

Things That May Be Only?

Lorenzo Dow McCabe and Some Neglected Nineteenth Century Roots of Open Theism in North America

‘Men’s courses will foreshadow certain ends, to which, if preserved in, they must lead,’ said Scrooge, ‘But if the courses be departed from, the ends will change.’ (Charles Dickens, A Christmas Carol)

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When old Ebenezer Scrooge asks the Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come whether the dreadful scenes foretold him were shadows of things that *will* be or only of things that *might* be, he touched upon some of the vital questions posed by human beings from time immemorial. Dickens's fictitious miser was neither the first nor the last to utter the major existential question of whether the writing could yet be sponged away.

The vast literature of humankind - including major works in philosophy and theology - continues to be permeated by questions about the nature of the future, whether it exists as a fixed reality or only as potential, as well as what can be known of it, or even whether it can be known with any degree of certainty at all.¹ Related questions concerning divine omniscience, along with the possibility, nature and extent of divine foreknowledge, go beyond academic significance as people are faced with tasks of coping with both personal and social scale suffering and by encounters with evil.²

These questions have specifically troubled the waters of Christian doctrine and practice since apostolic times without bringing healing resolution. Many attempted the quest for answers, but Augustine and the Scholastic thinkers developed the approaches and theories which became the dominant answers to these vital questions. They were consistent with most post-apostolic theology and philosophy.³

As the Christian world was shaken by the massive changes of the late medieval and renaissance period, and as controversies of the Protestant Reformation rekindled the questions, along with variations of those Augustinian and Scholastic dogmas, Erasmus and Arminius popularised alternative approaches. Debates since that time have been largely variations on these themes - themes which re-emerge in various contexts and historical epochs throughout Christian history.

In the turbulent years of the American Civil War, its aftermath and continuing on through the First World War in the early part of the last century, issues related to God's knowledge of the future re-emerged. Questions of moral government in the light of social and justice issues, questions of maintaining the goodness of God in the face of moral evil including suffering and war (ie, 'theodicy'), and questions of liberty and self-determination in a revivalist frontier environment combined to give rise to intense and sometimes heated reconsiderations of root issues concerning the various attributes of God

(including omniscience) and the nature of God's relationship to humans (including freedom of the will and foreknowledge).⁴ Though philosophers and theologians of many denominational backgrounds addressed the issues, these concerns were engaged with new urgency among American Wesleyan, Methodist and holiness groups.

These perennial questions are alive and well once again at the dawn of our so-called postmodern age, characterised by change and uncertainty brought about by a massive paradigm shift affecting nearly all areas of western thinking, believing and living. Relativity, quantum physics and chaos theory have resurrected questions about the nature of time.⁵ Revolutions, wars and threats of annihilation, combined with heightened global awareness of human rights issues have brought questions of theodicy again to the fore.⁶

While not exclusive to Christians in the western world, North American evangelicals seem particularly engaged with questions of the nature of human free will, as well as related concepts of divine sovereignty, providence, and omniscience. Christian publishing houses, current popular periodicals, academic philosophical and theological journals, and evangelical theological and philosophical societies, are scenes of verbal combat verging on an ecclesiastical civil war over these ancient, unresolved issues.⁷

Of particular concern is a growing debate between those who consider themselves 'orthodox traditionalists', embracing 'classical' theistic stances toward questions of the nature of God and God's relationship to creation and time, and a loose association of theologians and philosophers variously labeled as 'open theists' or 'freewill theists', espousing an 'openness of God' theological paradigm.⁸ The interactions generally carry little of the character of badinage among colleagues appreciating diversity in a common quest for theological articulation.⁹ The former commonly depict themselves as defenders of the faith and champions of orthodoxy, polemically charging opponents within evangelical circles with quislingesque heresy and warning of dire peril to both individuals and the whole evangelical community in embracing these 'neo-evangelical' views.¹⁰ Much of the work of open theists has, therefore, necessarily taken on an apologetic flavour.

In general, the former are found primarily in various shades of Augustinian or Calvinistic determinism. The latter identify more with Arminian and Wesleyan sources, toned by freewill beliefs, though they are sometimes deemed to go beyond Arminianism, finding themselves opposed and excluded even by many freewill traditionalists.¹¹

Clark Pinnock describes it as 'a Wesleyan/Arminian model with a twist.'¹² He claims that '[n]inety percent of it is in agreement with these evangelically oriented theological traditions, while ten percent is contested.'¹³ While John Sanders identifies the basic area of conflict within that smaller contested area as this very Arminian identity, Pinnock rightly recognises that it is open theism's affirmation of what he terms 'current omniscience' and denial of exhaustive divine foreknowledge that are the most visible and contested sticking points in contemporary debates.¹⁴

These debates intensified dramatically with the 1994 publication of *The Openness of God: A Biblical Challenge to the Traditional Understanding of God*, co-authored by five of open theism's leading thinkers.¹⁵ Since that time a virtual flood of articles, books and internet publications continues to pour forth and sustain the controversies. Pinnock identifies open theism as 'a variant of Wesleyan/Arminian theology which enjoys a respected place in evangelical tradition' - an identification that most other evangelical open theists would affirm.¹⁶ Opponents, however, speak of it as a clear departure from traditional evangelical orthodoxy, attacking it alternatively as either a new teaching or a restatement of an ancient heresy.

Despite clear distinctions, most critics associate this model with that of process theism.¹⁷ While major proponents of open theism grant an appreciation for certain aspects of process theology, they are also very clear about radical distinctions between these two approaches. Though Pinnock, for example, has spoken of open theism as an attempt to find a *via media* between classical and process theisms, he has been specific about where the two models differ.¹⁸ Gregory Boyd has been particularly forceful in presenting both the affinities and incompatibilities between them.¹⁹ Despite certain limited similarities, evangelical open theists have not identified process thought as the source of their ideas.

Neither have they identified with Socinianism - after the teachings of the Polish reformer Faustus Socinus - another theological variant commonly critically associated with open theism.²⁰ Whereas process theologians indicate the importance of these sources, open theists are aware that there exists an unbridgeable gap between Socinian heresy and orthodox evangelical theism.²¹ The resemblance between Socinian formulas concerning divine omniscience and similar expressions in open theism, though remarkable, are actually historically accidental rather than relationally dependent.²²

Ideas about limiting of foreknowledge in such a way that the future remains to some degree undetermined and uncertain, even for God, are not new. Not only did the Socinians hold an understanding of divine omniscience close in wording to the current omniscience of open theism, but the medieval Jewish theologian Gersonides said that in creating beings with genuine free will God limited the divine omniscience, even abdicating some dimensions of divine foreknowledge.²³ Likewise, Ambrose is reported to have said concerning prayer that 'if God foreknows the future, and if this must needs come to pass,' and 'if all things come to pass by the will of God, and his counsels are fixed, and none of the things he wills can be changed, prayer is vain.'²⁴

Contemporaries of Ambrose - Porphyry, Albinus and Calcidius - held similar ideas. The latter was reputed to have been a Christian, possibly even a Milanese deacon. He wrote that 'it is true that God knows all things, but that he knows everything according to its own nature: that which is subject to necessity as submissive to necessity, the contingent, however, as provided with such a nature that deliberation opens a way for it.'²⁵ And furthermore, 'contingent things are not inflexibly arranged and determined from the beginning with the sole exception of the very fact, that they must be uncertain and depend upon a contingent course.'²⁶

More specifically, however, open theists have insisted that this theological model is part of the larger picture Arminian and Wesleyan theological traditions. Open theism is seen not so much as a variant of this set of traditional views as a consistent development of, or within, it. Rather than being theologically discrete, it is traditional Arminian and Wesleyan belief evolved to a further level.²⁷

These roots of open theism as they developed during the second half of the nineteenth century are all but ignored by its opponents. Few critics allude to these historical developments, and fewer still take them seriously, despite the fact that open theists have consistently identified these factors as influential in their theological formation.²⁸

Rather than stretching credulity and the bounds of anachronistic fallacy, the major components of evangelical open theism can be found, at least in embryonic form, within these strangely neglected late nineteenth century historical theological developments among Arminian, Wesleyan, and holiness writers and preachers of the American frontier. While most of the writers from this period were content to simply replay themes previously heard, several of them articulated in their preaching and teaching barely-formulated ideas about how to understand divine omniscience and foreknowledge in ways which allowed humans authentic freedom of the will.

Methodist theologian and biblical scholar, Adam Clarke, for example, said that God 'knows Himself, and what He has formed, and what He can do; but it is not *necessitated* to know as certain what He Himself has made contingent.'²⁹ Although he described divine omniscience in a way which resembles 'presentism' or 'current omniscience' in open theism - the view that God has perfect knowledge of the past and present, as well as of what God determines to do in the future - he also insisted that 'God's gracious design to save a lost world by Jesus Christ could not be defeated by any cunning, skill, or malice of men or devils.'³⁰

John Miley would later say that Clarke 'held in the part of God a purely voluntary nescience' - a position which he criticised as inconsistent because 'a voluntary nescience in God must imply a knowledge of the things which he chooses not to know.'³¹ Miley, along with others of this period, understood 'nescience' - literally 'not knowing' - to be the antonym of prescience. He recognized that '[t]he divine nescience of such volitions would be a necessity, not a free choice.'³²

In saying this, Miley recognised the importance of the work of the Methodist theologian and philosopher Lorenzo Dow McCabe.³³ Although Miley himself did not embrace what was becoming known, primarily through McCabe's teaching and writing, as the divine nescience of future contingencies, he was very aware of, and even sympathetic to, this understanding. He noted that ideas of divine nescience had already been put forth in the sixteenth century among the Socinians and among some Remonstrants (Dutch followers of Arminius), though not Arminius himself, but praised McCabe's articulation as both powerful and persuasive.³⁴ He wrote that this 'doctrine itself has more recently been treated with a definiteness and thoroughness and supported with a force of argument

which are quite new,' and he confessed that 'it is much easier to pronounce the arguments of Dr. McCabe a nullity than to answer them in a process of lucid and conclusive logic.'³⁵

McCabe's influence spread through both his students and writings.³⁶ During the late 1800s, the pages of the *Methodist Quarterly Review* and other more local periodicals regularly set forth either McCabe's ideas or reactions to them.³⁷ He published three books. The first, on the subject of sanctification, was followed by two more lengthy treatments of his ideas concerning divine foreknowledge, which he generally termed 'prescience', and nescience of future contingencies.³⁸ At the time of his death, he was planning two further books: one expounding a new theory of the atonement which he had worked out, believing it superior to any others then known, and another setting forth his ethical theory.

