower sector is a symplectic submanifold of a larger phase space (second-class / confined sector), not "the whole lower order = one static Lagrangian." Symplectic repair blocks a bad *identification*; it does not by itself prove an anti-Laplace ontology. Reading discipline still does that work.

4. What this blocks

- Peer / equal-frame mutualism
- Using gravity-leak as the one-way access channel
- Treating the whole lower order as one static Lagrangian (wrong totum-simul invitation)
- Claiming geometry *proves* anti-Laplace or supplies divine ground
- Pantheism-by-containment (the Bulk stays created)
- Free lower matter roaming the Bulk under the strict-confinement reading

- Losing lower time by a bad embedding signature

5. What this still does not do

- Does not prove ADF.
- Does not equate nested creation with the Creator's atemporal decree.
- Does not rewrite ADF's main body or rename "L2."
- Does not supply *ground*, only *eyesight / access*.
- Does not claim laboratory confirmation of extra dimensions, warps, or "heaven = Bulk."

6. Relation to the older Appendix H overlay

The older symplectic overlay was vulnerable exactly where my good friend pressed (since I was only intending an analogy for visualization, I warned that it could not be pressed too far, but he did press it, so I have fixed it with a better theoretical model, one that doesn't violate the rules): phase space as Laplacean totum-simul, overlay doing little geometric work, bifurcation language misused, alternatives sitting in the wrong modal place. Those hits were largely right and forced a rebuild of the *access* picture.

The rebuild keeps the teaching aim (asymmetric access; anti-transfer of modal status) and refuses to treat every totum-simul image as Laplace, or to treat a drafting fault in an analogy as a thesis fault in ADF. Nested access and decree-first structure are separate pictures and must stay so.

7. Closing

If the Enclosed-Brane sketch is coherent as mathematics of *possibility*, it gives a cleaner illustration than the old overlay: lower 3+1 intact and nested; higher can reach; lower cannot resolve; soft mark allowed; peer mutualism refused; analogy still not proof.

Gerald Milton Smith, Jr.

11.2 Risley W. Mabile's critique and his repair[146]

On the Enclosed-Brane Analogy: Pressing the Mathematics

Risley W. Mabile

September 2026

Milton, thank you for the note [16]. You've done the thing I cared most about: access and ground are now separate pictures, and the note says so plainly and more than once. So I'm not going to re-argue the theology here, except for one section near the end, and I close with a proposal for Appendix H itself. You asked whether the sketch is coherent

[146] Risley W. Mabile, M.D., unpublished response to the author, 24 September 2026; printed with permission.

as mathematics of possibility. It is. My question is a different one: which parts of the mathematics are doing work, and which are carried along. I'll go axiom by axiom and then say what I think survives.

As before, mathematical terms are defined in the footnotes where they first appear, formal definition first and a plain gloss after. Sources are under References.

1 The geometry of the embedding (Axioms 1, 2, and 7)

This part is right. Take a five-dimensional warped bulk[147]

$$G = -n(y)^2\,dt^2 + a(y)^2\,\delta_{ij}\,dx^i dx^j + dy^2,$$

and a brane at $y = Y(t)$. The embedding[148] $\iota(t,x) = (t,x,Y(t))$ has $dy = \dot{Y}\,dt$, so the induced metric is

$$h = \iota^* G = -\big(n(Y)^2 - \dot{Y}^2\big)dt^2 + a(Y)^2\,\delta_{ij}\,dx^i dx^j.$$

This has signature $(-,+,+,+)$ exactly when $n(Y)^2 - \dot{Y}^2 > 0$, and a brane observer at fixed x has proper time[149] $d\tau = \sqrt{n(Y)^2 - \dot{Y}^2}\,dt$. That's your formula in Axiom 7, and your positivity condition is the right one.

The mathematics does make one thing plain that the prose understates. τ is a monotone function of t. The lower order's time is a reparametrization of the higher order's time, not a second time. Your "no second time dimension" is correct, and it means the bulk is temporal in exactly the way we are: it has one time, and ours is a slice of it. I come back to this in section 7.

