WILLIAM OCKHAM
PREDESTINATION,
GOD'S
FOREKNOWLEDGE,
AND
FUTURE
CONTINGENTS
Second Edition

TRANSLATED, WITH INTRODUCTION,
NOTES AND APPENDICES, BY
Marilyn McCord Adams
and
Norman Kretzmann

Copyright © 1983 by
Marilyn McCord Adams and
Norman Kretzmann
All rights reserved
Printed in the United States of America
Cover design by Laszlo J. Balogh
Hackett Publishing Company, Inc.
P.O. Box 44937
Indianapolis, Indiana 46244-0937

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data
William of Ockham, ca. 1285-ca. 1349.
Predestination, God’s foreknowledge, and future contingents.
Translation of: Tractatus de praedestinatione et de praescientia Die et de futuris contingentibus.
Bibliography: p.
Includes index.
1. Predestination—Early works to 1800. 2.Logic—Early works to 1800. I. Adams, Marilyn McCord.
II. Kretzmann, Norman. III. Title.
B765.033.T73 1982 234'.9 82-23317
ISBN 0-915144-14-X
ISBN 0-915144-13-1 (pbk.)

PREDESTINATION, 
GOD'S FOREKNOWLEDGE, 
AND FUTURE CONTINGENTS

[QUESTION I]"  

A  Regarding the subject of predestination and foreknowledge, it should be observed that those who suppose that passive predestination and passive foreknowledge are real relations in the

1Square brackets enclose words or phrases introduced into the text by the translators. An asterisk following a word (as on p. 36) indicates that we are adopting one of the variant readings cited in the footnotes to Boehner's edition. The contents of Ockham's treatise are organized around the consideration of five questions, all but the first of which are explicit in the text. Question I might be worded 'Are passive predestination and passive foreknowledge real relations in the person who is predestinate and foreknown?'. Ockham first produces an argument in support of a negative answer to this question and then deals with a series of objections to the argument or the answer. In Boehner's edition of the treatise the heading "[Quaestio Prima seu Dubium Primum]" is not supplied until the point at which marginal letter B appears. In his article "Ockham's Tractatus de Predestinatione et de Praescientia Dei et de Futuris Contingentibus and Its Main Problems" (in Philotheus Boehner, Collected Articles on Ockham, ed. Eligius M. Buytaert, "Franciscan Institute Publications, Philosophy Series" No. 12; St. Bonaventure, N.Y., The Franciscan Institute, 1958; pp. 420-441) Boehner is accordingly led to the mistaken view that Question I is concerned to show that "Even he who is opposed to real distinct relations has to admit contradictory propositions" (p. 422). In the manuscripts on which Boehner's edition is based the only occurrence of the heading "Quaestio Prima" is here at the beginning of the treatise.

2One of those Ockham is referring to may be Alexander of Hales (d. 1275), who held the view that predestination (or reprobation) is a form really inhering in the predestinate (or reprobate) person. Alexander thought, moreover, that the inherence of the form of predestination (or reprobation) in someone 'settled' it that that person would receive eternal life (or eternal punishment) on the day of judgment. Thus 'A is predestinate' would entail 'A will receive eternal life' and 'B is reprobate' would entail 'B will receive eternal punishment.' See Alexander's Summa theologiae, Pars I, Inq. 1, Tract. V, Sect. II, Quaest. IV, Tit. 1, c. iii, 293, where he seems, evidently mistakenly, to ascribe this view to Peter Lombard (d. 1160/64), the author of the Sentences.

3Compare the similar argument in Book One of Ockham's Commentary on the Sentences (the Ordinatio), d. 30, q. 2, c; also his Summa logicae, III (3), c. 31 (edn. Venet., 1508, fol. 90ra). (Boehner) (The data in references followed by Boehner's name in parentheses are supplied in the notes to his edition of the Treatise.) To suppose that passive predestination—i.e., the condition of being predestinate—is a real relation in the predestinate person is to suppose that it is on a par with, say, the real relation of filiation in a child. For Ockham's opponents, a real relation was not only that obtains independently of any mental act, but a thing (res) really distinct from substance and quality.

4A person is said to commit the sin of final impenitence when he dies without having confessed or repented of some mortal sin he has committed.

5Ockham's reasoning is governed by the doctrine that predestination and reprobation are jointly exhaustive as well as mutually exclusive conditions for all human beings.

6I.e., passive predestination and passive reprobation can be ascribed to or predicated of A. Cf. Ockham's Summulae in libros Physicorum III, c. 15: "In the broad sense 'denominatio' is used for 'predicato.' 'Denominatio' is taken strictly when a denotative name [such as 'predestinate'] signifying two things (one directly and the other, inhering in the first, indirectly) ... is predicated of something." On denotative names (or paronyms) generally see Aristotle, Categories, Ch. 8 (10a27-10b12), and Desmond Paul Henry, The De Grammatico of St. Anselm: The Theory of Paronymy, University of Notre Dame Medieval Studies, Vol. XVIII; Notre Dame, Ind., University of Notre Dame Press, 1965.
predestination—and then I ask whether or not charity can be destroyed; and the conclusion deduced earlier follows whether it can or cannot be destroyed.11

[Reply.] I maintain that what he assumes is false, for ‘everyone existing [in a state of] charity is predestinate’ is false, just as ‘everyone who commits mortal sin is reprobate’ is false. For Peter and Paul committed mortal sin but were never reprobate; similarly, Judas sometimes performed a meritorious act12 (meruit) but was not then predestinate. For these propositions [viz., ‘everyone existing in a state of charity is predestinate’ and ‘everyone who commits mortal sin is reprobate’] are equivalent to some about the future, since they are equivalent [respectively] to these: ‘God will give these [existing in a state of charity] eternal life’ and ‘God will give those [having committed mortal sin] eternal punishment.’ [But corresponding propositions about the future—viz., ‘God will give Peter eternal life’ and ‘God will give Peter eternal punishment’] do not follow [respectively] from ‘Peter is in [a state of] charity’ and ‘Peter has committed’ mortal sin.13 Therefore, if no one could be in [a state of] charity without having been predestinate, the conclusion of the argument would be opposed as much to those who deny as to those who

---

Note that the “I” of this paragraph is not Ockham but an objector. Objection 1, unlike the other objections in Question 1, is a direct criticism of the argument Ockham has just offered. It evidently rests on the claim that whether or not passive predestination is a real relation in the [predestinate, charity is a quality really distinct from and inhering in the person] who is in a state of charity. The objector assumes not only the commonly accepted thesis that if x is in a state of charity, x is accepted by God, but also that ‘x is in a state of charity entails x is predestinate.’ Ockham follows the theological consensus when he rejects the latter entailment.

11Haultry, Lexique, art. "Meritum": "... As far as we know, Ockham nowhere presented a formula that summarized his entire doctrine of merit. But since he defends Duns Scotus’s views against Peter Auriol, the following definition, propounded by Duns Scotus, may perhaps be presented as expressive of his thought: A meritorious act is the act of a free will produced under the influence of grace and accepted by God as worthy of supreme blessedness. [...] If this definition is expressive of Ockham’s thought, then God’s acceptance of an act as worthy of supreme blessedness is not tantamount to his predestinating the agent of that act. In this reply Ockham obviously does take it for granted that if one performs a meritorious act one is in a state of divine acceptance, even if only temporarily.

12The position Ockham takes in opposition to the view that passive predestination is a real relation, and on which he bases this reply, is stated in Assumptions 1-4, of which Assumption 4 is especially pertinent here. Ockham’s reply is complicated at this point by an unnecessary shift from a plural to a singular example.
who suppose [that they are real] relations. But that is false, and so the conclusion is not [of that sort].

C [Objection] 2. Every proposition about the present that is true at some time has [corresponding to it] a necessary 14 proposition about the past. For example, if 'Socrates is seated' is true, 'Socrates was seated' will be necessary forever after. But suppose 'Peter is predestinate' is now true; in that case 'Peter was predestinate' will always be necessary. Then I ask whether or not he can be damned. If he can be so, suppose that he is. Then 'Peter is reprobate' is true of the present; therefore 'Peter was reprobate' will always be necessary of the past. Thus 'Peter was predestinate' and 'Peter was reprobate' would be true at one and the same time.

