

S. M. BAUGH AND THE
MEANING OF FOREKNOWLEDGE:
ANOTHER LOOK

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I. INTRODUCTION

When faced with questions about predestination, Arminians often respond by pointing out to their Calvinist interlocutors that in the NT it seems clear that predestination is preceded by foreknowledge. They believe that a straightforward reading of Rom 8:29 fits well with the Arminian view that predestination to salvation is based upon God's will to save *and* human response to the possibility of salvation, for here we read that the predestined are "those God foreknew." Arminians sometimes argue that their view is supported even more clearly in 1 Pet 1:2, for here we see that the elect are "those who have been chosen according to the foreknowledge of God." Drawing from passages such as these, Arminians maintain that predestination is based upon God's foreknowledge of which human persons will and which human persons will not (or would not) accept the offer of salvation.

In an influential essay, S. M. Baugh has attempted to rescue Rom 8:29 and similar texts for Reformed theology by arguing that the meaning of foreknowledge in the NT renders "impossible" the "Arminian notion of 'foreseen faith' . . . as an interpretation of God's knowledge" when foreknowledge concerns predestination.¹ He vigorously objects to the common Arminian interpretation—to Baugh such readings of Scripture import theology into the meaning of the sacred texts in a way that does unconscionable violence to them.²

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¹S. M. Baugh, "The Meaning of Foreknowledge" in *Still Sovereign: Contemporary Perspectives on Election, Foreknowledge and Grace* (ed. Thomas R. Schreiner and Bruce A. Ware; Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000), 195.

²Baugh, "The Meaning of Foreknowledge," 194, 195.

Aware that his basic position appears to enjoy widespread support among recent and contemporary Calvinist theologians,³ we challenge Baugh's conclusions. In this essay, we look first at Baugh's word studies and the conclusions he draws from them. We then focus attention on the work that these conclusions are called to do for his theology, and we argue that he has not made a convincing case that the Arminian interpretation is "impossible." Noting that Baugh tends to conflate exegetical and logical issues, we find Baugh's arguments to be both unclear and unpersuasive; we conclude that he has not closed the door to the Arminian view of foreknowledge and predestination.

II. BAUGH'S ESSAY: AN OVERVIEW

Baugh begins by drawing attention to what he calls the "Achilles' heel" of Arminianism—its affirmation of God's foreknowledge of the future free choices of humans. He states that if God foreknows these free choices, then such choices "must be certain in a way that excludes the Arminian (libertarian) conception of free will."⁴ Baugh clearly endorses compatibilism; he insists on the reality of freedom while also maintaining that determinism is true.⁵ After briefly noting that Arminians respond to the problem of freedom and foreknowledge in different ways (and after labeling open theists "neo-Socinian in regards [sic] to foreknowledge"),⁶ Baugh then focuses on the meaning of foreknowledge in Scripture. He points out that God's knowledge is portrayed in the OT as "vast and perfect"; he insists that divine knowledge in both the OT and the NT (as well as in Greco-Roman literature) is both exhaustive and certain.⁷

The heart of Baugh's essay concerns the meaning of προγινώσκω, especially as used for God's foreknowledge in Rom 8:29; 11:1-2; and 1 Pet 1:1-2. Baugh argues that προγινώσκω does not and indeed "cannot refer to mere intellectual apprehension."⁸ Instead, προγινώσκω refers to something much more personal than mere "intellectual precognition of faith or anything else in the believer."⁹ What προγινώσκω means is that God *personally* foreknows those whom he predestines to salvation.

³Examples include the following Calvinist theologians (although some are more modest in their claims): Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 676-77; Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1983), 926; J. Oliver Buswell, *A Systematic Theology of the Christian Religion*, Vol. 2: *Soteriology and Eschatology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1963), 150; and Robert L. Reymond, *A New Systematic Theology of the Christian Faith* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1998), 466. Robert Peterson cites Baugh's article in his recent *Why I Am Not An Arminian* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2004).

⁴Baugh, "The Meaning of Foreknowledge," 183.

⁵*Ibid.*, 183, 189, 190, 197.

⁶*Ibid.*, 185.

⁷*Ibid.*, 186.

⁸*Ibid.*, 191.