2 Pinning leaves only one channel (Axiom 3)

Axiom 3 makes lower fields intrinsic to W, like open strings with Dirichlet endpoints on a D-brane.[150] Postulating that is fine. But look at what it does to the dynamics. The most general action[151] consistent with the axiom splits as

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[147] *Lorentzian manifold, signature.* A smooth manifold M with a metric G that at each point is a symmetric nondegenerate bilinear form on T_xM with exactly one negative eigenvalue; its *signature* is written $(-,+,\dots,+)$. Vectors v with $G(v,v) < 0$ are *timelike*. *Warped product.* A metric of the form $G = -n(y)^2\,dt^2 + a(y)^2\,\delta_{ij}\,dx^i dx^j + dy^2$, in which the scale of the t and x directions depends on the extra coordinate y. Plain gloss: a spacetime whose clocks and rulers are stretched differently at different depths in the extra dimension.

[148] *Embedding, pullback.* An embedding $\iota\colon W \hookrightarrow M$ is a smooth injective map that is a homeomorphism onto its image and whose derivative is injective at every point. The *induced metric* is the pullback $h = \iota^* G$, defined by $h(u,v) = G(\iota_* u, \iota_* v)$. The embedding is *timelike* if h is Lorentzian. Plain gloss: the brane inherits its clocks and rulers from the bulk it sits in.

[149] *Proper time.* Along a timelike curve c, $\tau = \int \sqrt{-h(\dot{c},\dot{c})}\,dt$: the time a clock carried along the curve would actually record.

[150] *Dirichlet boundary condition, D-brane.* In string theory, an open string whose endpoints satisfy Dirichlet conditions (their positions held fixed in the transverse directions) must end on a fixed submanifold, called a D-brane.

$$S = S_{\text{bulk}}[G, \Psi] + S_W[\varphi;\, \iota^* G],$$

where Ψ are bulk fields and φ are brane fields. There is no cross term in Ψ and φ, because a cross term would be a bulk field coupling directly to lower matter, which is what the axiom rules out. So the Euler–Lagrange equations for φ depend on the bulk only through $h = \iota^* G$, together with the extrinsic curvature[152] of the embedding if S_W is allowed to depend on it.

That's gravity. Once lower matter and light are pinned, the only way anything in the bulk can register on the brane is through the geometry the brane inherits, which is the gravitational channel. This is the channel Axiom 6 demotes. So with Axioms 3 and 6 taken together, the model has no channel by which the higher can reach the lower at all. Either gravity comes back as the channel, or you add a coupling that Axiom 3 forbids.

3 The algebra carries the analogy (Axioms 4 and 5)

This is the heart of the note, and it's stronger than you've claimed. Axiom 5 is a theorem, not an axiom, and the "surplus generator" clause isn't needed.

Let $\mathcal{A}_W \subsetneq \mathcal{A}_M$ be unital C*-algebras[153] with a common unit, and let $\mathcal{A}_W$ be norm-closed and closed under *. A state[154] of $\mathcal{A}_M$ restricts to a state of $\mathcal{A}_W$. Call the restriction map $r\colon \omega \mapsto \omega|_{\mathcal{A}_W}$. Both halves of your asymmetric access are properties of r.

Proposition 1. *Let $\mathcal{B} \subsetneq \mathcal{A}$ be a proper unital C*-subalgebra. Then the restriction map r from states of $\mathcal{A}$ to states of $\mathcal{B}$ is (i) surjective: every state of $\mathcal{B}$ is the restriction of some state of $\mathcal{A}$; and (ii) not injective: there are distinct states of $\mathcal{A}$ with the same restriction to $\mathcal{B}$.*

Open-string modes, which include gauge fields like light, are then confined to the brane. Closed strings have no endpoints; their modes include the graviton, and they propagate through the bulk [19, ch. 15].

[151] *Action, Euler–Lagrange equations.* In classical field theory the action S is a functional of the fields whose stationary points are the physical solutions. The conditions for stationarity are the Euler–Lagrange equations, the field equations of the theory [8].