[Reply.] I maintain that the major premiss is false (as is clear from Assumption 3 [pp. 46-47 below]); for that proposition that is about the present in such a way that it is nevertheless equivalent to one about the future and its truth depends on the truth of the one about the future does not have [corresponding to it] a necessary proposition about the past. On the contrary, the one about the past is contingent, just as is its [corresponding proposition] about the present. 15 All propositions having to do with predestination and reprobation are of this sort (as is clear from Assumption 4 [p. 47 below]), since they all are equivalent about the future even when they are verbally (vocatiter) about the present or about the past. 16 Therefore 'Peter was predestinate' is contingent just as is 'Peter is predestinate.'

And when you ask whether Peter can be damned, I reply that

14In the terminology of at least one thirteenth-century logician, William of Sherwood, such a proposition is "necessary per accidenta" and not to be confused with propositions "necessary per se": "... in case something cannot be false now or in the future or in the past it is said to be necessary per se — e.g., 'God is.' But it is necessary per accidenta in case something cannot be false now or in the future although it could have been false in the past — e.g., 'I have walked' (in Norman Kretzmann, William of Sherwood's Introduction to Logic, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1966, p. 41). See Introduction, pp. 5-9 above. In at least one place (Ordinatio, Prologus, q. 6) Ockham himself uses the label "necessary per accidents." He says, "Many propositions about the past are of this sort. They are necessary per accidents because it was contingent that they would be necessary, and they were not always necessary."

15For a discussion of the basis of this objection see Introduction, pp. 5-9 above. For the basis of Ockham's reply, see Introduction, pp. 12-16.

16The frequently recurring phrase "all propositions having to do with predestination and reprobation" (our rendering of the even vague Latin "omnia propositiones in ista materia") is intended to cover primarily propositions (a) in which passive
Predestination, God’s Foreknowledge, and Future Contingents

[Question 1]

F

[Objection] 5. Since everything that is God or is in God is necessary, divine predestination is necessary. Therefore, necessarily He predestinated Peter. Therefore Peter necessarily is predestinate, and so not contingently.

[Reply.] I maintain that 'predestination is necessary' can be understood in two different ways. In one way [it can be understood as the claim] that which is principally signified by the noun 'predestination is necessary. [Understood] in this way, I grant it, since that [which is principally signified] is the divine essence, which is necessary and immutable. In another way [it can be understood as the claim that that which is secondarily signified by the noun 'predestination'—viz.,] that someone is predestinated by God [is necessary]. [Understood] in this way, [predestination] is not necessary, for just as everyone who is predestinate, * contingently is predestinate, so God contingently predestinates everyone [who is predestinate].

And when it is said that divine predestination is immutable and therefore absolutely necessary, I maintain that what is immutable and real is necessary. When, however, we are speaking of an immutable complex—['mutable' and 'immutable'] in the sense in which one complex can change from truth to falsity and vice versa and another complex cannot change in that way—then not everything immutable is necessary. For there is some contingent proposition that cannot be first true and afterwards false and vice versa, so that it is [not] true to say of it 'this proposition is true now but was false earlier' and vice versa, and yet [this proposition] is not

---

18In his Opus Oxoniense (I, d. 40, q. u., n. 1, arg. 2 (Boehnner), Duns Scotus addresses himself to this argument expressed in these same words. Ockham’s reply is, however, quite different from Scotus’s in its strategy.
19See Assumption 6. See also Introduction, pp. 17–20 above, on the antecedent and the consequent disposing will of God.
20Objection 4 bears some resemblance to Aristotle’s argument in De causo I, Ch. 12, 281b20–25, which concludes “therefore everything that exists forever is absolutely indestructible.”
21Objection 5 is evidently based on the “real relations” view of active predestination, considering it to be a condition really inhering in God and hence necessary. The basis of Ockham’s reply is his general denial of the “real relations” view. Active predestination is no more a real relation in God than is passive predestination in Peter, and to speak of God’s predestination of Peter is simply to speak of God’s granting eternal life to Peter at some future time.
22Compare the account of the signification of ‘predestination’ in Assumption 1 with the account presented in this reply. The difference between the two accounts is partly this: it is the fact that it is really the signification only of ‘divine (or active) predestination’ that is presented here. This account is more easily followed if one thinks of it as applied to the analysis of ‘divine predestination’—viz., ‘God’s granting eternal life to someone at some future time’—which signifies principally God Himself, the agent, and secondarily His future action.
23Cf. Book One of Ockham’s Commentary on the Sentences (the Ordinatio), d. 40, q. 1, B (Boehnner). Notice that the first clause of this sentence introduces a variation on Objection 5 and that Ockham’s reply to it begins in the second clause and continues through the remainder of the paragraph.
24A “complex” here is a complex of terms — i.e., a proposition.
necessary but contingent. The reason for this is that although* by hypothesis [the proposition] is true and will have been true, it is nevertheless possible that it is not true and that it will never have been absolutely true. For example, ‘God knows that this person will be saved’ is true and yet is possible that He will never have known that this person will be saved. And so that proposition is immutable and is nevertheless not necessary but contingent.25

[Objection 5a.] On the contrary: every proposition that is true now and can be false can change from truth to falsity. But suppose that the proposition ‘Peter is predestinate’ is true now and can be false (as is* consistent); therefore [‘Peter is predestinate’ can change from truth to falsity].26

[Reply.] I maintain that the major premise is false, since more is required—i.e., that the proposition that will be false or will be capable of being false was true at some time. Therefore, although the proposition ‘Peter is predestinate’ is true now and can be false, nevertheless when it will be false, it will* be true to say that it never was true. Therefore it cannot change from truth to falsity.

[Objection 6.] When opposites are related to each other in such a way that one cannot succeed the other, then if one of them is posited the other cannot be posited— as is clear regarding blindness and vision. But to be predestinate and to be damned are [opposites] of this kind. Therefore [if one of them is posited the other cannot be posited].

[Reply.] I maintain that this is not true as regards such opposites as those to which future contingents correspond— opposites such as to be predestinate and to be reprobate. Therefore, although they could not succeed each other, still it does not follow that if one obtains the other cannot obtain.27

25In this reply Ockham presents the first sketch of the main line of his position, which is retracted in greater detail in, e.g., Question II, Article III, Part One, and Question V. See Introduction, pp. 26–30 above.

26Here as elsewhere in the remainder of the Treatise the conclusion is left unexpressed, the argument ending with the formula “igitur, etc.” In every such case we supply the intended conclusion within brackets.

27The objector’s example is open to misinterpretation unless it is understood that the blindness is absolutely incurable. The fact that incurable blindness can succeed vision while vision cannot succeed incurable blindness is of no consequence to the objection or to Ockham’s reply, even though in the case of predestination and reprobation neither can succeed the other. The reply rejects the objector’s analogy solely because blindness is a real condition and hence subject to necessity per accidens (see note 14). Peter’s blindness is a condition that is posited in actuality; Peter’s pre-

[Objection 6a.] On the contrary: concerning everyone of whom it is true to say today that he is predestinate and nevertheless that he can be reprobate tomorrow, ‘predestinate’ and ‘reprobate’ can be successively verified of28 him. Therefore [these opposites can succeed each other].

[Reply.] I deny it, unless it could be truly said when he is reprobate that he was at some time predestinate. Therefore, since this cannot be said in the case put forward, they are not successively verified of one and the same person, nor can they be.

[Objection 7.] One whom God predestinated from eternity He cannot not predestinate, for otherwise He could change [—which is absurd]. Therefore if God predestinated Peter from eternity, then from eternity He cannot not predestinate him. As a consequence, necessarily he will be saved.

[Reply.] I maintain that the first proposition is false, since all such [propositions] as ‘God predestinated Peter from eternity’ and ‘Peter was predestinated from eternity’ are contingent, since they can be true and they can be false—not successively, however, so that they are true after they were false, or vice versa. Therefore, even though ‘God predestinated Peter from eternity’ and [other propositions] of that kind are true now, before Peter is granted supreme blessedness, they can nevertheless be false. If he should in fact be damned, then [that proposition] is false in fact (or [such propositions] are false in fact). [Such propositions] therefore, are just as contingent with the phrase ‘from eternity’ as without it. Nor do they present any difficulty other than that presented by those that are verbally about the present.29

28In this reply Ockham presents the first sketch of the main line of his position, which is retracted in greater detail in, e.g., Question II, Article III, Part One, and Question V. See Introduction, pp. 26–30 above.

