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## **DIVINE KNOWLEDGE AT HARVARD AND YALE: FROM WILLIAM AMES TO JONATHAN EDWARDS**

### **Introduction**

William Ames (1576-1633), whose portrait hung in Old Harvard Hall, and whose *Marrow of Theology* served several generations of ministers at both Harvard and Yale, exercised substantial influence upon the New England curriculum, and arguably ought to occupy an important place in any examination of the scholastic background to Jonathan Edwards' theses on divine knowledge and freedom. During his two years as tutor at Yale (May 1724-September 1726), and while cataloguing the Dummer collection of books, no doubt Edwards would have come across a number of Ames's books, including Ames's *Rescriptio Scholastica*, (1615), which serves a key role in this essay's illustration of the use of scholastic terms by post-Reformation authors.<sup>1</sup> Students at Harvard, and at Yale in Edwards' time as a student, recited Ames's *Medulla* and Heereboord's *Meletemata* in order to learn

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<sup>1</sup>. *Papers in Honor of Andrew Keogh: Librarian of Yale University by Staff of the Library 30 June 1938*, ed. Mary C. Withington (New Haven: Privately Printed, 1938), 458. Of the eight books donated by Mr. Mount, seven were by William Ames. It was the Lugduni Batavorum [Leiden], 1634 edition. The original dates to Leiden, 1617. In this same volume, the "historical notes on the catalogues and classifications of the Yale University library," written by Anna Marie Monrad, say that the senior tutor was charged with the responsibility of cataloguing the library books and that in 1725, the first catalogue appeared. Edwards was the senior tutor at this time and charged with this duty, p. 251. See also the similar remarks by George Levesque, in Kenneth P. Minkema and George G. Levesque, *Jonathan Edwards Tercentennial Exhibition: Selected Objects from the Yale Collections 1703-2003*, collection housed at Yale (New Haven, CT: Jonathan Edwards College, Yale University, 2003), 33, 38.

how to dispute theses. Both authors figure prominently in this essay's understanding of the backdrop to Edwards' view of divine knowledge and freedom.<sup>2</sup>

This essay takes its cue from recent references to "Amesian Calvinism taught at Harvard and Yale" and a putative synthesis of aspects of "the early Enlightenment thinking with post-Reformation scholastic metaphysics," and seeks to identify and establish the influence of Ames, the Reformed scholastic Puritan, upon the Harvard and Yale curricula.<sup>3</sup> In particular, the aim is to set a benchmark by which to assess the correspondence between Ames's theses and those of commencement broadsides from 1687-1759 at Harvard, and from 1718-1760 at Yale, and those of Edwards, on issues related to divine knowledge and freedom. The evidence and analysis which follows will make the case that a shift occurred in the way Reformed scholastics used technical terms in the line from William Ames, Peter Van Mastricht, Adriaan Heereboord, Charles Morton, to Jonathan Edwards, especially noticable in the latter's *Enquiry into the modern prevailing notions of that freedom of will*, published in 1754 (*FOW*).<sup>4</sup> Though much had changed since Ames's day, it is striking that even as late as 1754 Edwards chose to write his *FOW* in the scholastic style and method, naming the same opponents as his forebears did, the Pelagians, semi-Pelagians, Jesuits, Socinians, and Arminians.<sup>5</sup> Edwards self-consciously makes his a "modern" inquiry, and for this reason only engages recent and contemporary authors,<sup>6</sup> with the one exception to this rule being his use of the standard thesis of Boethius (480-524) on the unchanging ever-presentness of God. Nevertheless, although Edwards calls his inquiry "modern," the method he in fact follows is the classic scholastic method of explaining terms and concepts, propositional analysis, stating opponents' positions, setting forth questions (*quaestiones*), and giving extensive commentary, making arguments which rely on, in Edwards' words, "the strictest and justest reason."<sup>7</sup>

To make the case that a shift occurred between Ames and Edwards—largely due to a neglect of the late-medieval and post-Reformation use of technical scholas-

<sup>2</sup>. See, John Noble, "An Old Harvard Commencement Programme, 1730," in *Publications of the Colonial Society of Massachusetts*, vol. 6, Transactions 1899, 1900 (Boston: Published by the society, 1904), 277.

<sup>3</sup> Mark Garrett Longaker, "Idealism and Early-American Rhetoric," *Rhetoric Society Journal* (Summer 2006), 5; Oliver D. Crisp, "Jonathan Edwards's Ontology: A Critique of Sang Hyun Lee's Dispositional Account of Edwardsian Metaphysics," *Religious Studies* 46, no. 1 (March 2010), 14-15.

<sup>4</sup>. *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, vol. 1, *Freedom of the Will*, ed. Paul Ramsey (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1957), 266. Henceforth, WJE 1, and in the body of the essay, *FOW*.

<sup>5</sup>. WJE 1:203.

<sup>6</sup> Such as, the English philosopher John Locke (1632-1704), the Church of England scholar Daniel Whitby (1638-1726), the English non-conformist Isaac Watts (1674-1748), the English philosophical theologian Samuel Clarke (1675-1729), and the Scottish moral philosopher Henry Home, Lord Kames (1696-1782).

<sup>7</sup> WJE 1:423.

tic terms—the next section looks to Ames as the early standard-bearer for the Puritan Reformed position on issues related to Reformed freedom. It examines the contribution of Ames to our understanding of Reformed freedom in relation to God’s knowledge of indeterminate possibles, on the one hand, and of future contingents, on the other, by setting forth the complaint of Nicolaus Grevinchovius (1578-1632)<sup>8</sup> followed by the response of Ames in his *Rescriptio scholastica*. The next step is to examine a manuscript copy of Charles Morton’s “Pneumatics,” which came into the possession of Elisha Williams, the tutor of Edwards. In particular, it examines what Edwards would have learned from Morton’s chapter on “God’s knowledge” about conceptual planes of divine knowledge, and the lack of “diverse moments” in the divine mind. Moreover, the evidence will show that this chapter, and others as well, are not original to Morton, but is largely abstracted from Adriaan Heereboord’s *Pneumatics* (Leiden, 1659). We then describe and analyze the use and development by Van Mastricht and Edwards of the formula of Boethius, on the unchangeable ever-presentness of God. The next section displays specific Harvard and Yale commencement broadside theses and *quaestiones*, which show the influence of Ames upon the school’s curricula, and the school’s understanding and use of technical scholastic terms concerning freedom, necessity, and contingency. In addition, we examine a handwritten transcription of *quaestiones* by Isaac Mansfield (Harvard AB, 1742; AM, 1745), as concerns two planes of divine knowledge. Finally, we will assess the disparity between the theses discussed from Ames to Edwards by briefly comparing a principal argument used in Edwards’ published work *Freedom of Will* (1754) with arguments in his unpublished “Controversies” Notebook (1743).<sup>9</sup>

### William Ames as the Puritan Standard-Bearer on Reformed Freedom

#### *Ames on Divine Knowledge and Will*

Ames’s *Marrow* makes the classic distinction between two conceptual planes of divine knowledge, the one plane structurally preceding the divine will, and the

<sup>8</sup> Fueled by the opportunities and challenges of what began as a University of Leiden dispute on predestination in 1602, between Jacobus Arminius and Franciscus Gomarus, which grew into the theologico-politico controversy between “the Remonstrants” and “the contra-Remonstrants,” as Grevinchovius called the parties in his preface, theologians like Grevinchovius flourished in this context, writing a treatise designed to persuade public opinion by drawing on a long tradition and broad spectrum of authors. Nicolaus Grevinchoven was born in Rotterdam in 1578 and died in Hamburg 1632. He partook of the Hague Conference (1611) and Delft (1613). The South Holland Synod removed him from ministry in 1618. He was not cited as a delegate to the Synod of Dordt (1618-9). See, *Nieuw Nederlandsch Biografisch Woordenboek* (NNBW), II:505-6. He was a signer of the *Remonstrance* of 1610, recognized by Wtenbogaert and Episcopius and the States of Holland.

<sup>9</sup> The digital edition of WJE (WJE Online) 27, hereafter cited as WJEO 27, “Controversies” Notebook, Pt. V, “Predestination.”

other structurally following the divine will. The relevant portion of the table of contents in the *Medulla* reads:

Ch. 7. "The Decree and Counsel of God"

25. "The knowledge of simple understanding refers to all possible things, i.e., all things universal and particular which may be brought into being through the most perfect knowledge in God."

26. "The knowledge of vision is the knowledge of all future things, whether they are necessary in their own nature, or free, or contingent."<sup>10</sup>

Ames builds on the Reformed tradition at Leiden as is evident in the similar terminology of Gomarus's definition of the first kind of knowledge.<sup>11</sup> The *Auction Catalogue of the Library of William Ames*<sup>12</sup> shows that he owned Gomarus's *Approval of the orthodox doctrine of the providence of God*, which has identical terminology. Ames's "simple knowledge of understanding" (thesis 25) is called by Gomarus "indefinite" knowledge, which according to both authors is "the most perfect knowledge in God of universal and individual states of affairs which can obtain."<sup>13</sup> The term "simple" means that there is a conceptual plane of divine knowledge that may logically be considered as absolutely free from any composition with other divine attributes, and thus apart from or "before" the intuitive (visionary) knowledge of states of affairs, which he sees by the divine will.<sup>14</sup>

After Ames, later Reformed theologians, such as Francis Turretin (1623-1687) and Petrus van Mastricht (1630-1706), give the same standard definitions as Ames.

<sup>10</sup> William Ames, *Theologiae Medullae*, reprinted from 1648 edition, ed. James S. Candlish (London: James Nisbet & CO., 1874), 31-2; William Ames, *The Marrow of Theology*, based on 3rd Latin edition, 1629, ed. and trans. John D. Eusden (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1968), 96. Ames's definition in Latin is given in order to compare to Gomarus, Van Mastricht, and Turretin. [25] "Scientia simplicis intelligentiae est omnium possibilium, id est, rerum universarum et singularum, quae fieri possunt, perfectissima in Deo scientia . . . [26] Scientia visionis est scientia omnium futurorum sive sint in sua natura necessaria, sive libera, sive contingencia."