Open theists refer primarily to the two books published on divine nescience. One of McCabe's colleagues noted that his ideas about this doctrine were perceived as novel by many American clergy, while they were already fairly well known in both Germany and England. He claimed that the professor's thinking in the area of divine nescience was 'the product of his absolutely original investigations into the teachings of the Bible, and of the unbiased human reason,' and that he was motivated by 'daring but devout attempts to place our Arminian theology on an impregnable basis' to embark on 'a new and brave departure from the beaten path in the agonizing struggle of men to make God just, as well as the justifier of the sinner.'³⁹ Such a claim is rendered somewhat plausible by the fact that due to perennial problems with his eyesight, McCabe was never a prolific reader.

Samuel W. Williams wrote that McCabe wanted his books to form 'a complete refutation of the Calvinistic doctrine of decrees.'⁴⁰ He traced the genesis of McCabe's thinking about divine nescience to 'a hint of the subject given him by Professor [F. S.] Hoyt,' following which 'he carried on independently.'⁴¹ McCabe confirmed this relationship in a tribute in the preface to his book on foreknowledge, where he also claimed that his motives were simply to further the search for truth and resolution in the unresolved problems between absolute divine foreknowledge and human freedom.⁴² McCabe also quoted someone (perhaps Daniel Curry) who he regarded as '[o]ne of the ablest thinkers American Methodism has yet produced [as saying]: "The denial of absolute foreknowledge is the essential compliment of the Methodist theology, without which its philosophical incompleteness is defenseless against the logical consistency of Calvinism."⁴³ McCabe clearly viewed his directions as refinements of Arminian belief.

McCabe expressed disappointment in Bledsoe's work on theodicy, saying that it was just a restatement of existing Arminian theology and did not resolve the problematic issues of reconciling an absolute divine foreknowledge and human freedom.⁴⁴ He regarded as equally tragic the resignation and despair indicated by those who could not find a way to resolve this dilemma inherent in Arminianism. McCabe's Arminian and Wesleyan approach to theology, together with his literal biblical hermeneutics, dominated the development of his beliefs about the definition of divine omniscience and limits to, but not complete elimination of, God's foreknowledge.

Miley realised that there were problems in reconciling both Calvinistic and traditional Arminian beliefs about God's knowledge with the belief in God as personal being. He went so far as to write that '[i]f the ministries of providence in the free agency of God ... be not consistent with his foreknowledge, the foreknowledge cannot be true,' and '[i]f there must be for us an alternative between the prescience of God, on the one hand, and his true personal agency in the ministries of providence, on the other, the former doctrine must be yielded, while we cleave to the latter, because it embodies the living reality of the divine moral government.⁴⁵ Likewise I. W. Wiley wrote in 1881 that there were many things about God and God's relationship to creation which were yet problematic, and that these things could be resolved either by Calvinistic determinism or Arminian simple free will, nor through some 'eclecticism which would combine parts of both.⁴⁶ While he preferred the Arminian approach, he confessed that 'Arminianism has not freed [people] from all difficulties, and especially [not] from those very serious embarrassments which ... [grew] out of the doctrine of the divine foreknowledge of contingent or volitional events.⁴⁷ McCabe declared that the 'surrender of prescience [was] indispensable to the respectability of Arminianism.⁴⁸

Open theists are not simply 'McCabites'. The theological phraseology of McCabe's era sounds somewhat stiff and rigid to most people today. Open theists have, therefore, generally chosen alternative terms, and they recognise limitations in his work. They also, however, express a debt of gratitude for McCabe's systematic exposition of the doctrine of divine nescience as helpful in formulating and articulating the ideas of open theism, especially limited foreknowledge and current omniscience.

During, and immediately after, his lifetime, McCabe's ideas were subjected to heated debate, criticism, ridicule and rejection by some, and warmly welcomed and appreciated by others.⁴⁹ Nevertheless, he was acknowledged as remaining solidly within the bounds of Arminian and Wesleyan orthodoxy as understood in his historical and cultural context. Fellow professors and former students bore witness to McCabe's commitment to a verbal theory of biblical inspiration bordering on dictation.⁵⁰ One former student wrote that '[h]e was so extremely orthodox that he was inclined to believe all the discrepancies of the Word of God to be the direct dictation of the Spirit!⁵¹

In terms very similar to those used by open theists, McCabe argued that absolute divine prescience is contraindicated by the biblical writers. He noted as 'remarkable how constantly it is implied, or assumed, in the Scriptures, that God does not foreknow the choices of free beings while acting under the law of liberty,' and that 'there are numerous passages in which is clearly found the assumption of the incapacity or inability of omniscience to foreknow ... the choices of beings endowed with the power of original volition and action, unless it should be through a violation of the law of human freedom.⁵²

Clearly, there are occasions when God can and does override normal operating principles of creaturely freedom to accomplish certain ends which God has determined to bring about.⁵³ For example, he contended that some biblical prophecies are to be understood in this light, for 'God in prophecy ... overrides the law of liberty, just as he overrides the

law of material forces in miracles.⁵⁴ He stressed that the human person is so constituted, that his will can be brought under the law of cause and effect, by bringing overpowering influences to act upon reason and his sensibilities.⁵⁵ Those circumstances are, however, understood to be exceptions to the normal operations of both God and human beings, and in them choices cease to be free. Choices under such circumstances cannot have a moral or responsible component for the chooser.⁵⁶

McCabe described human beings as 'free moral agents ... co-creators, co-causes, co-origimators' with God, and noted that 'the Scriptures represent *man* as having ... the power of taking the absolute initiative,' such that if people are 'not ... free being[s] there can be for [them] neither right, wrong, justice, moral philosophy, or moral government.'⁵⁷ As in the claims of open theists, therefore, absolute divine prescience is incompatible with the nature of human freedom and choice, as well as with responsibility and moral accountability.

McCabe argued further that such prescience of future free volitions is inherently contradictory and therefore impossible. Since future choices have no actual existence, they cannot be said to be actually known. To speak of knowing what is quite literally nothing is meaningless and absurd.⁵⁸ Concerning contingencies, he wrote, that 'only from that moment ... a contingency becomes a knowable thing. Up to the point of some free being originating its conception and determining to actualise it, it is pure unreality If ... a thing [is] unknowable, it is no reflection upon Omniscience to affirm its incapacity to know it.'⁵⁹ McCabe clearly understood that denial of absolute prescience was not a denial of omniscience. He noted that 'knowledge of a nothing is self-contradictory, and [a human] free choice before [someone] made it is a nothing.'⁶⁰

Writing about the same time as McCabe, Joel S. Hayes produced a volume on the foreknowledge of God in which he interacted with critics of the emerging doctrine of divine nescience. He argued that there is no biblical evidence that necessitates God's absolute foreknowledge, but rather that God 'does not state that he knows more than he has foreordained.'⁶¹

Like McCabe, he goes beyond simple defense of free will, however, arguing that 'God, though infinite in power and wisdom, did not and could not know before man was created whether he would sin or not' and that 'having created man a moral agent ... he could not prevent his sinning; nor could he before having created him, not knowing who would sin and who would not, have put any other moral being in his place with expectation of better results.'⁶² Nescience of future actions of moral agents is, therefore, inherent in, and necessary to, genuine human freedom.⁶³ Absolute divine foreknowledge is an idea incompatible with true human freedom, for 'to foreknow a free volition is a contradiction.'⁶⁴

Both McCabe and Hayes spoke of God knowing and using probabilities. Hayes differed from McCabe in defining foreknowledge primarily in terms of 'moral certainty' - an understanding which relies on the concept of probabilities as the basis for a kind of

virtual certainty about the actions of human beings as a class rather than about individuals or the free choices of individuals.⁶⁵

McCabe's understanding of the relationship between God's prescience and probabilities more closely resembles that of most open theists. He wrote that

God could ... estimate approximately what are likely to be the choices of free agents in the early future. And this estimate of probabilities may be so nearly indubitable, in many cases, as to resemble prescience itself.⁶⁶

He agreed with President Tappan that '[o]ur calculation of future choices ... can never be attended with absolute certainty, because the will, being contingent, has the power of disappointing calculations which are made upon the longest observed uniformity.'⁶⁷ Furthermore, '[a] contingent thing must be a pure origination by a being possessing power to select and originate one out of many. But this is possible only on the hypothesis that the future is now undetermined, unfixed, and, therefore, uncertain in the universe of contingencies.'⁶⁸ In a similar way, '[a]lteration, in the nature of things, necessitates subjective uncertainty in the divine mind,' and therefore '[t]he state of omniscience is ... a state of uncertainty as to which ... alternates will certainly come to pass.'⁶⁹ In short, the future must be at least partly open.⁷⁰

The concept of risk is implied in such a statement. Though not specifically developed in detail by McCabe - he termed this a 'pure adventure' - or his contemporaries, the idea that God risks disappointment in endowing creatures with genuine freedom, since such freedom implies ability to choose against God and against God's will.⁷¹ He wrote that God created human beings 'clothed with the august endowments of liberty, and an ability to disappoint [God's] desires and expectations and defeat his purposes.'⁷² Understood in this context, God's 'sovereignty ... is a sovereignty over sovereigns, not a sovereignty over mere machines or passive instruments, under the reign of mechanical philosophy.'⁷³ As among open theists, however, this does not imply that God is ultimately unable to accomplish those things which are divinely appointed. McCabe was quite clear in believing that '[t]he Scriptures indicate that God has two kinds of plans relative to this world and its inhabitants, - one sovereign, the other contingent,' and that God's 'sovereign plans are determined upon absolutely' and 'will be accomplished by one set of means or by another, ordinary or extraordinary.'⁷⁴ God may even determine 'in his mind the identical agent through whom [some sovereign purpose] shall finally be brought about.'⁷⁵ In other words, the future is both partly open and partly closed.