29Here as elsewhere in the Treatise, ‘verified of’ means ‘used as predicate terms in true, affirmative, present-tense propositions about.’
[Objection] 8. I ask regarding the things that have been revealed by the Prophets whether or not necessarily they come to pass as they have been revealed. If so, then since such things are future, it follows that their opposite cannot come to pass. On the other hand, if not, then ‘this is revealed’—where some such thing is indicated—was true at some time and therefore was ever afterwards necessary. Now it was not revealed as false, for the Prophets did not say what is false. Therefore it was revealed as true. Therefore it is necessary that what is revealed come to pass, since otherwise what is false could form the basis of a prophecy.

[Reply.] I maintain that no revealed future contingent comes to pass necessarily; rather, contingently. I grant that ‘this is revealed’ was true at some time and that its [corresponding proposition] about the past was ever afterwards necessary. I grant also that it was not revealed as false, but as true and contingent (rather than as true and necessary). Consequently it could have been and can be false. Nevertheless the Prophets did not say what is false, since all prophecies regarding any future contingents were conditionals. But the condition was not always expressed. Sometimes it was expressed—as in the case of David and his throne—sometimes it was understood—as in the case of the prophecy of the destruction of Nineveh by the prophet Jonah: “Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown”—i.e., unless they would repent; and since they did repent, it was not destroyed.

Cf. Ockham’s Quadripartite, IV. 4 (Boehner).
Psalm 131 [132], 12 (Boehner): “If thy children will keep my covenant, and these my testimonies which I shall teach them: Their children also for evermore shall sit upon thy throne.”
Jonah 3, 4 (Boehner).

ASSUMPTIONS

K In order to resolve these objections I first make certain assumptions. Once these are seen, the resolution of the arguments will be clear.

Assumption 1. Neither active predestination nor active reprobation is a real thing distinct in some way or other from God or the divine Persons. Nor is passive predestination something absolute or relative distinct in some way from the person who is predestinate.

But the noun ‘predestination’ (or the concept), whether taken in the active or in the passive sense, signifies not only God Himself who will give eternal life to someone but also the person to whom it is given. Thus it signifies three things: God [who will give eternal life to someone], eternal life, and the person to whom it is given. Similarly, ‘reprobation’ signifies God who will give eternal punishment to someone, [eternal punishment, and the person to whom it is given].

Assumption 2. All propositions having to do with predestination and reprobation are contingent whether they are of present tense—e.g., ‘God predestinates Peter’ and ‘Peter is predestinate’—or of past tense, or of future tense. If any [such proposition] were necessary, it would be one about the past. But ‘Peter was predestinate,’ for example, is neither a necessary proposition nor a proposition de necessario. For I ask whether or not Peter could be

Cf. Book One of Ockham’s Commentary on the Sentences (the Ordinatio), d. 41, q. 1, F (Boehner).
The first two sentences of Assumption 1 constitute Ockham’s first explicit assertion of the position he took in response to Question I and which formed the ultimate basis of his replies to all the preceding objections.
See note 22.
At this point in the text Boehner has a note referring to Book One of Ockham’s Commentary on the Sentences (the Ordinatio), d. 38, q. 1, N. (See Appendix 1, pp. 90–91 below.) The passage referred to, however, does not bear directly on Assumption 2 but rather on Assumption 6.
Ockham, Expositio aurea (Bologna, 1496), fol. 122c: “A necessary proposition
Predestination, God’s Foreknowledge, and Future Contingents

damned. If not, then necessarily he will be saved, and in that case there would be no need to deliberate or to take trouble—which is absurd.  
If he can be damned, suppose that he is so in fact. Then ‘Peter is damned’ is true. Therefore after this instant ‘Peter was damned’ will always be true. But according to you39 ‘Peter was predestination’ is necessary. Therefore ‘Peter was predestination’ and ‘Peter was reprobate’ will be true at one and the same time; and contradictions follow from these [propositions], as is clear. (Scotus, too, maintains this conclusion.)40

M Assumption 3. Some propositions are about the present as regards both their wording and their subject matter (secundum vocem et secundum rem). Where such [propositions] are concerned, it is universally true that every true proposition about the present has [corresponding to it] a necessary one about the past—e.g., ‘Socrates is seated,’ ‘Socrates is walking,’ ‘Socrates is just,’ and the like.

Other propositions are about the present as regards their wording only and are equivalently about the future, since their truth depends on the truth of propositions about the future.41

Where such [propositions] are concerned, the rule that every true proposition about the present has [corresponding to it] a necessary

is one that cannot be false. But a proposition de necessario is one that takes on such a mode [e.g., one to which the modal operator ‘it is necessary that’ has been applied]. Thus a proposition de necessario is sometimes true and sometimes false, sometimes necessary and sometimes impossible.” (Quoted in Baudry, Lexique, art. “Proposito necessario.”)

39Ockham is quoting a key phrase from Aristotle’s De interprettatione, Ch. 9, 18b26 ff. (See Appendix II, p. 101 below.)

40Evidently a reference to the objector represented in Objection 2.

The conclusion that Scotus, too, maintains is the thesis of Assumption 2—viz., that all propositions having to do with predestination and reprobation are contingent. Scotus’s reasons for maintaining this are, however, somewhat different from Ockham’s. According to Scotus ‘predestination’ properly signifies an act of the divine will, in particular the ordination by God of some rational creature to election, or to grace and glory. Every such act of the divine will is contingent rather than necessary. A past-tense proposition about such an act—e.g., ‘God predestinated Peter’—does not come under the necessity of the past (is not necessary per accidens) because the act of the divine will to which it refers is not in the past but is rather always present in “the now of eternity.” (See note 54 for other approaches to these problems along this line.)

[Assumptions]

one about the past is not true. And this is not remarkable, since there are true propositions about the past and about the future that have no true [proposition] about the present [corresponding to them]. For example, ‘what is white was black’ and ‘what is white will be black’ are true while their [corresponding proposition] about the present—‘what is white is black’—is false.42

N Assumption 4. All propositions having to do with predestination and reprobation, whatever they are verbally about the present or about the past, are nevertheless equivalently about the future, since their truth depends on the truth of propositions formally about the future.43 But Assumption 3 shows that such true [propositions] about the present do not have a necessary one about the past [corresponding to them] but rather one that is merely contingent, just as the one about the present is contingent. From these [considerations] it follows that no proposition about the present having to do with predestination and reprobation has a necessary one about the past [corresponding to it].

O Assumption 5. From the Philosopher’s point of view44 God does not know one part of a contradiction [to be true] any more than [He knows] the other, not only as regards future contingents but also as regards those [propositions] about the present and about the past that are equivalent to propositions about the future.

Ockham’s white/black example (see Appendix II, p. 100 below) and the observations with which he introduces it constitute a special case that cannot help to show that there is nothing remarkable in his claim that such a proposition as ‘Peter is predestination’—apparently about the present but really about the future—has no corresponding proposition about the past that is necessary per accidens. Ockham’s point is that the present-tense proposition ‘Peter is predestination’ is to be treated as a proposition whose truth has yet to be settled by what will be posited in actuality in the future (such as ‘Socrates will be seated’) and not as one whose truth is settled by what is posited in actuality in the present (such as ‘Socrates is seated’).

41A proposition “formally about the future” is a proposition about genuinely future things, about things that have yet to be settled—i.e., a future contingent proposition. Not every proposition “verbally about the future” is also formally about the future. See pp. 61–62. Assumption 4 is an explicit application of Assumption 3 to the present subject matter.

42Aristotle, De interprettatione, Ch. 9; cf. Ockham, Expositio aurea, on the conclusion of Book One of De interpretazione: Summa logicae, III (3), c. 31 (edn. Venet., 1508, fol. 89va–90ra and elsewhere); Book One of his Commentary on the Sentences (the Ordinatio), d. 38, q. v. M (Boehner) See Appendix I, pp. 89–90 below; Appendix II, pp. 105–107 below; Appendix III, pp. 110–113 below. See also Introduction, p. 12 above.
of the divine will, apprehends those complexes as neutral with respect to itself, and then the divine will determines that one part [of the contradiction] is true for some instant, willing that the other part is false for that same instant. After the determination of the divine will is effected, however, the divine intellect sees the determination of its own will, which is immutable. It sees clearly that one part is true with certainty—viz., that part which its own will wills to be true.