<sup>11</sup> Franciscus Gomarus (1563-1641). After pastorates in Frankfort an der Main and Hanau, he became professor of theology at Leiden University (1594-1611). Thereafter, he lectured in Saumur (1615-1618) and Groningen (1618-1641). On his conflict with Arminius, see n. 8.

<sup>12</sup> K.L. Sprunger, *The Auction Catalogue of the Library of William Ames*, *Catalogi Redivivi: A Reprint Series of Dutch Auction and Stock Catalogues from the 17th and 18th Centuries* (Utrecht: H&S HES Publishers, 1988), 12.

<sup>13</sup> F. Gomarus, *Conciliatio Doctrinae Orthodoxae de Providentia Dei.*, *Opera Theologica Omnia, Maximam Partem Posthuma: Suprema Autoris Voluntate f̄ Discipulis Edita. Cum Indicibus Necessariis.* (Leiden: 1597; Amsterdam: Joannis Janssonii, 1644), C.3, 4, p. 159 (pagination from 1644 edition). "Praescientia autem Dei indefinita est rerum universarum & singularum, quae fieri possunt, perfectissima in Deo scientia." (Now the indefinite foreknowledge of God is the most perfect knowledge in God of universal and individual states of affairs which can obtain).

<sup>14</sup> See "Simplicitas" in Richard A. Muller, *Dictionary of Latin and Greek Theological Terms: Drawn Principally from Protestant Scholastic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker books, 1985), 283.

Turretin's definition of the first kind of divine knowledge refers to it as both "simple understanding" or "indefinite," or "natural."<sup>15</sup> And his definition of the second kind of divine knowledge refers to it as "free," or "intuitive (of vision)" or "definite."<sup>16</sup> The first kind concerns "a mere possible state of affairs"; the second kind concerns "future states of affairs, which are called definite, whose future certainty are due to the certain council of God."<sup>17</sup>

Van Mastricht has consulted Ames on the decrees and counsel of God, as is evident in his in-text reference to Ames's *Medulla (Marrow)*, Book I, ch. 7. He also gives a twofold definition of *scientia Dei* in his *Pars dogmatica*, 14. And he, too, refers to the first kind of divine knowledge as "natural," or "simple understanding," which concerns things God knows purely as possibles (*pure possibilia*)." And, likewise, the second kind is "free," or "intuitive (visionary)."<sup>18</sup>

After his theses about two kinds of divine knowledge, Ames explains in the very next thesis in the *Marrow* that the decree of the divine will structurally precedes the knowledge of vision, thereby privileging the divine will.

7. 27. The things which God knows through the knowledge of simple understanding he knows by his all-sufficiency, but those things he knows through the knowledge of vision he knows by his efficiency or by the decree of his own will. Ps. 33:15 and Isa. 44:7.<sup>19</sup>

The distinction by Ames between these two conceptual planes of divine knowledge, with Ames's privileging of the divine will, means that there is a non-necessitated, formal plane of divine freedom. "There is no necessary connection between the divine nature and such acts," that is, outward acts of God, writes Ames.<sup>20</sup> The formal plane of divine freedom applies to both divine knowledge and divine will.

<sup>15</sup> Francis Turretin, *Institutio Theologiae Elencticae, in Qua Status Controversiae Perspicue Exponitur, Praecipua Orthodoxorum Argumenta Proponuntur & Vindicantur, & Fontes Solutionum Aperiantur*. (Geneva: Samuelem De Tournes, 1688), Q. 13, 234. "Solet vero distingui vulgo a Theologis in Scientiam simplicis intelligentiae seu naturalem, & indefinitam" ("It is commonly distinguished by theologians into the knowledge of simple understanding, or natural and indefinite").

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, "Et Scientiam liberam, seu visionis & definitam."

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, "Illa [the former] est rerum mere possibilium . . . . Ista [the latter] est rerum futurarum, quae definit, dicitur, quia res futurae definitae sunt certo Dei consilio."

<sup>18</sup> Petrus van Mastricht, *Theoretico-Practica Theologia, Qua, Per Singula Capita Theologica, Pars Exegetica, Dogmatica, Elenctica & Practica, Perpetuâ Successione Coniugantur* (Utrecht: Thomae Appels, 1699), 146, 148. (Henceforth, *ThPrTh*). "Duplex nomen obtinet: scientiae naturalis, seu simplicis intelligentiae, qua, circa pure possibilia . . . scientia libera seu visionis" ("There is a twofold nomenclature: natural knowledge or simple understanding, which concerns pure possibles . . . free or intuitive, visionary knowledge").

<sup>19</sup> Ames, *Medullae*, 32. "Quae novit Deus per scientiam simplicis intelligentiae, novit ex sua omnissufficientia: quae vero novit per scientiam visionis, novit per suam efficientiam, vel ex decreto suae propriae voluntatis." Ames, *Marrow*, 96.

<sup>20</sup> Ames, *Marrow*, 97 (th. 36).

There are the two planes of divine knowledge and the one plane of divine willing. God's outward acts are not knowledge-based, but will-based. God wills "by preceding choice."<sup>21</sup> Moreover, "the will of God does not imply a necessity in all future things."<sup>22</sup> The significance of a distinct formal plane of divine freedom—and human freedom as well—is that, by definition, an agent has simultaneous powers to elicit an alternative act, that is, one of a number of possible alternatives (Ames, ch. 7, thesis 25, 47). Although, of course, the number of possible alternatives for God is infinitely greater than for humans. Whichever act an agent elicits, he or she has at that instant the power to will that it not occur, or to not will that it occur.

Moreover, keeping these two conceptual planes of divine knowledge distinctly apart helps one better understand divine freedom of will, that God is not omnivolent, and that he wills by counsel, the choices of which are not necessitated, and that a contingent status of future states of affairs can rhyme, or consist, with necessity, in the sense of the necessity of consequence of the divine decree.

The next section will turn to the more sophisticated scholastic exchange between Grevinchovius and Ames, which will provide more support to verify the significance of holding distinct planes of divine knowledge, and in Ames's terms, "antecedent to" and "following" the divine will. First, we present the complaint by Grevinchovius, followed by the reply from Ames. The section will reconstruct, as it were, the two author's comments to each other in the form of a dialogue, as if they were face-to-face, which is the format the two authors used in their in-print dialogue. We then give a brief analysis of the dialogue.

*Grevinchovius (1578-1632)*

The authors address each other in the second person singular and refer to each other's page numbers in the original in-print dialogue. Ames had written his *De Arminii sententia Disceptatio scholastica* in 1613 to which Grevinchovius responded in his *Dissertatio theologica* in 1615, which invited a counter reply by Ames in his *Rescriptio scholastica* in 1615. We begin with the voice of Grevinchovius, enhanced for sake of the dialogue, who sets forth his complaint about what Ames had written. The question the following dialogue addresses is: If a proposition such as, "It is the case that Peter will believe," is neither true nor false, how then can God have any certain knowledge of it?

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, (th. 36).

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 99 (th. 49).

GREVINCHOVIUS'S COMPLAINT: *Dissertatio theologica* (1615)

You deny that future contingents can in any way be known with certainty and infallibility, unless in the divine will as the cause.<sup>23</sup> If that were the case, then the will is so great that it would be the cause of divine knowledge.<sup>24</sup> Moreover, you imply that God's volition posits an objective event before the divine mind, which would not be future, unless the will of God determines or permits it to occur.<sup>25</sup> Likewise, your view would entail that God would not know the event as future, because it is not future, and that God cannot foreknow the future, which is nothing short of error. I deny that foreknowledge, properly speaking, is caused by the will.<sup>26</sup>

The will only produces or permits the effect, which must be known by God, according to the infinity of divine knowledge.<sup>27</sup> The knowledge of God, concerning what is willed, cannot be contingent. It is not a result of a cause or by volition. When God produces or permits an objective effect, the object is known and cognized.<sup>28</sup> You should be more precise and not say that future events are not known, but only that they do not exist, except by the divine will.<sup>29</sup> [In other words, I am willing to accept that there is a sense in which future objects do not yet exist, but you must agree that God knows them. And, instead of asking you if God knows what will come about, let me ask you if God knows what will not come about. I believe, that your notion of divine freedom of will is caught on the horns of a dilemma]<sup>30</sup>:

<sup>23</sup> Nicolaus Grevinchovius, *Dissertatio Theologica de Duabus Quaestionibus Hoc Tempore Controversis, [1] de Reconciliatione Per Mortem Christi Impetrata Omnibus Ac Singulis Hominibus, [2] de Electione Ex Fide Praevisa* (Rotterdam: Batavorum, 1615), 350. "2. Negas futura contingentia cognosci posse ullo modo certo atque infallibili, nisi in voluntate divina."

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, "Quid? Ergo ne voluntas seu volitio potius erit causa scientiae divinae?"

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, "Dato, quod volitione Dei ponatur objectum, quod non esset futurum, nisi voluntas Dei id fieri decerneret aut permitteret."

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, "Nego tamen praescientiam istam a voluntate proprie loquendo causari."

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, "[Q]uia voluntas tantum producit aut statuit producere vel permittere effectum, quod non potest non a Deo cognosci, propter infinitatem scientiae divinae."

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, "[Q]uod est objectum, scientiae et cognitionis."

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, "[N]eque dixisse, futura contingentia non cognosci, sed tantum, non existere, nisi ex voluntate divina."

