

## APPENDIX L

## ARMINITAS: A DIALOGUE

JACRATES: So, as I think you can see from my arguments, it follows that God can foreknow and predict the future infallibly precisely because he is the one who controls and determines exactly what will transpire in the future and can predict it ahead of time because he knows what he purposes to do. So, the fact that he can predict the future is evidence that God determines even the very choices we make.

ARMINITAS: But, Jacrates, that is just the point. What makes you so sure that God could not accomplish his purposes and do so without fail and still have men make choices that he did not determine? That seems very reasonable to me.

JACRATES: Ah, yes, I see your point. Perhaps you could help me see it a little better though. How could God infallibly accomplish his purposes and yet not determine the choices of men? Could you help me see more clearly how that could be?

ARMINITAS: Most certainly!

JACRATES: Great! I am eager for you to proceed.

ARMINITAS: Do you not agree that God is very wise and skillful?

JACRATES: Oh yes! I do indeed.

ARMINITAS: And do you not agree that God does control and direct the physical environment around us?

JACRATES: Yes, I most certainly do.

ARMINITAS: And, in fact, if what I shall prove is so, he controls the actions of other people toward us as well?

JACRATES: Yes, certainly! We agree on that. How he does so seems to be the point at issue between us.

ARMINITAS: Then God controls and directs every influence that comes into our life and experience?

JACRATES: Yes, I agree that that is so.

ARMINITAS: Do you also agree that God understands us better than anyone else? Even better than we understand ourselves?

JACRATES: Yes, I agree with that.

ARMINITAS: And do you agree that God understands us well enough that he could predict with great precision how we will react to a certain situation and all of its influences?

JACRATES: Yes, I do. I agree with that.

ARMINITAS: Then, Jacrates, can you not see? God could quite easily accomplish everything that he purposes by simply bringing exactly those influences to bear on us that will compel us to choose whatever he wants us to choose. Now the choice is fully ours. God did not create the choice, as you suggest, nor determine it in the way that you have been saying. Rather, our choice is made in complete independence from God. But yet we are put in a position by God, who totally controls our environment, where God knows that we will make exactly that choice he wants us to make. In just such a way, by controlling the influences at work on us, God is able to control what our choices will be, but without actually creating or determining those choices for us. Do you see what I am saying, Jacrates?

JACRATES: Yes, Arminitas, I think I do.

ARMINITAS: Then, you can see how futile and unnecessary and ridiculous all your ramblings about divine determinism are?

JACRATES: Well, Arminitas, as for knowing how ridiculous my ramblings are, I have always known that. But I still do not find divine determinism ridiculous. It still seems much more reasonable than what you have suggested.

ARMINITAS: What, Jacrates, are you out of your mind?

JACRATES: Probably.

ARMINITAS: Why can you not see the logic in what I am saying? Where do you not find it compelling?

JACRATES: I can see the logic in what you are saying just fine. But your assumptions are what give me great trouble.

ARMINITAS: Please explain.

JACRATES: On the one hand, Arminitas, you assume that our choices are totally determined by something other than a person himself and you assume this in order to prove that God could control our choices by creating the network of influences at work on us. But then, after you have finished your proof, you tell me that “of course our choices are not determined at all” and that we make them “in total independence from God.”

ARMINITAS: But I never did assume that our choices were totally determined by something other than ourselves.

JACRATES: In that case, Arminitas, I must take serious exception to your proof.

ARMINITAS: Why is that?

JACRATES: Arminitas, did you not ask me to agree that God understands us well enough that he could predict with great precision how we will react to a certain situation and all of its influences?

ARMINITAS: Yes, I did.

JACRATES: And did I not agree with you?

ARMINITAS: You most certainly did.

JACRATES: But you did not tell me that I was to agree with you without assuming that our choices were totally determined.

ARMINITAS: No, not explicitly; but I was assuming you would understand that.

JACRATES: Well, Arminitas, I don't see how I can agree with you any longer if you will not allow me to believe first that my choices are determined.

ARMINITAS: Why is that Jacrates?

JACRATES: Arminitas, do you think it possible that God could predict with great precision choices that were random?

ARMINITAS: No, most certainly not.

JACRATES: Then, you agree that God could not predict with great precision choices that were uncaused and undetermined?

ARMINITAS: Yes, I agree.

JACRATES: So you are assuming that our choices are determined and caused by someone or something?

ARMINITAS: Most definitely, by ourselves!

JACRATES: Now you don't mean that our choices cause themselves, do you?

ARMINITAS: No, of course not. We cause our choices, our choices don't cause themselves. That would be absurd.

JACRATES: So our choices are neither uncaused nor are they self-caused? They are neither undetermined nor self-determined?