I argue against this opinion, however, for in the first place it does not seem to preserve the certainty of God’s knowledge in respect of future things that depend absolutely on a created will. For I ask whether or not the determination of a created will necessarily follows the determination of the divine will. If it does, then the will necessarily acts [as it does], just as fire does, and so merit and demerit are done away with. If it does not, then the determination of a created will is required for knowing determinately one of the other part of a contradiction regarding those [future things that depend absolutely on a created will]. For the determination of the uncreated will does not suffice, because a created will can oppose the determination [of the uncreated will]. Therefore, since the determination of the will was not from eternity, God did not have certain cognition of the things that remained [for a created will to determine].

Secondly, when something is determined contingently, so that it is still possible that it is not determined and it is possible that it was never determined, then one cannot have certain and infallible cognition based on such a determination. But the determination of the divine will in respect of future contingents is such a determination, both according to him [Scotus] and in truth. Therefore God cannot have certain cognition of future contingents based on such a determination.
Predestination, God’s Foreknowledge, and Future Contingents

[The argument] is supported as follows. All such propositions as ‘God from eternity willed this part of the contradiction* to be true’ and ‘God from eternity determined this’ are contingent, as is clear from Assumption 2. Consequently they can be true and [they can be] false. Therefore one will have no certain cognition based on such a determination.

For that reason I maintain53 that it is impossible to express clearly the way in which God knows future contingents. Nevertheless it must be held that He does so, but contingently. That must be held because of the pronouncements of the Saints, who say that God does not know things that are becoming in a way different from that in which [He knows] things that have already occurred.54

Despite [the impossibility of expressing it clearly], the following way [of knowing future contingents] can be ascribed [to God]. Just as the [human] intellect on the basis of one and the same [intuitive] cognition of certain non-complexes can have evident cognition of contradictory contingent propositions such as ‘A exists,’ ‘A does not exist,’ in the same way it can be granted that the divine essence is intuitive cognition that is so perfect, so clear, that it is evident cognition of all things past and future, so that it knows which part of a contradiction [involving such things] is* true and which part false.55

53 Cf. Book One of Ockham’s Commentary on the Sentences (the Ordinatio), d. 38, q. u., M [Appendix I, pp. 89–90 below]. (Boehner)

54 What “must be held because of the pronouncements of the Saints” is evidently only that God does know future contingents determinately—this much is confirmed by what Ockham reports of them—and not also that His knowledge of them is contingent. Both St. Thomas Aquinas (in Summa theologica, I, q. 14, a. 13 [see Boehner, “Ockham’s Tractatus . . .”, p. 435]) and St. Anselm (in On the Harmony of the Foreknowledge, the Predestination, and the Grace of God with Free Choice), for example, maintain that God knows all things, past, present, and future, as eternally present to Himself. The same sort of account of God’s knowledge of temporal things can be found much earlier in Boethius as well (in The Consolation of Philosophy, V). Ockham’s position is plainly opposed to that of St. Thomas (loc. cit.), who held that God’s knowledge is necessary even though the things known by Him are contingent.

55 Ockham’s suggested account of the nature of God’s knowledge of future contingents is somewhat obscured by the occurrence in this sentence of (a) inaccuracies of expression and (b) technical terms deriving from his theory of knowledge. As to (a), what he seems to have intended in the first part of the analogy might better have been expressed as follows: “Just as the human intellect on the basis of one and the same intuitive cognition of a non-complex such as A can have evident cognition of the present existence or nonexistence of A so that it knows which one of the contra-

[Assumptions]

Suppose it is said that that which is not true in itself cannot be known by anyone, but that [the proposition] that I shall sit down tomorrow is of that sort.

In that case I maintain that [that proposition] is true, so that [it is] not false, but contingently true, since it can be false.

On the contrary: each part of this [contradiction] ‘I shall sit down tomorrow,’ ‘I shall not sit down tomorrow,’ can, indifferently, be true. Therefore one part is not more true than the other.56 Hence either neither is now true or both [are now true]. Not both; therefore neither.

I maintain that one part is now determinately true, so that [it is] not false, since God wills the one part to be true and the other to be false. Nevertheless He wills contingently. Therefore He can not will the one part and He can will the other part, inasmuch as the other part can come to pass.57

Q Assumption 7.58 In connection with the subject of predestination and reprobation the verb ‘to know’ (scire) is taken either broadly—i.e., for the cognition of anything whatever—and in that sense God knows (cognoscit) all things, non-complexes as well as complexes, necessary, contingent, false, and impossible; or strictly, and in that sense it is the same as to know (cognoscere) what is true.

dictory present contingent propositions ‘A exists,’ ‘A does not exist’ is true, in the same way it can be granted that . . .” As to (b), the terms ‘evident cognition’ and ‘intuitive cognition’ can be understood thoroughly only within Ockham’s epistemology, which is most readily accessible in the translated material in Part II of Boehner’s Ockham: Philosophical Writings (Latin and English) Edinburgh and New York. Nelson, 1957: [English only] New York, Library of Liberal Arts, 1964). (Cf. also Baudry, Lexique, art. “Notitia.”) It is enough for present purposes to say that evident cognition is indubitable cognition and that “intuitive cognition of a thing is that cognition in virtue of which it can be known whether or not the thing exists, so that if the thing does exist the intellect judges immediately that it exists and has evident cognition that it exists . . .” (in Book One of Ockham’s Commentary on the Sentences (the Ordinatio), Prologus, q. 1, Z). The gist of Ockham’s suggestion thus seems to be that all things past and future are objects of intuitive cognition for God in the way in which a presently existing thing can be an object of intuitive cognition for a human being.

54 This objection is obviously intended as an allusion to the position attributed to Aristotle in Assumption 5.

55 For a discussion of Ockham’s remarks here, see Introduction, pp. 20–26 above.

56 Cf. Book One of Ockham’s Commentary on the Sentences (the Ordinatio), d. 39, q. 1, B (Appendix I, pp. 92–93 below), where Ockham distinguishes the same two senses of ‘to know’ as are distinguished in Assumption 7.
Predestination, God's Foreknowledge, and Future Contingents

It is in this sense that the Philosopher says in Book One of the Posterior Analytics [Ch. 2, 71b26] that nothing is known unless it is true. R

Assumption 8. Some propositions having to do with predestination and reprobation are to be distinguished with respect to composition and division, such as those in which a mode is posited together with a clause in indirect discourse (ponitur modus cum dicto). The result is that what is indicated (denotatur) in the sense of composition is that the mode is predicated of the prejacent of the clause in indirect discourse, or of the proposition belonging to that clause. What is indicated in the sense of division, however, is that the predicate belonging to the clause in indirect discourse, or to the proposition belonging to that clause, is predicated together with such a mode of that for which the subject of the clause supposits, as is shown in logic. This shows that 'the predestinate can be damned' and [propositions] like it are not to be distinguished with respect to composition and division.

S

Assumption 9. For present purposes 'cause' is taken in two ways. In one way for a real thing having another real thing as its effect. That from whose existence something else follows is called the cause, for when it is posited the effect is posited, and when it is not posited [the effect] cannot be posited.

It is used in another way when it means (importat) the priority of one proposition over another with respect to an inference. We say, for instance, that when there is a natural inference from one proposition to another and not vice versa, the antecedent is the cause of the consequent and not vice versa.

Once these [assumptions] have been seen one can respond to the arguments that have been propounded, proving that the predestinate can be damned, and also to other [arguments] propounded for other questions concerning God's knowledge in respect of future contingents.

Cf. Book One of Ockham's Commentary on the Sentences (the Ordinatio), d. 40, q. 1, C. Cf. also Duns Scotus, Opus Oxoniense, I, d. 39, q. u., n. 17 (ed. Vivès, t. 10, pp. 629 ff.) and d. 40, q.u., n. 2 (pp. 680 ff.). With respect to the logic, cf. Ockham's Summa logicae, II, c. 9 (Boehner).