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 353. I extrapolate in the body of the text from what Grevinchovius says about Ames's view, to wit, "Rather you understand the will of permitting such that future contingents are not known with certainty, for after God has posited a decree permitting an act, a created agent can nevertheless avoid the act. (Aut, denique, intelligis voluntatem permittendi: sed neque in hac certo sciuntur futura contingentia: posito enim decreto permittendi actum, potest tamen creatura actum evitare). "Further, he says that Ames's view implies that God cannot know what a human agent is going to do, due to

If such is the will of God concerning free acts, so will it be of future acts, such that he wills them to occur either contingently or necessarily. If necessarily, they will occur in a necessary manner, and they cease being contingent.<sup>31</sup> However, if, on the other hand, he wills them contingently—this is without prejudice to freedom and its use—then surely, 1) the absolute decree ceases its activity and efficacy; 2) nor are your acts, as you yourself can judge, able to be foreseen in this decree. They are set forth, and yet cannot occur.<sup>32</sup>

AMES'S REPLY: RESCRIPTIO SCHOLASTICA (1615)<sup>33</sup>

I disagree with you on whether God knows a proposition as either true or false *before* (in a structural sense) the decree (*ante decretum*). For future contingents such as, "Peter will believe, (*Petrus credet*)" do not have a determined truth-value antecedent to divine knowledge (*non habere veritatem determinatam anteceder ad scientiam divinam*), such that they can be known or that they may be said to be, or that they may be said to be knowable, except by the will of God.<sup>34</sup>

The truth-value of the proposition, "Peter will believe," has not been determined true before the decree of the divine will (*non fuit determinate vera, ante decretum illud voluntatis divinae*), by which the faith of Peter has been predetermined. Indeed the thing itself (*res ipsa*) has not been reckoned as a future being (*entis futuri*), neither therefore as true . . . it is not a determinate truth value out of the nature of the thing

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how he constitutes human power either to act or not to act. (At in neutra voluntate cognosci potest certo hominen acturum, quia per utamque solum constituitur potens ad agendum, vel non agendum). Then Grevinchovius concludes: "Now you see, if I am not mistaken, that the decree of the divine will is not a sufficient reason for the existence and knowledge of future contingents (according to your argumentation)" ("Iam vides, ni fallor, decreto divinae voluntatis non inesse sufficientem rationem existentiae eoque nec [ex tua ipsius argumentatione] scientiae futurorum contingentium").

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 352-3. "Adde, si talis est Dei voluntas de actibus liberis, erit etiam de modo futuritionis actuum istorum, eoque vult eos fieri modo vel contingenti vel necessario: si necessario, fiet ergo modo necessario, et desinunt esse contingentes: Sin contingenti modo, hoc est salva libertate atque usu eius, jam, 1) cessat decretum de istis actibus absolutum atque efficax."

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, "[J]am 1) cessat decretum de istis actibus absolutum atque efficax; 2) neque actus isti, vel te judice, possunt in hoc decreto praevideri, quippe quo posito, possunt tamen non fieri."

<sup>33</sup> William Ames, *Rescriptio Scholastica et Brevis Ad Nicolaus Grevinchovii Responsum Illud Prolixum, Quod Opposuit Dissertationi de Redemptione Generali, et Electione Ex Fide Praevisa*, rev. ed. (Amsterdam: 1615; Harderwijk: Nicolai a Uvieringen, 1645).

<sup>34</sup> Ames, *Rescriptio*, 182. "[U]rgebam ego, futura haec non habere veritatem determinatam anteceder ad scientiam divinam, vel ita ut sciri possint aut scibilia dicantur, nisi ex voluntate Dei." See discussion below under Pt. IV, B, where Van Mastricht uses the same expression: "Futura contingentia non habere determinatam veritatem . . . non habere quidem in se; habere tamen in decreto divino." ("Future contingents do not have a determinate truth value . . . not in themselves, they have, however, truth values in the decree of God").



or internal cause, for there is no necessary junction between these terminate ends (*quia nulla necessaria connexio est inter hos terminos Petrus et fides*), Peter and faith, nor from any external secondary causes; for they are indifferent, neither determined nor determining.<sup>35</sup>

Moreover, Ames holds, a future contingent proposition, such as “Peter will believe,” does not possess a truth value independent of the divine will. God’s will is the first cause, and therefore the truth value is not assigned to the proposition by secondary causes, which would root the ultimate cause outside God. Let us suppose the proposition, “Peter will believe.” Even though the relation between the subject and predicate may be necessary by a necessity of the consequence of the divine decree that Peter believe, Peter’s belief is not a necessary consequent. The proposition is contingent upon and rooted in the divine will. The secondary cause, that is, Peter’s believing, is contingently rooted in the first cause, God’s divine willing.<sup>36</sup> Ames continues his reply:

The force of my argument, hinges, not upon the moment of time in which Peter believes, but upon the structure of the moment of time by which he believes. You insist on this proposition, “Peter will believe”: That either it has been determined true or determined false, and that it is thus contradictory to be determined true, if Peter will not believe. But the law of contradiction refers to in the same way in the same moment of time in which an event takes place among us. I refer not to the moment of time *in which*, but I take my reference point from the structural moment (*momento rationis*) by which an event occurs.<sup>37</sup>

### Analysis of Grevinchovius and Ames

Grevinchovius has two concerns about Ames’s view of election. In his opinion, it is either marked by an antecedent, causal necessity that destroys human freedom, or it denies absolute divine knowledge of contingent future events which

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., “Propositio ista Petrus credet, non fuit determinate vera, ante decretum illud voluntatis divinae, quo praedefinita fuit Petri fides. Res enim ipsa non habuit rationem entis futuri, nec igitur veri, verum enim et ens confunduntur, praeterea, non est determinate vera ex natura rei, vel causis internis; quia nulla necessaria connexio est inter hos terminos, Petrus et fides, neque ex causa aliqua externa secundaria; quia sunt indifferentes, nec determinatae nec determinantes.”

<sup>36</sup> This paragraph extrapolates a bit from the preceding paragraph for the sake of his argument.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., “Instat ille propositio hac, Petrus credet, vel determinate vera fuit, vel determinate falsa, ita ut contradictoria sit determinata vera, Petrus non credet. Respondeo, 1. Contradictionis lex est, ut ad idem temporis momentum referatur, ad idem, secundum idem, et eodem tempore: agitur autem inter nos, non de momento temporis *in quo*, sed de momento rationis *a quo*.”

God wills contingently, reducing God's absolute knowledge to contingent knowledge.

The answer of Ames to the statement that a future contingent event is known to bear either a true or a false value, is that there is a third value which comes into play, namely, a neutral truth value of a neutral proposition.<sup>38</sup> What Ames objects to is the notion that God cannot know something unless it already has one of two assigned truth values; that it is either true or false.

Grevinchovius does not accept the semantical distinction of a "neutral proposition," which functions on a formal plane of freedom. For him, there is no plane of unactualized possibilities. His semantic field operates on the one plane of this world's factual reality. He denies Ames's distinction of conceptual planes of knowledge, that is, *scientia naturalia* or *scientia simplicis intellegentiae* on the one hand, and *scientia visionis* on the other.

Rather, in his opinion, states of affairs are already assigned truth values. But this begs the question, who assigns truth values, God or humans? His answer is that this happens concurrently, which in effect conflates God's will into both God's knowledge of possibles and knowledge of foreseen states of affairs. And this is what Ames objects to and the reason why a supposed "foreseen faith" forms part of the title of his scholastic reply to Grevinchovius.

That God is omniscient and omnipotent, but not omnivulent, testifies to a conceptual distinction between divine will and divine knowledge.<sup>39</sup> For it is God's will that specifies which possible states of affairs God will actualize and thereby assign a truth value.<sup>40</sup> Moreover, this implies that God contingently wills the state

<sup>38</sup> On the semantic distinction of "neutral propositions," considered at the level of pure possibilities, see Andreas J. Beck, *Gisbertus Voetius (1589-1676): Sein Theologieverständnis und Seine Gotteslehre*, Forschungen Zur Kirchen- und Dogmengeschichte, 92 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2007). In his summary on "God's knowledge" (8.5), Beck writes that Voetius makes the classic distinction between "indefinite" (unbestimmten) and "definite" (bestimmten) divine knowledge, with, however, the divine will, located structurally between the two, playing the decisive role. Voetius's theory of "the neutral proposition," which Beck (pp. 271-2) attributes to Duns Scotus, is "where God's will determines the truth value of a proposition which in itself is neutral" ("Theorie der neutralen Proposition, an, wobei Gottes Wille den Wahrheitswert einer aus sich selbst neutralen Proposition bestimmt"). Also, see Beck's chapter, "God weet wat Hij wil: Duns Scotus' theorie van de neutrale propositie" ("God knows what He wills: Duns Scotus's theory of the neutral proposition"): "But at a pure level of possibility, contingent propositions are semantically undetermined, for at that level it is not seen when and where they actually are true or not true" ("Maar op het pure mogelijkhedeniveau zijn contingente proposities semantisch onbepaald, want daar is niet zichtbaar wanneer en waar ze actueel waar of onwaar zijn"). *Geloof Geeft Te Denken: Opstellen Over de Theologie Van Johannes Duns Scotus*, ed. A. J. Beck and H. Veldhuis, Scripta Franciscana, 8 (Assen, Netherlands: Koninklijke van Gorcum, 2005), 142-46.

<sup>39</sup> "By his will, however, he does not will all things which he can . . . God is omniscient and omnipotent but it cannot be said that he is omnivulent," in Ames, *Marrow*, 99 (th. 47).

<sup>40</sup> This conceptual distinction on God willing contingently, which flows from a *theologia contingens*, belongs to the Reformed theological heritage, and is explained by Andreas J. Beck in "Gisbertus Voetius (1589-1676): basic features of his doctrine of God," in W. J. van Asselt and E. Dekker, *Refor-*

of affairs, "Peter will believe," such that God specifies between the possibles (simultaneous alternatives) "Peter believes," or "Peter *can* not believe."<sup>41</sup>

Ames appeals to the "canons of logic" to disprove the notion that freedom and contingency are somehow removed by the necessity of the consequence of a divine decree. According to the canons of logic, he argues, it is not the case that "the connection always be necessary if it be true."<sup>42</sup> In fact, says Ames, scholars should know that the sense of the words of a conditional conjunction are not "absolute" or "positive," but express "a hypothetical necessity."<sup>43</sup> And a hypothetical necessity, or necessity of the consequence of a decree, can consist with contingency. The struggle between the two positions of Ames and Grevinchovius can be illustrated by Ames's proposition, which Grevinchovius contests. Grevinchovius cites Ames as saying, (1) "Unless the world be created *ex nihilo*, nothing will exist."<sup>44</sup>

Ames focuses on the decree, saying that this proposition rests on the divine decree.