[152] *Extrinsic curvature.* For a submanifold $W \subset M$, the second fundamental form K measures how W bends inside M; for a normal vector field N, $K(u, v) = G(\nabla_u N, v)$ for u, v tangent to W. Plain gloss: how curved the brane is as seen from the bulk, as distinct from how curved it is from inside.

[153] *C*-algebra.* A complex algebra A with an involution $a \mapsto a^*$ and a complete norm satisfying $\| ab \| \leq \| a \| \| b \|$ and $\| a^* a \| = \| a \|^2$. It is *unital* if it has a multiplicative identity 1. The bounded operators on a Hilbert space form the standard example. In quantum theory, self-adjoint elements ($a = a^*$) represent observables [10].

[154] *State.* A linear functional $\omega\colon A \to \mathbb{C}$ that is positive ($\omega(a^* a) \geq 0$ for all a) and normalized ($\omega(1) = 1$). Plain gloss: an assignment of expectation values to every observable, which is what a physical state of the system amounts to. For a positive functional on a unital C*-algebra, $\| \omega \| = \omega(1)$ [10].

Proof. (i) Let φ be a state of $\mathcal{B}$. By the Hahn–Banach theorem[155] it extends to a functional $\tilde{\varphi}$ on $\mathcal{A}$ with $\| \tilde{\varphi} \| = \| \varphi \| = 1 = \tilde{\varphi}(1)$. A bounded functional on a unital C*-algebra with $\| \tilde{\varphi} \| = \tilde{\varphi}(1)$ is positive [10], so $\tilde{\varphi}$ is a state.

(ii) Pick $a \in \mathcal{A} \backslash \mathcal{B}$. Since $\mathcal{B}$ is closed, Hahn–Banach gives a bounded g with $g|_{\mathcal{B}} = 0$ and $g(a) \neq 0$. Put $g^{\dagger}(x) = \overline{g(x^{*})}$ and split $g = g_1 + ig_2$ with $g_1 = 1/2\,(g + g^{\dagger})$ and $g_2 = 1/2i\,(g - g^{\dagger})$. Both are hermitian,[156] and both vanish on $\mathcal{B}$ because $\mathcal{B}$ is closed under *. Since $g(a) \neq 0$, at least one of them is nonzero; call it f. By the Jordan decomposition[157] $f = f_{+} - f_{-}$ with $f_{\pm}$ positive. Because $1 \in \mathcal{B}$, $0 = f(1) = f_{+}(1) - f_{-}(1)$, so $f_{+}(1) = f_{-}(1) = c$, and $c > 0$ since $f \neq 0$. Then $\omega_{\pm} = f_{\pm}/c$ are states of $\mathcal{A}$. For every $b \in \mathcal{B}$, $\omega_{+}(b) - \omega_{-}(b) = f(b)/c = 0$, so they have the same restriction. And $\omega_{+} \neq \omega_{-}$ because $f \neq 0$. ■

Three consequences follow.

First: blindness needs nothing beyond proper inclusion. Axiom 4's surplus Bulk generator is automatic, since any $a \in \mathcal{A}_M \backslash \mathcal{A}_W$ serves, and Axiom 5 follows from Axiom 4 by Proposition 1(ii). I'd state it as a result, since it's stronger than a design axiom and costs nothing.

Second: no geometry is involved. The smallest example is two qubits.[158] Take $\mathcal{A}_W = M_2 \otimes 1 \subsetneq M_2 \otimes M_2 = \mathcal{A}_M$. The entangled Bell state $|\Phi^{+}\rangle\langle\Phi^{+}|$ and the product state $1/2\,1 \otimes 1/2\,1$ are different states of the pair, but both restrict to the maximally mixed state $1/2\,1$ on the first qubit. Everything Axioms 4 and 5 are after is already present in a four-dimensional matrix algebra, with no bulk, no warp, and no branes.