In Summa logicae, II, c. 9, Ockham distinguishes between modal propositions that do not contain a clause in indirect discourse (a 'dictum') and those that do contain one. The latter are called 'de modo' propositions. A de modo proposition, he says, 'is always to be distinguished with respect to composition and division. In the sense of composition what is indicated is always that the mode is verified of [see note 28] the proposition belonging to the dictum. Thus what is indicated by 'that every man is an animal' is necessary [in the sense of composition] is that the mode 'necessary' will be verified of the proposition 'every man is an animal,' the dictum of which is that which is said (dictum)—viz., 'that every man is an animal.' For it is called a dictum of a proposition when the terms are taken in the accusative case and the verb in the infinitive mood [the regular Latin construction for indirect discourse]. But the sense of division of such a [de modo] proposition is always equivalent to the proposition taken together with the mode and without the dictum. Thus 'that every man is an animal is necessary' in the sense of division is equivalent to 'every man of necessity (or necessarily) is an animal' (ed. Boehner, p. 246). In Summa logicae, II, c. 10, Ockham says that modal propositions of the other sort, those that do not contain a dictum, are 'entirely equivalent to propositions with a dictum de modo propositions understood in the sense of division.' He then observes that a de modo proposition may be true in the sense of composition false and false in the sense of division, or vice versa, introducing the following as one of his examples: '... this is true—that everything false is true is necessary—and nevertheless this is false—everything true necessarily is true' (pp. 248-249).

The 'prejacent' of, or the proposition 'belonging to' the dictum 'that every man is an animal' is 'every man is an animal.' This difference is more apparent grammatically in Latin, where the corresponding dictum is 'omnis hominum esse animal' and its prejacent is 'omnis homo est animal.'

The notion of a term's suppositing something is part of the theory of the properties of terms developed by thirteenth-century logicians (see, e.g., Kretzmann, William of Sherwood's Introduction to Logic, especially Chapter Five) and discussed extensively by Ockham (in Summa logicae, I, c. 68—c. 77, some of which appears in English in Part IV of Boehner's Ockham: Philosophical Writings). For present purposes it is enough to say that 'that for which the subject of the clause supposits' is what is named or referred to by means of the subject-term in the dictum of a de modo proposition. Applying this remark of Ockham to the proposition 'that Socrates is an animal is necessary' we may say that if the proposition is understood in the sense of division, then what is understood is that animality is predicated with necessity of the man Socrates, as in 'Socrates necessarily is an animal.'

The 'not' in this sentence appears in most manuscripts of the Treatise but is omitted from one and erased in another. Everything else in Assumption 8 (as well as the discussion in Summa logicae, II, c. 9 and c. 10) suggests that the 'not' does belong here. The predestinate can be damned is a modal proposition but not a de modo proposition. It should, then, be equipollent to the corresponding de modo proposition understood in the sense of division (see note 60). The corresponding de modo proposition is that the predestinate is damned possible. In the sense of composition this is understood as 'the predestinate is damned possible,' which Ockham denies. In the sense of division it is understood as 'the predestinate possibly is damned,' which Ockham maintains is true, and to which the predestinate can be damned is equipollent.

Cf. Book One of Ockham's Commentary on the Sentences (the Ordinatio), d. 41, q. F (Boehner).

On an antecedent as cause of a consequent or a premiss as cause of a conclusion cf. Aristotle, especially Posterior Analytics, Book II, Ch. 11 (94a20); also Metaphysics, Book V, Ch. 2 (1013b17).
[QUESTION II]

A  In respect of all future contingents does God have determinate, certain, infallible, immutable, necessary cognition of one part of a contradiction? 66

[Article 1]

The following arguments are advanced to show that it is not determinate.

(1) Neither truth nor falsity is determinate in future contingents. Therefore [God does not have determinate cognition of one part of a contradiction between future contingents].

(2) If it were determinate, then whether or not we deliberated [about something] necessarily that which is known by God determinately would come to pass. Consequently we would deliberate and take trouble in vain. 67

(3) If it were determinate, then God would be of limited knowledge.* Proof: If God can bring about something determinately, so that He cannot [bring about] its opposite, He is of determinate and limited power. Therefore, similarly, [if God could know one part of a contradiction between future contingents determinately so that He could not know its opposite, He would be of determinate and limited knowledge]. 68


67See note 38. See also Introduction, pp. 12-16, above, on the derivation of arguments (1), (2), and (4).

68We have supplied this conclusion in order to bring out plainly the analogical character of the argument. That it is an argument from analogy is shown by the occurrence of the word ‘similarly’ just before the conclusion is left to be supplied.

B  In reply to this part of the question I maintain* that, as was said in Assumption 6, God has determinate cognition in respect of future contingents since He knows determinately which part of the contradiction will be true and which false.

Reply to (1). It is clear from Assumption 5 what must be said, for from the Philosopher’s point of view neither part [of the contradiction] is determinately true in the case of future contingents that depend absolutely on a free power—e.g., on a created will. This is clear in the same [Assumption]. What must be said in accordance with truth and the Faith, however, is clear from Assumption 6.

Reply to (2). The first consequence does not hold good, for although He does know one part [of the contradiction] determinately, nevertheless He knows contingently, and He can not know, and He can 69 never have known. Therefore, deliberation does make a difference.

Reply to (3). I deny the [first] consequence. As to the proof, I grant that it is true that if God were to cause one part of a contradiction in such a way that He could not cause the other, then He would be of limited power. Similarly, if He were to know one part [of the contradiction] in such a way that He could not know the other, then He would have limited and imperfect knowledge. But neither [of these antecedents] is true.

Reply to (4). It is clear that the minor premiss is false. Nevertheless, [although a future contingent is determinately true,] it is true contingently, for it can be false and it could never have been true.

69Reading ‘potest’ for ‘potuit.’
In the second part of the question it is principally argued that He does not have certain and infallible cognition.

(1) Proof: 'God cognized (novit) that I would sit down tomorrow, and I shall sit down tomorrow; therefore He is deceived.' This inference is clear, for in believing that that is in fact the case which is not in fact if the case He is deceived. Similarly, then: 'God cognized that I would sit down tomorrow, and it is possible that I shall not sit down tomorrow, therefore it is possible that He be deceived,' and consequently He can be deceived. 'This second inference is proved as follows: just as an assertoric conclusion follows from two assertoric premises, so a de possibili conclusion follows from two assertions; one of which is assertoric and the other de possibili.

(2) If God cognized that I would sit down tomorrow, and it is possible that I shall not sit down tomorrow, suppose that in fact I shall not sit down tomorrow. Then it follows that God is deceived. Since what is impossible does not follow from the positing in fact of what is possible, 'God is deceived' is not possible.

The Faith is in opposition [to both these arguments].

I maintain that He does have certain and infallible cognition. This is proved by means of Assumption 6.

Reply to (1) in opposition. I maintain that the first inference is good, although not syllogistic. For to be deceived is to think that a thing is otherwise than it is for the time for which it is believed to be so. And this is what is entailed by those assertoric premises, for they entail that God believes otherwise than will be the case. And the conclusion follows from those two premises if they can be true at one and the same time. But they cannot be true at one and the same time, for if God cognized that I would sit down tomorrow it follows that 'I shall sit down tomorrow' is true, for nothing is known unless it is true. Therefore its opposite is false, since otherwise contradictions would be true at one and the same time.

But whatever is the case regarding the first inference, it is certain that the second does not hold good. In order for such a mixed inference (mixtio) to hold good the major premise would have to be omnitemporally assertoric (de inesse simpliciter), so that it would always be necessarily true, however much that de possibili premise should be posited in fact. In that case the de possibili conclusion follows; otherwise not. I prove this claim in the following way. If we argue from the opposite of the conclusion together with that same de possibili premise we infer only the opposite of a necessary omnitemporally assertoric proposition. In truth, then, from 'God cannot be deceived' and 'it is possible that I shall not sit down tomorrow' only this conclusion follows: 'God knows (scit) not necessarily but only contingently that I shall sit down tomorrow.' Therefore...

Ockham's treatment of the second inference in argument (1) is not easy to follow. It is not hard to see that he is right to reject the inference: the difficulties arise in considering his stated reasons for doing so. For one thing, he uses technical terms that are used elsewhere in the Treatise (see p. 70) but are not defined in the Treatise. A "mixed inference" is an inference involving either assertoric and modal propositions (as here) or modal propositions governed by different modes. (Ockham discusses many varieties of both sorts of mixed inference in Summa logicae, III (1), c. 31-c. 64; ed. Boehner, pp. 402-456.) An "omnitemporally assertoric" proposition is an assertoric proposition "in which the predicate cannot be attached to the subject at one time and denied of it at another time, but [the proposition] is constituted uniformly at all times, so that [the predicate] is predicated truly either always or never" (Summa logicae, III (1), c. 31; p. 403). It is distinguished in Ockham's logic from a "temporally assertoric (de inesse ut nunc) proposition," in which the predicate can be truly affirmed of the subject at one time and truly denied at another time (loc. cit.).