Grevinchovius returns to this proposition of Ames and changes it to illustrate the conditionality of God's knowledge of future contingents. He writes, (2) "If the world will exist, it is necessary that it be created from nothing."<sup>45</sup> He argues that Ames's statement (1) is "altogether incongruous (*omnino incongruum est*)."<sup>46</sup> It assumes the antecedent; therefore, by inference, what follows, follows necessarily. Ames argues that statement (2) transfers the status of a conditional future to that of an absolute by "conjectural" (*mere conjecturalem*) knowledge of what will occur, independent of the divine will (*independentem a divina voluntate*). But this is inconsistent with God's "natural knowledge or knowledge of simple understanding."<sup>47</sup> In statement (1), Ames does not conjecture or assume the truth value or existence of any state of affairs. His example is meant precisely to illustrate the point that

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*mation and Scholasticism: An Ecumenical Enterprise*, gen. ed. Richard A. Muller, Texts and Studies in Reformation and Post-Reformation Thought (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2001), 205-26.

<sup>41</sup> Conceptually, that Peter believes and can not believe, at the same moment, is not a contradiction. The concept here is not that of "the power of simultaneity" but rather that of "simultaneous powers."

<sup>42</sup> Ames, *Rescriptio*, 195. "Negatur hic (ibid.) imprimis canon ille logicus axioma scilicet connexum necessarium semper esse si verum sit."

<sup>43</sup> Ames, *Rescriptio*, 195. Ames refers in the text to Julius Caesar Scaliger (1484-1558), "Vide Scaligerum *de causis linguae Latinae* [Lyon, 1540], I.II.c.168." Scaliger's book is listed in Sprunger, *The Auction Catalogue of Ames*, 15.

<sup>44</sup> Grevinchovius, *Dissertatio*, "Nisi mundus ex nihilo fiat, nunquam existet," 349.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 410. "si mundus existet, necesse est eum ex nihilo creari."

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 349. This section of Grevinchovius's *Dissertatio* cites Ames's arguments: "Sed eandem in Deo vel naturalem esse dico et simplicis intelligentiae." Grevinchovius then responds to Ames's language on this kind of "natural" knowledge in God: "scientiam quondam in Deo naturalem esse et simplicis intelligentiae, puta, Nisi mundus ex nihilo fiat, nunquam existet," 410. On "conjectural knowledge," see also, Ames, *Marrow*, c. VII, "The decree and counsel of God," 97 (th. 31).

God knows possibles by his natural knowledge (*scientia naturalis*) or knowledge of simple understanding; these possibles God can bring into being by fiat. It remains a neutral proposition in God's "natural knowledge" until and unless God decides to actualize it.

### Charles Morton's (Heereboord's) "Pneumatics," Copied by Ebenezer Williams

Ebenezer Williams (Harvard AB 1709, AM 1712) finished his own transcription of Morton's "Ethicks and Pneumatics" on 07 February 1707-8. The flyleaf of the notebook suggests that his copy was passed on to a fellow student, Elisha Williams (Harvard AB 1711, AM 1714).<sup>48</sup> It is well known that Elisha was Edwards' tutor at Wethersfield (1716-1719), and it is reasonable to suppose that Elisha used these texts in instructing Edwards. A close analysis of the Morton text, which follows, shows that it is not original to Morton, but rather that he largely extracted and translated Heereboord's Latin text on *Pneumatics*.<sup>49</sup> Edwards then was at least indirectly exposed to Heereboord and his Reformed definitions on "science in God," "divine will," "divine power"—among other chapters—at the earliest time of his training in Wethersfield.<sup>50</sup>

What would Edwards have learned? Specifically, he learned that divine freedom was confirmed by two kinds of divine knowledge and their structural relation to the divine will, as mediated to him through Morton's (Heereboord's) *Pneumatics* chapter "Of science in God."

In Chapter 8, "Of Science in God,"<sup>51</sup> Morton begins his translated extraction with the definition of Heereboord of the knowledge of God. "The science of God is

<sup>48</sup> Ebenezer Williams, "A System of Ethicks and Pneumaticks P.D. Carolum Morton. M.A," Harvard University Archives, HUC 8707.394 VT (transcribed 1707-08). The commencing dates for Elisha Williams are taken from the Harvard commencement broadsides, where his name appears. Harvard University, Commencement Theses, Quaestiones, and Orders of Exercises, 1642-1818. HUC 6642, Harvard University Archives. The Bachelor 1711 broadside is in the collection. However, the Master's 1714 *Quaestiones* was procured through *Early American Imprints, Series I: Evans, 1639-1800*.

<sup>49</sup> Adriaan Heereboord, *Pneumatica* (Leiden, 1659).

<sup>50</sup> William Sparkes Morris has argued for Edwards' early familiarity with Heereboord's *Meletemata*, whose work also serves as a benchmark for examining the use of scholastic distinctions in Edwards' thought. Morris demonstrated the influence of both Franciscus Burgersdijck (1590-1635) and Adriaan Heereboord (1614-1661), in *The Young Jonathan Edwards: a Reconstruction*, Chicago Studies in the History of American Religion (New York: Carlson Publishing, 1991; republished in *The Jonathan Edwards Classic Studies Series*, Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2005), 3, 79-80.

<sup>51</sup> Ebenezer Williams, "Pneumaticks." The following footnotes will show that the text of *Pneumatics* is not original with Morton, but for the most part extracted and translated from Heereboord's *Pneumatica* (Leiden, 1659), cap. X, "De Scientia Dei." One piece of evidence, in addition to the obvious translation of the Latin text, is the fact that the English text does not read so smoothly, which is due, not so much to a student's transcription errors, but rather to a wooden translation from Latin into English. The quotes in the body of our text are from Morton's student textbook; the footnotes show the Latin original in Heereboord's *Pneumatics* text.

whereby he does understand most perfectly all singular together and at once truly and infallibly by one eternal and most simple act."<sup>52</sup> Morton explains that though "possibles" in the "past, present, and future" are "real," God's knowledge of them is technically considered "one pure simple act."<sup>53</sup> But to accommodate to human understanding, the following distinctions are made about divine knowledge. The first is that of "possible."

What is possible is "not as opposed to impossible, but future."<sup>54</sup> This is a significant additional statement since these are real possible states of affairs; they are "opposites" present to the divine mind, as it were, which can be assigned a truth value, be actualized, and obtain in this world, if decreed by the divine will. This first plane of knowledge he calls by the classic name, knowledge of simple understanding: "1. Possibles are "known of God by knowing his own power, This called Science of simple intelligence and conceived as going before all decrees of his will."<sup>55</sup>

This conceptual plane of knowledge also bears the names "necessary," "natural," and "indefinite."<sup>56</sup> The indefiniteness of a state of affairs corresponds to the lack of an assigned truth value. And this divine knowledge of the opposite state of affairs corresponds to whether it will be "future," that is, the same state of affairs has no truth value, but can have a truth value. As Morton describes this "indefinite" characteristic of divine, it concerns "the thing without the circumstance of time." This status of possibility is subject to the divine will which, as Heereboord describes, "transfers a state of affairs from the state of possibility to a state

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<sup>52</sup> Heereboord, *Pneumatica*, 188. His stated thesis under the title of ch. 10 is: "Scientia Dei est, qua omnia et singula vere atque infallibiliter uno, aeterno, ac simplicissimo actu, simul et semel, intelligit perfectissime ac distinctissime" ("The knowledge of God is that by which he truly knows most perfectly and distinctly all, and all individual, states of affairs, at once and simultaneously, and in one most simple, eternal, and infallible act").

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, 190, 192. "III. Ex entibus realibus cognoscit Deus tum possibilia, tum futura, uno simpliq; actu intelligendi" ("God knows from among real entities, both what is possible and what is future, in one simple act of understanding").

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 193. "[D]icimus circa possibilia, non excludimus impossibilia, scientia enim est oppositorum, sed possibilia hic opponuntur futuris" ("When we speak concerning possibles, we do not exclude impossibles—for knowledge is of opposites—but these possibles are opposed to futures").

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 192. "[A]c scientiam in Deo possibilium vocamus simplicis intelligentiae" ("We call knowledge in God of possibles simple understanding"). P. 191: "Praeterea, cum entia realia dicuntur possibilia, in ordine ad potentiam Dei, uti futura in ordine ad voluntatem ejus, Deus cognoscendo suam potentiam et voluntatem, eo ipso cognoscit entia realia, que ut possibilia potentiae, et ut futura, voluntati ejus objiciuntur" ("Besides, when we speak of possible real entities, it is in order to the power of God, as futures are in order to his will, God knowing his power and will, by which he knows real entities; they are as possibles of his power, and as futures, they are subject to his will").

<sup>56</sup> As has been seen above, these are the terms also assigned by William Ames. The Latin text of Heereboord, which Morton follows and translates (p. 193), is: "Prior vocatur quoque necessaria, naturalis et indefinita; posterior libera, voluntaria ac definite."

of futurition.<sup>57</sup> The second distinction about divine knowledge that Heereboord, and Morton, make concerns the “future.” Here, then, is Morton’s translation of the second conceptual plane of divine knowledge:

2. [The] future known of God by knowing his own will ‘tis called science of vision in the order of our intellect conceiving is apprehended to follow his decrees though indeed science and decrees are together eternal tis also called free and voluntary and definite by the circumstance of time past present and future.<sup>58</sup>

The frequent reference which is made to two conceptual planes of divine knowledge, that is, that there is a structural ordering of these planes, before and after, the divine will, is borne out from the text of Heereboord (and Morton). The definition (2) seeks to clarify that this language is an accommodation to human thinking, and that in the divine life of God, “knowledge and decrees are together eternal.”<sup>59</sup> The very next paragraph of Morton makes this clear that there is a “twofold estate” conceived, of possibility on the one hand, and fruition on the other.