ARMINITAS: That is correct.

JACRATES: So they must be determined by someone or something else?

ARMINITAS: Yes, that is what I have been saying all along. We cause our choices.

JACRATES: We are in agreement then that we cause our choices?

ARMINITAS: Yes, certainly! I do hope this argument of yours is going somewhere.

JACRATES: Now, can we agree, Arminitas, that our will is what causes our choices?

ARMINITAS: Yes, I think that is accurate.

JACRATES: Now, what do we know about the will? Is the will itself uncaused? Is it eternal and without any creator?

ARMINITAS: No! Most definitely not.

JACRATES: And did the will create itself out of nothing? Did it cause itself?

ARMINITAS: No, of course not.

JACRATES: So the will is caused by something other than itself.

ARMINITAS: Yes, that is true.

JACRATES: And is that something God? Did God cause our wills to be?

ARMINITAS: Yes, of course. God created our wills.

JACRATES: Now, Arminitas, does it make any difference in your answers just now that we have not defined precisely what our will is? Do we need to define it precisely? Or can we proceed on the assumption that however it is to be defined our answers just now would remain just the same?

ARMINITAS: We can proceed. I don't think I would change my answers no matter how we might define the will so long as it is anywhere close to a reasonable definition.

JACRATES: Good. And do you agree that it would be impossible for God to cause our wills to exist—that is, to create them—without thereby determining the principles by which they would operate in making our choices.

ARMINITAS: Yes, that seems reasonable.

JACRATES: So, do you agree that any choice we make has been determined by our own will that has, in turn, been determined by God, who created it? And, hence, that every choice we make has been ultimately determined by God?

ARMINITAS: Yes, I believe I must if I am to be logical.

JACRATES: So do you see why I could agree with you that God understands us well enough to know how we will respond to particular influences? I could agree with you if God is the one who has determined the way we will respond. But if God is not the one who determines the way we will respond, then I don't see how he could know. If God has not determined the way we will respond, then no one has. If no one has, then our choices are undetermined. But if our choices are undetermined, then God could not know how we would respond in a given situation, for our choices would be random. So, Arminitas, if I agree with your assumption, then I must believe that God has determined our choices. But if I do not believe that God has determined our choices, then I cannot agree with your assumption. No matter how well God knows us, if the choices we make are random and uncaused, then not even he could predict what choices we would make.

ARMINITAS: If all this is true, Jacrates, then why does what I argued still make sense to me?

JACRATES: I think the problem is that you weren't altogether honest with me. You agreed with me that it would be impossible for God to cause our wills to exist—that is, to create them—without thereby determining the principles by which they would operate in making our choices. Now, on the one hand, you do believe that; but, on the other hand, you don't accept it at all. You apparently have some sort of notion that both are true at the same time. On the one hand, God created our wills and everything about them and determined the principles by which they would operate. But, on the other hand, you clearly want to believe that there is something about the way the will functions in making choices that is not determined by God, but is self-determining. That way you can eat your cake and have it to. God is the creator of our will, but God does not ultimately determine the function of the will that is decisive in dictating what my choices will be.

ARMINITAS: Yes, I believe you are right. That is exactly what I am thinking. I was too hasty then to grant you that if God created the will, he necessarily determines how it will function. I do not agree with that. He has, certainly, determined the general principles by which our wills operate. But the more specific principles that are decisive in determining our specific choices, God does not determine those. God has deliberately and purposely created them to be free of his control.

JACRATES: Good. Now we are beginning to get somewhere, Arminitas. You almost have me convinced. However, I need your help in seeing just one more thing..

ARMINITAS: What's that?

JACRATES: I just need for you to tell me, then—if God does not determine the more specific principles that are decisive in determining what our specific choices are, then who or what does? Is it perhaps our genetic code? Do our genes then finally determine our choices by creating the specific principles whereby our wills function?

ARMINITAS: Heavens, no! Our wills would certainly not be free wills if that were the case. B. F. [Skinner] is right about that. There's no sense talking about freedom and dignity if everything is determined by genes or chemistry or physics or what have you. But we all know that we have free wills! That's just plain common sense. No, its not genes.

JACRATES: What then?

ARMINITAS: Well, it's our personalities. My personality is what gives rise to the specific principles that determine decisively what my will chooses.

JACRATES: I see. And where did my personality come from? Did not God create it and determine exactly what it would be?

ARMINITAS: Yes, of course.

JACRATES: Then, you are just having fun with me, Arminitas. If God created my personality and determined exactly what it will be and if my

personality determined what those specific principles are that determine exactly how my will will function in making specific choices, then God is the one who ultimately determines each and every one of my specific choices after all.

