

The Mystery of Middle Knowledge, Part 2

Philosophic Problems Of The Middle Knowledge Theory

By R . K. McGregor Wright, ThM, PhD

Historical Preamble

In the first paper I sought to outline the historical build-up to the modern use of Molinism, or “middle knowledge” theory, mostly by arminian Evangelicals. We noted that after it was refuted at least in principle by Duns Scotus soon after the death of Aquinas, it was again presented in a much fuller form by the Jesuit Luis de Molina in the late 1500s, as a proposed solution to the problem left by Thomas Aquinas of the “mystery” of how to reconcile biblical predestination with human free will.

Aquinas’ position was that as the Bible taught absolute predestination of the Elect to salvation, and as the early church fathers in the sub-apostolic age taught that we have a free will in the sense that we could just as easily have chosen one thing as another when alternatives are presented to us, *both doctrines* had to be held as the teachings of the Holy Catholic Church. The fact that predestination could not be reconciled with such an autonomist free will only meant that we had to hold these two truths as “a divine Mystery of the Faith.” It was therefore *a heresy* to deny either side of the contradiction (or more politely, the “mystery”). They *both* had to be held in tension as elements of Holy Tradition.

Then along came the Reformation. First Martin Luther, and then John Calvin (and the other Reformers followed them here), pointed out that precisely *because* the notion of free will was in conflict with so many Bible doctrines, of which predestination and God’s omniscient foreknowledge were just two obvious points of conflict, the thing to do was to abandon libertarian free will, recognizing that it had no support of any kind in the biblical text. The protestant principle of *sola Scriptura* in any case, indicated that even if the early fathers *did* speak in this kind of language some of the time, by the time of Augustine, it was coming under pretty heavy theological fire, and should not be treated as part of the “apostolic deposit.” Its absence from Scripture made this plain enough. What have we then, with this child of Athens?

After the Reformers passed on, Arminius and the Socinians and others returned to freewillism. Arminius himself saw that a “freedom of indifference” was indeed incompatible with the reformed doctrine of salvation, and his followers pointed out five problem areas where the Calvinism of the Dutch state church would have to be modified. These *Remonstrants* produced a challenge to the state church of Holland in 1610, called the *Remonstrance*, which caused the Arminians to be forced out of the Dutch Reformed Church at the Synod of Dordt in 1619, when the Calvinists produced their famous answer to the Arminians in the so-called “Five Points of Calvinism.”

But long before this, the Jesuits, freshly organized as the Soldiers of the Pope, whose whole *raison d’etre* was the destruction of Protestantism through education and political action, had got into the theological act with their “new solution” to the problem of divine sovereignty. It seems that they wanted to make an independent mark on the university world of philosophy, by developing *a new form of Thomism* by which they sought to carve out a new philosophic niche for themselves over against the main teaching order of the day, the Dominicans. The new theory has been loosely called Molinism after its first proponent, and includes the “Middle Knowledge” theory, so-called because of its claims about a type of knowledge they said God had, which they thought could be used to bring about reconciliation between human free will and God’s universal sovereignty. So: How did this Middle Knowledge work?

An Eirenic Theory of Reconciliation?

Luis de Molina as a concerned Jesuit theologian, and well settled in the standard Thomist tradition of the Middle Ages, decided that the protestant rejection of autonomist free will was not only heretical, but it was also *unnecessary*. Thomas Aquinas was simply wrong about our needing to accept *both* predestination and autonomous free will as a divine “mystery,” for *they could be reconciled after all*. Among the different facets of God’s knowledge, there was a type of knowledge which Aquinas had apparently not seen the implications of. We must first look at what Thomas had thought in this area, before we can see the point of Molina’s shift to “middle” knowledge.

