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BOOK REVIEWS

The Challenges of Divine Determinism: A Philosophical Analysis, by Peter Furlong. Cambridge University Press, 2019. Pp. viii + 239. \$99.99 (hardback).

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The Challenges of Divine Determinism: A Philosophical Analysis is a fantastic book of a sort few could have written. Proponents of divine determinism would have struggled to press objections against the view with the force that Peter Furlong presses them. On the other hand, opponents of divine determinism frequently seem unable to imagine how anyone could be attracted to the view, and, thus, perhaps even more so would have struggled to take as seriously as Furlong does a consideration of possible replies to the objections. Not until the very end of the book, do we learn that Furlong, who once thought that “if divine determinism was true, then human life is a sham” (219), is “now agnostic on the question of divine determinism” (220). Furlong, then, refrains from offering a final verdict on whether the objections to divine determinism are ultimately fatal. Revealing the findings of his study early on, he reports that, “in the end, it seems to me, that although this view carries numerous non-negligible costs, none of the problems is obviously decisive (which, of course, is not to say that they are obviously not decisive)” (8).

Furlong defines “divine determinism” loosely as “the view that everything that occurs is a consequence of God’s will—a will both complete and irresistible, such that the entire history of the universe is settled by what God ordains” (1). Although he briefly references some of the formidable historical figures that might be classified as “divine determinists” and discusses in about ten pages some of the motivations that have attracted thinkers to the view, he makes it clear that he is unable to address the “vast field of issues” that would be required to evaluate the benefits, and thus to offer an overall assessment, of divine determinism (7). Rather, *The Challenges of Divine Determinism* restricts itself to an evaluation of objections to divine determinism in light of possible replies. This self-imposed restriction seems well considered. Furlong treats just about every objection to divine determinism in great detail. There would not have been space for a responsible consideration of the benefits of the



view, or for an overall assessment, within the same volume. To provide an overall assessment would have required weighing divine determinism's "non-negligible costs" against its benefits and comparing them to the costs and benefits of competing views. Understandably, that was more than the volume could bear.

Despite what it doesn't do, *The Challenges of Divine Determinism* is must reading for anyone interested in the viability of divine or theological determinism. It is well written, carefully argued, and fair. Readers on all sides will benefit from Furlong's clarity, thoroughness, mastery of the literature, and judicious reluctance to reach verdicts too quickly. Sure to be a reference point for future discussions, the book is also suitable for adoption in graduate or upper-level undergraduate courses.

After an introduction that sets out the plan for the book, Furlong turns in Chapter 1 to offer a more precise working definition of determinism, to consider its motivations, and to distinguish two types of divine determinism. While he notes that authors have defined divine determinism in slightly different ways, he settles on a definition that makes clear that, for divine determinism, facts about God's will *both* entail (or conditionally necessitate) *and* explain every other contingent fact. According to "Edwardsian divine determinism," God creates an initial state of the universe (with any contingent causal laws there may be), and every subsequent state follows necessarily from the first. According to "primary divine determinism," there isn't an initial state of the universe from which every subsequent state follows necessarily, but we should rather think of God's creation as a single act in which every detail of the universe is settled and explained by God's willing it, much in the way every detail of a novel is settled by its author. Among the motivations for divine determinism, Furlong discusses passages from scripture, the phenomenon of prophecy, the principle of sufficient reason, making sense of scriptural authorship, and concerns about divine power, knowledge, aseity, sovereignty, and providence.

Chapters 2 and 3 consider objections that divine determinism rules out creaturely freedom and responsibility. Furlong does not attempt to settle the question of whether freedom and responsibility are compatible with determinism *in general*. Rather, he considers whether adapted versions of the most powerful arguments against the compatibility of free will and ordinary physical determinism apply with the same force against the compatibility of free will and divine determinism. Chapter 2 considers an adaptation of the Consequence Argument aimed at divine determinism and Chapter 3 considers an adaptation of Manipulation Arguments.

Furlong has some interesting things to say about how divine determinists might respond to Manipulation Arguments, but in this reviewer's opinion, whatever force Manipulation Arguments have against the compatibility of free will and determinism derives entirely from what those arguments have in common with the Consequence Argument. It seems to me that Furlong judges rightly that the Consequence Argument

is powerful (if not indisputable), and that it would (with adaptations) apply with the same force to divine determinism as it does to ordinary physical determinism. Especially helpful is Furlong's lengthy discussion of attempts by divine determinists to explain how their position is compatible with creaturely freedom. These attempts may show that divine determinism does not make a creaturely act absolutely necessary, but that point does not address the Consequence Argument. The Consequence Argument is not objecting that determinism renders acts *absolutely* necessary. Rather, it objects that determinism rules out freedom because it precludes our having responsibility for our acts, since it entails that our acts follow necessarily from explanatorily or causally prior conditions over which we have no control.