ARMINITAS: Well, no, I guess my personality is not what determines how my will functions.

JACRATES: Well, what then?

ARMINITAS: Nothing, I guess nothing determines it.

JACRATES: Nothing! You mean nothing causes those specific principles to exist that determine exactly how my will functions? Are those principles eternal then. Have they always existed right alongside God himself. Is there some part of God's creation that he did not create?

ARMINITAS: No, of course not...

JACRATES: Then these principles created themselves out of nothing all by themselves. This sounds like evolution! Is that what you are saying?

ARMINITAS: No, of course not. You are just beginning to rattle me a little, Jacrates. I spoke too hastily. I didn't really mean that nothing determines them. I just meant that I don't know what to name that thing that determines those principles. It is just some aspect of the will itself that God does not control.

JACRATES: Oh, all right. Let's give this "we-know-not-what-its-name-is" a name then. Can we call this aspect of the will, the 'brumpf'?

ARMINITAS: Sure, why not?

JACRATES: O.K. And where did my brumpf come from? Did not God create it and determine exactly what it would be?

ARMINITAS: No, you won't trap me this time. No! God did not determine exactly what it would be. That's the whole point.

JACRATES: Is it created, Arminitas? Or have our brumpfs always existed



from before the foundation of the world?

ARMINITAS: No, my brumpf had to have been created.

JACRATES: And who created it?

ARMINITAS: It had to be God.

JACRATES: Are you not playing with me again, Arminitas? Tell me if this doesn't make sense: If God created my brumpf and determined exactly what it will be and if my brumpf determined what those specific principles are that determine exactly how my will will function in making specific choices, then God is the one who ultimately determines each and every one of my specific choices after all. Isn't that right?

ARMINITAS: It would be, Jacrates, except I think God created my brumpf without determining exactly what it will be.

JACRATES: My! God can work miracles. But I don't see how he could possibly do that. Well, let's suppose you are right. If not God, then who or what did determine what our brumpf would be, even though not he but God created it?

ARMINITAS: Well, I don't know the name of it.

JACRATES: Since we have shown ourselves so good at names shall we invent another? How about 'rattle'? Our rattle is what determines exactly what our brumpf will be that then determines what those specific principles are that dictate our specific choices. Now, is our rattle also created by God without being determined by God? And should we find yet another name for that thing that does determine what exactly our rattle will be even though God and not that thing created our rattle? And shall we keep on this way until we run out of names, Arminitas? Or shall we sooner or later find some part of our will that is either eternal and uncreated like God or is capable of creating itself out of nothing all by itself or is both created and determined by the same thing?

ARMINITAS: Yes, I think sooner or later we shall.

JACRATES: And which shall we find?

ARMINITAS: I think we shall find something that is both created and

determined by the same thing.

JACRATES: Oh good! I was getting very tired thinking about it. And what will that same thing be that both creates and determines this aspect of our wills?

ARMINITAS: It must be God, of course.

JACRATES: And so God does finally determine those very specific principles that dictate what choices our wills will make after all?

ARMINITAS: Yes, I think he must. What do you think Allophon? Should we concede Jacrates his point? Are you convinced that divine determinism is the only way to explain how God can so totally control the affairs of history?

ALLOPHON: No, I'm afraid not. I must confess that I do not immediately see what is wrong with Jacrates' reasonings, but surely something is wrong. Your explanation, Arminitas, makes much more sense to me than Jacrates'.

JACRATES: Allophon, let us assume then for a moment that Arminitas was right in his explanation as you are quite confident is the case. Tell me, then, do you believe in free will?

ALLOPHON: Certainly. That is why I am so sure that you are wrong, Jacrates.

JACRATES: And what is 'free will,' Allophon?

ALLOPHON: Well, I'm not sure I have defined it for myself carefully enough, but I guess I would say it is something like man's ability to make choices that have not been decisively determined by anything or anyone other than the man himself.

JACRATES: Alright, that sounds like a good enough definition for a start. Would you say, then, that a machine has a free will? I mean, some machine that has artificial intelligence, for example?

ALLOPHON: No! Certainly not.

JACRATES: Why not? Is it because the laws of physics that direct the operations of the machine and the particular physical state of the machine's environment at any given time are decisive in dictating what that machine's choices or decisions will be at that time?

ALLOPHON: Yes, exactly!

JACRATES: Now what about this theory that Arminitas has offered to the effect that God can infallibly control men's actions without actually determining their choices? Help me understand it a little better. Do you understand Arminitas to be saying that God can so skillfully control a man's physical environment that he can compel him to make exactly that choice that he wants him to make?