Hence the schoolmen conceive all things as in a twofold estate viz. possibility & fruition, between those two they place the act of Gods will to transfer thing from the act of possibility to a state of futurition, God knows both say they, the one antecedently to the will and the other consequently.<sup>60</sup>

Morton, following Heereboord, holds this “twofold estate” (*duplex rerum status*) in tension with the will and clarifies what one means by attributing “foreknowledge” to God. “Prescience is properly speaking science of vision” and not “knowledge of simple understanding.” The latter “precedes” futures, structurally speaking, but is not nevertheless called “foreknowledge.” This is because the “objects” of simple understanding are “non-entities.” They are “indefinite,” unde-

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 193. “[R]em ex statu possibilitatis transferre in statum futuritionis.”

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., 192.

<sup>59</sup> Heereboord, 192-3. “[Q]uamvis utraque et ipsum Dei decretum ab aeterno simul sint” (“It follows, however, that both [knowledge, given the context] and decree be simultaneously eternal in God himself”).

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 193. “Hinc duplex rerum status ortus est Scholasticis; unus possibilitas, alter futuritionis, inter quem voluntas divina concipitur intercedere media, et rem ex statu possibilitatis transferre in statum futuritionis: Deus res cognoscit in utroque statu, in priori antecedenter ad illum voluntatis suae actum, in posteriori consequenter ad illum.”

finied, that is, without an assigned truth value. They are “possibles.”<sup>61</sup> There is therefore nothing to “fore-know.” The end of Morton’s (and Heereboord’s) chapter “On the science of God” and his exposition can be summarized in the following points:

(1) The prophet Isaiah alludes to “diverse conceptual planes of divine knowledge,” and makes the point that there is no third conceptual plane, commonly called, “middle knowledge.”<sup>62</sup> Morton understands the Heereboord text to mean “several movements of human thought,” whereas the Latin text speaks of “diverse moments,” pointing to conceptual planes of divine thought, or structural moments, since all agree that there are no successive temporal moments or steps in divine thought. By not conceiving what Heereboord was talking about, Morton unwittingly mistranslates and masks from the student the important conceptual distinction at hand.

(2) The objects of divine knowledge are either in a state of possibility or a state of futurity.

(3) The divine will is conceived to be located between the two, the function of which is to transfer a state of affairs (*rem*) from a state of possibility to a state of futurity.<sup>63</sup>

(4) It is God’s will that imposes necessity of the consequence upon future states of affairs; but it is a “derived” necessity, from God’s side, not from humans.<sup>64</sup>

(5) The following syllogism by Heereboord proves, he says, that there are but two conceptual planes of divine knowledge, for the inference of the major can be denied. The syllogism is:

a. Every habit presupposes an object.<sup>65</sup>

b. Those things which are mutually opposed to one another do not allow a third to come between them. (Possible and futures are mutually set in opposition to one another, if viewed in their formal sense (*in ratione sua formali*).<sup>66</sup>

c. But the objects of (1) simple knowledge of understanding and (2) knowledge

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., 194. The text of Morton is: “Prescience is properly science of vision respecting futures possible (the object of simple intelligence) are as such proper non entities hence God is said to know non entities and impossibles, non entities as possible, and impossibles as opposite to possibles for opposites are together in knowledge simple intelligence.”

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., 198-9. “[Q]uare illa scientiae divinae distinctio tantum notat diversa momenta . . . quod non autem non detur tertium momentum” (“Therefore the distinction only marks diverse [structural] moments of the divine knowledge”).

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., 193.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., 195.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., 199. “Omnis enim habitus objectum presupponit.”

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., “Possibile et futurum immediate opponuntur, si scilicet spectentur utrimque in ratione sua formali.”

of vision are set in mutual opposition to one another in God's mind.<sup>67</sup>

d. Therefore, what is possible is set in mutual opposition to what is future.

(6) There are, therefore, but two conceptual planes of divine knowledge, such that, in the divine mind, states of affairs are mutually opposed to one another. This state of opposition, ( $p$  or  $\sim p$ ) lies as a foundational stone in the syllogism of Heereboord and is reflected in claim (5b), that a possible and a future are mutually opposed to one another.

### **The Use of Boethius on Foreknowledge and Contingency by Van Mastricht and Edwards**

*The Formula of Boethius* Boethius's definition of eternity reads:

Eternity is the simultaneous and complete possession of infinite life . . . That which grasps and possesses wholly and simultaneously the fullness of unending life."<sup>68</sup>

The Boethian thesis was meant to answer the vexing parallel questions of (1) how to rhyme God's foreknowledge with human freedom of will and (2) necessity and contingency. He answers (1) by saying that foreknowledge no more causes the necessity of future results than does the light of vision render things necessary, because it shines on them, to use the Boethian metaphor. "God sees all things in His eternal present. Wherefore this divine foreknowledge does not change the nature or individual qualities of things."<sup>69</sup> He identifies two kinds of necessity, a simple necessity, "All men are mortal," and a conditional necessity, "if you know that a man is walking, he must be walking." The former is akin to a necessity of the consequent, or, a necessity of nature, "The sun rises." The latter is akin to the necessity of the consequence of knowing that a man is walking at a certain moment.

He answers (2) by pointing to the modalities of possibility, necessity, and contingency. The definition that God "grasps simultaneously the whole of unending life in the present,"<sup>70</sup> holds to a single unchangeable plane of reality such that past, present, and future states of affairs are present to God's mind and therefore necessary. This view of modalities has been called "statistical," which means that

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., "Sed objecta scientiae simplicis intelligentiae et visionis in Deo immeditate opponuntur."

<sup>68</sup> Andrew B. Schoedinger, *Readings in Medieval Philosophy* (Oxford: OUP, 1996), 199. PL 63:348, Prosa VI, 858.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., 201.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., 199.



it reduces possible and necessity to a “temporal frequency.”<sup>71</sup> For example, to say that a person *can* be blind and *can* see at the same instant of time is not possible. There would have to be a successive moment of time at which she sees. This poses a problem to the Boethian view of one single plane of reality, where past, present and future, are present to God. Is she blind, or not? For in this view, there is no alternative conceptual plane of reality upon which the blind person possibly can see at that same instant of time. Only another future time index is possible in this view. Nevertheless, the Boethian formula stresses that though these states of affairs are present to God’s mind, and are therefore necessary, “the necessity of the present is an unconstraining necessity.”<sup>72</sup>

But another way is to move beyond the “statistical” understanding of modalities and posit a simultaneous, alternative conceptual plane of reality. This would leave room for a “synchronic alternative possibility.”<sup>73</sup> In that case, someone who is sitting can be standing at the same instant; and a blind person *can* see at the same moment, on a simultaneously alternative conceptual plane.

We now turn to Van Mastricht’s development of the Boethian formula. He follows in the line of Ames and Voetius, as one who does go beyond the statistical understanding of modalities, and speaks of two conceptually distinct but synchronically simultaneous planes of divine knowledge.

#### *Van Mastricht’s Use and Development of Boethius’s Formula*

It is known from a letter of Edwards to Bellamy on 09 January 1748/9 that he wished to consult both Turretin and Van Mastricht in the course of his writing *Freedom of Will*.<sup>74</sup> We now turn to Van Mastricht and his use and development of the formula of Boethius.<sup>75</sup> In his chapters “On the eternity of God” and “On the life and immortality of God,” Van Mastricht takes several of his “dogmatic parts” to confirm that there is no “before” and “after” in terms of successive temporal moments in God’s unlimited life. He does this by explaining each distinct term of

<sup>71</sup> John Marenbon, *Medieval Philosophy: An Historical and Philosophical Introduction* (2007; repr., London: Routledge, 2009), 45.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, 46.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, 45, 307, 371. The formal plane of freedom is described as “simultaneous alternatives,” in Simo Knuuttila, “Medieval theories of Modality,” *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Summer 2011 Edition), ed. Edward N. Zalta, <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2011/entries/modality-medieval>, 1 [accessed 7 October 2011]. See, also Antoon Vos, who dubbed this theory “synchronic contingency,” in Vos, *The Philosophy of John Duns Scotus* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006), 225, 243. Also, Vos, et al., *John Duns Scotus: Contingency and Freedom, Lectura 1 39. Introduction, Translation, and Commentary*, The New Synthese Historical Library 42 (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic, 1994), 6.

<sup>74</sup> WJE 16:217, 266.

<sup>75</sup> For the development by Van Mastricht of the exegetical tradition of the Boethian formula, see Adriaan Cornelis Neele, *The Art of Living to God: A Study of Method and Piety in the Theoretico-Practica Theologia of Petrus Van Mastricht*, Perspectives on Christianity, 1 (Pretoria: University of Pretoria, 2005), 164.

the Boethian definition, which he cites from his *Consolation of philosophy*: “Boethius has accurately said [that God has] a perfect possession, together and at once, of unlimited life.”<sup>76</sup>

He then goes beyond Boethius, introducing two planes of divine knowledge, citing Ames in his text and expressing the Reformed view, which both Voetius and Ames held, that there is a non-successive, structured order in divine knowledge, antecedent to and following, by implication, the divine will. (1) God’s simple knowledge of understanding, which is of possibles, is grounded, “not in the divine will, but in God’s all-sufficiency,” which also is what Ames had said in his *Marrow*. On this point, Van Mastricht says that there is an “antecedent structure” (*antecedens natura*) of his all-sufficiency to his will.<sup>77</sup>

Van Mastricht follows Ames by confirming the (2) conceptual plane of divine knowledge of vision (of intuition) where future contingents are known *due* to the divine will. And given this structuring, one can hold that “Future contingents do not have a determinate truth value . . . not in themselves; they have, however, truth values in the decree of God.”<sup>78</sup>

Briefly, four points can be made at this point: (1) Structurally speaking, before the divine decree, future contingents do not have an assigned truth value (*non habere determinatam veritatem*); a truth value is assigned (determined) by the divine decree. (2) “God cannot know any event, nor the futurity of any event, except by the decree made from eternity, which is most perfectly known by God.” (3) “He knows” what he has decreed “by his most certain and perfect intuition” (knowledge of vision).<sup>79</sup> (4) Van Mastricht improves on the Boethian modalities view, under (A2) above, by drawing on previous author’s (Ames and Voetius) notion of an alternative conceptual plane.