⁹*Ibid.*

Baugh admits that γινώσκω commonly was used by the Greeks “for cognition, acknowledgement, perception, or related intellectual states, and rarely with a person as the object of knowledge.”¹⁰ But he also argues that the corresponding Hebrew verb, ירע, involves a personal relationship of commitment. Surveying the usages of ירע, he works hard to show that “the phrase *God knows us* expresses a relationship of commitment.”¹¹ Baugh then attempts to demonstrate that this personal and relational aspect of God’s knowledge is carried over into the NT, and he argues that God’s foreknowledge of those who are predestined to salvation is therefore also relational, personal, and committed. He rejects the common Arminian interpretation:

The classic Arminian interpretation of Romans 8:29, that God’s foreknowledge of faith is in view, is clearly reading one’s theology into the text. Paul does not say: “whose faith he foreknew,” but “whom he foreknew.” He foreknew us. That is not to say that God was ever ignorant of the fact that we would believe. But in Romans 8:29, predestination is not dependent on faith; rather, God predestines us on the basis of his gracious commitment to us before the world was.¹²

Baugh offers what he takes to be a “rendering (that) better expresses the concept behind Romans 8:29: ‘Those to whom he was previously devoted’”¹³

Baugh takes the same line in 1 Peter 1; he insists that the Arminian interpretation means that “God’s choice is reduced to a ratification of the individual’s autonomous decision.”¹⁴ Holding to the idea that divine foreknowledge is God’s prior, personal, and intimate knowledge of those persons who are predestined for salvation, Baugh maintains that in 1 Pet 1:1-2, “speaking about God’s foreknowledge may be a way of expressing his eternal commitment to individuals as part of his determination to bring them to faith and to all the glories and benefits of Christ’s work.”¹⁵

In summary, we can see that Baugh argues that the meaning of γινώσκω (and ירע as background) shows that God’s knowledge is relational, committed, and deeply personal. When the prefix προ- is included, we are to conclude that divine foreknowledge in the NT refers to God’s prior (to creation) commitment to and personal relationship with certain individuals whom God then predestines to

¹⁰Ibid., 192.

¹¹Ibid., 193.

¹²Ibid., 194.

¹³Ibid.

¹⁴Ibid., 195.

¹⁵Ibid., 196.

salvation. From this, Baugh concludes that the Arminian position is "impossible."¹⁶

But Baugh concludes more as well—indeed much more. He concludes that "naturalistic theology" is "germinal in Arminianism."¹⁷ He also concludes that Arminianism comes to "logical fruition" in Socinianism; Socinianism is a "consciously more consistent Arminianism."¹⁸ So Arminianism is an inconsistent and self-contradictory Socinianism,¹⁹ while the "neo-Socinianism" of open theism is "beyond the boundaries . . . of Christianity."²⁰ In other words, Arminianism is in big trouble. At best it is internally inconsistent and incompatible with the teachings of Scripture. At worst it is a deliberate departure from orthodox Christianity.

III. BAUGH'S ARGUMENTS: AN ANALYSIS

Baugh's word studies seem to us to be quite clear and indeed helpful. But his actual arguments are less than pellucid, and his conclusions appear to us to go far beyond what is warranted by his exegesis. In fact, it seems that some of his conclusions have little if anything to do with the meaning of προγινώσκω. We find at least three different arguments against Arminianism in this essay. Summarizing these succinctly (and we hope fairly), we respond to each in order.

Baugh's main argument has to do with the meaning of προγινώσκω and its relevance to the debates over predestination among Calvinists and Arminians. Exactly how the understanding of knowledge as personal and relational makes Arminianism false and Calvinism true is not clear, but we take it to be either a simple *modus tollens* argument (one that makes use of a disjunctive syllogism) or a similar *modus ponens* argument. Baugh seems to assume that:

1. Either Determinist Calvinism is true or Arminianism is true;

He also thinks that

2. If Arminianism is true, then God's (fore)knowledge of persons is not committed and relational;

He argues at some length that

3. God's (fore)knowledge of persons is committed and relational;

And he concludes that

4. Therefore, Arminianism is false (MT 2,3);²¹

¹⁶Ibid., 195.