Chapters 4 and 5 take up, respectively, the questions of whether divine determinism makes God the cause of human sins and whether it makes God blameworthy for human sins in virtue of determining their occurrence. With an eye on the former question Furlong considers the "privation solution" according to which God does not cause human sin because he does not cause the privation or defect—the lack of conformity to the moral standard—in virtue of which an act is sinful. According to one version of this approach, the modest privation solution (MPS), the lack of conformity is caused only by the creature, not God. Furlong offers a formidable objection to the MPS, to the effect that the lack of conformity to the moral standard will simply follow from the positive aspects of the world; thus, if God causes all the positive aspects of the world (as divine determinists presumably hold), he will also cause the lack of conformity, at least if we assume the lack of conformity is the sort of thing that admits of a cause (incidentally, I attempt to address an objection of this sort in work published too late to have been considered by Furlong). Furlong proposes in the place of the MPS a more radical privation solution (RPS) on which internal relations, such as "the lack of conformity to the moral standard," are strictly speaking incapable of being causal relata, with the consequence that they cannot be caused by God. Although the RPS merits further consideration, two questions initially present themselves: first, will God on the RPS still *explain* the lack of conformity even if God doesn't technically cause the lack of conformity; and, if so, is that a problem? Second, how serious a cost is it to give up the asymmetry allowed by the MPS, according to which the lack of conformity to the moral standard, though not caused by God, *is* caused by the sinful creature?

Furlong considers a number of possible responses to the objection that God's determining the occurrence of sin makes God blameworthy. He judges that all the responses have costs, but that some combination of responses is likely successful for a divine determinist willing to assume the costs. In my view, several of the determinist responses considered admit of development in a form stronger than that presented by Furlong. In considering the appeal to divine authority, for instance, more could be said about the nature and moral basis of that authority—why it isn't

simply a matter of raw power. More could be said about how the scope of God's responsibility differs from the scope of human responsibility, and how this difference might be relevant to evaluating whether God is blameworthy. More could be said about what God does and doesn't owe creatures. And more could be said about the goods God may be aiming to make possible by including moral evil in the world. Without consideration of these goods and their relation to moral evil, it may be difficult to judge whether God is doing anything blameworthy in determining that the world include moral evil for the sake of these goods—and this point holds true whether or not we embrace consequentialism, since consequentialism is not the only moral theory on which the ends of action play a critical role in its justification. I do not mean to imply that Furlong entirely neglects these sorts of questions (he doesn't), and there is admittedly only so much an author can do in limited space.

Chapter 6 considers whether divine determinism rules out the Free Will Defense as a response to the problem of evil. Furlong discusses in detail a number of recent attempts to show that it does not. Although the best of these attempts is successful on its own terms, Furlong points out that the terms are not ones many divine determinists would accept, making it of limited value to divine determinists in responding to the problem of evil. Although Furlong's discussion of these attempts is careful and illuminating, I was surprised by the comparative brevity of his treatment of responses to the problem of evil that do not rely on the Free Will Defense. These responses, which typically invoke goods made possible by moral evil, are to my mind more promising for the divine determinist. There are indications that Furlong may agree, as he comments with reference to such responses that "the case for the high cost of determinism in this matter [the problem of evil] is not as strong as it might initially appear" (158).

I found chapters 7 and 8 to be, perhaps, the most interesting of the entire book. Chapter 7 offers discussion of two more challenges for divine determinism, one concerning God's love for creatures and another concerning creatures' love for God. Many theists have thought that God's love for human beings is something analogous to a good parent's love for his or her children. But how can that sort of analogy be sustained if God determines that some human beings are perpetrators and some victims of horrifically wicked acts? The problem is intensified if we add that God determines that some creatures spend eternity in Hell. Furlong considers a number of solutions to this problem, some of which he judges hopeless, others of which he thinks more promising provided the divine determinist is prepared to incur certain "significant costs" (185) of the responses adopted. Among these more promising responses include ones that involve recourse to sceptical theism, to universalism about salvation, to a very strict metaphysics of identity, and to revising or qualifying the "parental" model of divine love. To the objection that a human being's love for God is not genuine if that person is determined to love God,

Furlong judges that there are a number of promising responses that do not incur serious costs.

Chapter 8 takes up four related challenges to divine determinism, all of which stem from the seeming implication of divine determinism that God wills our acts of sin or wrongdoing. First, doesn't God deceive us by issuing commands against acts of wrongdoing, implying that they are contrary to his will, when all the while he determines that we sometimes do them? Second, if God wills that we sometimes commit acts of sin, isn't that incompatible with a common theistic understanding that we should conform our actions to God's will? Third, if our past sins have been willed by God, won't we be opposing ourselves to God's will if we repent of them? Fourth, isn't it absurd for God to blame and punish us for sinful acts that he determines us to perform? Furlong explores a number of possible responses, judging, once again, that the objections can be answered, but that doing so involves certain costs.

Throughout most of the book, Furlong sets himself to "examine the logical space in which divine determinists might stake out their positions, rather than constructing, proposing, and defending a particular view" (220). In the brief conclusion, however, in addition to revealing his own agnosticism regarding divine determinism, he reveals a bit more regarding which lines of reply he finds most promising in response to each objection, and which objections would worry him most were he a divine determinist. He also offers some helpful remarks regarding the nature of philosophical disputes in which conflicts of intuition can have such a strong influence on what disputants are prepared to acknowledge as a reasonable position to hold.

The Challenges of Divine Determinism is a book that presents challenges mostly to divine determinists, but indeterminists may find themselves challenged as well. It is a rewarding read, and a significant contribution to contemporary philosophy of religion.

Free Will and God's Universal Causality: The Dual Sources Account, by W. Matthews Grant. Bloomsbury, 2019. Pp. viii + 248. \$114 (hardback).

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W. Matthews Grant's *Free Will and God's Universal Causality* is a systematic presentation and defence of what he calls the *Dual Sources* account of divine and creaturely agency. The Dual Sources account comprises two