#### *Edwards’ Use of Boethius’ Formula*

Edwards engages his Arminian<sup>80</sup> interlocutors using the Boethian definition—

<sup>76</sup> “Boëthio, satis accurate dicitur: interminabilis vitae, tota simul & perfecta possessio. De Consol. Philos. Lib. v. Pros. 6,” in Van Mastricht, *ThPrTh*, Cap. 11, sect. VI, 129.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, Cap. 13, “De intellectu, scientia, et sapientia Dei,” sect. XXIII, 149. “in signo rationis, ut loquuntur, antecedens natura” (in a structural moment . . . that naturally goes before). On this technical term in Voetius, see Beck, *Gisbertus Voetius*, 268 (footnote 18).

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, Cap. 11, “On the eternity of God,” sec. VI, 129; Cap. 12, “On the life of God,” sec. VIII, 136; “On the immortality of God,” sec. XIX, XX, 140. “Futura contingentia non habere determinatam veritatem . . . non habere quidem in se; habere tamen in decreto divino” (148).

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, 148. Points (1), (2) “Eventus nullus, futurationem ullam, habere non potest, nisi, per decretum ab aeterno factum, Deoque perfectissimè cognitum,” and (3) “suique certâ & perfectâ intuitione, intelligit.”

<sup>80</sup> Brooks Mather Kelley writes of the term Arminian that it was “usually used in an imprecise sense by New Englanders to mean any leaning toward Anglicanism (which, it is true, leaned in turn toward Arminianism),” in *Yale: A History, The Yale Scene*, University Series, 3 (New Haven: Yale University

without building on his forebears' developments—as a foil upon which to make the point that the prescience of God is consistent with the necessity of the consequence of the divine decree. He brings elements of this standard definition into the discussion by quoting some unnamed Arminian source. The Arminian quote that Edwards gives is placed alongside his own source of the Boethian formula. First, the Arminian source:

Although it be true, that there is in God the most perfect knowledge of all events from eternity to eternity, yet there is no such thing as *before* and *after* in God, but he sees all things by one perfect unchangeable view, without any succession.<sup>81</sup>

Edwards' source (likely mediated to him either by Andrew Baxter or Van Maastricht) reads:

God comprehends all things, from eternity to eternity, in one, most perfect, and unalterable view; so that his whole eternal duration is *vitae interminabilis, tota, simul, and perfecta possessio*.<sup>82</sup>

In this chapter on "God's certain foreknowledge of the future volitions of moral agents," Edwards repeatedly makes the case that divine foreknowledge of an event implies the necessity of the event, where necessity is understood as the necessity of the consequence, the consequence either of being known, or of being decreed. A variety of technical terms are used in this chapter, such as, necessity "of connection," "of supposition," "of infallibility," and "indissoluble," all of which properly refer to the necessity of the consequence.<sup>83</sup> For Edwards, whether the connection is between an event and God's foreknowledge or between an event and God's decree, the connection is the same kind of necessity, a necessity of the

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Press, 1974), 31. Kelley alerts us to the fact that much more was at stake in New England than theology and its conceptual distinctions, as helpful and needful as this paper claims they are.

<sup>81</sup> WJE 1: 266.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, 268. Edwards cites the Latin of the Boethian definition twice, also on 385-6, possibly mediated to him via Andrew Baxter, mentioned in Edwards' footnote, 385-6. However, the Boethian formula may also have been mediated to Edwards via Van Maastricht, *ThPrTh*, 129, cap. 11, sec. VI.

<sup>83</sup> "The necessity of the consequence" (*necessitas consequentiae*) can be understood, for example, as "Necessarily, if I marry Cindy, Cindy is my wife." "It is a necessity brought about or conditioned by a previous contingent act or event so that the necessity itself arises out of contingent circumstance," writes Muller. Cf. "the necessity of the consequent" (*necessitas consequentis*), which is what cannot be otherwise than it is, in Richard A. Muller, *Dictionary of Latin and Greek Theological Terms: Drawn Principally from Protestant Scholastic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker books, 1985), 200. See, these two necessities defined in Ames's *theses logicae* 290, 297, 298, and Yale 1737 broadside, Logic 9. See *infra* under Part V, A.

consequence, in the one case of the divine decree, in the other of divine knowledge.<sup>84</sup>

Edwards' statement that "hence there never is in reality anything contingent in such a sense, as that possibly it may happen never to exist,"<sup>85</sup> reveals his understanding of the use of the modal "possible," which in this statement is in line with the single Boethian plane of this present reality.

Edwards points out that the Arminian quote of Boethius refers to the notion that God sees states of affairs "as they are in truth,"<sup>86</sup> that is, with assigned truth values, which strengthens his argument that God's foreknowledge of human acts is necessary by a necessity of the consequence of God's seeing. That Edwards makes use of the Boethian thesis is, given its original aim, an understandable move. The answer of Boethius is the answer that Edwards gives, namely, "Necessarily, what God sees will happen, will happen." This is none other than the necessity of the consequence of, in the Boethian sense, "divine vision of all things co-present."<sup>87</sup>

The value of the Boethian definition for the Remonstrants (Arminians) is that (1) it seems to confirm one's convictions that there are no neutral propositions being presented to the mind of God. (2) Future acts are always seen by God, and thereby always have a truth value assigned to them. (3) The necessity of the consequence of human acts is concomitant (accompanies) with the divine decree and divine knowledge. (4) There is no possibility of an unconditioned necessity of the consequence "after" the divine decree, because there is no before or after.

### Analysis

What is striking is that there is ostensible agreement between Edwards and all four above-mentioned points about what the Remonstrants value. What permits this agreement is the lack of either party to hold to distinct, structurally ordered "moments" in the "unchanging ever-presentness" of God,<sup>88</sup> whether antecedent to or following the decree, which would have set one party in opposition to the other. Both definitions operate on the single plane of this present reality, a view that has been mentioned before in association with the Remonstrant Grevinchovius. By adopting the Boethian thesis as a defensible thesis, both on the account of rhyming necessity with freedom, and on the "statistical" understanding

<sup>84</sup> WJE 1:261.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, 267.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>87</sup> Mortimer J. Adler, *The Idea of Freedom: A Dialectical Examination of the Conceptions of Freedom*, The Institute for Philosophical Research (New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1958), 1:445.

<sup>88</sup> Marenbon, *Medieval philosophy*, 55.

of modalities, Edwards has ruled out discussion of divine knowledge in terms of a simultaneous, alternative plane of thought.

There are drawbacks in not appealing to the advances made by post-Reformation authors, such as Ames, Voetius,<sup>89</sup> and Van Mastricht, who distinguish two conceptual planes of divine knowledge. What is at stake for the Reformed notion of freedom is (1) the conceptual plane of formal freedom, both divine and human, as well as (2) the privileged and structurally key role of the will, which is the axis around which seventeenth-century Reformed authors understood divine knowledge. In neither the scheme of Edwards nor that of Arminians is there room for alternative possibles whose nature is known by God, but not necessarily actualized. There is no room for neutral states of affairs, proposed to the divine mind for election, for all states of affairs are seen in the divine vision as co-present, are time-indexed, and therefore possess a truth value. These are aspects of divine intuitive knowledge (of vision), but these planes of knowledge are not specified in Edwards' text. By way of contrast with these two schemes, as Ames put it in his *Marrow*, God's knowledge of all things that are to be known, and his power which can do all possible things, "together they are stretched forth beyond those things which actually have been, are, and shall be."<sup>90</sup>

Suppose the proposition, "Peter will believe," is more sharply formulated, as (1) "If God considers the possible statement, 'Peter will believe,' and assigns it a truth value, and decrees that it be so, then, 'Necessarily, Peter will believe.'" This necessity remains a necessity of the consequence. The consequent, "Peter's belief, or assent," is not necessary regardless of the antecedent decree. Proposition (1) is contingent upon and rooted in the divine will.

Proposition (1) makes use of the distinction between two conceptual planes of divine knowledge. It reckons upon God's knowledge of simple understanding and its feature of knowing "possibles," which may be brought into being and fruition. This attribute of divine knowledge is not composed with another attribute, but is distinct from the divine decree. It is at the level of these conceptual planes that the argument takes place in Ames. Edwards' discussion, however, takes place entirely on the plane of God's intuitive knowledge (of vision).

### **Harvard and Yale Commencement Theses and Quaestiones**

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<sup>89</sup> Voetius, like Ames, understands that God knows future contingents through his will, but not in the Boethian sense of God seeing all states of affairs as present and actual. On this point, see Beck's exposition in ch. 8, sec. 2, on "necessary and contingent knowledge," which traces this notion back to Henry of Ghent (ca. 1217-1293) and Duns Scotus (1265/6-1308), in Beck, *Gisbertus Voetius*, 276.

<sup>90</sup> Ames, *Marrow*, 99.

*The Commencement Program and Ames's Influence upon the Curriculum*

The trustees of Yale ensured that the act for founding the collegiate school obliged the president "to ground the Students in the Principles of Religion by reading to them or making them Recite the Assembly's Confession of Faith which is turned into good Latin, as also the Catechises; and Dr. Ames's *Medulla*." Friday afternoons were reserved for learning theology from Johannes Wollebius's *Compendium Theologiae Christianae*.<sup>91</sup> Traces of William Ames's influence upon the commencement theses, which reflect the broader scope of the undergraduate curriculum, are evident in the 1718 Yale Bachelor *theses* that the young initiates in the arts drew up together with moderator Samuel Andrew, the second rector of Yale (1707-1719). The theses of Ames are presented, followed by the similar theses on the Harvard and Yale commencement broadsides.<sup>92</sup>

Thesis three of Ames's *Technometry*—the measure or study of art—is:

Question 3: "In summary, What does technometry teach?"

Answer: "The general nature and use of universal and particular arts."

Question 5: "How therefore is art defined?"

Answer: "Art is the idea of Eupraxia [good action] delineated methodically from universal rules."<sup>93</sup>

Yale's 1718 *Theses Technologicae*, presided over by Samuel Andrew, included the following:<sup>94</sup>

1. "Technology is in general the summary of universal and particular arts."