¹⁷Ibid., 199.

¹⁸Ibid.

¹⁹Ibid., 184.

²⁰Ibid.

²¹Ibid., 195.

And

5. Therefore, Determinist Calvinism is true (DS 1,4).²²

If it is the *modus ponens* version, then it goes something like this:

1. Either Determinist Calvinism is true or Arminianism is true;
- 2.* If God's (fore)knowledge is committed and relational, then Determinist Calvinism is true;
3. God's (fore)knowledge is committed and relational;
- 4.* Therefore, Determinist Calvinism is true (MP 2*,3);
- 5.* Therefore, Arminianism is false (DS 1,4*).

In either case, Baugh is arguing that because God's (fore)knowledge is personal, committed, and relational, then predestination is unconditional, Arminianism is false, and Determinist Calvinism is true. If this (or something in the neighborhood) is the argument, then Arminians have several lines of response open to them. First, Arminians can respond that (1) is ambiguous; it is too vague to be of much help here. For one thing, Baugh's characterization might limit the options even more than some *Reformed* theologians would want to allow. Some *Reformed* theologians might deny determinism while still attempting to hold to unconditional election in matters of salvation only, but Baugh's approach would not allow this. Indeed, it is arguable that some important *Reformed* theologians have taken this route.²³ Even if it is not clear to us just how this approach might work (for reasons beyond the scope of this discussion, we are skeptical that it would), Baugh's approach would never give it a chance.²⁴

More importantly, Baugh's assessment hardly does justice to the historical depth of this debate.²⁵ The interpretation of foreknowledge

²²Ibid., 190.

²³Richard A. Muller argues that the *Reformed* scholastics (including the very opponents of Arminius) consistently repudiated metaphysical determinism ("Grace, Election, and Contingent Choice: Arminius's Gambit and the *Reformed* Response," in *The Grace of God, The Bondage of the Will*, Vol. 2: *Historical and Theological Perspectives on Calvinism* [ed. Thomas R. Schreiner and Bruce A. Ware; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1995], 269-77; idem, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics: The Rise and Development of Reformed Orthodoxy, ca. 1520 to ca. 1725* [4 vols.; Grand Rapids: Baker, 2003], 1:123, 128-29, 3:29).

²⁴We are confident that Baugh's argument would fail even if it attempted only to show that *election* is unconditionally determined (whether or not everything else is determined).

²⁵Although Baugh does not cite *Reformed* predecessors, his argument for the meaning of προγινώσκω is not new among the *Reformed*. Francis Turretin says that God's "foreknowledge" can be taken in two ways: "either theoretically or practically, the former . . . pertains to [God's] intellect; the latter for practical love, and the decree which God formed concerning the salvation of this one or that one, and it looks to [God's] will (*vel* theoretice, *vel* practice; *priori* . . . *pertinet ad intellectum; posteriori pro dilectione practica, et decreto quod Deus de hujus vel illius salute statuit, et ad voluntatem spectat*)" (*Instituto Theologiae Elencicae* IV.vii.8). In Rom 8:29, he says foreknowledge

in Rom 8:29 as God's foreknowledge of something *about* a person is "Arminian" only in the sense that Arminius agreed with this interpretation, not in the sense that the interpretation originated with him. Furthermore, if we take "foreknowledge" in Rom 8:29 to be referring to God's foreknowledge of something *about* an individual (the "theoretical/intellectual" [Turretin] or "cognitive" [Baugh] aspect), then Arminians have a remarkable amount of support from the patristic tradition. Such Fathers as Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Origen, Hilary, Ambrose, Jerome, Chrysostom, and John of Damascus all agreed that God predestines on the basis of what he foreknows about a person.²⁶

Moreover, Baugh does not adequately distinguish between differing versions of Arminianism. He consistently sees a distinction between traditional Arminianism and "Open Theism," but beyond that he does not deal with the varieties of Arminianism. But it is not clear to us that all objections that might count against simple foreknowledge Arminianism or those versions of Arminianism that are quick to punt to mystery would also count against classical,

means both "love" (*dilectio*) and "election" (*electio*) (*Institutio* IV.vii.9). It is important to note, however, that Turretin does not here make Baugh's stronger claim that this interpretation *alone* rules out Arminianism.