Thomas Aquinas

Aquinas had observed that God must necessarily have exhaustive knowledge of all future events. This was simply the Bible’s doctrine of divine Omniscience, and was not a problem to any orthodox Christian. But this further meant that God’s eternal decree to have this universe, rather than some other possible or conceivable universe, was a matter of certain foreknowledge of the world *as it would actually exist*, because God saw the future possible world, including our future freewill decisions, in his own decree to create. His knowledge of future events was essentially his knowledge of his own decree to produce *this* universe rather than some other universe. This foreknowledge of God was called his knowledge of vision, or *scientia visionis*, meaning that God saw things that have been, are now, and will be, by looking at them in the stream of time which of course is ever-present to him. But how did this stream of time get to be *present* to the mind of God? Only because God’s knowledge of the real world is identical to his knowledge of his own plan or decree for that world.

But God also had another kind of knowledge, his knowledge of simple intelligence, his *scientia intelligentiae simplicis*, by which he knows the purely possible. This knowledge comes from within God’s own being. It is innate to God, and it would include all possible events, as distinct from actual events. So God’s foreknowledge of future real events is the first kind of knowledge (of our future freewill acts as they will actually occur), and this is all determined, including our future freewill acts, by God’s sovereign decree. This statement, aside from his insistence on free will also, shows that Thomas Aquinas was just as predestinarian as Luther and Calvin. Sovereign Predestination was clearly taught in Scripture, and was never in dispute between the Reformers and the real Thomist catholic theologians of their day.

De Molina decided that this was not realistic. He thought that it really undermined the freedom of our actions, for it made them the results of the divine decree itself. This was not a “divine mystery” at all, but a philosophic error in Aquinas’ reasoning, which he, de Molina, proposed to correct. Aquinas, he said, had not properly analysed the nature of God’s foreknowledge. There had to be *another kind of foreknowledge*, which he called “middle” knowledge, because he conceived of it as being mid-way between the other two. God not only knew both all the *possibilities* as well as how things would *actually* turn out, but he also knew *how the free will would actually act under all possible circumstances*. God knows these future conditional events by his *scientia media*, or “middle”knowledge.

In this way, God could know future free events without determining them, for his decree to create involved his then choosing from this prior knowledge, which universe he wanted out of all the possible worlds. This middle knowledge presupposed that the acts were in fact free, and the creatorial decision of God’s Will followed this knowledge *on this assumption*. In this way Molina thought to preserve human autonomy while admitting that God’s foreknowledge was perfectly accurate. At the same time, he was refuting Calvin and Luther, who had simply insisted that Free Will is found nowhere in Scripture, while divine sovereignty is writ large throughout the Bible. Because they are incompatible, the Reformers naturally rejected the notion of an autonomist Free Will.

It is this theory that modern Arminians (like William Craig) are latching on to today, in order to safeguard their arminian assertion of an autonomous human will in the face of all that the Bible says about God’s creatorial sovereignty. They agree with him that God does not know future free acts in the absolute decree of his Will, but

only as *futura conditionata*, or “futable” acts, as possible future events. But this realm of God’s foreknowledge is certain knowledge, the freewill choices remain undetermined, and so the conflict with absolute predestination is thereby resolved. Or so Luis thought.

The following proofs however, demonstrate that Molina’s solution fails at all the important places. We shall recount the arguments against this aspect of Molinism by Duns Scotus, by the Thomists themselves, and by more modern philosophers, including Pohle, Crabtree, and Helm. We shall then look briefly at the Bible itself to demonstrate that the Scriptures exclude belief in any kind of autonomy, making the project simply irrelevant for the believer who wishes to “live by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God” (as the Lord Jesus insisted in Mat 4:4).

John Duns Scotus

In the course of criticizing Aquinas’ view of the relation between God’s Will and his Intellect, Duns decided that it was God’s Will that was primary, and that therefore all the functions of the divine Intellect had to follow what the Will decided, rather than (as Aquinas had it), the Will choosing from the options that the Intellect first presented to it. This means that all of God’s knowledge, including his exhaustive knowledge of future contingencies as they would exist under all possible conditions, is ultimately based in God’s eternal Will or decree to create. God’s knowledge is never bare awareness of possibilities only, but always a “willing knowledge.” Even future conditionals are only intelligible in terms of God’s decree. God cannot “know” something independently of “willing” it. God’s knowledge of all future contingencies is not only a bare knowing, but a knowledge of his will for the future. Thus de Molina’s idea of a middle knowledge of autonomous choices undetermined by God’s decree is impossible.