Given this distinction (which Ockham evidently considers exhaustive), it looks as if he is here claiming that the objector's major premise — 'God cognized that I would sit down tomorrow' — is not a necessary omnitemporally assertoric proposition, and that the inference is therefore invalid. Ockham's reply would have been justified if the objector had used the word 'knew' (scit) rather than 'cognized' (novit); for 'God knew that I would sit down tomorrow,' is, from Ockham's point of view, a future contingent proposition despite its being verbally about the past. The premise as the objector has it, however, is not a future contingent proposition but a proposition necessary about the past and hence one that satisfies Ockham's demand. Ockham may have misconstrued these arguments by interpreting 'cognized' as if it were 'knew.' (See his truth-value-neutral use of 'notitia in Assumption 6.) Notice that in his reply to (1) Ockham twice uses a form of 'scio' rather than of 'nosc.'
Predestination, God’s Foreknowledge, and Future Contingents

fore in order for the first mixed inference to hold good the major premiss would have to be omnitemporally assertoric. But* it is clear that it is not so, for it is merely contingent, inasmuch as it can be true and can never have been true. This is clear from Assumptions 2 and 3 above.

Reply to (2). I maintain that what is impossible never follows solely from the positing in fact of a de possibili* proposition. Nevertheless the assertoric proposition ‘I shall not sit down tomorrow’ in which the de possibili proposition is posited can be inconsistent with an assertoric proposition with which the posited de possibili proposition is not inconsistent. (For an antecedent can be inconsistent with something with which its consequent is not inconsistent, as whiteness is inconsistent with something with which color is not inconsistent.) And that assertoric proposition entails the de possibili proposition, and not vice versa, as is clear. Therefore from that assertoric proposition, which is an antecedent for the de possibili proposition, and another assertoric proposition inconsistent with the first there can follow an impossible conclusion that* does not follow from that de possibili proposition, which is a consequent, and the other assertoric proposition. So it is no wonder that an impossible conclusion follows from inconstant premises, for an impossible conclusion does follow from opposite premises in a syllogism.

In reply to what is claimed [in (2)] I now maintain that nothing impossible follows from ‘it is possible that I shall not sit down tomorrow’ when it is posited in fact. But from ‘I shall not sit down tomorrow,’ in which it is posited in fact, and ‘God cognized that I would sit down tomorrow’ the impossible proposition ‘God is mistaken’ does follow; and it does so because the premises are inconstant. For example, ‘Socrates is seated’ and ‘Socrates can stand’ are true at one and the same time. Nevertheless ‘Socrates is seated’ and ‘Socrates is standing’ do not hold good at one and the same time but rather are inconstant; therefore it follows from those two propositions that sitting is standing. That conclusion does not follow, however, from ‘Socrates is seated’ and ‘Socrates can stand.’ The whole cause [of the difficulty] is the inconsistency of the premises in the uniform [inference] and the lack of it in the mixed inference. And in the same way in all respects this is [the whole cause of the difficulty] in what is claimed [in (2)].

[Question II]

[Article III]*

E Third, it is argued that He does not have immutable knowledge (scientiam) regarding future contingents.

[Part One]

(1) There can be no passage from contradictory to contradictory without any change.* Proof: It does not seem that that which was true earlier is now false, or vice versa, unless there is some change. But God knowing the contingent proposition ‘I shall sit down’ can not know it, for it can be false, and what is false is not known.*

(2) Similarly: God does not now know the proposition ‘I am in Rome,’ for this is now false, and He can now know it for the year when it will be true. Therefore it seems that God changes.*

* Cf. Duns Scotus, Opus Oxoniense, i, d. 39, q. u. m. 1, 3, and 4 (ed. Vivès, t. 10, pp. 613-614); also Book One of Ockham’s Commentary on the Sentences (the Ordinatio), d. 39, q. u. [Appendix 1, pp. 92-95 below]. (Boehner)

* Although Ockham used ‘notitia’ (cognition) in framing Question II originally and in the specific questions of Articles I and II, he uses ‘scientia’ (knowledge) in the specific questions of Articles III and IV.

I.e., he cannot first know the one part of a contradiction and then know the other part without changing.

* All the examples using direct discourse and the pronoun ‘I’ in this argument and the two following have used either indirect discourse or a proper name in place of the pronoun, since the ‘I’ of the examples is surely not intended to refer to God but rather to the frame of the arguments.

* The point of argument (1) is brought out more easily by using the example supplied by Ockham in what is evidently his reply to it (on p. 61). Consider only all times prior to t₁, and suppose that the proposition ‘Socrates will sit down at t₁’ is true and therefore known by God. Since the proposition is contingent, it can be false and hence God’s knowledge can be otherwise than it is. But this is not to say that God’s knowledge admits of change; in particular, it is not to say that God’s knowledge passes over from the one contradictory to the other, which is the sufficient condition laid down by the objector himself at the outset of the argument. In his reply, therefore, Ockham bases his criticism on the assumption that the objector meant to show that it is possible that God first know and afterwards not know before t₁ that Socrates will sit down at t₁.

* The second premiss of argument (2)—“He can now know it for the year when it will be true”—(postem eascire modo ad annum, quando erit vera)—is obscure. It seems to suggest that although God does not now know ‘Peter is in Rome,’ He can now know ‘Peter is in Rome at t₄’ (assuming that Peter is not now in Rome but will be there at t₄). But that observation could scarcely be construed as supporting the conclusion, nor is it the sort of point to which Ockham’s reply is addressed. In view of these discrepancies it seems that the second premiss was to have been “He will know it in the year when it will be true”—i.e., at t₄ God will know ‘Peter is in Rome.’ This reading
(3) Similarly: He now knows this proposition about the future—‘I shall read tomorrow’ (suppose that this is true)—and after tomorrow He will not know the proposition ‘I shall read tomorrow,’ for then it will be false.

[Reply to (2).] Speaking of propositions that are merely about the present and that depend in no way on the future, I maintain that just as such propositions can change from truth to falsity and vice versa, so God can at one time know such a proposition* and at another time not, and know one* after He did not know it, and not know after He did know, and know a proposition that He did not know earlier, without any change in Him as a result of a mere change in a creature or in known propositions of this sort (just as He is said to be first noncreated and afterwards creating as a result of a change in and the establishing of a creature), because our intellect can [do this] without any change in it. Proof: Suppose that I think that the proposition ‘Socrates is seated’ is true although it is false, because Socrates is standing, and that while that act remains in my intellect that proposition becomes true. Now I know that which I did not know before, without any change in my intellect but only in the thing. And it is in this way that that passage “in relation there is no motion” in Book VII of the Physics is understood, so that the proposition is particular rather than universal. For the Philosopher intends there to speak of knowledge, since it is a relation, [and to say of it] that someone can begin to know something without any change in him, as has been said. Moreover, as

may reasonably be considered to support the stated conclusion, and it seems to provide the sort of point to which Ockham’s reply is addressed. There is, however, no feasible reading of argument (2) that connects it specifically with the question of the immutability of God’s knowledge regarding future contingents, the topic of this Article III. The opening words of Ockham’s reply show that he was aware of this.

*Reading ‘legam’: ‘leam.’

Ockham’s reply to argument (2) seems to go wrong in two respects. In the first place, it is difficult if not impossible to accept his example as providing an instance of my first not knowing and then knowing that Socrates is seated while my belief remains unchanged. That what I believe to be the case is in fact the case is a necessary but not a sufficient condition for my knowing it to be the case. Secondly, and more important, even if Ockham’s example did provide the instance he intended it to provide for our intellect, such an instance could not be provided for God’s intellect. Since God is omniscient, it is impossible that God believes before t_e that Peter is in Rome and hence impossible that God first (before t_e) does not know and afterwards (at t_e) does know that Peter is in Rome while his belief remains unchanged.