²⁶E.g., Irenaeus: "Therefore God foreknowing (*praesciens*) all things, prepared apt habitations for both [groups of people]: to those who seek after the light of incorruptibility, and return to it, he is kindly giving this light which they desire (*eis quidem qui inquirunt lumen incorruptibilitatis, et ad id recurrunt, benigne donans hoc quod concupiscent lumen*)" (*Adversus Haereses* IV.xxxix.4). Origen: "For in this, [the question of] the will [of those foreknown] is greater than the foreknowledge of the creator (*voluntas magis est, quam praescientia conditoris*). For where will the foreknowledge appear, since what is future depends on the choice of the doer (*quod futurum est, pendeat in factoris arbitrio*)?" (*In Epistolam ad Romanos* VII.vii.6). Ambrose: "For God did not predestine before he foreknew, but whose merits he foreknew, their rewards he predestined (*quorum merita praescivit, eorum praemia praedestinavit*)" (*De Fide* V.vi.83[82]). Commenting on Romans 9, John Chrysostom says, "Therefore why on the one hand was one [Jacob] loved, and the other [Esau] hated? . . . Even before these [actions God] knows who is the evil one, and who is not (*πρὸ τούτων [πραγμάτων] οἶδε τίς μὲν ὁ πονηρὸς, τίς δὲ ὁ μὴ τοιοῦτος*)" (*In Epistolam ad Romanos homil.* XVI.v). "For this is of foreknowledge (*προγνώσεως*), to be chosen from their births (*ἐξ ὧδινων αὐτῶν ἐκλέγεσθαι*). In order that, he says, God's election which happens according to his purpose and foreknowledge (*τοῦ Θεοῦ ἡ ἐκλογὴ ἡ κατὰ πρόθεσιν καὶ πρόγνωσιν γενομένη*) might be manifest, for from the first day he both knows and proclaimed which one was good and which one was not" (Chrysostom, *Ad Romanos* XVI.vi). Commenting on Eph 1:4-5, Chrysostom says, "What does it mean, 'In him he chose?' Through faith in him (*διὰ τῆς εἰς αὐτὸν πίστεως*), he says, Christ accomplished it before we became. . . . For if indeed [he predestined us] from his love only, all must be saved; but again if from our virtue only, his coming is superfluous, as well as all things in the divine dispensation. But it is neither from love only, nor from our virtue, but of both (*ἀλλ' οὔτε ἀπὸ ἀγάπης μόνης, οὔτε ἀπὸ τῆς ἡμετέρας ἀρετῆς, ἀλλ' ἐξ ἀμφοτέρων*)" (*In Epistolam ad Ephesios Homil.* I.ii). For references to the other Fathers and brief discussion on this topic, see James Jorgenson, "Predestination according to Divine Foreknowledge in Patristic Tradition," in *Salvation in Christ: A Lutheran-Orthodox Dialogue* (ed. John Meyendorf and Robert Tobias; Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1992), 159-69.

Molinist Arminianism. Something like (1) is probably true, but as it stands it needs work. Unfortunately, however, Baugh barely takes notice of the differences between the various kinds of Arminianism or the various Arminian interpretive and theological strategies.²⁷

Arminians can also contest (3), and they may be able to make a good case. We do not wish to do so here, for we think that Baugh might be right that God's (fore)knowledge of persons is committed and relational knowledge.²⁸ And more importantly, we do not need to do so, for we take issue with (2) and (2*). Both (2) and (2*) are not obviously true, and Baugh makes no argument for either of them. But why should we think that they are—or might be—true? Arminians hold (with many other Christians) that there is a sense in which God is committed to being in relationship with all human persons (1 Tim 2:3-4), regardless of their response to grace and their ultimate destiny. So if God is committed to all persons this way, surely he is committed to those who are predestined to salvation. And, from Baugh's word studies alone, the meaning of γινώσκω, προγινώσκω and יָרַע do not have obvious meaning for who is predestined for salvation or what the bases for that predestination are.