In this context McCabe, in words echoed almost verbatim by open theists, asserted that God is both wise and resourceful enough to handle any situations and contingent developments which arise from undetermined freedom among humans.⁷⁶ Furthermore, God can do so while acting within the realm of present knowledge, without the necessity of prescience.⁷⁷ He asserted that 'God is fully able to meet any and every emergency, no matter how great, how sudden, or how complicated, that can arise anywhere in infinite space or endless duration.'⁷⁸ After all, he asked, '[i]s not God omniscient in respect to all knowable things, to all free choices as soon as they are put forth? Those attributes of

Jehovah [sic] could overcome all difficulties and provide for all hazards, and turn to best account all developments that may be made in all the boundless universe and throughout eternity.⁷⁹ McCabe delighted in demonstrating that '[n]escience presents ... the sovereignty of God with most impressive magnificence as he goes forth over the boundless universe overcoming all difficulties, and arresting, as far as possible, all evils which are inevitable in the government of beings whose choices originate in the depths of their own free-wills.⁸⁰ Such resourcefulness would be highly valued among human beings and would actually be more praiseworthy and glorious in the divine being than would insistence upon an omniscience which included absolute prescience.⁸¹

Along with this, McCabe consistently argued that there would be no real advantages to either God or creation for God to possess unlimited prescience. Not only does God not need such prescience to perfectly rule in divine providence, but God would actually be hindered by having this kind of foreknowledge. God could do nothing to change what God foreknew would happen, since what is foreknown cannot, by definition, be changed.⁸²

This kind of omniscience would also rule out any form of actual change within God. McCabe contended that 'universal prescience ... is positively inconsistent with [God's] character and office as the moral governor of the moral universe,' for

[a] real trial, a trial that is not a mere delusive semblance, requires that God's feelings and his conduct toward an accountable spirit should be constantly changing and varying with the ever varying volitions which that spirit puts forth in the exercise of his endowment of freedom. But this can only be possible on the supposition of God's nonprescience of those volitions. To affirm that God's feelings, purposes, and conduct can change just as the free volitions of the subject do actually change, when he has perfect foreknowledge of all the future volitions of that free subject, is to assert a manifest impossibility.⁸³

Contained within this pericope are safeguards for authentic mutuality in the divine-human relationship, the capacity of God (contra classical understandings of the attributes of impassibility and immutability - related notions that God does not experience emotional or any other changes) to actually feel experientially rather than just know about emotions cognitively and to change in some ways by experiencing the sequentiality of time.⁸⁴ In this context, McCabe quotes Isaak August Dorner's claim that '[i]n the world ... God must live as historical life, a life that is conditioned by man's use of freedom.'⁸⁵ God's eternity is, therefore, not conceived in terms of 'timelessness' or some Boethian 'eternal now' but in terms of endless duration, without beginning or end.⁸⁶

In like manner, nescience is essential if God is to be understood in personal terms or as entering into personal relationships with humans. Absolute prescience would rob God of every attribute essential to personal being. God would not be free because God could never choose, do, think or act in any other way than God does act, otherwise the divine prescience would be false, which it cannot by definition be. In fact, God would be immobilised - unable to think, choose, initiate, act, react, or interact - like the idols which were so often the object of divine wrath. Ultimately, God's omniscience would conflict

with God's omnipotence, since, as McCabe asserted, 'if God is not able to form a conception that he never thought of, then he has never in all the eternity past possessed the power to form any new conception, and then, consequently, all his conceptions must be eternal; and if eternal they were never originated, and God, therefore, has never been able to form a new conception, or to originate and determine any one thing.'⁸⁷ This, however, would represent an intolerable situation.⁸⁸ It would also, he contended, contradict apostolic witness in Scripture.⁸⁹

Like both McCabe and open theists, Hayes declared that genuine human freedom is essential since a 'doctrine of necessity makes God the only real agent or actor of sin in the universe' because otherwise 'the creatures which he has made [are] merely passive instruments in his hands to accomplish his purposes.'⁹⁰ God would ultimately be responsible for evil, and a satisfactory theodicy would be impossible.⁹¹ In contrast, however, McCabe located 'the origin of sin in the human will' and declared that '[t]he simple and single choice of a free will was the absolute incipency of moral evil into the moral universe.'⁹² However, 'no considerations, no ends, no final causes, could ever justify God, before an intelligent universe, in violating absolute rectitude, or in overriding freedom in free agents, or in outraging benevolence, either in planning wickedness, or in desiring its inception, or in creating individual souls who he foresaw would certainly be wicked and miserable and everlasting blotches upon his moral universe.'⁹³ In contrast, 'divine nescience brings beauty, quietness, profit, and assurance forever into the great theodicean [sic] problem.'⁹⁴

Concerning the future state of the reprobate, McCabe is less willing than open theists to abrogate the doctrine of eternally conscious separation in hell. He does, however, advocate the idea that '[t]here must ... be a point in probation beyond which the power of alternative choices cannot be continued.'⁹⁵ In other words, the human characteristic of indeterministic freedom is not eternal; it will come to an end.⁹⁶ McCabe described something of a psychological or character evolutionary process in which habitual choices, dispositions and behaviours progressively take on a permanent form, giving rise to an immutable character.⁹⁷ This works gradually in such a way that '[e]very additional volition adds additional weakness to the conscience, darkness to the mind, hardness to the heart and perverseness to the will. In this process the soul finally reaches a state in which it is irredeemably fixed in its awfully shocking depravities,' ultimately resulting in a condition of 'being morally petrified.'⁹⁸ Once this condition is reached, a person is lost to God and beyond the reach of God's love and mercy.⁹⁹

McCabe identified other specifically pastoral concerns which would be better addressed in the language of divine nescience than in that of absolute prescience. It better addresses the reality of spiritual warfare, as well as the urgency of evangelism and missions.¹⁰⁰ McCabe lamented that

[m]uch of the indifference, the casting off of personal responsibility, and the non-development of latent spiritual power, that have so sadly characterised and paralyzed the Church, is ... chargeable to the belief of the old dogma of universal and absolute prescience. The old view of the divine foreknowledge - involving the fixed certainty of

all future events - has ever been most enervating and repressing. It has made pigmies of those who might have been giants, and mere glimmering lights of many pulpits which should have sent a powerful and saving radiance far across the moral darkness of this world.¹⁰¹

It better fit the nature and efficacy of prayer and thoroughly resolved intellectual objections to that discipline. He quoted Richard Rothe's phrase: 'If absolute prescience be true, prayer becomes not only nonsense, but inexcusable.'¹⁰² Further concerning prayer, McCabe argued that '[t]he logical and practical effect of ... belief in divine foreknowledge is [that one] can never infract or modify that which God infallibly foreknows.'¹⁰³ Real prayer, however, 'means that God will do for a soul, on condition of its compliance with the duty of prayer, that which he will not do if that condition is not complied with,' and therefore, '[i]f the condition be complied with it effects changes in God, or prayer is a meaningless institution'¹⁰⁴

It makes Christianity more palatable to those who are not themselves of the Christian faith. In this light, McCabe referred to Albert Barnes agonised confession of his inner turmoil and confusion resulting from his inability to resolve the tensions between prescience and freedom.¹⁰⁵ Neither was he alone, said McCabe, for 'almost every Christian believer fights a life-long battle with this most obtrusive and harassing dogma,' and '[t]he doctrine of the absolute foreknowledge of God has occasioned more perplexity and intellectual torture than any other in all the departments of theology.'¹⁰⁶ Accepting divine nescience would resolve the spiritual turmoil experienced nearly universally resulting from the dogmas of absolute omniscience and total prescience.

Miley wrote that '[t]he divine nescience of future volitions, if accepted as truth, is not necessarily revolutionary in theology,' neither for Calvinism (which, he argued, logically allows no authentic contingencies) nor Arminianism, since '[e]very vital doctrine would remain the same.'¹⁰⁷ Furthermore, in contrast to contemporary critics of open theism, he asserted that '[i]f the truth of nescience were established or accepted, it would be as little revolutionary within the sphere of practical truth as in that of doctrinal truth,' and '[c]ertainly it could not in the least abate any of the moral forces of Christianity.'¹⁰⁸ On the contrary there could even be positive results.

Critics of open theism frequently link it with Socinianism or with process theism. Both associations are compatible with the apologetic and theo-political aims of these writers, but they are historically inaccurate and fallacious. While certain tenets of open theism bear resemblance to some aspects of both Socinian and process thought, these resemblances are historically accidental. Some open theists have expressed appreciation for process theology, but they have not identified it as a significant source for the formation of their thinking. They do, however, consistently identify their roots in Arminian and Wesleyan tradition, especially certain developments among Methodists on the American frontier during the late nineteenth century, particularly the thinking of Lorenzo Dow McCabe. Amidst the furious attacks by detractors of open theism these historical roots have strangely been almost entirely neglected. Open theism is, in fact, neither the radical new departure from evangelical orthodoxy nor the embracing of

unbiblical heresy it is purported to be. Perhaps recognition of the roots of open theism in a stream of orthodox Christian heritage can begin to rebuild what has been already broken as a result of contemporary controversies among North American evangelicals, generate a climate in which differences are both recognised and appreciated, and contribute to better equipping people to encounter questions and issues arising from the shift toward postmodernism.

¹Science fiction and fantasy literature authors have, on the whole, certainly been the most interested in time, including: H. G. Wells' classic book of time travel, *The Time Machine*, which was recently released in a film version, and Robert A Heinlein's incomparable 1959 short story, '-All You Zombies -', a snake-eats-its-own-tail story where a person becomes his own father, mother and child. Travelers to Narnia in C. S. Lewis's children's stories experience time in a different way, as do the characters of Madeleine L'Engle's *Wrinkle in Time*. Connie Willis has written a very popular series of time travel books (including *The Dooms Day Book*, *To Say Nothing of the Dog*, *Lincoln's Dreams*). Orson Scott Card wrote the Ender series, in which hyperspace travelers experience a slower passing of time than stationary characters, and *Pastwatch: The Redemption of Christopher Columbus*. Even Michael Crichton, who does not entirely fit the genre, authored *Timeline*. Several popular films have also focused on time travel, including the monumental *Back to the Future* trilogy, *The Matrix* and *The Matrix Reloaded*, and the comic *Bruce Almighty*. A virtually endless list of such works might well be produced. A few of particular interest are Kurt Vonnegut, Jr's *Slaughterhouse Five* which features a set of creatures who exist in a version of the 'eternal now'; James Redfield's metaphysical novel, *The Celestine Prophecy: An Adventure*, in which Father Costos, an inquisitor from the Roman Catholic Church - established religion - who believes the prophetic teachings are dangerous says that they threaten '[n]ot just our religion; everyone's religion. Do you think there is no plan for this world? God is in control. He assigns our destiny. Our job is to obey the laws set forth by God God creates the future the way he wants it. To say humans can make themselves evolve takes the will of God out of the picture. It allows people to be selfish and separate. They think their evolution is the important thing, not God's plan.'(176). Likewise Cardinal Sebastian, another representative of the established religion, has made it his quest to destroy both the original manuscripts of the prophecies and every copy in existence. He says: 'This document makes it sound as though humans are in control, as though we are in charge in the world. We are not. God is.' (255) And again: 'I will not change my mind [about suppressing the manuscript]. This Manuscript Would undermine our basic structure of spiritual authority.'(237); Alan Lightman's *Einstein's Dream: A Novel*, another metaphysical work in which various understandings of time are used to view life, and Frank Herbert's *Children of Dune*, where Leto II says: 'I speak the popular myth of prescience: to know the future absolutely! All of it! What fortune could be made - and lost - with such knowledge, eh? The rabble believe this. They believe that if a little bit is good, more must be better. How excellent! And if you handed them the complete scenario of his life, the unvarying dialogue up to his moment of death - what a hellish gift that's be. What utter boredom! Every living instant he'd be replaying what he knew absolutely. No deviation. He could anticipate every response, every utterance - over and over and over and over and' (94) Some fascinating material is also coming out of non-fiction sources, eg see Paul Davis, *How to Build a Time*

Machine (New York: Penguin, 2002) and Michio Kaku, 'A User's Guide to Time Travel,' *Wired* (August 2003), 104-107. This brief list could be extended almost indefinitely, and such a literary survey would form a fascinating study in its own right.