The passage Ockham quotes seems to be from Chapter 3 of Book VII of the Physics (246b11): “... relations are neither themselves qualitative modifications nor yet subjects of such modification of or coming into being or of any kind of change at all.” But what Ockham goes on to say of Aristotle’s view makes it plain that he is drawing far more directly on this later passage from the same chapter (247b1 ff.): “Nor are the states of the intellectual part qualitative modifications, nor do they ever come to existence in the primary and strict sense. For it is even more true of the state of knowing that it is of the moral virtues that it is a condition determined by a particular relation; and it is further evident that these intellectual states have no proper genesis. For that which knows potentially comes to know actually not in virtue of any motion of its own, but because something not itself is now newly presented to it; when the particular is presented to it, it gets such knowledge as it can have of the particular by means of knowledge of the universal. And again the enjoyment and actualizing of knowledge is not the result of a process of coming into being, unless you choose to say the same of every act of seeing or touching and consider the actualizing of knowing as analogous to such. Nor is the original acquisition of knowledge a process of becoming or a modification. For it is when the understanding has come to rest at its goal that we are said to know and possess a truth, and there is no process of becoming leading to the terminal pause, nor indeed to any kind of change, as has already been shown. Again, just as we do not say that a man has come to have knowledge again when he emerges from drunkenness or sleep or disease (although it is true that his power of realizing knowledge has been suspended), so likewise we should not say that when he originally acquires the state, he is ‘coming to be’ possessed of knowledge.”

At least two passages from Aristotle’s Categories, as well, seem highly relevant to Ockham’s reply to argument (2)—viz., Ch. 5, 4a22 ff.; Ch. 7, 7b23 ff.

We have not located this remark in Averroes (“the Commentator”). If “that proposition” is the general principle that a relation may begin to obtain between A and B without any change in A, it may be said to be “in accord with Plato’s view” as expressed, for example, in Theaetetus, 155B-C. On the other hand, the more specific principle that “someone can begin to know something without any change in him” might be construed as an echo of the familiar Platonist account of beginning-to-
future. Suppose, for example, that the proposition ‘Socrates will sit down at \( t_1 \)’ is asserted after \( t_1 \). This suggests that past things are future—viz., that \( t_1 \) is future and that the sitting down is future. Such a proposition about the future can change from truth to falsity, since before \( t_1 \) it was true and after \( t_1 \) it is false. And God can not know such a future contingent after He did know it, as a result of change in things and the passage of time, without any change on His part.

Regarding these latter future [contingents] it must be known that some of them are true and do not begin to be true but do begin to be false. If, for example, \( t_1 \) is tomorrow, ‘Socrates will sit down at \( t_1 \)’ (suppose that is the case) is true now. It never began to be true, but it will begin to be false, for after \( t_1 \) it will always be false. And ‘Socrates is predestinate’ is of this kind, since before the [giving of] supreme blessedness it is always true if it is ever true, but after the [giving of] supreme blessedness it will always be false.

Others of them are false and never begin to be false but do begin to be true. For example, ‘Socrates will not sit down at \( t_1 \),’ since before \( t_1 \) it will always be false (suppose that is the case) and afterwards it will always be true. And ‘Socrates is not predestinate’ is of this kind, since before the [giving of] supreme blessedness it was false and afterwards it will always be true.

[Part Two]

The same point [viz., that God does not have immutable knowledge regarding future contingents] is argued for as follows. God can know more than He does know, for He can know many contingent propositions that will be true but that are now false. Similarly, He can know less than He does know, for He knows some propositions that are true about the present and that will be false ever afterwards. Therefore His knowledge is mutable.

Speaking of knowing and of God’s knowledge strictly, as is said in Assumption 7, I maintain that God can know something that He does not know now (since in this sense [of ‘know’] God knows nothing unless it is true), for a proposition that is not true now—such as that I am in Rome—can be known by God at some time even though it is not known by Him now. Still it need not be granted that He can know more than He does know, for nothing is known by God unless it is true and everything true is known by God. But there are always equally many truths, and so there are always equally many things known by God.

I prove the assumption in the following way. It is not possible that there are more truths at one time than at another, for it is always the case that one or the other part of a contradiction is [true], and nothing is true unless it is one or the other part of a contradiction. Nor is it possible that both parts of a contradiction be true. Hence there are as many truths at one time as at another, neither more nor less, even though something is true at one time that is not true at another. And this holds good universally, so that if something that was true before becomes false, something that was false before becomes true. Thus this does not follow: ‘God can know many things that He does not know, and not know many things that He does know; therefore He can know more, or less, than He does know.’

Suppose someone says that whatever God knows now He will always know, since from the fact that God first knows the proposition ‘Socrates is seated’ and afterwards knows the proposition ‘Socrates was seated’ [it does] not [follow] that He knows something different; rather, [He knows] one and the same thing.\(^8^3\)

I maintain that if one takes ‘knowledge’ or ‘know’ for that cognition of God’s whereby He cognizes those propositions, then that [knowledge of His] is one and the same in respect of all things knowable. If, however, one takes God’s knowing according as it involves the complexes ‘Socrates is seated,’ ‘Socrates was seated,’ then it is not one and the same. For those complexes are neither one and the same, nor equivalent,\(^*\) nor interchangeable (convertibilia); for the one can be true while the other is false.\(^8^4\) Suppose

\(^8^3\) This paragraph suggests a view like the views advanced by Boethius, Anselm, and Aquinas (see note 54), who maintained that God knows all contingent things from the viewpoint of eternity as we know present contingent things. On this view God does not first know one proposition—‘Socrates is seated at \( t_1 \)—and then know another—‘Socrates was seated at \( t_1 \);’ rather He knows from eternity the eternally present fact of Socrates’s sitting at \( t_1 \).

\(^8^4\) Ockham would have put his point more precisely if he had said “for it can be that the one is true while the other is false.”
that God knows now for the first time the proposition ‘Socrates is seated.’ In that case the proposition ‘God knows the proposition ‘Socrates was seated’’ is false about the past. Similarly, when Socrates is walking He knows the proposition ‘Socrates was seated,’ since this is true, and not the proposition ‘Socrates is seated,’ since this is false.85

[Part Three]

[It is argued that] His knowledge can increase, for He can know more than He does know; and it can decrease, for He can know less than He does know. Therefore [God’s knowledge] can change.

I maintain that it can neither increase nor decrease, for it is undifferentiated (indistincta) in respect of all things.86 But can the number of foreknown things really be increased or decreased? It can be said that this is false in the sense of composition,87 for ‘the number of the predestinate is increased or decreased’ is impossible, since that means that the number of the predestinate is first greater and afterwards becomes less, or vice versa. And this is false, for these opposites cannot be verified successively, since whoever is predestinate has been predestinate from eternity. For every proposition that is simply about the future, that does not connote anything past or present, has always been true if it is ever true.

In the sense of division it can be granted, for then no more is meant than that someone besides those who are now predestinate can be predestinate, and this is true. But if that proposition is pos-

85This reply of Ockham’s may be better understood in the light of his suggestion as to how God knows future contingents (on pp. 50, 89–90). In this reply he distinguishes two senses of ‘God’s knowledge.’ God’s knowledge in the first sense is that “intuitive cognition” which “is the divine essence,” that single act of apprehension which is eternally one and the same and in which everything knowable is known in a single eternal intuitive cognition. In this first sense ‘God’s knowledge’ refers only to His act of cognition and not to the relation of that act to the world. In the second sense assigned by Ockham to ‘God’s knowledge’ it refers not just to God’s act of cognition but also to the relation of that act of cognition to the world.

86Ockham’s point here seems to be that when God’s knowledge is understood to be His single essential eternal intuitive cognition (see note 85), the object of God’s knowledge is the single undifferentiated eternal object that includes all things—whether complex or simple; necessary, possible, or impossible: true or false. Cf. Appendix I, p. 95.

87See Assumption 8 and especially note 60.

[Part Four]

It is argued that whoever does not know a contingent proposition A and can know A can begin to know A, for it does not seem that an affirmation is true after a denial—[i.e.,] after [the affirmation] was not true—unless it begins to be true. Therefore if He does not know the proposition A and can know A [His knowledge] can change.