ALLOPHON: Yes, that is how I understand it.

JACRATES: Now, we have already agreed that God knows the future infallibly, and that the only way that that can be so is if he has infallible control over the choices of men. Isn't that so?

ALLOPHON: Yes, we are agreed on that.

JACRATES: So you are suggesting then that God is able to have infallible control over the choices of mankind through skillful manipulation of their physical environment?

ALLOPHON: Yes, that's what I would say.

JACRATES: Now if God is capable of infallible control of men's choices through their physical environment, then does it not follow that a man's physical environment must have inexorable control over what a man decides? Otherwise, no matter what physical environment a man found himself in, there would always exist the possibility that the man would choose something other than what his environment was influencing him toward. Isn't that so?

ALLOPHON: That doesn't sound quite right. Explain what you mean some more.

JACRATES: Look at it this way. Let's make a distinction. Let's call an

“influence” something in my physical environment that creates pressure on my will to choose in one direction rather than another. But although an influence creates pressure on the will to choose in a certain direction, it does not actually dictate that the will must necessarily choose that direction. It is always possible, by our definition, to choose something contrary to what an influence is pushing us toward. But let’s call a “cause” something in my physical environment that makes it physically impossible for me to choose other than what the cause is dictating that I choose. Do you understand my distinction?

ALLOPHON: Yes. Clearly.

JACRATES: Alright then, how is it that God uses our physical environment to control our choices? Does he use it as a very compelling influence, or does he use it as a cause?

ALLOPHON: I’m not sure what difference it makes.

JACRATES: Well, let me ask you this: is it your belief that God controls the affairs of man absolutely with no margin for error. What I mean is this— is there any possibility of God somehow not succeeding to control a man’s choices the way he wants?

ALLOPHON: No, I don’t think there is any possibility of that.

JACRATES: So you really literally did mean that God controlled a man’s choices infallibly.

ALLOPHON: Yes. I believe that is literally true.

JACRATES: Now, according to our definition, it is always possible for a man to make a choice contrary to what an influence is pushing him toward. So, if it is impossible for a man to make a choice contrary to what God is pushing him toward through his manipulation of the environment, then it must be the case, by our definitions, that God uses the environment to *cause* us to choose the way we do. He doesn’t merely use the environment to *influence* our decision. He actually uses it to *cause* it.

ALLOPHON: Yes, that would seem to follow.

JACRATES: Now, let’s return to our artificially intelligent machine for a moment. Would you agree that the choices the machine makes are caused

by its physical environment? Or do you think that the physical environment is only an influence?

ALLOPHON: Certainly the physical environment causes the machine's choices.

JACRATES: And did we not agree earlier that the reason our machine does not have free will is because the laws of physics and its environment actually cause, by our definition, the choices the machine makes?

ALLOPHON: Yes, I suppose we did.

JACRATES: And did we not just now say that the physical environment causes us to make the choices we make?

ALLOPHON: Yes, we did.

JACRATES: Should I conclude then that you don't believe we have free will after all, Allophon? Or is there some difference between me and the machine that I have failed to notice?

ALLOPHON: Well, I think there is a difference. The machine doesn't choose how it will respond, it just does what the laws of physics make it do. But people choose what they shall do.

JACRATES: And what do you mean by that exactly? Do you mean that whereas the machine has to do what it does because it is simply responding to its physical environment, people don't have to do what they do in response to their physical environment and could actually do exactly the opposite?

ALLOPHON: Yes, that's right.

JACRATES: But Allophon, my friend, I thought you told me you believed that God controlled our choices infallibly; and, hence, that our environment *caused* our choices such that we do what we do out of necessity? Didn't we decide that must be the case if it is true that God infallibly controlled human choice?

ALLOPHON: Yes, I seem to recall that we did.

JACRATES: Then am I to take it that you do not believe that man has

free will? Are we just like the machine? Or should we assume that Arminitas' theory is wrong? Perhaps we should reject Arminitas' theory that God can control human choices through skillful manipulation of his environment because the only way God could do that is if man does not have free will.

ALLOPHON: Well, I do believe in free will. That is precisely why I did not feel comfortable with your theory that God causes our choices. It has seemed to me that your theory is incompatible with free will. But if you're right and Arminitas' theory is incompatible with free will, then I don't like it either.

JACRATES: Shall we make that our conclusion then?

ALLOPHON: No. Not so fast. Perhaps Arminitas' theory is still sound. Perhaps rather we were wrong to assume that God was infallible in his ability to control our choices. Perhaps God is just very, very successful. Maybe 99.9999% successful. We still have free will and it is our free will that is the deciding factor in what we will do, but God is simply very good at exerting just the right influences to induce us to choose what he wants us to choose.