²John Sanders relates the impact of the death of his brother on his pilgrimage in open theism, while opponents counter with other stories, personal crises and tragedies to demonstrate the efficacy of traditional theism in the face of life's hardships. Both open and traditional theists, as well as their nineteenth century counterparts, express concern over the practical and pastoral implications of their conflicting beliefs.

³This is generally termed '*classical theism*' or '*traditional theism*' in current literature about open theism. The former is historically inaccurate since it technically refers to the theism of the pre- and non- Christian Greek philosophers, though parts of the current discussions do revolve around the role that Greek philosophical thought, concepts and language have played in shaping early Christian doctrines. The latter indicates that broadly defined, this is the set of theistic beliefs to which the majority of Christians have historically given allegiance. Open theists do not contest this claim. (Eg see Gregory A Boyd, *God of the Possible: A Biblical Introduction to the Open View of God* [Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2000]), 10.) Often the terms '*orthodox*', meaning 'adhering generally to long standing and biblically consistent doctrines', not to be confused with 'Orthodox', and '*evangelical*' understood in the ill-defined North American usage as generally holding to certain long-standing, theologically conservative doctrines concerning the biblical scriptures, the nature and purpose of Christ's death and the processes of saving faith. Part of the difficulty in current debates over the orthodoxy of open theism or whether open theists should still be recognised as evangelicals arises from the unclear definitions and criteria surrounding these terms. Defining '*orthodox*' and '*evangelical*' is a bit like asking Augustine the meaning of *time*. His answer was to say many things about it without being able to say exactly what it is (see Craig Callender and Ralph Edney, *Introducing Time*, ed by Richard Appignanesi (Cambridge: Icon Books, 2001), 3. Not infrequently the term '*reformed*' also appears in the context of traditional theism and generally signifies organisations and belief systems originating in the European Protestant Reformation - especially those traditions stemming from Calvinistic or Lutheran roots, though in popular usage it also includes Arminian and Wesleyan traditions.

⁴'*Moral government*' refers to the idea that God governs the world of free rational creatures by laws of persuasion and appeals to free choices and free actions. '*Moral*' implies '*responsible*' in this context. The government of nature is, in contrast, *non-moral* because it involves the laws of cause and effect, and is therefore deemed *non-responsible*. 'Theodicy' refers to attempts at reconciling the goodness and love of God with the existence of evil.

⁵Eg, see Callender and Edney, *Introducing Time*; Eva Brann, *What, Then, Is Time?* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 1999); Ziauddin Sardar and Iwona Abrams, *Introducing Chaos*, ed by Richard Appignanesi (New York: Totem Books, 1999). John Polkinghorne discusses these scientific developments and their relevance for

contemporary faith and theology in *Faith, Science and Understanding*, advanced uncorrected page proof (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000). Polkinghorne is particularly relevant to the current discussions about open theism because, though he is generally not understood as sitting within the bounds of either open theism or evangelicalism, he holds similar views to those expressed by open theists. Eg, he writes that '[i]f the world is an evolving process still *in via*, then God may be expected to be in interactive relationship with its unfolding history. There is no need ... for the Creator to be a Cosmic Tyrant, in total control of all that is happening. Indeed, the play of creation, as we perceive it, has more the appearance of an improvisation than the appearance of the performance of a predetermined script.' He identifies within contemporary theological thought an acknowledgement 'that there is a divine kenosis involved in the act of creation. The Creator self-limits divine power in allowing the created-other to be truly itself, in its God-given freedom of being. Such a degree of setting aside total divine control is perceived to be fitting for the God whose character is love and whose nature would be incompatible with the exercise of a cosmic tyranny. A kenotic account of creation is of great significance in theodicy's attempt to wrestle with the perplexities posed by the evil and suffering so clearly and painfully present in the world. If it is the case that not every event is brought about by a direct exercise of divine power, then not everything that happens can be expected to accord with God's benevolent will' (111). This creational kenosis is not materially different from the christological kenosis; both imply divine self limitation. Inherent in this notion is that 'in allowing the other to be, God allows creatures their part in bringing about the future. There must be an intertwining of providential and creaturely causality.' This requires that the future be at least partially open in terms very similar to open theism, for 'an evolving world of true becoming is one in which even the creator does not yet know the future, for the future is not yet there to be known. The picture of the invulnerable, all-powerful God of classical theology has given way to the picture of the God who interacts with creaturely history but does not overrule the acts of creatures' (126-127). Nevertheless, 'God's purposes will eventually be fulfilled. The precariousness involved in the Creator's sharing of causality with creatures may imply that this fulfilment will be attained along contingent paths, as God responds to the free actions of others, but the God who is the ground of a true and everlasting hope will work ceaselessly to bring salvation to creation' (128). Last year Polkinghorne gave a clear endorsement of open theism in an interview with Michael Collender ('An Interview with Dr. John Polkinghorne,' <http://www.christkirk.org/stannespub/polkinghorn.shtm>).

⁶See Polkinghorne, *Faith, Science and Understanding*, 126-127. This is also the primary subject of some of Gregory A Boyd's series which includes *Satan and the Problem of Evil: Constructing a Trinitarian Warfare Theodicy* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2001) and *God At War: The Bible and Spiritual Conflict* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1997), as well as a forthcoming third volume.

⁷The Evangelical Theological Society has been the setting for much of the controversy and conflict, as papers, debates, and arguments concerning open theism proliferate, and potential disciplinary action against open theists is contemplated.

⁸In North America, '*Open theism*' represents a relatively small but growing informal association of evangelicals from Arminian and Wesleyan backgrounds, loosely identified by adherence to a strong belief in the radical incompatibility between human freedom and absolute divine providence, as well as disbelief in absolute divine foreknowledge. God's omniscience is understood to mean essentially that God has complete and perfect knowledge of reality as it is - the past as past, the present as present and the future as future (i.e. without actual existence, consisting primarily in potentials and possibilities). The future is therefore substantially 'open' for both humans and God. Though God foreknows what God intends and purposes, God's knowledge does not extend to *future contingencies* - those things which may or may not happen depending on the choices and actions of free agents. This is sometimes termed '*presentism*' (indicating '*present knowledge*'), and Clark H Pinnock has more recently used the term '*current omniscience*'. ('Open Theism: "What is this? A new teaching? - and with authority! [M{ar}k 1:27}'), University of Calgary, 03 February 2003, <http://www.ucalgary.ca/UofC/faculties/HUM/RELS/chairs/cchair/csrc/Pinnock.OpenTheism.pdf>. Openness also suggests the importance of authentic, mutual relationships between humans and God. Because of the strong emphasis on *incompatibilistic freedom* - freedom incompatible with external divine control or coercion, sometimes called '*libertarian freedom*' - some prefer to speak of '*freewill theism*'. However, while it is true that all open theists are also freewill theists, not all freewill theists are open theists. Other labels applied to this type of theism include: '*presentism*', '*relational theism*', '*neo-evangelicalism*', '*evangelical personalism*', '*neo-Arminianism*', '*hyper-Arminianism*', '*consistent Arminianism*', '*evangelical processianism*', '*post-Arminianism*', '*extreme Arminianism*', '*neo-Socinianism*', '*new model evangelicalism*', '*neotheism*' (though this term generally refers to process theism) and '*neo-Pelagianism*'. Because there are really no absolutely clear criteria for designation, various lists of open theism's leaders have appeared, but the primary names among North American evangelicals, upon whom I have focused in this document, are David Basinger, Randall Basinger, Gregory A Boyd, William Hasker, Clark H Pinnock, Richard Rice and John Sanders. Other names are sometimes associated with some of the ideas of open theism, including Stephen T Davis, Richard Swinburne, J. R. Lucas, W. H. Vanstone, Terence Fretheim, John Polkinghorne, Keith Ward, Eberhart Jungel, Vincent Brümmer, Brother Andrew, Nicholas Wolterstorff, Dallas Willard, H. Roy Elseth, Michael Peterson, John Hick, Bruce Reichenbach, George Mavrodes and the late Gordon C Olson.

¹⁰Eg see John Piper, Justin Taylor and Paul Kjoss Helseth, eds. *Beyond the Bounds: Open Theism and the Undermining of Biblical Christianity* (Wheaton: Crossway Books, 2003); Bruce A Ware, *God's Lesser Glory: The Diminished God of Open Theism*. (Wheaton: Crossway Books, 2000); Bruce A Ware, 'Despair Amidst Suffering and Pain: A Practical Outworking of Open Theism's Diminished View of God.' *Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 4/2 (Summer 2000): 56-75.

¹¹Some recent examples are Robert E Picirilli, 'An Arminian Response to John Sanders's *The God Who Risks: A Theology of Providence*.' *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 44/3 (2001):467-491; Robert E Picinilli 'Foreknowledge, Freedom, and the Future.' *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 43/2 (2000):259-271; and James

H. Railey, 'Open Theism: An Arminian-Pentecostal Response.' Assemblies of God Theological Seminary: Bible and Theology Department Lecture Series, 24 September 2003. http://www.agts.edu/faculty/faculty_publications/articles/railey_open-theism.pdf.

¹²Pinnock, 'Open Theism: "What is this? A new teaching? - and with authority! (M[ar]k 1:27)', 3, 4. Ware said very much the same thing: 'To a great degree, the openness proponents are saying only what their Arminian colleagues have long argued' (*God's Lesser Glory*, 143).

¹³ibid, 4.