Third: the inclusion is stipulated, not derived. That the higher order's observables include the lower's is the content of $\mathcal{A}_W \subset \mathcal{A}_M$, and nothing in the brane geometry produces that inclusion. So the load-bearing claim of the analogy ("higher can resolve lower; lower cannot resolve higher") enters the model as an assumption about algebras. The branes then illustrate an assumption that has already been made.

4 Reach, marks, and mutual coupling (Axiom 6)

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[155] *Hahn–Banach theorem.* A bounded linear functional on a subspace of a normed space extends to the whole space with the same norm. It also gives, for any closed subspace V and any vector $a \notin V$, a bounded functional vanishing on V but not at a [10].

[156] *Hermitian functional.* One with $f(x^{*}) = \overline{f(x)}$ for all x; equivalently, real-valued on self-adjoint elements.

[157] *Jordan decomposition.* Every bounded hermitian functional f on a C*-algebra can be written $f = f_{+} - f_{-}$ with $f_{\pm}$ positive and $\| f \| = \| f_{+} \| + \| f_{-} \|$ [10, 13]. It is the analogue of splitting a signed measure into positive and negative parts.

[158] *Qubit, tensor product, M_2.* M_2 is the algebra of 2×2 complex matrices, the observables of a two-level quantum system (a *qubit*). The observables of two qubits form $M_2 \otimes M_2 \cong M_4$, and $M_2 \otimes 1$ is the subalgebra of observables on the first qubit alone. $|\Phi^{+}\rangle = (|00\rangle + |11\rangle)/\sqrt{2}$ is the standard maximally entangled (Bell) state [12].

You write that "algebraic reach is not the same as causal reach." That's right, and it's where the model is thinnest. Axioms 1–6 contain no dynamics linking the two orders, so the felt mark isn't modeled at all.

To model it you need an interaction. In the quantum picture, let the Heisenberg dynamics[159] of the combined system be $\alpha_t(a) = e^{itH} a\, e^{-itH}$ with $H = H_W \otimes 1 + 1 \otimes H_B + H_{\text{int}}$. If $H_{\text{int}} = 0$, then α_t maps $\mathcal{A}_W$ into itself and the lower order evolves autonomously: no mark. If $H_{\text{int}} \neq 0$, the lower order's reduced dynamics is in general a family of completely positive maps[160] that isn't unitary. That non-unitarity is a good mathematical picture of a mark without a resolved source: the lower order registers a disturbance and can't reconstruct what did it.

The problem is that coupling of this kind is mutual. Classically it's one line.

Proposition 2. *Let $H(x,p,y,\pi) = H_W(x,p) + H_B(y,\pi) + V(x,y)$ with V twice continuously differentiable, where (x,p) are lower and (y,π) are bulk coordinates. If the force on the lower order, $-\partial V/\partial x$, depends on the bulk configuration y, then the force on the bulk, $-\partial V/\partial y$, depends on the lower configuration x.*

Proof. The first condition says $\partial^2 V/\partial y\,\partial x \not\equiv 0$. By the symmetry of mixed partial derivatives[161] $\partial^2 V/\partial x\,\partial y \not\equiv 0$, which is the second condition. ■

The quantum version is the same in substance: an interaction $H_{\text{int}} = \sum_k A_k \otimes B_k$ generates evolution on both factors at once, and back-action[162] is generic.

Strict one-way influence does exist in the mathematics, but it has to be built in. In quantum information it's called a semicausal operation: one party can signal the other but not the reverse [2]. Eggeling, Schlingemann, and Werner proved that semicausal operations are exactly the semilocalizable ones, those that can be carried out by the first party acting and then passing a system one way to the second [6]. So your "soft one-way mutualism" has a precise mathematical name. But it is an extra postulate about the form of the coupling, and it isn't delivered by the brane. The physically natural couplings in brane-world models, gravity above all, are two-way.

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[159] *Heisenberg dynamics, automorphism.* Time evolution represented as a one-parameter family α_t of automorphisms of the observable algebra (structure-preserving bijections), $\alpha_t(a) = e^{itH} a\, e^{-itH}$ for a Hamiltonian H. Observables move; states stay fixed. Plain gloss: the rule for how every measurable quantity changes with time.