JACRATES: So Allophon, am I to understand that God's prophetic predictions are not infallible either? Are they only 99.9999% reliable? "Thus says the Lord, I'm 99.9999% sure that ...."?

ALLOPHON: Well, I don't know. That doesn't sound exactly right does it? But maybe. Well, why not?

JACRATES: Well, it's possible I guess. I'm just glad that I don't have to be the prophet when God misses. Seems to me there's another problem though. I understand why our machine's choices are controlled by its environment. There's a physical and mechanical relationship between what happens to the machine and what the machine does. But you are denying that kind of connection in people aren't you?

ALLOPHON: Yes, I am. I think that's one of the things that makes people different from machines.

JACRATES: Then, how is it that the physical environment could actually

control what one chooses?

ALLOPHON: Well I don't know *how* exactly. I mean, I don't know the mechanics of it. But you surely know yourself that when you are very hungry and there is something to eat, you will eat it. Well, if you are hungry enough and God puts something desirable enough in front of you, he can pretty much guarantee that you will eat it. I think that must be how it works.

JACRATES: To the tune of 99.9999%?

ALLOPHON: Yeah.

JACRATES: Well, remember when God put Jesus in the wilderness and got him very hungry and then had Satan suggest that he use his supernatural powers to turn stones into bread. Was God trying to get Jesus to turn the stones into bread and eat them, but yet Jesus didn't do it? Is that an example of where God actually failed to control Jesus' choices? Is that one of the .0001%?

ALLOPHON: No, God didn't want Jesus to turn the stones to bread. That was a test and Jesus had the strength of character to resist the temptation.

JACRATES: But isn't that the same as saying Jesus had the strength of character to resist the influences on him? Like hunger?

ALLOPHON: Yes.

JACRATES: But what do you think? Did God not make normal human beings to have the strength to resist influences on their choices? Or is that how God can control us—because we always give in to the things that influence us? And if so, is it true that God wouldn't blame us for giving in to those kind of influences on our choices, since we don't really have the ability to resist them?

ALLOPHON: No, we're supposed to be able to resist too.

JACRATES: But you can't have it both ways, Allophon. Either we can't effectively resist influences (in which case it makes sense that God could

be 99.9999% successful in controlling our choices) or we can resist and are expected to resist the influences on our choices. In fact, we are expected to freely choose what is right against whatever pressure of influences exists. If the latter, then I don't see how God, no matter how skillful he is, could rate as high as 99.9999%. Furthermore, doesn't it seem strange that we would applaud God for something we find so reprehensible in one another?

ALLOPHON: What's that?

JACRATES: Manipulation. We don't find it particularly noble when people try to manipulate others, exploiting their weaknesses to get them to do what they want them to. We find that rather wicked of them. Why would 99.9999% successful manipulation not be at least as wicked?

ALLOPHON: I suppose you have a point there.

JACRATES: I think divine determinism makes a lot more sense. Arminitas' theory gets us into all kinds of trouble.

ALLOPHON: Perhaps you are right.



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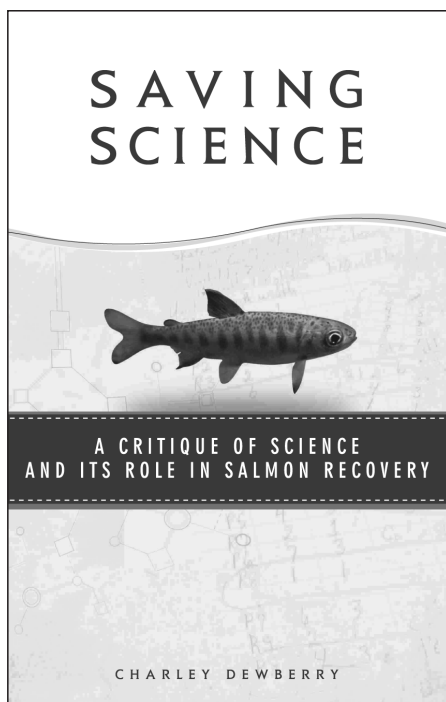
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Almost everyone assumes that sound science is the best hope for saving Pacific Northwest salmonids. But what is sound science? From his unique perspective, Dr. Charley Dewberry examines the background, assumptions, and inconsistencies behind the common view of science and he prescribes the remedies for saving science.



Charley began a Ph.D. program in stream ecology at Oregon State University but ended up completing a Ph.D. in philosophy of science at the University of Oregon in 1995, motivated largely by many of the issues raised in this book. He currently is a tutor at Gutenberg College in Eugene, Oregon.

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