¹⁴Sanders actually said: 'No, exhaustive definite foreknowledge is not the watershed issue in the debate between proponents of openness and proponents of certain forms of Calvinism Neither is our claim that God experiences temporal succession Although presentism and God as everlasting distinguish traditional Arminianism from neo-Arminianism (open theism), they are not the key lines of division between open theists and scholastic Calvinists [I]t involves the same points that separate all forms of freewill theism, including traditional Arminianism, from Calvinism. These are the interrelated issues: (1) whether God has chosen to be, for some things, affected or conditioned by creatures; (2) whether God takes the risk that humans may do things that God does not want done; (3) whether God exercises meticulous or general providential control; and (4) whether God has granted human beings libertarian or compatibilistic freedom. This constellation of issues is the great divide in this debate.' ('On Heffalumps and Heresies: Responses to Accusations Against Open Theism.' *Journal of Biblical Studies*[n.d.], 8-9). http://www.journalofbiblicalstudies.org/Issue5/Heffalumps_and_Heresies.pdf. Pinnock was speaking in more general terms, not trying to make the same point that Sanders was arguing ('Open Theism: "What is this? A new teaching? - and with authority! [M{ar]k 1:27]', 1. Ware identified the same focus of conflict as Pinnock, writing in *God's Lesser Glory* that '[o]pen theism's denial of exhaustive divine foreknowledge provides the basis for the major lines of difference between the openness view and all versions of classical theism, including any other version of Arminianism' (65). This last point is not, strictly speaking, entirely accurate, since this study concerns a significant strain of Arminian belief and theological presentation in which the denial of God's absolute foreknowledge is held to be axiomatic to the rest of the system, and which so closely resembles open theism at nearly every point that one could almost speak of these late nineteenth century Arminian and Wesleyan writers as the first American evangelical open theists.

¹⁵Clark H Pinnock, Richard Rice, John Sanders, William Hasker and David Basinger, *The Openness of God: A Biblical Challenge to the Traditional Understanding of God*. (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1994).

¹⁶Open Theism: 'What is this? A new teaching? - and with authority! (M[ar]k 1:27)', 3. He also wrote that '[t]he open view of God grows out of the ideological, if not the ecclesiastical, soil of Wesleyan-Arminianism,' and even more specifically out of the developments in nineteenth century Methodism (Clark H Pinnock, *Most Moved Mover: A*

Theology of God's Openness (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2001), 106-107. Sanders, 'On Heffalumps and Heresies', 9-11. See also, John Sanders, *The God Who Risks: A Theology of Providence* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1998); Clark H Pinnock, ed., *The Grace of God, The Will of Man: A Case for Arminianism* (Grand Rapids: Academic Books, 1989).

¹⁷Robert Morely, in *Exploring the Attributes of God: An Apologetic for the Biblical Doctrine of God* (Iowa Falls: World Bible Publishers, 1989), criticised open theists, claiming that absolute foreknowledge is 'the chief attribute of God' (118) and that [t]he processions and moral government theologians are attacking the Godhood of God when they deny His [absolute] foreknowledge' (119). Norman Geisler is the most persistent in making this accusation. Eg, he wrote that 'the view of God which Pinnock embraces rejects classical theism for a more neoclassical [ie process theism] perspective in the tradition of Whitehead, Hartshorne and Ogden' (in David Basinger and Randall Basinger, eds. *Predestination and Free Will* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1986), 170. In *Chosen But Free: A Balanced View of Divine Election*, 2nd Ed. (Minneapolis: Bethany House, 200), he described open theism as 'extreme Arminians who embrace Neotheism' (107), associated open theism with Pelegianism and process theism, while admitting in a footnote that they are not strictly the same (106); cf Norman L Geisler, H. Wayne House and Max Herren, *The Battle for God: Responding to the Challenge of Neotheism* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2001) 9-11,20. In 'Can God Be Grasped By Our Reason' in a volume of critical essays edited by Douglas S. Huffman and Eric L. Johnson, *God Under Fire: Modern Scholarship Reinvents God*,(Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002), Eric L. Johnson wrote that open theism deviates from 'Semi-Pelegian/Arminian/Wesleyan resolutions of [the] paradox' of God's foreknowledge and human freedom (91-92). The same volume includes D. A. Carson's essay 'How Can We Reconcile the Love and the Transcendent Sovereignty of God?' in which the author inaccurately asserts in a footnote that Rice acknowledged 'his fundamental indebtedness to Hartshorne' (282-283), but all Rice actually acknowledged was some similarity in some areas of thought. In another footnote he insisted that open theism is 'most emphatically *not* in line with Eastern Orthodox, Roman Catholic, or Wesleyan traditions. It is in line with some process and Socinian traditions As to omniscience itself, it is the openness theologians who are cut off from the "great tradition" ... and they should be brave enough and candid enough to admit it instead of trying to marginalize Calvinists" " (308). In a rather extreme and bizarre association of open theism with 'Liberals I Drag' included by editor Douglas Wilson in *Bound Only Once: The Failure of Open Theism* (Moscow, ID: Canon Press, 2001), Ben R Merkle wrote that '[o]ne of the comic things about reading books from the Openness genre is the fact that Openness authors all feel an obligation to explain, quite frequently, why the theology they are advocating is not Process theology' (76), and [a]lthough disposing of several of Process thought's more alarming accessories, several miscreants have snatched [sic] Process theology's major selling point, a denial of God's foreknowledge, in order to make room for a rationalist's free will, given it a complex make-over, and plopped it down in the center of orthodoxy's camp' (70-71). In *God's Lesser Glory*, Ware offers a more cautious and accurate evaluation, acknowledging that open theists have accomplished the goal of establishing a *via media* between process and traditional theisms, though this may not be, in his evaluation, necessarily a good thing

(144-145, 208). I have not included in this study criticisms of open theism by process theologians, but they do exist.

¹⁸Pinnock, quoted in Carson, 'How Can We Reconcile the Love and the Transcendent Sovereignty of God?', 283. He has also said that theologians today 'need a resource which can help us put love in the center of theology. Plato cannot help us - maybe Whitehead can' (Clark H Pinnock, 'Evangelical Theologians Facing the Future: An Ancient and a Future Paradigm,' *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 33/2 (1998) [Reprint of keynote address at annual meeting of the Wesleyan Theological Society, Mount Vernon Nazarene College, Mount Vernon, OH, 07,08 November 1997], 27; see also, Clark H. Pinnock, 'Between Classical and Process Theism,' in *Process Theology*, ed by Ronald [H.] Nash (Grand Rapids, Baker, 1987), 309-327, and Randall Basinger, 'Evangelicals and Process Theism: Seeking a Middle Ground,' *Christian Scholar's Review* 15/2 (1986): 157-167. Most discussions of open theism include who-influenced-who discussions of philosophy. Chad Owen Brand includes a discussion of terms such as 'influenced' in his essay 'Genetic Defects or Accidental Similarities? Orthodoxy and Open Theism and Their Connections to Western Philosophical Traditions' in Piper, Taylor and Helseth, eds. *Beyond the Bounds*, 48, but unfortunately does not always follow his own rules. The relationship between process and open theisms - would be an entire book in itself, and it can only be touched upon briefly here. Likewise, all open theist leaders, Pinnock included, stress that biblical understanding is at the real core of the issues. It is beyond the scope of this paper to address the complicated and extensive literature debating the hermeneutics of both traditional and open theism. These issues are discussed and debated by nearly everyone writing about the current situation. What should be noted in this context is that this was also the overriding concern of the nineteenth century Wesleyan, Methodist and holiness divines (including McCabe) whose exchanges both among themselves and with their more Calvinistic detractors. I contend that the actual roots of open theism predate process thought, both historically (hence the undertaking of this research) and existentially. My experience parallels that described by Sanders when he wrote that he had never even heard of process thought until studying under Norman Geisler at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School. (Sanders and I were classmates at this school.) Not only did my embracing of the ideas which have become known as open theism predate my knowing about process thought, but I had not actually read any process theological writing until preparing for this paper.

¹⁹Gregory A Boyd is particularly clear about the relationship between process and open theisms. Acknowledging appreciation for some of process thought's concepts and formulations does not mean either identification or dependence. Eg, in *Trinity and Process: A Critical Evaluation and Reconstruction of Hartshorne's Di-Polar Theism Towards a Trinitarian Metaphysics*, American University Studies Series VII, Theology and Religion vol. 19 (New York: Peter Lang, 1992), he wrote that '[p]rocess thought has been on the frontier of integrating a doctrine of God into modern dynamics and relational categories' and agreed with Robert Neville's evaluation of Whitehead's conception of God as 'the most important philosophical idea for contemporary theology. Nevertheless he insisted that '[e]ven if one disagrees with many aspects of this system of thought (as [I] indeed shall), one can hardly demur with the point that the direction of this school's

thought is essentially the direction which any modern theological system must take if it is to be visible in our contemporary intellectual milieu' (8-9). See also, Gregory A Boyd, *God At War: The Bible and Spiritual Conflict* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1997), 299; Pinnock, *Most Moved Mover*, 15-1 and Richard Rice, *The Openness of God: The Relationship of Divine Foreknowledge and Human Free Will*(Nashville: Review and Herald Publishing Assoc, 1980), 28.

²⁰Eg, see Brand, 'Genetic Defects or Accidental Similarities?', 65; see also, Carson, 'How Can We Reconcile the Love and the Transcendent Sovereignty of God?', 308. Frederick Leahy said that open theism is 'a hybrid theology - ultra-Arminianism grafted onto a Socinian-root stock and planted in the barren soil of human autonomy' (quoted in Pinnock, *Most Moved Mover*, 15). In *No Other God: A Response to Open Theism* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing, 2001), John Frame refers to 'the Socinian connection' in open theism, and says that 'their [ie the open theists'] view of God's knowledge is clearly Socinian' (34). He termed Socinianism 'the [m]issing [l]ink in [o]pen [t]heism's [g]eneology' (32). D. A. Carson comments in an endorsement quoted in this book that 'Socinianism can dress itself up in new terminology and pass itself off as evangelical theology', n.p. Once again, as was the situation with process thought, one seems to find that similarity of expression is incautiously and fallaciously assumed to indicate dependence or reliance.

²¹In *Trinity and Process*, Boyd admits that '[u]ntil the time of the Socinians, the belief that God's omniscience included all future events was not generally questioned' (296-297), but he does not allow Socinian teaching as a source of his thought. Neither do any other principal open theists. Even Lorenzo Dow McCabe, in discussing other views, referred to 'the great Socinius [who] boldly denied the dogma of foreknowledge' (*The Foreknowledge of God and Cognate Themes in Theology and Philosophy* [Cincinnati: Cranston and Stowe, for the Author, 1887; original copyright 1878], 221), but he does not acknowledge him as a source of his own reflections, nor could he agree with some of the other dimensions of Socinian thought which more radically depart from traditional Christian theology and the biblical writings. Such is manifestly not the case. The basis for condemnation of Socinianism was not originally theological but christological. Process theologian Charles Hartshorne, however, has no problem acknowledging indebtedness to Socinianism. He wrote in his book *Omnipotence and other Theological Mistakes* (Albany: State University of New York, 1984), that God is indeed 'all-knowing,' but that 'in the Socinian sense. Never has a great intellectual discovery passed with less notice by the world than the Socinian discovery of the proper meaning of omniscience. To this day works of reference fail to tell us about this' (27). Socinian teaching concerning omniscience essentially said, in terms entirely consistent with both early nescience thinking and open theism, that 'we must remember the axiom that, just as God's power consists in the ability to do all that is possible, so his knowledge consists in his knowing all that is knowable, . The knowable is what has reality in some form, whether past, present, or future Also, God must know the real as that which it is, the past as past, the present as present, the future as future The future, however, consists either of what necessarily will occur, or of what only possibly, or under certain considerations and contingently may occur. Under the latter come all acts of human freedom. Since God

knows all things as they are, accordingly he knows the necessary future as such and the contingent future also as such. If it were otherwise, God would not know things as they are, for truth is the congruence of knowledge with its object So far, then, from implying a restriction upon the divine knowledge, the recognition that future possibilities are known only as possible, as uncertain, is the only way to preserve the absolute truth of this knowledge' (after Otto Fock, in Charles Hartshorne and William L Reese, eds. *Philosophers Speak of God*. (Chicago: University Press, [?]), 225-226. Even if an historical connection could be demonstrated, would that matter? Another fallacious assumption might be at work here: assuming that if one part of a marks a teaching as heretical, every other part of the system is equally heretical.