It is true that the only persons explicitly referred to in the προγινώσκω passages under consideration (Romans 8 and 1 Peter 1) are those who are predestined for salvation. So maybe the meaning

²⁷More disturbing is Baugh's claim that Arminians affirm that salvation is based upon an "autonomous decision" made by an "autonomous will" ("Meaning of Foreknowledge," 195, 199). To the contrary, Arminius clearly denied such connotations of human autonomy in salvation. Cf. Jacob Arminius, *Apologia adversus Articulos quosdam Theologicos*, art. XXVII, in *Opera Theologica* (Frankfurt: Wolfgang Hoffmann, 1635), 140-41; in *The Works of James Arminius* (London ed.; trans. James Nichols and William Nichols; 3 vols.; London, 1825, 1828, 1875; repr. with an intro. by Carl Bangs; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1986), 2:51-52, with idem, *Verklaring van Jacobus Arminius, afgelegd in de vergadering van de staten van Holland op 30 Oktober, 1608* (ed. G. J. Hoenderdaal; Lochem: De Tijdstroom, 1960), 113-14; *Opera*, 140-41; *Works*, 1:664: "I ascribe to God's grace the beginning, the continuing, and the fulfillment of all good (het beghinsel, den voorgangh, ende de volbrenginghe alles goets), also so far that the regenerate man himself, without this preventient and stimulating, following, and cooperating grace, can neither think, will or do the good, nor also resist any temptation to evil. From this it appears that I do not diminish God's grace, attributing too much to man's own free will." Nor do responsible evangelical Arminian theologians make such claims. In fact, many Arminian theologians make statements that are directly contrary to the characterization of Arminianism offered by Baugh, e.g., John Wesley: "Natural free-will, in the present state of mankind, I do not understand: I only assert, that there is a measure of free-will supernaturally restored to every man" ("Predestination Calmly Considered" in *The Works of John Wesley: Third Edition, Complete and Unabridged*, Vol. 10: *Letters, Essays, Dialogs, Addresses* [Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1984], 229-30; see also Thomas C. Oden, *John Wesley's Scriptural Christianity* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994], 244-45; Kenneth J. Collins, *The Scripture Way of Salvation: The Heart of John Wesley's Theology* [Nashville: Abingdon, 1997], 38, 42-43; Miner Raymond, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. 2 [Cincinnati: Hitchcock and Walden, 1877], 169-71; and John Mark Hicks, "The Righteousness of Saving Faith," *Evj* 9 [1991]: 27-39).

²⁸Ben Witherington III, *Paul's Letter to the Romans: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 227-30; and Grant R. Osborne, *Romans* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2004), 221-23 deny (3) on exegetical grounds.

is more restrictive, maybe it is even true that God has personal knowledge only of those who are predestined for salvation. But even so, Baugh has given us no reason to think that Determinist Calvinism must be true for there to be personal and relational knowledge. For the meaning of προγινώσκω as committed, relational, and personal knowledge does not tell us much. It does not tell us whether God's prior knowledge of a person who will be saved is based only upon God's own decision or on both God's decision and the decision of the person who is saved. The word study alone (at least as Baugh has presented it) does not tell us enough to make a decision one way or another. And the analogies we have from the personal knowledge of human relationships—including the "knowledge" (יָדַעַת) shared by Adam and Eve—might lead us to believe that truly personal knowledge is actually dynamic and reciprocal, thus perhaps even supporting the Arminian position that divine foreknowledge of persons includes knowledge of their (libertarianly) free responses. After all, Adam's "knowledge" of Eve surely was personal and relational, yet we have no reason to think that Eve's actions were determined by him.

Baugh's argument does not convince us that the committed and relational personal knowledge of God makes the Arminian interpretation impossible. He readily affirms that God's personal (fore)knowledge does not exclude but rather includes divine knowledge of all choices that those persons will make and all actions those persons will take.²⁹ As Baugh admits, God's (fore)knowledge of persons (as relational) includes knowledge of the full set of free choices that these persons will make. But this does not tell us whether those choices are free in a libertarian sense or free in a compatibilist sense. To assume that they must be free only in a compatibilist sense is to beg the question.³⁰ So it may be that God's personal (fore)knowledge includes the knowledge of persons who freely (in a libertarian sense) choose God in response to God's choice.