[160] *Reduced dynamics, completely positive map.* The evolution of a subsystem's state obtained by evolving the whole system and then restricting. It is given by completely positive, trace-preserving maps, the most general physically allowed transformations of a quantum state, which need not be reversible [3]. Plain gloss: how a part of a system changes when it is being disturbed by the rest.

[161] *Symmetry of mixed partials (Schwarz's theorem).* If V has continuous second derivatives, then $\partial^2 V/\partial x\,\partial y = \partial^2 V/\partial y\,\partial x$.

[162] *Back-action.* The disturbance a measured or coupled system exerts on the system it's coupled to; the quantum counterpart of Newton's third law.

5 Axioms 8 and 9

Axiom 8, bulk shortcuts between brane events, is real mathematics. Geodesics through a warped bulk can connect brane points outside the induced light-cone [4]. You mark it optional, and the model loses nothing without it. I'd drop it, since it invites the reader to ask what it's for.

Axiom 9 should go. Second-class constraints do cut out a symplectic submanifold[163] [5, 9], so "symplectic, not Lagrangian" is the correct repair of the identification. But a symplectic submanifold preserved by the flow is itself a Hamiltonian system: the Hamiltonian vector field restricts to it, and by Picard–Lindelöf there is exactly one trajectory through each of its points. The lower sector is exactly as Laplacean as before. You concede that it "does not by itself prove an anti-Laplace ontology." Then it earns nothing, and it's a way back into the Appendix H problem.

6 What survives

Strip out what's idle and the model reduces to three statements.

(1) The lower order's observables are a proper subalgebra of the higher order's: $\mathcal{A}_W \subsetneq \mathcal{A}_M$.

(2) Hence, by Proposition 1, every lower state is realized upstairs, and the lower is blind to some differences upstairs. Both are theorems.

(3) The higher leaves a mark on the lower through a coupling postulated to be semicausal, higher to lower; the lower's reduced dynamics then registers a disturbance whose source it cannot reconstruct.

Flatland can go on top as the picture. That's a sound model of asymmetric access, and it passes your own Appendix C rule, one sentence of image with the disanalogy named. The extra dimensions, the warp, the Dirichlet pinning, the proper-time formula, and the second-class sector can all go. They're consistent, and none of them does any work.

7 What the mathematics can't settle

One point, and then I'll leave it. The model's higher order is a created, temporal, spatially extended bulk, with our time a slice of its time. Mathematically that makes it a larger creature. The note says, rightly, that nested creation is not the Creator's decree. So the analogy needs to say what the higher order stands for. If it's the heavenly council and the enemy (1 Kings 22, Job 1–2), then it's a picture for Appendix G and not for ADF's G/C asymmetry. If it's meant to picture God's access to the creature, then the created, temporal bulk works against it: a bigger spacetime with more dimensions is the "one more agent, only larger" picture that II.8 rejects. The

[163] *Second-class constraints, Dirac bracket.* In Dirac's theory of constrained Hamiltonian systems, constraints $\chi_a = 0$ are second-class when the matrix of their Poisson brackets $\{\chi_a, \chi_b\}$ is invertible. The constraint surface is then a symplectic submanifold, and the Dirac bracket is the Poisson bracket it inherits [5, 9].

mathematics fits either reading equally well, which is exactly why it can't settle the question.

8 A proposal for Appendix H

Everything above is subtraction, so I owe you an addition. The reason the containment pictures keep going idle is, I think, structural. Phase space around a slice and a bulk around a brane both put the higher order in a bigger space, and however the axioms are tuned, containment makes the higher a larger thing of the same kind: one more region of reality, with its own time and its own causes, reaching into ours. The asymmetry ADF needs isn't one of size. It's one of level: two complete explanations of one act that don't compete. No number of extra dimensions pictures that, because the relation you want is one in which the higher isn't located in the lower at all.

The oldest image for that relation is the author and the story, and it does in one picture what your email said needed two. What follows is drafted as a replacement for Appendix H, in something close to the paper's register, so you can lift whatever is useful.