<sup>91</sup> Franklin Bowditch Dexter, ed., *Documentary History of Yale University: Under the Original Charter of the Collegiate School of Connecticut 1701-1745* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1916), 7-9.

<sup>92</sup> For a description of the broadsides and commencement days, see, especially, the "Historical Note," in the online article: Harvard University, "Commencement Theses, Quaestiones, and Orders of Exercises, 1642-1818," HUC 6642, Harvard University Archives. Accessed on the online archival search information system: <http://oasis.lib.harvard.edu/oasis/deliver/~hua03010> [accessed 2 January 2013]. See also Noble, "An Old Harvard Commencement Programme," 265-78; For a description of the commencement exercises at Yale, see Levesque's essay, "Jonathan Edwards at Yale," in Minkema and Levesque, *Jonathan Edwards Tercentennial Exhibition*, 33-4. For another account of Yale commencement days, see Kelley, *Yale, a History*, 13, 14, 20-1.

<sup>93</sup> William Ames, *Philosophemata* (Amsterdam: Joannem Janssonium, 1651), Bk. II "Alia technometriae delineatio per quaestiones & responsiones ad faciliorem captum instituta ac proposita," 45. "3. Quid docet summam technometria? Omnium et singularum artium in genere naturam et usum; 5. Quomodo ergo definis artem? Ars est idea eupraxia regulis catholicis methodice delineata." For an English translation of Bk. I, the *technometria theses*, see William Ames, *Technometry*, trans. and ed. Lee W. Gibbs (University of Pennsylvania, 1979); Originally published as *Technometria, Omnium et Singularum Artium fines adaequatè circumscribens*, (London: 1633).

<sup>94</sup> *Early American Imprints, Series I: Evans, 1639-1800*. 1. "Technologia est omnium & singularum Artium, universale Summarium." 2. "Ars est compendium, ex Regulis catholicis constitutum." 3. "Eupraxia est communis omnium Artium Finis."

2. "Art is a compendium constituted from universal rules."
3. "*Eupraxia* is the common end of all the arts."

And one of Harvard's 1687 *Theses Technologicae* argued: "Art is *Eupraxia*, 'good action,' methodically delineated from universal rules."<sup>95</sup> The influence of Ames upon the New England schools is also evident in the close nexus between Ames's *theses logicae* and certain commencement broadside *theses*.

From Ames's *Theses Logicae*:

Thesis 290. "The antecedent is not always the cause of the consequent, but of the consequence."<sup>96</sup>

Thesis 297. "Every propositional connection, which is absolutely true, is also necessary: This necessity is the necessity of consequence, not of the consequent."

Thesis 298. "This necessity can consist with contingency and antecedents and consequents, indeed with falsity and impossibility."<sup>97</sup>

Yale's 1737 *Theses Logicae*, presided over by Elisha Williams:

9. "The antecedent is not always the cause of the consequent, but of the consequence."<sup>98</sup>

The following selection of *theses* and *quaestiones* confirms that future contingents are grounded in the divine will, and that there is a structural ordering of planes of divine knowledge prior to and following the divine will.

Harvard's 1704 *Quaestiones*, presided over by Samuel Willard:

"Whether the root of contingency in second causes be in God's will itself."<sup>99</sup> Samuel Wiswall affirmed this *Quaestio*.

Harvard's 1717 *Quaestiones*, presided over by John Leverett:

<sup>95</sup> Harvard University, "Commencement Theses, Quaestiones, and Orders of Exercises, 1642-1818," HUC 6642, Harvard University Archives. Commencement broadside, 1687, *Theses technologicae*, no. 1, "Ars est *Eupraxia* regulis catholicis methodice delineata."

<sup>96</sup> Ames, *Philosophemata*, Bk. VI. "*Theses logicae*," 184. "Antecedens non semper est causa consequentis, sed consequentiae."

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, Thesis 297. "Omne axioma connexum, quod est absolute verum, est etiam necessarium: necessitas haec est *necessitas consequentiae* non consequentis." Thesis 298. "Necessitas haec consistere potest cum contingentia et antecedentis, et consequentis, imo cum falsitate et impossibilitate," 184-5.

<sup>98</sup>. In *Early American Imprints, Series I: 1639-1800* (hereafter *Evans Bibliography*). "Antecedens non semper est causa consequentis, sed consequentiae."

<sup>99</sup> Samuel Eliot Morison, *Harvard College in the Seventeenth Century*, Pt. II (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1936), 634. *Quaestio: An Radix contingentiae in causis Secundi sit ipsa Dei Voluntas?*

“Whether a third kind of middle knowledge in God be mandated other than simple knowledge and visionary knowledge?” No, was the response of Nehemiah Hobart.<sup>100</sup>

Yale’s 1740 *Theses Ethicae*, presided over by Thomas Clap (Edwards was present at this commencement):

9. “The certainty of a contingency (or event) is not a cause in determining the will.”<sup>101</sup>

Yale’s 1740 *Theses metaphysicae*:

6. “The knowledge of something non-existent whose existence is possible depends on omniscience.”<sup>102</sup>

Yale’s 1740 *Quaestiones*:

“Whether divine foreknowledge implies the certainty of the consequence” affirmed by Robert Silliman.<sup>103</sup>

Harvard’s 1759 *Theses Metaphysicae*, presided over by Edwards Holyoke:

3. “Necessarily, the infallibility of foreknowledge does not remove contingency and freedom of second causes.”<sup>104</sup>

Yale’s 1760 *Quaestiones*, presided over by Thomas Clap:

“Whether the foreknowledge of God of future events would preexist his determination and decree?” Denied by Samuel Lynde.<sup>105</sup>

The New England schools were making distinctions based on structured conceptual planes of divine knowledge in relation to the divine will. Without these

<sup>100</sup> Harvard University, “Commencement Theses, Quaestiones, and Orders of Exercises, 1642-1818,” HUC 6642, Harvard University Archives. Harvard 1717, “An praeter simplicis intelligentiae et visionis, Statuatur in Deo Scientia quaedam Tertia et Media?” Negat Respondens Nehemias Hobart.

<sup>101</sup> *Evans Bibliography*. “Eventus certitudo, voluntatem in determinando non efficit.”

<sup>102</sup> *Evans Bibliography*. “Cognitio alicujus non existentiae, cujus existentia possibilis est, ex omniscientia pendet.” See Ames, *Marrow*, 96 (th. 27). Thesis 6 is clearly consistent with, perhaps appropriated from, Ames, *Marrow*, 96 (th. 25, 27).

<sup>103</sup> *Evans Bibliography*. “An Praescientia divina eventus certitudinem implicet?” Edwards was present at the commencement and demonstrates in WJE 1 that he fully agrees with this thesis.

<sup>104</sup> *Evans Bibliography*. “Infallibilitas Praescientiae Contingentiam et Libertatem Causarum Secundarum, necessario non tollit.”

<sup>105</sup> *Evans Bibliography*. “An Dei Praescientia Eventus futuri, ejus Determinationem et Decretum praexisteret? Negat Respons Samuel Lynde.”



distinctions, it would be difficult to understand the point of the theses. For example, the Yale 1740 Logic thesis 6 makes sense if the discussion at Yale assumed a simple knowledge of understanding of possible states of affairs that do not exist and do not yet have an assigned truth value. Edwards was present at this commencement and would have had a copy of the broadside. Thesis 6 would consist with what Edwards writes in his private "Controversies" Notebook (1743): That which is "in a state of possibility" is not "necessary in its own nature" and must be brought out of one state and into "futurition" and that by "God only," writes Edwards.<sup>106</sup> But it would not consist with his published work, *FOW*.<sup>107</sup> We will return to this at the end under Part VI assessment.

### Isaac Mansfield's Student Notebook

Mansfield's notebook contributes to our understanding of the theological content that was mediated to students as part of their program of study. The focus is the structural priority of the divine will and its relation to two planes of divine knowledge: "God's knowledge of simple understanding" and "God's intuitive knowledge (of vision)," necessity, and contingency.

As may be expected, student notebooks show preparation for these commencement day disputations and exercises. A bound student notebook, with handwritten transcriptions of selected commencement *quaestiones*, part of the Masters' degree exercises, copied by Isaac Mansfield (1720-1792), confirms that these two kinds of divine knowledge were part of the curriculum.

Isaac Mansfield entered Harvard college in 1742 and left behind a student notebook in which he listed commencement *Theses* and *Quaestiones*. He found commencement broadsides in the library of his grandfather-in-law's, Joseph Gerrish (AB 1669).<sup>108</sup> Mansfield records the following *Quaestio* and supporting argument from Harvard's 1670 *Quaestiones*, presided over by Charles Chauncey:

1. "Whether the foreknowledge of God be the cause of states of affairs?" Johannes Harrimannus responded in the negative.<sup>109</sup>

<sup>106</sup> WJEO 27, "Controversies" Notebook, Pt. V, "Predestination" [accessed 4 February 2013]. Quote from paragraph after section ending with n. 39.

<sup>107</sup> WJE 1:266-269. It does not seem to consist with his use and explanation of the definition of Boethius.

<sup>108</sup> John Langdon Sibley, *Biographical Sketches of Graduates of Harvard University, in Cambridge, Massachusetts*, 18 vols. (Cambridge: Charles William Sever, 1873-1999), 11:158-60.

<sup>109</sup> Isaac Mansfield (1720-1792), "Quaestiones in Comitii Publicis Harvardini Collegi Quod Est Cantabrigiae Nov-Anglorum, Defensae & Pro Viribus Propugnatae & Juvenibus in Artibus Initiatis," HUM 6 (Harvard University Archives, 1660-1753), AD 1670. "An Praesentia Dei fit causa rerum? Negat Responsum Johannes Harrimannus." This *quaestio* is not listed in Appendix B of Morison, *Harvard College in the Seventeenth Century*.

The argument is built upon the scholastic distinctions, which we have seen, between “simple” or “indefinite” knowledge” and “knowledge of vision.” The former neither “makes nor does,” the latter God “does and effects.”