Further, Douglas Langston points out that de Molina did not properly understand in the first place, Scotus’ view of Free Will, which was what came later to be called the “freedom of spontaneity,” not a “freedom of indifference.” That is, Scotus did not hold to de Molina’s view of the Will at all, but agreed with what the Reformers came to accept. So de Molina’s objections to Scotus’ view of why God’s Sovereignty is compatible with human responsibility is simply irrelevant to the issue of compatibility.

Of course, it would be possible to answer that Scotus held other views, but my point here is that some modern commentators believe that de Molina failed to see how damaging Scotus’ arguments against Aquinas were by extension, to his own view of a conditional middle knowledge. In effect, Duns Scotus had refuted Molina before he was born.

It is not much good claiming to believe in something *called* “Free Will,” if one’s definition of freedom is different. The new definition must itself be justified. It cannot be just arbitrary.

The Thomists

By the time de Molina tackled this problem, he no longer had the option that Scotus had, of changing the definition of free will, because the libertarian theory of free will had by then (in 1545-63) been made official catholic dogma by the council of Trent. Luther and Calvin could do this too, but de Molina could not; he was stuck with libertarian free will, just as he found it in Aquinas.

The followers of Aquinas (mainly in the rival Dominican order) argued three ways against Molinism:

First, de Molina’s claim to reconcile an autonomously free will with absolute predestination by a fully sovereign God was no solution at all. All de Molina had succeeded in doing was to remove the “mystery of the Faith” from its natural place in evaluating the obvious contradiction between the two, to a weird theory of how God could know exactly how a particular will would in fact act granted a particular set of hypothetical circumstances. This was just

as mysterious as the first mystery; for once it be granted that God does know accurately exactly how a choice would in fact be made, it is already being said that that choice is being determined by the circumstances. This contradicts the original claim that the will “could” have chosen some other way. De Molina countered with the claim that God knew how the will would in fact act, because he had some kind of “supercomprehensive,” or “deep” knowledge of the will itself. But this is either an empty claim amounting to yet a further Mystery of Faith, or it is a claim that God knows that the properties of a particular will are such that it cannot but act a particular way in a particular set of circumstances. But this means that the will is infallibly determined to a particular course of action *by its very nature*, which denies its freedom of indifference. So (secondly) Molina was really denying free will, not reconciling it with Divine Sovereignty. There has to be a “medium” in which divine knowledge operates. Either God knows a certain thing in itself, or he knows it as a merely possible future reality. But possibilities can only become realities because the Will or decree of God sovereignly causes them to pass from the possible to the actual. Since only God’s causal premotion can cause the Will to go one way rather than the other, even free acts are only such because of God as the first cause of everything.

The third objection of the Thomists was that the Molinists were really only secret Semipelagians. It was of the essence of Semipelagianism, that the beginning of our motions towards God, the very initial beginning of faith is the work of our free wills. Only then does God assist us with effectual grace. Before we form that initial desire to believe and trust God, we are the objects of only a general or “sufficient grace” which only becomes “efficient grace” when the free will makes it so. Likewise the Arminians also taught that only when we chose autonomously to believe, does God’s universal or “prevenient grace” become “efficient grace” or actually saving grace. The Thomists noted that the Molinists likewise had the difference between sufficient and efficient grace produced not by God, but by the human free will. The Semipelagians and Arminians alike had God’s choice to make grace effective (his Election of some and not others) depend on his foreknowledge of how the free will would act. Likewise the Molinists, making God’s decree to create follow upon his foreknowledge of how the free will in fact will act under certain circumstances, makes Election follow foreknowledge.

So the Thomists pointed out that Molinism really gave no account at all of *exactly how* God could have certain foreknowledge of future freewill decisions. Therefore, no real “reconciliation” had occurred, and the Mystery of Faith was just moved down the process a notch or two. The real “mystery” was where God got this “middle knowledge.”