Baugh takes for granted that once he has proved that God's knowledge is relational, he has thus proved that predestination is determined and unconditional. He assumes that there can be no room for a libertarianly free response if divine (fore)knowledge is relational.

But this tacit assumption is an unwarranted leap.³¹ Both sides of the debate can concur that God's foreknowledge is comprehensive, embracing both relational and cognitive dimensions, that is, in knowing each person God knows that person's faith and actions.

²⁹Baugh, "The Meaning of Foreknowledge," 194.

³⁰If Baugh's other arguments are successful, then maybe they would help him here.

³¹C. E. B. Cranfield, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 2 vols. (ICC; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1975), 1:431 n. 1, seems to make a similar leap. Cf. also Douglas J. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 532-33.

However, Baugh fails to demonstrate that this relational knowledge is not mutual, that the election based upon it is unconditional or that determinism is true. That God's previous relational commitment may also be grounded in one's will for mutuality with God and one's standing in Christ has not been ruled out by Baugh.

Douglas J. Moo is close to Baugh when he suggests that Rom 8:29 says nothing about "in Christ"; he concludes that election "in Christ . . . does not fit these verses very well."³² We are not so sure. On the contrary, the whole context of Romans 8 addresses assurance for "those who are in Christ Jesus" (Rom 8:1). After quoting 1 Pet 1:18-20, that Christ has been foreknown (chosen), Baugh claims that Christ's faith and action were not the objects of foreknowledge or the point of this passage.³³ Yet, we submit that not only was the *person* of Christ foreknown, but his *faithful obedience* (as the divine-human Second Person of the Trinity incarnate for our salvation) indeed is a key point of this passage: you were redeemed "with precious blood as of an unblemished and unspotted lamb" (1 Pet 1:19). God's foreknowledge of Christ is connected with his sinless sacrifice, his action. Baugh has done nothing to show that God's foreknowledge and election of Christ's disciples cannot be based on their acceptance of God's grace. On the one hand, we could agree with Baugh that, in Rom 8:29, προγινώσκω connotes God's previous devotion to his creatures. On the other hand, we believe that this acknowledgement in no way contradicts Arminius's view that "God can previously have affection for and love as his own no one among sinners, unless he foreknew in Christ, and considered him as a believer in Christ."³⁴ Baugh's argument does nothing to show that the Arminian interpretation is not viable. As it stands, the argument from (1)-(5) is unsuccessful.

This brings us to Baugh's second argument. As far as we can see, it has little to do with the relational meaning of προγινώσκω. But it is relevant to the general discussion of foreknowledge and predestination, and it does seem to play an important role in Baugh's essay, so we include discussion of it here. Baugh claims that God has exhaustive and definite foreknowledge of all future events *because* God has determined those events. For instance, Baugh states that God has "clear prescience of all that surrounded Christ's death . . . because he had determined to bring it about."³⁵ He continues by

³²Moo, *Romans*, 533.

³³Baugh, "The Meaning of Foreknowledge," 196.

³⁴"Deum neminem ex peccatoribus pro suo praediligere et amare posse, nisi eum in Christum praenoverit, atque ut credentem in Christum intuitus fuerit" (Arminius, *Examen modestum praedestinationis Perkinsianae*, in *Opera*, 513; *Works*, III:296). Cf. also Arminius, *Examen Thesium D. Francisci Gomari de Praedestinatione* (Amsterdam, 1645), 39, 70; *Works*, III:558, 585. See also James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 1-8* (WBC 38A; Dallas: Word, 1988), 482, who agrees with this meaning of προγινώσκω, yet refrains from theological speculation regarding the basis of God's foreknowledge and predestination.

³⁵Baugh, "The Meaning of Foreknowledge," 189.

insisting that "the certainty of God's knowledge of the event was . . . certain and foreknown because God had determined to accomplish it."³⁶ For Baugh, it is clear that God knows the future with certainty *because* God has determined it—but if God has not determined the future, then God is not in a position to know the future.³⁷ Arminians deny that God determines the future, so Baugh asserts that Arminians cannot affirm (at least with consistency) that God knows the future. Baugh's argument seems to go like this:

6. If God determines the future, then God knows the future;
7. God knows the future;
8. Therefore, God determines the future.