²²This is in contrast to the conclusions of Brand, 'Genetic Defects or Accidental Similarities?', '43-73.

²³Richard L. Purtill, 'Foreknowledge and Fatalism,' *Religious Studies* 10 (1974):319. See also, Douglas P Lackey, 'A New Disproof of the Compatibility of Foreknowledge and Free Choice.' *Religious Studies* 10 (1974): 318.

²⁴Quoted by Vincent Brümmer, *What Are We Doing When We Pray? A Philosophical Investigation* (London: SCM Press, 1984), 35, 41.

²⁵Calcidius in J. Den Boeft, *Calcidius on Fate: His Doctrine and Sources*, *Philosophia Antiqua* Vol XVIII, ed by W. J. Verneius and J. H. Waszink (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1970), 52. He went on to say: For God does not know the nature of what is contingent in such a way as that which is certain and bound by necessity... but in such a way that he really knows the contingent according to its nature....His knowledge of uncertain things is indeed necessary, viz., His knowledge that these things are uncertain and their course contingent - for they cannot be different from their nature -, yet they are themselves possible in both directions rather than subject to necessity.

²⁶ibid. See also, Gerald Verboke, *The Place of Stoicism in Medieval Thought* (Washington: Catholic University Press, 1983), 82-83.

²⁷See notes 11 through 16 above.

²⁸See, John Sanders, 'Why Simple Foreknowledge Offers No More Providential Control than the Openness of God,' *Faith and Philosophy* 14/1 (1997): 38; Gregory A. Boyd, *Satan and the Problem of Evil: Constructing a Trinitarian Warfare Theodicy*. (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2001), 91; Pinnock, *Most Moved Mover*, 107; H. Roy Elseth, *Did God Know? A Study of the Nature of God* (St Paul: Calvary United Church, 1977), 41,55,99,127, 181, Pinnock, et al. *The Openness of God*, 189; Gordon C. Olson, *The Foreknowledge of God: An Inquiry as to the Truthfulness of the Doctrine Theologically and Biblically*, np: 1941, [Photocopy of original supplied by the author], 59,60. Gordon Olson amassed a considerable collection of material about McCabe; it was he who first introduced me to McCabe's writings, welcomed me frequently into his home and allowed me unlimited access to his collection in my original research while I was a student at

Trinity Evangelical Divinity School. In 'Open Theism: "What is this? A new teaching? - and with authority! (M[ar]k 1:27)' Pinnock referred to McCabe's work as '[a]n exhaustive presentation of the data in support of current omniscience' (7), and Boyd acknowledged his indebtedness to McCabe and praised his work as 'a still unsurpassed survey of the biblical basis for the open view of God' (*God at War*, 305,313). McCabe's writings are not accepted without criticism, however. (See Christopher Hall and John Sanders, *Does God Have a Future? A Debate on Divine Providence*. [Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003], 30.) Boyd discussed a set of such sources, including McCabe's works, in *God of the Possible*, 115. Geisler quotes Roger Nicole who said that 'Clarke denies that God ever changes his mind,' and agrees that Boyd was 'wrong to include in his list the biblical commentator Adam Clarke' (*No Other God*, 37) but, as will be shown below, both Nicole and Geisler were themselves mistaken., and Clarke did indeed speak in these terms. Cf William McGuire King, 'God's Nescience of Future Contingents: A Nineteenth-Century Idea.' *Process Studies*9 (Fall 1979): 105-115. A notable exception to this neglect is an excellent essay by Randy L. Maddox, 'Seeking a Respons-able God: The Wesleyan Tradition and Process Theology' in Bryan P Stone and Thomas Jay Oord, eds. *Thy Nature and Thy Name Is Love: Wesleyan and Process Theologies in Dialogue* (Nashville: Kingswood Books, 2001), 111-142..

²⁹Adam Clarke, 'Some Observations on the Being and Providence of God,' in *Discourses on Various Subjects Relative to the Being and Attributes of God, and His Works in Creation, Providence, and Grace*, 2 vols. (New York: B. Waugh and T. Mason, 1832), 298.

³⁰Adam Clarke, *Christian Theology*. Selected from his Published and Unpublished Writings, and Systematically Arranged, with A Life of the Author by Samuel Dunn, (New York: Lane and Scott, 185), 69. He also said that '[w]hatever hindrances are thrown in the way his wisdom and power can remove; and his infinite wisdom can never want ways or means to effect its gracious design'(74).

³¹John Miley, *Systematic Theology*, vol 2 (New York: Hunt and Eaton, 1893), 180. Miley identified Clarke as believing in divine nescience, as did D. D. Whedon in a review of McCabe's third book published in the *Methodist Quarterly Review* in January of 1883 (176-177).

³²ibid, 181.

³³Miley quoted McCabe with approval and said of his writing: 'These are the utterances of a mind thoroughly candid in temper, rarely acute in analytical power, and clear in philosophic insight' (ibid, 359,376). McCabe himself came from Scottish-Irish immigrant ancestors who had come from County Tyrone and crossed the Allegheny Mountains to settle in the Ohio frontier. He was born in Marietta on 7 January 1817, third son of Robert and Mary (McCracken) McCabe. Both his parents died when he was about six years old, and thus orphaned he became self-reliant and resourceful. His parents, who had named him Lorenzo Dow after one of the most prominent early Methodist evangelists, passed on to him a sense of Wesleyan Christian piety, but he himself had a significant

conversion experience only eleven years after their death. He was given license to preach in the Methodist Episcopal Church at the age of twenty-one, but he chose to secure a college education first, graduating with his bachelors degree from Ohio University in Athens in 1843, receiving a graduate degree from the same institution in 1846. He was ordained an Elder in the Methodist Episcopal Church by Bishop Edward S. Jones on 5 September 1847 in Columbus, OH. In subsequent years he received a D.D. from Allegheny College (1855) and an LL.D. from Syracuse University (1875). McCabe developed problems with his eyes and underwent special treatment. These concerns forced him to resign his place in the Worthington Circuit. They were to plague him for the remainder of his life. He was married twice. His first wife, Martha (Sewall), to whom he was married in 1845 shortly before moving to Delaware (Ohio) died from typhoid fever in November of 1850. Not until 19 July 1857 did McCabe marry again, this time Harriet Calista Clark, Preceptress of Dickinson Seminary in Pennsylvania. She began editing *Women's Home Missions* in 1884. One of his sons, John, became a pastor in the Cincinnati Circuit, while his nephew, Charles, became a Methodist bishop. A grandson later became chaplain at Libby Prison. Though he continued to preach regularly, the majority of McCabe's life and ministry involved him in teaching and preparing young Methodist students for their various vocations. In 1844, McCabe was elected Professor of Mathematics at Ohio University. Later that same year he received a call from the newly organized Ohio Wesleyan University. He joined the faculty there in 1845 and remained there until his death on 18 June 1897. Consistently remembered as both intelligent and original in thinking and devoted and deeply pious in spiritual life, he moved from the Chair of Mathematics to the philosophy department in 1860. Twice during his time there he served as acting president of the University.

³⁴Miley, *Systematic Theology*, vol 2, 159. McCabe was similarly praised in a great many tributes from those who knew him, worked with him or studied under him, including Boston Personalist and Methodist Bishop Francis John McConnell; see his *Is God Limited?* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1924), 125. McConnell noted, however, that McCabe was 'most severely criticized even for the statement of the thesis [of divine nescience]', but he could not recall ever hearing 'any serious attempts to meet his arguments, except that the proposition was derogatory to the divine character.' One Loring C Webster wrote a point by point refutation of McCabe's arguments in *The End from the Beginning; Or, Divine Prescience vrs. Divine Nescience of Future Contingencies*. (Cincinnati: Cranston & Curts, 1895), but Webster's arguments and his own position are all but incomprehensible. Methodist theologian and editor of the *Methodist Quarterly Review*, D. D. Whedon wrote, in a January 1879 review in his own journal (162-166) of *The Foreknowledge of God* that McCabe had 'better abandon the theory [of divine nescience],' since [t]he human instinct will not surrender omniscience It [the book] is amiably and ably written, but is erroneous in its fears, and, therefore, its reasonings [sic] are as needless as they are useless. Our brother will yet regret the publication. Like much which preachers think, it should be remain unspoken.' In his January 1883 review of McCabe's third book, he lamented that McCabe's views basically 'assault Arminianism' and that these views are neither 'specifically Methodist' nor 'new to Methodism. They have not been ignored by Methodism from indifference or intellectual apathy. On the contrary, Methodism has consciously, repeatedly, and positively reviewed

and rejected them.' He did, however, recognise the quality of McCabe's writing and thinking. He wrote that 'he has furnished the fullest, ablest, and most original statement of the theory extant.'

³⁵Miley, *Systematic Theology*, vol 2, 159.

³⁶ See eg, J. F. Hurst [a professor at Drew Theological Seminary], Introduction to McCabe, *The Foreknowledge of God and Cognate Themes*, 8,9: 'There are men ... all over the land, and even representing the American Church and Government in foreign countries, who have sat at his feet and received the double impress of his genius and his ever-fresh sympathies.'

³⁷See note 34 above. The battle of the reviews between those opposing McCabe and those favouring him went on until July 1900.

³⁸Lorenzo Dow McCabe, *Light on the Pathway of Holiness* (New York: Phillips & Hunt, 1872); McCabe, *The Foreknowledge of God and Cognate Themes* and Lorenzo Dow McCabe, *Divine Nescience of Future Contingencies a Necessity, Being an Introduction to 'The Foreknowledge of God and Cognate Themes'*, (New York: Phillips and Hunt, for the Author, 1882). See Selected Bibliography for some of the other shorter works by McCabe, published and unpublished.