Catholic Encyclopedia Articles

As Pohle says in his Catholic Encyclopedia article on the “Controversies on Grace,”

It is apparent that above all, molinism is determined to throw a wall of security around the free will. The Thomists maintain that this is done at the expense of grace. Instead of making free will dependent on the power of grace, it is the will which freely determines the success or failure of grace. Thus in the last analysis it is human will which decides whether a particular grace will prove efficacious or not, although revelation teaches that it is God, who with his grace, gives both the willing and the doing of a good act.

He then observes that even Cardinal Bellarmine saw this difficulty and refused to follow the other Molinists in that direction. I think Bellarmine and the Thomists were right in this criticism of de Molina.

At this point, I would like to observe that in his C. E. article on Free Will, Michael Maher offers to supply “proof” of free will, but only tells us of the three traditional arguments, that freewill must be right because it is obviously true (the consent of the people), that it is necessary as the foundation of human responsibility, and that it is essential to our conception of what human nature is (otherwise we would be robots). I have refuted these superficial claims in my own book, *No Place For Sovereignty*, and have concluded that as there are no coherent arguments proving the freewill theory, it must be regarded as an unproven dogma.

The official Catholic position is quite straightforward. They recognize with the Lutherans and the Calvinists that the Bible teaches absolute predestination as correlatives of the doctrine of God’s creatorial sovereignty. This was

not disputed at the time of the Reformation, although Augustinianism declined in importance in Roman Catholicism after the destruction of the Jansenists in the 1700s.

But in addition to God's sovereignty, Catholics must also believe in libertarian free will, not because it is found in the Bible, but because it seems to be taught in the church fathers of the second, third, and fourth centuries, if anything with increasing clarity. In the final analysis, free will is defended on traditional grounds only. Therefore, assumed to be part of the Apostolic Tradition, it determines the Catholic Faith as much as Scripture does. The Catholic view of this matter is the same now as it was in the 1500s; an autonomist free will and an absolute divine sovereignty *must both be held as a divine mystery of faith, even though they cannot be reconciled by theologians*. Since most Evangelicals have little idea what the Reformers thought of this subject, they tend to agree with this state of affairs. This makes life pretty easy for a modern Molinist. He can assume that a modern Evangelical will think that the freewill theory is correct (indeed, it's "obviously true,") without asking for proof. It's a privileged assumption, a dogmatic presupposition, which only a crazy person would question. Naturally, a thoughtful person might reasonably think that some kind of reconciliation is perfectly reasonable.

J. A. Crabtree's Response

In Schreiner and Ware's collection of essays, the second volume contains a most insightful article analyzing de Molina's method of argument in the *Concordia*. Crabtree begins by focusing on de Molina's explanation of how God gets his foreknowledge of future freewill contingents. In his official or overt account, de Molina claims that God knows exactly how a particular person will in fact freely choose, under all possible circumstances. God then chooses to actualize that set of circumstances which best fits his own decree to create and redeem the world.

Crabtree then points out that Molina seems to have two "significantly different accounts" of how middle knowledge works. On the one hand, his "official" account is that God knows these futurable contingencies by a direct, non-inferential, immediate or intuitive knowledge. On the other hand, he also has a covert account which requires that God knows them because he has an ability to infer infallibly that person P will do X at time T, on the basis of his infinitely thorough knowledge of how the will of P works under certain conditions. So: Is God's middle knowledge inferential or intuitive?

In the official account, God's knowledge is deep, immense, infinitely thorough, but he does not infer this knowledge from other things that he knows about P. No real explanation is given of how this is possible; it is rather a declaration of a "mystery," that no explanation can or will be given. The final result is that *middle knowledge is really just mysterious and incomprehensible as the original Mystery of Faith propounded by Aquinas*.

In the unofficial or "covert" account, de Molina appeals also to "the preeminent comprehension" by which [God] knows that faculty (of the will) He knows which part (direction) it will in its freedom turn itself towards." But this is more like empirical knowledge, drawn from an awareness of the properties of the individual will as such. He describes it as "the most profound and inscrutable comprehension" of the "faculty of free choice." And this is an entirely different medium of knowing than innate awareness. No doubt this does explain how God can know which way the will will in fact turn, but a further problem arises immediately.