Appendix H: Asymmetry Pictured

The image. Ask why Macbeth killed Duncan. One true answer is ambition, a wife's pressure, and a prophecy half-understood; that explanation is complete inside the play, and no reader thinks Macbeth didn't really choose. Another true answer is that Shakespeare wrote it. The second answer doesn't subtract anything from the first. Neither is a partial cause waiting for the other to finish the job. They answer two different questions, and that is the grammar of II.7: Question D asks whether, relative to the decree, the act's futurition is secured; Question C asks whether the creature's own antecedents necessitate it. The author image makes the grammar visible. Two answers, two levels, no ballot.

What it shows. First: ground without rivalry. Everything in the play exists because it was written, and the writing is not one of the causes in Scotland. Aquinas states the rule directly: the same effect is not attributed partly to God and partly to the natural agent, but wholly to both, in different orders [1, III, c. 70]. Farrer called this double agency [7]; Tanner calls it non-contrastive transcendence, meaning that God's agency is not on the creature's plane and so cannot compete with it [17].

Second: one-way access. The author knows every line. Macbeth could search Scotland to its last stone and not find Shakespeare, not because Shakespeare is hidden well but because the author is not a place in the story. The lower cannot resolve the source, and nothing has to be postulated to make that so.

Third: a mark without a rival cause. The author can shape events from within (a prophecy, a providence-shaped coincidence) without becoming a character, and

nothing Macbeth does acts on Shakespeare as a cause. The influence is one-way by the nature of the relation, not by a condition placed on a coupling.

Lastly: the author can write himself into his own story. Sayers built a book on this [14], and Lewis used the same image to explain why God would not be found as one more object inside the world [11]. This is where the image earns its place in ADF: the decree is not the center of the story; the author's entry into it is. That is the point Appendix G makes about Christ, and the image carries it without strain.

What it does not show. Characters are not real agents; creatures are. A critic will say the image makes creaturely freedom a fiction, or that "Shakespeare wrote it" is determinism with good manners. So the image is restricted to what it teaches: that the two levels don't compete, and that access runs one way. It does not picture the creature's contingency and must not be asked to. That work belongs to the figure below, and to the indexed operators of Appendix A.

The figure. Let Γ be the field of possible world-histories, the object of God's knowledge of simple intelligence. The decree G selects one history γ^*, the object of the knowledge of vision. At a choice point p on γ^*, let $\mathrm{Opt}_C(p)$ be the outcomes not excluded by the creature's token-complete antecedents C.

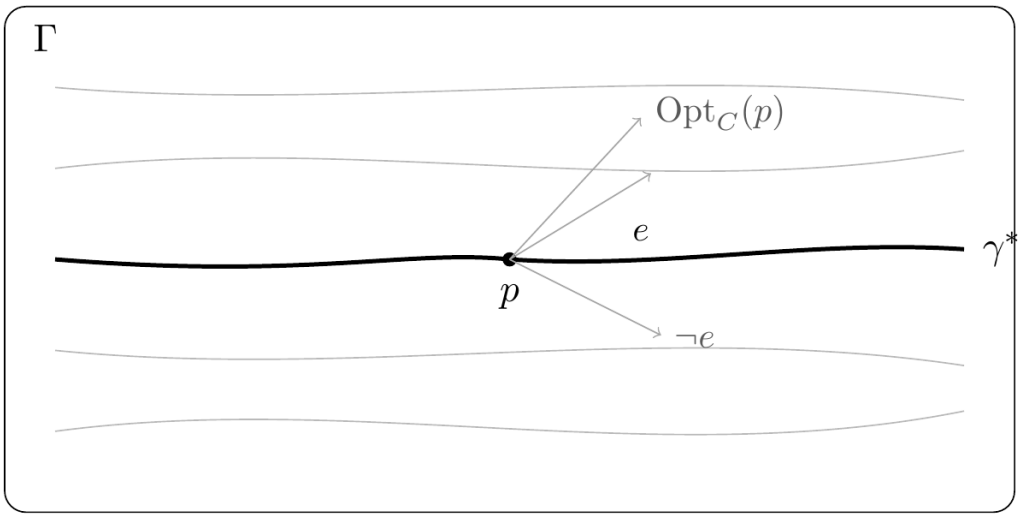


Figure 1: Possible histories (light), the decreed history γ^* (heavy), and the creature's options at p (fan). $\Box_G e$: e lies on γ^* and is secured there by G. $\Diamond_C \neg e$: $\neg e \in \mathrm{Opt}_C(p)$. The heavy line is G's; the fan is C's.