³⁹ W[illiam] G. Williams, 'Lorenzo Dow McCabe (1817 to 1897 on Tomb stone [sic]' [Memoir mostly reprinted in the *Western Christian Advocate* 2 (23 June 1897).] (N.p./n.d. Unpublished manuscript, Personal Library Collection of Gordon C. Olson.). Interestingly, ideas resembling open theism - and sometimes classed as such, though not specifically addressed in this essay - are quite common among contemporary English writers.

⁴⁰Samuel W Williams, *Pictures of Early Methodism in Ohio* (Cincinnati: Jennings and Graham, 1909), 307.

⁴¹ibid, 307-308.

⁴²Hurst, Introduction to McCabe, *The Foreknowledge of God and Cognate Themes*, 9.

⁴³McCabe, *The Foreknowledge of God and Cognate Themes*, 18.

⁴⁴McCabe, *Divine Nescience of Future Contingencies a Necessity*, 104. See also, Joel S. Hayes, *The Foreknowledge of God; Or, The Omniscience of God Consistent with His Own Holiness and Man's Free Agency*, (Nashville: Publishing House of the M[ethodist] E[piscopal] Church, South, for the Author, 1890), 9-42.

⁴⁵Miley, *Systematic Theology*, vol 2, 192. See also 215.

⁴⁶I. W. Wiley , Introduction to McCabe, *Divine Nescience of Future Contingencies a Necessity*, 7.

⁴⁷ibid.

⁴⁸McCabe, *Divine Nescience of Future Contingencies a Necessity*, 40.

⁴⁹ Included here were some of the Boston Personalists, at least one of whom - Bishop McConnell - had been one of McCabe's students; see note 34 above. In general there was a mixed response to McCabe's ideas among those identified with Boston Personalism.

⁵⁰Eg, he concluded a sermon on Acts 7:16 by criticising biblical critics and saying: 'But it may be seriously doubted whether Isaiah[,] Jeremiah or the mighty Apostle to the Gentiles could have rejected such profound inspiration and superintention of the 3d [sic] person of the ever blessed Trinity' (Lorenzo Dow McCabe, [New Interpretation of Acts 7:16]., Delaware, OH, n.d. [Unpublished manuscript, Personal Library Collection of Gordon C. Olson]). Regarding ultimate authority of the biblical scriptures see, McCabe, *Light on the Pathway of Holiness*, 181, 183. Clark H Pinnock wrote in 'Biblical Texts - Past and Future Meanings, 'Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society 43/1 (March 2000), that [t]he hermeneutical task is not a matter of reducing the meaning of Scripture to what readers want to hear but is an exercise in discerning what the Word of the Lord is for this time and place' (81). I have not addressed the handling of biblical interpretation - a subject too far beyond the scope of this essay. Though there are differences in appreciation of critical study of biblical texts, open theists generally interpret the biblical writings in ways that would be consistent with, and acceptable to, McCabe and other nineteenth century formulators of the doctrine of divine nescience and human freedom.

⁵¹Williams, *Pictures of Early Methodism in Ohio*, 310.

⁵²McCabe, *The Foreknowledge of God and Cognate Themes*, 28-29. McCabe began his book on sanctification, *Light on the Pathway of Holiness*, by saying: 'Man possesses one faculty which is not under the law of cause and effect: which is not fettered by any other faculty, or controlled by any other agency, human or divine. Under the provisions of the Gospel the will is perfectly free' (7). In his [Sermon and Remarks on] 'Greatness,' n.p./n.d. (Unpublished manuscript, Personal Library Collection of Gordon C. Olson.), McCabe said that '[t]he mind is initiative and sovereign in its volitions' (12). What is often overlooked in these discussions is that freedom of the will was not for McCabe, nor is it for open theists, an end in itself. In *The God Who Risks*, Sander said that 'it is not freedom qua freedom that God values but the potential for reciprocal love. What God values is the loving relationship, and libertarian freedom is simply a means to that end' (224).

⁵³Neither McCabe nor open theists today claim that the future is completely open. Rather it is seen as *partly* open and partly *closed*. Rice argued that '[t]ime - the passage of the future into the past - is characteristic of the actual nature of reality. Time is not a projection of the way we happen to experience the world. Moreover, as the ongoing

occurrence of events, reality is also characterized by the emergence of novelty. Not everything that will happen to us is already determined. A significant portion of the future remains to be decided. The part now open consists of the future free decisions made by the creatures as well as by God' (*The Openness of God*, 26).

⁵⁴McCabe, *The Foreknowledge of God and Cognate Themes*, 30; see also, McCabe, *Divine Nescience of Future Contingencies a Necessity*, 76.

⁵⁵McCabe, *The Foreknowledge of God and Cognate Themes*, 39-40. He continued, saying that 'God ... can use him as an instrument in his hands. He can make use of him as easily as he can make use of fire, water, light, air, sun, moon, or stars [T]o deny that God can use man merely as an instrument, would be to limit Omnipotence, and prevent the possibility of a superintending providence When he wishes to accomplish any end through intelligent beings, he may bring such influences to bear upon them, or offer to them such suggestions, or mysteriously so lead them by some of the resources and instrumentalities within his almighty embrace, that the action of their wills shall be under the law of cause and effect. Such influences may be brought to bear upon them as to interfere with their free agency.' Like open theists, he accentuated the difference between unconditional and conditional prophecies.

⁵⁶ibid, 40. Furthermore, he said, '[i]n those acts of the will which involve moral character, there must be occasions for the action of the will in choosing. If upon such occasions there be nothing to exert an *influence* over the choice, there could be neither test, character, nor reward. But if there be in them anything to *coerce* the choice, then there could be neither freedom nor accountability. The moment that degree of intensity is reached in the force of these occasions which determines the choice, free agency and moral character disappear from the arena of human action.' Cf, T. W. Brents, *The Gospel Plan of Salvation*, 12th Edition (Nashville: Gospel Advocate, 1928 [1st Edition, 1874]), 96: '... He [ie God] did not know, before creating man, just how wicked he would be, simply because such foreknowledge would be incompatible with the free agency and responsibility of man. To be responsible, man must be free. If God knew before He gave Adam the law in the garden that he would violate it when given, then he was not free; for he could not have falsified God's foreknowledge if he would: hence to violate the law was a necessity.'

⁵⁷McCabe, *Divine Nescience of Future Contingencies a Necessity*, 22-23.

⁵⁸McCabe, *The Foreknowledge of God and Cognate Themes*, 53-54. He also wrote: 'If it be possible for God to prewise [sic]and to declare with certainty the future volitions of a free spirit, while acting under the law of liberty it can only be by looking not at the occasions of the will's action, but at the source where alone its certainty can originate; namely, at the human will itself. But the free will of a future free spirit has yet no existence whatever. Its future free choices are bound up with no existing causes. No existing causes can now give the slightest indication of what those future choices will be. Every one of those possible choices ... is also now a nonentity The will itself is a nonentity. And if both the choice ... and the souls itself are now nonentities, the prevision

of this choice must be impossible in the nature of things, and hence involve absurdity. To pre-empt [sic] the effect of a cause, which has now no possible existence, is unthinkable. A nonentity, for whose future possibility there now exists no causality, can not, therefore, be foreknowable.' see also, 247, and *Light on the Pathway of Holiness*, 179. Brent wrote that '[n]o one ... will deny that [God] is *omnipotent* as well as *omniscient*, yet there are some things He *cannot do* Then if there are *some things which God can not do, though omnipotent, may there not be some things which he DID [sic] not know, though omniscient?*' (*The Gospel Plan of Salvation*, 96). Rice wrote that '[f]uture free decisions do not exist in any sense before they are actually made,' and 'if future free decisions do not yet exist, they are not there to be known until they are made. And the fact that God does not know them ahead of time represents no deficiency in His knowledge. Not knowing that which isn't there to be known hardly constitutes ignorance' (Rice, *The Openness of God*, 45-46). All other openness leaders have said virtually the same thing, though Boyd's version of 'neo-Molinism' represents a slightly different approach; see also, Thomas V. Morris, *Our Idea of God: An Introduction to Philosophical Theology*, *Contours of Christian Philosophy*, ed by C Stephan Evans (Vancouver: Regent College Publishing, 1991), 83-104.

⁵⁹McCabe, *Divine Nescience of Future Contingencies a Necessity*, 24-25. He also said that 'God can have no knowledge until from the realm of the possible a free being originates their conception and determines to actualise those conceptions into entities.'

⁶⁰ibid, 34.

⁶¹Hayes, *The Foreknowledge of God*, 396.

⁶²ibid, 45.

⁶³ibid, 45-46. He contended that 'God never created a being who he knew would sin He created moral agents, and through them moral actions took their rise in the universe; but, as it belongs to the very nature of such actions not to be produced in the agent by and extraneous power, so it is also of their very nature not to be foreknown God could not create moral agents and deny them the possibility of sinning It was equally impossible for him to create such beings and at the same time foreknow their moral character. "All things are possible with God," it is true, but to know before man was created whether he would be holy or sinful is not a thing, but merely an absurd conceit which has no corresponding reality in the actual world. God knows all things, but whether I, in the exercise of my free agency, will transgress God's law or not, is not a thing, but a mere figment of the imagination due to the imperfection of man's reasoning powers.'

⁶⁴ibid, 46; see also, 137ff.

⁶⁵By 'morally certain', Hayes meant a predictive ability based on the knowledge that a *class* of people will choose freely to act in certain ways. He did not believe that it was ever possible to know certainly what choices *individuals* would make; see ibid, 296-397.

McCabe did not discuss general theories about human behaviour in this way. In *God of the Possible*, Boyd wrote: 'Sometimes we may understand the Lord's foreknowledge of a person's behaviour simply by supposing that the person's character, combined with the Lord's perfect knowledge of all future variables, makes the future behaviour certain [C]haracter becomes more predictable over time. The longer we persist in a chosen path, the more that path becomes part of who we are [T]he range of viable options we are capable of choosing diminishes over time' (35).

⁶⁶McCabe, *The Foreknowledge of God and Cognate Themes*, 159. In this context he wrote: 'It might, perhaps, be termed a modified foreknowledge - a foreknowledge, however, that could be relied upon only to a very limited extent by the divine administration in the kingdom of grace or freedom; a foreknowledge, too, that is widely different from absolute certainty.'

⁶⁷*ibid*, 156.

⁶⁸McCabe, *Divine Nescience of Future Contingencies a Necessity*, 24.

⁶⁹*ibid*, 41.