The obvious question, after we ask "Which of these explanations is it?" becomes, "What happens to an autonomous free will under these circumstances?" The unofficial account has God knowing the will by knowing its properties or character, *i.e.*, by knowing the internal determinations of the will itself. Calling it "free" in the sense of autonomous and equally able to go either way is no longer an option under such conditions. The moment the will is irrevocably associated with a particular set of conditions under which it will definitely go one way rather than the other, its freedom (considered as autonomy, as a freedom which allows it also to go the other way under the same conditions), is eliminated by definition.

Crabtree observes that while the first explanation is only to fall back on mystery, the second explanation destroys free will completely. In other words, de Molina gives no explanation of how middle knowledge could work at all.

Paul Helm's Observations

On the other side of the Atlantic, Paul Helm is the recently-retired head of the philosophy of religion department of King's College at London University. This philosopher questions whether it is really possible for God to know which of any two alternative choices is the real one without a context which distinguishes the choices. How can any set of "circumstances" exist even potentially, in which a particular choice will *certainly* be made, unless God decrees these circumstances? God would have to distinguish between even potential sets of circumstances in order for the different choices to be distinguishable. Clearly, each choice is associated in some irrevocable way with a particular set of circumstances. But this is tantamount in practice to saying that the circumstances determine the choice. Otherwise any set of circumstances could enable any choice whatever. The whole point of middle knowledge is that God foreknows all possible freewill choices, in all the possible sets of circumstances each one could be made in. But this implies that the circumstances are necessary for the choice to go one way rather than the other, and that is all causation amounts to. As long as the choice is associated with a particular set of conditions, de Molina can no longer say he is preserving an autonomous free will.

But this is again another version of an objection raised in de Molina's own days by the Thomists, and never really faced. No matter how they explain free will, the Molinists cannot cope with the fact that even when de Molina is claiming that God's will has not yet decreed the particular circumstances in which a particular choice will be made, he is claiming a knowledge which even God could not have. *If the circumstances can be known, they also determine which choice will be made.* Since God knows which way the human Will certainly will in fact go in each case, even before it is actualized in his plan, he inevitably associates it with a particular set of conditions, and this is equivalent to predetermination of the Will. That is, autonomy is denied.

No matter how he works it, once he admits that God knows freewill decisions before they occur, de Molina cannot escape the predetermination of individual choices by God. It is my opinion that the only way to do this is to limit God's knowledge of the future, the way Clark Pinnock does. And this sets the Bible aside as an authority, for God could not then know centuries in advance that Joseph and Mary would actually decide to go to Bethlehem rather than stay in Nazareth for the birth of Jesus.

The Essence of Autonomism

Once we allow creation out of nothing by an omnipotent deity, it follows necessarily that *either* God is the first mover of all events in the universe, including human decisions, *or*, we must introduce another dualistic factor over which God has no significant control. This might be Chaos and Old Night, the god Tiamat, eternal Matter, pure chance, or Being-in-general. It makes no difference what you call it, it must be the womb of all that God rejects, or does not know. But to do this is to limit God by that factor at least some of the time, and that makes God *finite*. Therewith, the monotheism of Isaiah, Jesus, John and Paul has been abandoned.

This is what Adam and Eve did in the Garden when they decided to make themselves the reference-point for evaluating whether God ("Thou shalt surely die") or Satan ("Thou shalt not surely die"), was correct about the future of the sinner. Had God been the reference-point, Satan's position would have been ruled out of court by definition. But if God is the Creator, he is necessarily the only Ultimate to exist, and he must necessarily be the reference-point for all interpretation of human experience. There can be only one Ultimate, by the very nature of Ultimacy. To deny the ultimacy of God is to make oneself the Ultimate. And this is the essence of the Fall, the essence of sin, the essence of the assumption of the metaphysical autonomy of the will.