The anti-transfer ban of Appendix A can now be seen rather than stated. Membership in $\mathrm{Opt}_C(p)$ is a fact about C. Membership in γ^* is a fact about G. Neither is read off the other. The composite sense of Appendix B is the attempt to hold γ^* fixed and walk down $\neg e$ anyway, which the figure shows to be impossible; the divided sense is the fan itself, which is real.

A formal note for readers who want one. The one-way access in the author image has a precise and very small formal core. If the lower order's observables are a proper

subalgebra of the higher order's, then every lower state is realized in the higher, and distinct higher states are indistinguishable from below. (This is Proposition 1 of this note.) Nothing further in the way of geometry is needed, and none is offered.

What this appendix does not claim. It does not prove ADF. It does not make creatures fictional, and it does not make the decree a script that empties second causes; the confession's grammar governs the image, not the reverse [18, 3.1, 5.2]. It borrows no physics. Consistent with Appendix C, it offers one image, names its disanalogy, and hands the work of contingency to the figure and to Appendix A.

That's the whole of it: about two pages in the paper's format, against the six the old appendix and the brane note together would need. It also keeps what you told me you didn't want to lose. Access is one-way, the mark is soft, peer mutualism is excluded, and nested access stays distinct from decree-first grounding, the first in the image and the second in the figure.

The brane note is a better model than the old overlay, and I'd rather see this proposal in the paper than either. Happy to go through it with you.

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11.3 What the picture shows, and what it does not

Mabile’s repaired figure is the part of all this that bears on Walaeus, and its symbols fit the doctrine discussed in this article closely. Γ, the field of possible world-histories, is in Mabile’s words “the object of God’s knowledge of simple intelligence”: that is God’s natural knowledge, his knowledge of everything that could be. The one history γ^* that the decree G selects is “the object of the knowledge of vision”: that is God’s free knowledge, which follows the decree. The fan $\mathrm{Opt}_C(p)$ needs more care. It is not itself a picture of conditional knowledge. It shows the outcomes that the creature’s own antecedents leave open at a point p; it shows what the creature could do, not what it would do. But the fan lies inside Γ and not on the decreed line, and that is where Walaeus files his conditional knowledge. Whatever God knows about what would follow along those branches, on this or that supposition, he knows by simple intelligence, and he knows which branch is actual only in and after his decree. The figure also has no separate place for a third kind of knowledge between Γ and γ^*. That is Walaeus’s point against Molina, and the picture makes it visible. It does not show what makes a conditional true, and so it cannot settle the question that Walaeus himself left open. It is a picture, not a proof.

12. Conclusion

Four questions have guided this study. The answers can now be given plainly.

What was Walaeus's view? Walaeus held that God knows, before any actual decree, what would follow on every possible supposition, including what free creatures would do if God placed them in certain circumstances and acted in them in certain ways. He kept the name *scientia media*, but this is not a third kind of knowledge. It belongs to God's knowledge of simple intelligence. It is the object of God's decree, never its cause; it always presupposes a decree of God (on my reading, a supposed one); and it must be purged of every Jesuit use that makes God's grace depend on the creature's choice.

How did he use it, and what value did he claim for it? He used it to honour Scripture's conditional statements, to maintain that God knows every truth, to show that God's decrees did not change between the covenant of works and the covenant of grace, to explain how God permits sin without being its author, and to hold together God's government and human freedom. He would not use it to explain prayer, which he grounded in the one decree of ends and means. He would not use it in election, which he held to be unconditional. The value he claimed was modest and defensive: Scripture "seems to admit" it, and "it will be seen how far it can or cannot be granted."