⁷⁰Open theism, in contrast to certain forms of radical existentialism and certain popular 'new age' spiritualities, does not view the future as a blank slate. The painting 'Giacomond' by Berlin artist Quint Buchholz, for example, depicts a young boy walking on a tightrope from a house roof with the end of the tightrope away from the house held in his own hands. He appears to be laying out the rope as he takes each step. There is much that is appealing about such a depiction of the future as genuinely open, but there is in it no place for God or and of the plans that God may have for what must come to pass in the future; the future here is completely open. See also note 53 above, and note Basinger's statement in *The Case for Freewill Theism*, that, in contrast to process theists, freewill theists 'fall into the group of standard theists ... who believe that God can, at least to some extent, unilaterally guarantee that what occurs in this world is what he has determined should occur' (23).

⁷¹See, McCabe, *Divine Nescience of Future Contingencies a Necessity*, 274-277. John Sander's major work on open theism is entitled *The God Who Risks*. See also, Boyd, *Satan and the Problem of Evil*, 85-114.

⁷²McCabe, *The Foreknowledge of God and Cognate Themes*, 228.

⁷³McCabe, *Divine Nescience of Future Contingencies a Necessity*, 61.

⁷⁴McCabe, *The Foreknowledge of God and Cognate Themes*, 179-180...

⁷⁵*ibid*, 180. David Basinger, *The Case for Freewill Theism: A Philosophical Assessment* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1996), 62, wrote: 'Freewill theists do not deny that God can (and does) at times unilaterally override human freedom for some good end.'

⁷⁶McCabe responded to the claim that life in a world without absolute divine foreknowledge would be unbearably uncertain and that 'God's government would be precarious' (Hodge), by saying that 'God very well knows that he never can have any thing [sic] to fear from any rivals. Could any thing [sic] ever occur in any part of Jehovah's [sic] dominion disproportionate to his infinite attributes and perfections?' (ibid, 174). Sanders put it pointedly in *The God Who Risks*: 'The Christian faith requires a faithful God, not a risk-free God' (186). In *What Are We Doing When We Pray? A Philosophical Investigation* (London: SCM Press, 1984), Vincent Brümmer wrote that 'we must admit that this theory does imply that God's control over the course of events in the world is limited, and that his freedom to realize his purposes is dependent on the co-operation of man. But this is not a limitation or dependence which is imposed on God from outside. On the contrary, they are freely chosen by God as the necessary corollaries of the sort of universe he has freely decided to create By granting us freedom of will, God makes himself vulnerable to our independent action' (67-68). Nevertheless, he said also that 'we must not overestimate the human ability to thwart God's intentions, nor underestimate God's ability to respond adequately to whatever we in our sinful defiance might do to oppose the realization of his intentions [H]is creative resources ... [are] infinite so that he is always able to respond creatively to whatever we might decide to do' (68). In this context he quotes J. R. Lucas: 'One plan may fail, but there are always others. As fast as we torpedo his best designs for us, he produces out of his agonized reappraisal a second best ...[.] Whatever the situation, there are some things he would rather have us do than other things; and in so far as we do them, we are fulfilling a plan he has for us; in so far as we do not, we shall be bringing about a situation, undesired if not always unforeseen, which will call for new remedies of its own, new remedies which will themselves call once again for our co-operation if they are to be carried out ...[.] God, being infinite, there is not just one best, which if frustrated we can never hope to recapture or recreate, but an infinity of bests' (68).

⁷⁷ See: McCabe, *The Foreknowledge of God and Cognate Themes*, 176, where he wrote that '[f]uture free events, however innumerable, various, complicated, or alarming, can never transcend the capacities of omnipotence, omnipresence, and omniscience, instantaneously to manage, thwart, control, or utilise, as may seem best to infinite wisdom, goodness and justice.'

⁷⁸ibid, 175.

⁷⁹ibid, 176-177. Open theists speak of God's 'infinite resourcefulness' (Rice, *The Openness of God*, 85).

⁸⁰McCabe, *Divine Nescience of Future Contingencies a Necessity*, 61.

⁸¹McCabe, *The Foreknowledge of God and Cognate Themes*, 183ff.

⁸²See, John Sanders, 'Why Simple Foreknowledge Offers No More Providential Control than the Openness of God,' 26-40; see also, McCabe, *The Foreknowledge of God and Cognate Themes*, 174ff; Sanders, *The God Who Risks*, 229-230. In *Divine Nescience of*

Future Contingencies a Necessity, McCabe asserted that God would be incapable of 'personic action' but would rather be paralysed immobility, frozen 'into the iceberg of indifference' (289).

⁸³McCabe, *The Foreknowledge of God and Cognate Themes*, 186-187. Furthermore, '[i]t is not possible, in the nature of things, for any being to foreknow all the doings of others, and to foreread in all particulars their character and conduct for ages to come, and yet change in his own feelings and thoughts and purposes toward them, as in process of time they come actually to put forth those accountable volitions *seriatim*.'

⁸⁴ See: McCabe, *Divine Nescience of Future Contingencies a Necessity*, 27, where he insisted that '[i]n the divine omniscience there must be an element of growth. If there be free beings there must be free determinations. God may have a prior knowledge of them as mere possibilities, but he cannot have a knowledge of them as actualities. This knowledge of human acts must be acquired as they come to pass' and continued, saying that '[t]his knowledge he draws from history, and it is conditioned by the action of the causalities which he has brought into existence. In his counsels, in his knowledge and in his volitions with respect to the world, in his relations to time and space, God is not unchangeable. In these regards he undergoes movement and change, and suffers himself to be conditioned.'

⁸⁵ *ibid*, 29. '[This] freedom,' he wrote, 'is a co-operative factor, and his own acts condition both the operations and the communications of God. Neither intellect nor heart can be satisfied with a view of God which represents him as remaining eternally the same, for present, past, and future, instead of his position and feelings assuming a form correspondent to man's character.'

⁸⁶ See, Boethius, *The Consolation of Philosophy*. Trans with Introduction and Notes by Richard H. Green (Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, 2002; reprint of New York: McMillan Publishing, 1962), 104-107.

⁸⁷ McCabe, *The Foreknowledge of God and Cognate Themes*, 237.

⁸⁸ See: McCabe, *Divine Nescience of Future Contingencies a Necessity*, 19, where he argued that this must be so since '[a]ll God's infinite attributes move on in ineffably harmonious relations from everlasting unto everlasting,' and God's 'will holds each attribute in subserviency [sic] to the perfection and consistent activities of the whole.'

⁸⁹ McCabe, *The Foreknowledge of God and Cognate Themes*, 237. This was so since 'Paul [said] God hath made of one brotherhood all the nations of men, and determined their bounds. But God could not have determined the bounds of the nations of men if those bounds had been eternally determined. The fact that he determined those bounds proves that he originated the resolve to determine them. If he originated that resolve he originated the conception to determine them; and if he originated that conception he can originate conceptions now; he can now form conceptions of which he has never before thought.'

⁹⁰ Hayes, *The Foreknowledge of God*, 55. See also, Lorenzo Dow McCabe, 'The Genesis of Human Responsibility,' *Methodist Review* (September 1889), 761-762.

⁹¹ *ibid*, 285ff.

⁹² McCabe, *Divine Nescience of Future Contingencies a Necessity*, 33.

⁹³ *ibid*, 53.

⁹⁴ *ibid*, 106.

⁹⁵ *ibid*, 134.

⁹⁶ This is parallel to Boyd, *Satan and the Problem of Evil*, 178-206.

⁹⁷ McCabe, in *Divine Nescience of Future Contingencies a Necessity*, 123, proposed that '[m]oral character is the result of freely volitiating [sic] in harmony the standard of immutable rightness,' whereas [a]n immoral character is the result of freely volitiating [sic] in opposition to that standard.'

⁹⁸ *ibid*, 124.

⁹⁹ *ibid*, 124-125.

¹⁰⁰ This accords with the major emphasis of Boyd in both *God At War* and *Satan and the Problem of Evil*.

¹⁰¹ McCabe, *The Foreknowledge of God and Cognate Themes*, 85. He concluded that [h]uman agencies respond too feebly to the divine command [of the Great Commission]; and they will continue to do so until all Christian men dismiss all enervating delusions about the plans of God, and his bringing things about 'in his own good time and way,' and enter most heartily into the great battle with sin, under the strong conviction that otherwise the momentous designs in respect to which we stand forth, before men, angels, and God, as responsible actors and agents may after all be disastrous and overwhelming failures.' See also, 361.

¹⁰² Richard Roth, quoted in McCabe, *The Foreknowledge of God and Cognate Themes*, 221. Another German philosopher in this school of thought, Isaak August Dorner, spoke of God's knowledge in terms reminiscent of Calcidius: 'We cannot be satisfied with the assertion that for God there can be no thing past and nothing future as such, but that everything exists before him as in an eternal self-identical present God knows what is present as the present, and thus the divine knowledge of actuality advances as appropriate thereto. What is yet future and known as such, moves into the present and from there into the past; but the divine knowledge accompanies it in its course, it assumes a changing shape in the divine knowledge itself, and that presupposes a movement, a change even in

the knowing activity of God himself' (quoted in King, 'God's Nescience of Future Contingents,' 115.

¹⁰³McCabe, *Divine Nescience of Future Contingencies a Necessity*, 98.

¹⁰⁴ibid, 99. Furthermore, he wrote: 'If, from its purely human side, prayer can effect no real changes in the infinite mind and heart, it is an institution destitute of both sense and utility. But if prescience of contingencies be true, how can prayer exert the slightest influence in changing the thoughts, feelings, purposes and volitions of Deity? Upon the hypothesis of prescience, prayer can effect no changes in God. Thus one of the sublimest [sic] of all the sublime institutions of the Christian religion, one of the grandest of all the moral engines, stands forth before the world, not draped in the respectable habiliments of mystery, but in the disheartening garb of tantalizing absurdities.'

Prayer and the reality of mutual relationship it implies are major concerns for open theists. Eg see, Sanders, *The God Who Risks*, 271-274; see also Brother Andrew, with Susan DeVore Williams, *And God Changed His Mind* (Grand Rapids: Chosen Books, 1990).

¹⁰⁵McCabe, *The Foreknowledge of God and Cognate Themes*, 18,19.

¹⁰⁶ibid, 23. He went on to say that '[i]t has given to infidelity stronger ramparts on which to plant its fierce batteries against divine revelation than that wily foe has been able to find anywhere else. It has made excuse or the occasion or burying energy, enterprise, great endowments, and large possibilities in the grave of indifference. It has put fetters on thousands of immortals, or floated them as mere waifs into the gulfs of debasing indulgence. It has retarded the Gospel, taken power from the Church, brought upon her fearful eclipses, and set her down amid shadows in the pursuit of interminable and pointless controversies.'

¹⁰⁷Miley, *Systematic Theology*, vol 2, 184-185.

¹⁰⁸ibid, 185. Miley would clearly disagree with contemporary detractors of open theism and their dire warnings about what could result if open theists are allowed within evangelical ranks.

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