This is what the Greeks, the Catholics, the Arminians, and everyone else who presupposes free will is doing. A dogma pure and simple is being elevated to the status of a divine revelation. There are no arguments for free will

found in the Bible, it is never appealed to there as a category of explanation, it is incompatible with divine sovereignty, and it was correctly abandoned by the Reformers. They of all people knew that it was incompatible with the free grace of a sovereign God, and said so repeatedly in many different contexts. Martin Luther told Erasmus that the denial of the free will theory was at the heart of the Gospel. And Erasmus was really happy with this confession, for it saved him for the rest of his life, from the accusation of being a secret Lutheran. No longer could anyone say that Luther hatched the egg that Erasmus had laid!

All pagan systems struggle with the One and Many problem, often in the form of the battle between polytheistic and pantheistic elements of a nonchristian religion. Absolutely nobody escapes this dilemma, because nobody can formulate even so much as the relation between a question and its answer without facing the question of what principle of unification and which principle of diversification to depend on. Heathen systems from Socrates to Kant have either opted for logic in order to unify things, or Chance to provide diversity. Those who do not wish to choose, formulate some syncretistic combination of both Chance and Logic. And this leads to ultimate instability.

In all non-Christian systems, Reason struggles against a background of Chance. And all because in the Fall, our first parents decided to make their own consciousness ultimate instead of God in his Word.

The Fundamental Blunder

The great blunder underlying Molinism is not that it supports Arminianism (it doesn't) or that it undermines the theology of the Reformation (which it certainly does) or that it is inconsistent with itself and cannot explain how free will and God's sovereignty can be made compatible. The real issue is that it *assumes the Free Will Theory without proof*, and then proceeds to "reconcile" the Bible with something that does not exist. The autonomy of the will is a dogma which corresponds to nothing in the real world.

Syncretism vs. Apologetics

Presuppositions control conclusions much like the International Rules determine what counts as a possible move across the whole board. And nobody escapes this control of their presuppositions, for presuppositionless argument is impossible. You have to start somewhere, and your starting-point functions as a set of presuppositions. And no system can derive its own axioms.

So from a Christian standpoint, "objectivity" as such is not possible. Objectivity is itself an idol of the fallen mind, for all thought, all interpretation of any experience of the world whatever, is an interpretation which either presupposes the God of the Bible as the Ultimate reference-point, or it presupposes the idol of the finite human awareness in His place.

All syncretisms, all artificial efforts to combine God's revelation with non-Christian presuppositions, must lead to basic inconsistencies, and produce basic instabilities and tensions. We are then confronted in philosophy as we so often are in ethics, with "a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways," as James puts it. The usual way to paper over these inconsistencies is to refer to them as Mysteries (like Thomas Aquinas did) or Paradoxes (with Soren Kierkegaard and the existentialist theologians who depend on his notion of faith) or perhaps Antinomies (as J. I. Packer did in a well-known booklet of his). But contradictions are just contradictions after all, and contradiction embraced leads rapidly to craziness. One half of any logical contradiction is always wrong.

When Paul challenged the Greeks at Athens he made no attempt to move from their assumptions to his own, but instead challenged everything of importance in their world-view. He began with creation out of nothing, and ended with the historical resurrection of the body. The first they regarded as metaphysically impossible (which it is if you are a pantheist or a polytheist, and they were both), while the second they just laughed at. It was just too stupid for consideration by civilized people. But in the crowd, and even on the Areopagus Council itself there were those who realized that they had just heard the most penetrating and destructive attack on the Hellenistic world

view they had ever encountered, and they were riveted to this man. Some them, a small handful, believed that at last they had heard Truth in its final form, and they just could not get themselves free from it. These believers were experiencing God's efficacious grace in the encounter with the Gospel of a God with true creatorial sovereignty!

When Jesus in Matt 4:4 repeated a verse from Deuteronomy to Satan in the desert, asserting that over against the notion that a real human being should determine his own destiny with himself as the reference-point, man must live not by bread alone but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God, he was reversing the process begun by Eve in the garden of Eden, and reasserting his heavenly Father as the ultimate reference-point for all interpretation. The entire drama of redemption turned in that instant on that epistemological hinge!