What were his sources? His named source is Franciscus Gomarus, his teacher at Leiden and the leading opponent of Arminius. Walaeus names him twice, and his teaching follows closely, in definition, example and placement, the theses on predestination printed under Gomarus's name, which were probably his model. He grants the doctrine a pedigree among "many Scholastics and more recent writers," names Ames as an orthodox opponent, and never names Molina. The idea had entered Leiden through Arminius, but Walaeus never names Arminius as his authority.

How does he compare with Molina, and in what time frame? Molina's middle knowledge, in print from 1588, is a third kind of knowledge, dependent on the creature's free choice, and the key to predestination and grace. Walaeus's hypothetical knowledge, stated first in an undated letter probably of about 1616, then in a book approved for printing in 1625, and fully in the *Loci communes*, first printed about 1641 and revised in the *Opera omnia* of 1643, shares Molina's object but not his placement or his uses. It is part of God's natural knowledge, never the cause of a decree, and barred from election.

One more question remains, the one with which this study began.

Did Walaeus keep to Calvin, or set him aside? On this locus the answer to Muller's question is continuity on the rule, with a real departure in exegesis, not a borrowing that set Calvin aside. Walaeus kept Calvin's rule that God's knowledge of what will be rests on his decree. He refused to make foreknowledge the cause of election, and he treated God's permission as itself a decree, not as bare permission. Keeping that rule, he departed from Calvin's reading of the conditional texts: he gave the knowledge of conditionals a place under simple intelligence and a use in

defending the decree, and in doing so he read those texts more boldly than Calvin, who had called the Keilah question idle. That step was real. What he took from the Jesuits was a question and a name, not their order of knowledge and decree. The freedom of the will remains the pressure point. Molina relieved it by putting the creature's freedom before the decree; Walaeus kept the decree first and left the grounding of conditional truth unexplained. That pressure is real, and it has to be taken seriously.

Had a leading Contra-Remonstrant quietly become a Reformed Molinist? He had not. He took an idea his opponents had made a weapon, kept the one part he believed Scripture teaches, and purged the rest. He kept the knowledge and its name, and refused it the standing of a third kind.

What This Teaches

Walaeus teaches three things that a thoughtful Christian reader can take away, whatever he finally decides about middle knowledge.

The first is that it is right to take an idea seriously even when it comes from the other side. Walaeus did not reject middle knowledge because Jesuits taught it or because Arminius had used it. He asked what Scripture says. He found that the Bible does tell us, in places like the story of David at Keilah, what would have happened under conditions that never came about. So he granted that God knows such things. Then he asked what went wrong in the Jesuit use of the idea, and he removed exactly that. A Christian can learn from anyone. What he may not do is let anyone's system overrule what Scripture teaches about God.

The second is that the question of who comes first matters more than the details of a theory. For Molina, God's knowledge of what a person would do depends on the person's choice, "and not the reverse," and God chooses in the light of it. For Walaeus, God is first in everything: in his knowledge, in his decree, in his grace. Walaeus's whole purge comes down to one conviction, stated in the words of Romans 9:16: "it depends not on human will or exertion, but on God, who has mercy."[164] A reader who remembers nothing else from this study should remember that this is where the line was drawn.

The third is that it is honest, and not weak, to admit where our understanding stops. Walaeus did not claim to explain how God knows the free choices of creatures without either making those choices the master of God's knowledge or taking away their freedom. He said that God knows the future free acts of creatures "in a way incomprehensible to us," and he pointed to Romans 11:33: "Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways!"[165] He used the idea of hypothetical knowledge where it helped him keep faith with Scripture, and he stopped using it where it would have made God depend on man. Knowing where to stop is part of good theology.

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[164] Romans 9:16, ESV.

[165] Romans 11:33, ESV.

Walaeus did not settle every question about middle knowledge, and he did not claim to. But he shows how a careful Christian thinker can handle a hard and disputed idea: receive what Scripture supports, refuse what it forbids, and bow before what it leaves hidden.

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