But this is clearly wrong-headed—if this is what is going on in Baugh's argument then we have an obvious case of the fallacy of affirming the consequent. God's determination of the future might be a sufficient condition for divine foreknowledge, but it hardly follows that it is a necessary one. The problem with this argument is obvious enough that we will assume—despite appearances to the contrary—that Baugh does not intend this as his argument.

So maybe Baugh intends something more like:

- 6.* If and only if God determines the future, then God knows the future;
7. God knows the future;
8. Therefore, God determines the future.

Unfortunately for Baugh, there is an additional problem with this argument—we have been given no reason to believe that (6*) is true. Why should we think that God can know something only if he determines it? It *may* be true that *we* could have certain knowledge of the future only if we were able to determine it, although even this seems unlikely. But even if it were true of us, why think thus of God? Yes, we are created in the divine image, but surely the *amount* of our knowledge is vastly different from that of God. Why should we suppose that the *mode* of divine knowledge is the same as ours—why should we think that God can only know something future on the basis of having determined it? Why should we presume that God's knowledge is what the scholastics called *discursive*, that is, that it is based on or inferred from something? In questioning (6*), we feel that we are in good company. For centuries Christians have denied that God's knowledge is *discursive*; for instance both Thomas Aquinas and many Reformed scholastics of the seventeenth century

³⁶Ibid., 190.

³⁷Ibid., 199.

denied that God's knowledge is based upon anything.³⁸ More recently, Alvin Plantinga has argued that, although we don't know how God knows the things he knows, we do have good reason to believe that "his knowledge doesn't proceed via the causal channels by which our knowledge proceeds; we know further that it doesn't proceed by way of any other causal channels either."³⁹ We do not presume to know *how* God knows what he knows, nor are we sanguine about our ability to comprehend the mode of divine knowledge (Rom 11:33, 34). We conclude that the arguments from 6-8 and 6*-8 are far from compelling.

Perhaps this is not what is going on at all; maybe what we have taken to be a second argument in Baugh's essay is only a part of what we now identify as his third argument. Baugh begins his essay with reference to a philosophical argument for determinism:

If God infallibly knows the free choices of humans, then these choices must be certain in a way that excludes the Arminian (libertarian) conception of free will. Let us say that God knows from eternity that Jones will choose soup from next Tuesday's lunch menu; how can Jones choose salad instead? If he does, God would have been mistaken. If God's knowledge is certain, Jones's choice of soup is inevitable. "And if the future is inevitable, then the apparent experience of free choice is an illusion."⁴⁰

We can summarize his argument as follows:

9. If God knows the future, then determinism is true;
10. God knows the future;
11. Therefore, determinism is true.

We begin by noting that this argument has little if anything to do with the relational meaning of προγινώσκω. We also note that this argument is widely debated—Baugh could have strengthened his

³⁸Thomas Aquinas says, "The act of God's understanding is his substance" (*Summa Theologiae* Ia.xiv.4.resp.); "His existence is his understanding (*suum esse sit suum intelligere*)" (*ST* Ia.xiv.5.resp.); "In divine knowledge (*scientia*) there is no discursiveness" (*ST* Ia.xiv.7.resp.). See also Richard A. Muller, who affirms that the Reformed orthodox agreed that in God "*scientia* is an . . . *actus simplicissimus*" (*Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics: The Rise and Development of Reformed Orthodoxy, ca. 1520 to ca. 1725*, Vol. 3: *The Divine Essence and Attributes* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 2003], 398). As Muller points out, the scholastic rationale for rejecting the discursiveness of divine knowledge is based upon a doctrine of divine simplicity. We note that the critic of this route should not too hastily assume either (a) that there is only one doctrine of divine simplicity available, or (b) that the doctrine of simplicity needed to avoid discursive knowledge equals or entails the doctrine of "property simplicity" that has been so roundly (and, in our view, rightly) criticized. For criticism of "property simplicity" see Alvin Plantinga, *Does God Have a Nature?* (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1980).

³⁹Cf. Alvin Plantinga, "Divine Knowledge," in *Christian Perspectives on Religious Knowledge* (ed. C. Stephen Evans and Merold Westphal; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 63.