Solomon was right after all (in Prov 1:7, 9:10, and 15:33), and the apostle Paul after him (in 2 Tim 3:16-17), that the recognition of who God is, is the beginning of Wisdom, of Knowledge, and of day-by day Instruction in righteousness. Borrowing from the heathen will not cut it. Borrowing intellectual capital from pagan sources is a very bad way to start a Christian Apologetics bank account!

Conclusions?

1. Molinism has been so often refuted, and has so many different problems and inconsistencies in it, that I truly stand amazed in the presence of an Evangelical who thinks he can polish it up and use it in God's service. Besides, we need to face the point that was never an issue among the Dominicans or the Jesuits, that de Molina was a hardworking Jesuit who spent his whole professional life trying to undermine the theology of the Reformers. Why would an Evangelical want to help them do this? *Why?*
2. Middle Knowledge is just a Jesuit scam. Its purpose is to reconcile a pagan assumption borrowed from the Greek philosophers and unknown to the pages of the Bible, with the sovereignty of God, and it just doesn't work. Even the Thomists could see that.
3. There is little doubt that Molinism was an encouragement to Arminius himself, and yet we notice that he nowhere embraced it wholly. The simple truth is that Molinism, as a form of Thomism, is incompatible with Arminianism, while *both* of them leave the theologian open to the accusation of Semipelagianism. Neither can adequately safeguard the independence of efficacious grace.
4. Arminians are not facing the real state of affairs in the Bible when they cheerfully side with Eve in locating Ultimacy in the human will instead of in God, and assume the Free Will theory *without proof*, giving it the status of a *privileged presupposition*. It simply *must* be questioned.
5. It is a waste of the Evangelical's time, because free will in the libertarian sense of a "liberty of indifference" simply does not exist. It is just a pagan religious delusion.
6. And the most tragic thing of all is that the spread of Molinist ideas among Evangelicals today provides sad evidence that modern Evangelicalism is even more ignorant of the theology of the Reformation than it was a generation ago. The Reformers are less and less understood in our churches than ever before. One thing is abundantly clear: we need much more historical teaching in our Sunday Schools, if people are going to wake up to what is being done to undermine the Reformation.

For Further Study

Here follow some of the easy-to-access sources for looking into this topic. Since William Lane Craig is the main evangelical philosopher trying to reintroduce Molinism into current Evangelicalism in order to defend his own Arminianism, his writings are the best place to start. See his article in Clark H. Pinnock's collection *The Grace of God; The Will Of Man: A Case For Arminianism* (Zondervan, 1989), and several later essays and books, especially *The Only Wise God* (Baker, 1987). Dr. Craig also has a website containing recent articles and responses to various critics.

Largely in response to Dr. Pinnock's collection of essays, a two-volume work edited by Tom Schreiner and Bruce Ware, *The Grace of God, The Bondage of the Will* (Baker, 1995) contains articles critical of Molinism by Richard Muller (p. 251), J. A. Crabtree (p. 429), and Paul Helm (p. 485).

Introductory discussions of Molinism and its faults, on Aquinas, Congruism, Grace, Free Will, Predestination, Augustinianism, Pelagianism, and Semipelagianism, and many related topics, can be found in Hastings' *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, and *The Catholic Encyclopedia*. NOTE: These articles make clear that *the purpose of Molinism was not only to solve a philosophical problem internal to Thomism, but to demolish the theology of the Reformers also*. They state the Thomist (and later) objections to Molina's theories clearly, despite the abstruseness of the subject matter.

R. K. McGregor Wright's *No Place for Sovereignty* (InterVarsity Press, 1996), seeks to show the inadequacy of the presupposition of Free Will from a Biblical, Historical, and Philosophical standpoint. It argues that Arminianism has no hope of providing a coherent basis for Christian Apologetics, and rather tends to encourage heretical views of God and salvation, as in the recent "openness" theories of "freewill theism," as promoted by Clark Pinnock.