“That which God has willed he does and effects. But the foreknowledge of God is simple. Knowledge it is said that is ‘indefinite’ neither does nor will do. It follows that definite knowledge foreknows future sins, but it will not be called the cause of sin. Therefore, bare divine knowledge does not remove the nature of states of affairs, knowing both the good and the bad.”<sup>110</sup>

This view affirms that there are two conceptual planes of divine knowledge and that knowledge of vision (intuition), which follows the divine will, is in no way the cause of states of affairs.

### Assessment and Conclusion

In assessing the disparity between the theses discussed above from Ames to Edwards, it is instructive to look into the “Controversies” Notebook to see what Edwards transcribes from Johann Friedrich Stapfer (1708-1775) and his *Institutiones* (1743-7), and what he does not, in his preparation for writing on the Arminian controversy.<sup>111</sup> Edwards transcribes paragraph XCIII, “Objectio IV,” and then skips over the first “responsio” paragraph marked “a” and begins again with paragraph “b,” which ends with a thesis on mere possibles represented to the divine mind, antecedent to the decree. First, the thesis he does transcribe:

*b* And yet, no representation of a free and contingent state of affairs involves an absolute necessity. Therefore, neither of them are foreknown or foreseen.”<sup>112</sup>

Paragraph *a*, however, he consciously rejects and skips over, presumably because it would not fit his scheme. The thesis he does not transcribe:

*a* Above all it must be held, what we have often observed, that neither divine foreknowledge of a state of affairs, nor predestination of a state

<sup>110</sup> Ibid., “Sic quiquid voluit, fecit & effeciet. Sed praescire Dei. Simplexq: Scientia dicta, Indefinite nie facit aut faciet. Sic definite praescit peccata futura. Sed non peccati causa vocandus erit. Ergo, Naturam rerum Divina Scientia nuda non tollit, cogens quae bona, quae mala.”

<sup>111</sup> WJEO 27, “Controversies” Notebook, Pt. V “Predestination” [accessed 4 February 2013].

<sup>112</sup> Ibid., paragraph ending with footnote 10. The Latin transcription is compared with the source: Johan Friedrich Stapfer, *Institutiones Theologicae Polemicae Universae, Ordine Scientifico dispositae*, 5 vols. (Tiguri [Zurich], 1743-47; 4th ed., Tiguri: Heideggerum et socios, 1756-7), 4:579. (The pagination follows the 4th edition.)

of affairs infers absolute necessity."<sup>113</sup>

In his *FOW*, Edwards adopts neither thesis *a* nor *b*, but arrives at a different conclusion, namely, that the divine decree does not increase or change the already absolute nature of the connection, nor God's knowledge of the event decreed.<sup>114</sup> Stapfer, contrary to Edwards' view, makes clear in paragraph *a* that what God foreknows as contingent remains contingent, and what he foreknows as necessary, necessary. The predetermination by the divine will does not change a contingent status into a necessary status.<sup>115</sup>

Moreover, in his "Controversies" notebook, Edwards shows that he is quite familiar with the structural distinctions, such as have been drawn from primary sources above, like the distinction between possible states of affairs, which are antecedent to the decree, and not necessary in their own nature, and the decree which brings them "out of a state of mere possibility, into a state of futurity."<sup>116</sup> A brief sampling from the notebook will show his awareness and his own exposition of these conceptual planes of thought, including his emphasis of the key role of the divine will.

Edwards picked up the notion of "mere possibilities represented to the divine mind antecedent to the decree (*antecedenter ad decretum*)."<sup>117</sup> He argued that it is not the case that the proposition, "such a thing will be," is necessary in its own nature, rather, "the reason of the futurity of the thing . . . can be no other than God's decree."<sup>118</sup> God determines "the truth of the proposition" and decides "whether the proposition shall be true or not." Edwards contests with Arminians who hold that God knows that things are future, or not, "antecedent to God's decree, and independent of it." For, argues Edwards, if it were so, then "God has no power

<sup>113</sup> Stapfer, *Institutiones*, 4:578. "*a*. Tenendum hic ante omnia, quod saepius jam a nobis observatum fuit, nec divinam rerum Praescientiam nec praedeterminationem rebus absolutam inferre necessitatem."

<sup>114</sup> WJE 1;261.

<sup>115</sup> Stapfer, *Institutiones*, Paragraph *a*: "Siquidem Deus res liberas praesciat et decernat ceu res liberas, contingentes ut contingentes, necessarias vero ut necessarias; praescientia futurationis rerum earundemque praedeterminatio in rebus ipsis nihil mutat." (If in fact God foreknows free states of affairs and determines them as if free states of affairs, contingent as contingent, but necessary as necessary, then the foreknowledge of future states of affairs and the predetermination of the same, changes nothing in the states themselves.)

<sup>116</sup> WJEO 27, "Controversies" Notebook, the paragraph following n. 39 [accessed 4 February 2013]. The notion of transferring a state of affairs "from a state of possibility to a state of futurity" is in Stapfer, *Institutiones*, I:108, CDXL. Edwards has transcribed whole sections, in Latin, from Stapfer, vols. IV (starting at p. 577) and V (p. 185) on the Arminian controversy.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*, from paragraphs ending with n. 10. Translation mine; the source is Stapfer's *Institutiones*, vol. 4, 578, cap. XVII, *De Arminianis*.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*, paragraph following n. 39. The argument is directed against the Molinist, Arminian, Remonstrant notion of divine "middle knowledge."

by his decree to make anything future or not future.”<sup>119</sup> A principal argument in *FOW* is Edwards’ use of the necessity of the consequence of the divine decree, which he associates with the strength of an implicative proposition, whose subject and predicate have an indissoluble bond. The thesis he draws on in support of his argument is the formula of Boethius on the unchanging ever-presentness of God and what he sees. Of the two aspects of the formula outlined above, under (IV. A) “the formula of Boethius,” (1) the necessity of the consequence of what God sees, and (2) the statistical approach to the modalities of a single unchangeable plane of reality, Edwards infers in his exposition both (1) and (2), but favors the use of the former and neglects to gain from the development of the latter, into synchronically contingent conceptual planes of reality, as seen in the development from Ames to Van Mastricht. The early medieval formula cannot, with only a single present plane of reality, bear the weight of Edwards’ claim to defend Reformed divine knowledge and freedom against the scheme of Arminians, at least not with the present perspective on the greater strengths of the arguments in the beginning of the Ames to Edwards historical trajectory.<sup>120</sup>

This essay has raised evidence from primary sources that highlights the problem of interpretation that a published work like Edwards’ *FOW* creates, when compared with his use of sources in his private notebooks. He does not feel beholden to defending an historical line of Reformed arguments, but projects a modern trajectory, appropriating one and leaving aside another of an author’s arguments, selecting what best fits his own scheme, all the while writing in the mode of classic scholastic-style and method. A related topic is his appeal to a late-classical, early-medieval authority such as Boethius in his writing strategy against the Arminians, rather than to other above-mentioned authors in the line back to Ames.

This study has raised these issues from primary sources and has hopefully pointed the way to the need for such research in order to better understand Edwards in his time and the shift away from use of the “more” sophisticated understanding of distinct conceptual planes of divine knowledge. Edwards, like Van Mastricht before him, first gave arguments from the Bible for necessity of consequence based on infallible divine prescience, in *FOW* Part II, section 11, followed in the next section by reasoned argumentation to arrive at a better understanding of the necessity of the consequence. And Edwards and Van Mastricht, like Ames

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*, ending with n. 40.

<sup>120</sup> It is conceivable that the definition of Boethius was mediated to Edwards through Stapfer, since it is stated in *Institutiones*, I:75 (CCCIV); divine knowledge of simple understanding and of vision are defined by Stapfer in I:87 (CCCLVIII-CCCLX). That Stapfer moves beyond the Boethian thesis and develops a robust view of contingency raises the question of why Edwards left these ideas out of his treatise against the Arminians.

in his *Marrow* before them, cite the locus classicus of Acts 15:18, "Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world."<sup>121</sup> On this text, Edwards customarily speaks of what God "foresees," whereas Ames and Van Mastricht distinguish between what God knows and what he foresees. The question is which line of reason most convincingly specifies how his works are known, without compromising the integrity of divine knowledge and freedom.

#### A b s t r a c t

This essay makes the case that a significant shift occurred in the conception of the doctrine of divine knowledge and freedom, in the line from William Ames (1576-1633), traced through Van Mastricht, Heereboord, and Morton, to Edwards, marked by a neglect, intentional or otherwise, of technical terms used by post-Reformation scholastic authors.. The study begins with the exchange of arguments in Ames's *Scholastic reply to the Remonstrant Nicolaus Grevinchovius* (1615) and the latter's *Theological treatise* (1615). The essay also examines a manuscript copy of Charles Morton's "Pneumatics," and claims that the evidence from the flyleaf shows that this student notebook came into the possession of Elisha Williams, Edwards' tutor at Wethersfield. Moreover, evidence shows that the text is a translation of Heereboord's "Pneumatics" and that a few crucial passages have been mistranslated, evidencing the shift that occurred in the understanding and use of technical terms. The essay will then examine the use and development by Van Mastricht and Edwards, in the latter's *Freedom of Will*, of the well-known formula of Boethius (480-524) regarding the unchanging ever-presentness of God, as well as Edwards' (1743) "Controversies" Notebook (WJE Online Vol. 27), on "Predestination." Finally, select Harvard and Yale commencement broadside theses and *quaestiones* show the influence of Ames and that technical distinctions on structured conceptual planes of divine knowledge were being made in the schools, which are necessary to understanding the Reformed doctrine of divine freedom. It appears that Edwards, however, rested his published arguments on Boethius's single conceptual plane of divine knowledge rather than appropriating a post-Reformation development of a twofold conceptual scheme.

<sup>121</sup> WJE 1:251. See, Ames, *Marrow*, 94. Thesis 7, "Every decree of God is eternal," with Acts 15:18 referenced. The Bible verse is v. 18, not v. 8, corrected from Latin version.