⁴⁰Baugh, "The Meaning of Foreknowledge," 183.

argument by drawing from the various philosophical theologians who have given extended treatment to this issue and have advanced similar arguments with clarity and rigor.⁴¹ We do not attempt to settle this issue here, but we do point out that Baugh also could have made a stronger case by responding to various objections to this argument. For this argument (especially [9]) and its conclusion are far from being universally or widely accepted in metaphysics and philosophical theology today! In addition to the simple and convincing points made by Boethius,⁴² Arminians have recourse to some sophisticated responses (and rigorous arguments for them) to the problem of freedom and foreknowledge that are readily available to them.⁴³ For instance, if the Ockhamist distinction between "hard" and "soft" facts is legitimate, then Baugh's illustration of Jones and the lunch menu fails, as does his charge that "if God infallibly foreknows the free choices of humans, then these choices must be certain in a way that excludes the Arminian (libertarian) conception of free will."⁴⁴ If either Ockhamism or Molinism (or a Molinist strategy that incorporates Ockhamism) is viable, then it is arguable that there is at least one obvious way out for Arminians.⁴⁵ But Baugh takes no notice of Ockhamism, nor does he offer any consideration of Molinism. So the argument from 9-11 may have some rhetorical force, but as it stands it is far from compelling.

IV. CONCLUSION

Baugh claims that the meaning of προγινώσκω renders the Arminian view of predestination impossible and thus necessarily endorses Calvinism.⁴⁶ Our less forceful claim is that the Arminian position has not been ruled out. It is our view that the use of προγινώσκω, especially in Rom 8:29, likely underdetermines the

⁴¹William Hasker argues that exhaustive divine foreknowledge of future events (as understood in the traditional sense) renders impossible libertarian freedom. This leads him to deny exhaustive divine foreknowledge (*God, Time and Knowledge* [Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989]). For examples of rigorous cases for determinist Calvinism (and compatibilism), see John S. Feinberg, *No One Like Him: The Doctrine of God* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2001); Paul Helm, *Eternal God: A Study of God Without Time* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1988), 109-94; idem, *The Providence of God* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1994).

⁴²Boethius, *De Consolatione Philosophiae* Book V.

⁴³Cf. William Lane Craig, *Divine Foreknowledge and Human Freedom: The Coherence of Theism I: Omniscience* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1990).

⁴⁴Cf. Alvin Plantinga, "On Ockham's Way Out," *Faith and Philosophy* 3 (1986): 235-69.

⁴⁵Some of the more important works on Molinism include Luis de Molina, *On Divine Foreknowledge: Part IV of the "Concordia"* (trans. with an introduction and notes by Alfred J. Freddoso; Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988); William Hasker, David Basinger and Eef Dekker, eds., *Middle Knowledge: Theory and Applications* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2000); Thomas P. Flint, *Divine Providence: The Molinist Account* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998); and Edward Wierenga, *The Nature of God* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989).

⁴⁶Baugh, "The Meaning of Foreknowledge," 195.

debate between Calvinists and Arminians. Although it is agreed that God foreknows everything, including certain individuals for the purpose of salvation, the verse does not specify which aspect of foreknowledge God is utilizing (cognitive or relational or—more likely—both). God predestines, but the verse does not specify the grounds for predestination; it does not directly address the focus of this debate. To say that God foreknows a person's response of faith that results in mutual and deeply relational, committed love does not contradict the meaning of *πρόγνωσις*, that is, God's personal, eternal commitment to that person.

Determinist Calvinism finally may be true. But at this point the arguments adduced by Baugh on its behalf from the meaning of foreknowledge are far from persuasive. The meaning of *προγινώσκω* *might* support the Calvinist position. It does appear to give Calvinists some hermeneutical "wriggle room" in answering Arminian exegesis of these contested passages. It may even somehow yet render the Arminian position "impossible." But if we are correct, then Baugh has not shown this to be the case. The meaning of foreknowledge in these disputed texts appears to be at least as amenable to an Arminian interpretation as to a Calvinist reading.⁴⁷

⁴⁷Thanks to Steve Blakemore and Jerry Walls for their comments on an earlier draft of this essay.

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