I maintain that if you understand A to be a contingent proposition about the present, the proposition [that whoever does not know a contingent proposition A and can know A can begin to know A] is true, and in that case I grant the conclusion that God can begin to know A. But the further conclusion that [His knowledge] changes does not follow, as is clear above.88

If, however, you understand A to be a contingent proposition about the future, the proposition [that whoever does not know A and can know A can begin to know A] is not true, for its being true requires that the two propositions ‘God does not know A’ and ‘God does know A’ be true successively, and they cannot be true successively. For just as nothing is known by God unless it is true, so also everything true is known by God, and therefore if A is true it always was true and hence always was known by God. Therefore, furthermore, ‘God does not know A’ was never true. Consequently the conclusion ‘God can begin to know A’ does not follow, for it would never follow unless first ‘God does not know A’ and after that ‘God does know A’ were true.

88Cf. Book One of Ockham’s Commentary on the Sentences (the Ordinatio), d. 39, q. u. (Appendix I, pp. 92–95 below), where Ockham considers the question “whether God can know more than He knows” in a discussion closely paralleling the one in Question II, Article III, Parts Two and Three of this treatise.

89Question II, Article III, Part One.
[Question II]
not understand $A'$ always was false, since if one part of a contradiction always was true the other always was false, and vice versa.

[Article IV]

For this follows: God knows $A$ immutably; therefore necessarily. Proof of the inference: Necessity is not posited in God except for the necessity that belongs to immutability; therefore whatever is in Him immutably is in Him necessarily.

I maintain that ['God does have necessary knowledge regarding future contingents'] can be understood in two ways. [Understood] in the first way [it means] that God's knowledge whereby future contingents are known is necessary. And this is true, since the divine essence itself is one single necessary and immutable cognition of all things, complex and non-complex, necessary and contingent. [Understood] in the second way [it means] that by that knowledge future contingents are known necessarily. And in that way [His knowledge] is not necessary, nor need it be granted that God has necessary knowledge regarding future contingents; instead, [His knowledge regarding them] is contingent. For just as this or that future contingent contingently will be, so God knows that it contingently will be, for if He knows it He can not know that it will be.

Since the expected conclusion is 'God's knowledge can change,' the stated conclusion is likely to seem unwarrantedly strong. In one sense it is so; the argument plainly does not support '... changes' rather than '... can change.' But since God's knowledge is an aspect of God's essence, the conclusion 'God can change' is not prima facie unwarranted. Notice that in his reply Ockham takes that conclusion—"God is mutable"—to have been the one intended. (All this suggests that 'igitur Deus mutatur' may be a scribe's error for 'igitur Deus mutabatur,' but the notes to Boehner's edition indicate no variant readings for this passage.)

In the first three sentences of this reply we have twice reversed the order of affirmative and negative propositions and twice reversed the order of claims about truth and falsity. These changes are required in order (1) to align the reply with the argument to which it is directed, (2) to bring the beginning of the reply into agreement with its concluding sentences, and (3) to make Ockham's claims about the truth and falsity of future contingents in this reply consistent with his other observations on this topic. Without these changes the first three sentences of Ockham's reply would read as follows: "I maintain that the proposition 'a natural power cannot act after having not acted without there being a change' is true whenever the propositions 'such a power is not acting' and 'such a power is acting' can be verified successively, and otherwise not. Thus if 'God does not understand $A'$ (where $A$ is a future contingent) and 'God does understand $A'$ could be true successively, it would follow that God is mutable, for [the immutability of His knowledge] could not be preserved through the change of the future contingent. But that [future contingent] cannot change from falsity to truth so that it is first false and afterwards true. For, as has often been said, even if it is posited that God does not understand $A$ because $A$ is false and can be true, if it is posited in fact that $A$ is true, then 'God does understand $A'$ is true and always was true. Consequently 'God does...

93Ockham's use of such expressions as 'God understands $A$' (Deus intelligit $A$) and 'God knows $A$' (Deus scit $A$) may be open to misunderstanding, in the former case more than in the latter. Suppose that the proposition replacing 'is Socrates will sit down.' What is meant by those expressions is, of course, that God understands that Socrates will sit down, or that God understands that 'Socrates will sit down' is true, and not that God understands the proposition 'Socrates will sit down' (and similarly for 'knows').

94Cf. Duns Scotus, Opus Oxoniense, I. d. 29, q. u., n. 6 (ed. Vivès, t. 10, p. 614) and n. 31 (p. 653). Cf. Book One of Ockham's Commentary on the Sentences (the Ordinatio), d. 38, q. 1, N (against "certain scholars"). [Appendix I, pp. 90–91 below.] (Bohner)

95In Articles I, II, and III the opening arguments attacked the ascription of the property in question to God's knowledge and Ockham's replies defended it. In Article IV, on the necessity of God's knowledge regarding future contingents, the opening arguments of each of the five parts defend the ascription of the property while Ockham's replies attack it.

The expected (and probably the intended) wording of the second clause of
Next, in reply to the argument, I maintain that the inference does not hold good. For although [God's] knowledge is immutable and the object known—viz., a future contingent—is immutable in such a way that it cannot be first true and afterwards false—as has often been said, still it does not follow that necessarily God knows it, but rather contingently. For although A itself cannot change from truth to falsity or vice versa, it is nevertheless contingent, and so it can be false and consequently not known by God. Thus contingently it is known by God and not necessarily. Therefore there is a fallacy of the consequent there [in the argument], for it follows the other way around but not this way. Similarly, there is a fallacy of the consequent here: 'A cannot be first true and afterwards false; therefore it cannot be false,' for it follows the other way around but not this way.

As for the proof of the inference, I grant that there is no necessity in God except for the necessity that belongs to immutability, for other kinds of necessity—e.g., the necessity of compulsion (coactionis)—are not posited in God because [they entail] imperfection. Thus the inference 'something necessary is in God; therefore something immutable' follows correctly, but not the other way around, for everything necessary is immutable and not vice versa, unless one is speaking of those immutables that are God Himself. For many complexes are known by God [to be] immutable which are nevertheless not necessary but simply contingent.

*This sentence is "so God knows contingently that it will be," but the Latin is "ita Deus scit ipsum contingenter fore" (rather than "scit contingenter ipsum..."). Ockham is of course not claiming that God is only contingently and not necessarily omniscient. The issue here is not whether His knowing all true propositions is a necessary property of His but whether His knowing this or that proposition in particular is a necessary property of His. Since the proposition in question is a true contingent, it is possible that it not be true, and hence possible that it not be known by God, and hence not necessary that it be known by God. Cf. Tractatus de Prinicipii Theologiae (ed. L. Baudry, "Études de Philosophie Médiévale," XXIII; Paris, Librairie Philosophique J. Vrin, 1986), [105], where Ockham's reply to the objector is explained with admirable clarity by the compiler of this compendium of Ockham's views.

**Because a future contingent is at issue here it seems incorrect or at best misleading to say without qualification that "it cannot be first true and afterwards false." If Socrates will sit down at t it is true now, then at t and ever afterwards it will be false (see, e.g., p. 62). But the kind of revision that seemed appropriate in similar circumstances in Ockham's reply to the opening argument in Part Five of Article III (see note 91) is not appropriate here, since Ockham is speaking of future contingents that are known by God and hence about such as are now true. This reply must therefore be read with the understanding that the change of truth-value is being considered only during all time prior to t. See note 16.

It is argued that everything possible is mutable; therefore everything immutable is necessary. But God's knowledge is immutable. Therefore [God's knowledge is necessary]. Alternatively, this is mutable; therefore it is contingent. Therefore, similarly, this is immutable; therefore it is necessary—by this rule: if what is opposed to one thing may be inferred from what is opposed to another, then the one thing may be inferred from the other (si oppositum de opposito, et propositum de proposito).

In reply to the second argument* I maintain that the inference does not hold good. As for the rule, I say that it has to be understood [to apply only] when one argues from the opposite of the consequent to the opposite of the antecedent. But the argument here is the other way around, and thus there is a fallacy of the consequent.

[Part Three]

[It is argued that] whatever can be in God, of necessity is God, since He is immutable. But knowing A can be in God. Therefore necessarily it is in God. Therefore necessarily He knows A.

I maintain that that which is in God or can be in Him formally necessarily is God. Knowing A is not in God formally, however, but merely through predication; for it is a certain concept or name that is [sometimes] predicated of God and at other times not. And it is not necessary that it be God, for the name 'Lord' is predicated of God contingently and temporally and nevertheless is not God.

[Part Four]

[It is argued that] every absolute perfection is in God necessarily, but knowing A is of this sort; therefore [knowing A is in God necessarily]. The minor premise is proved as follows: God would not be perfect if He did not know A, for He is not imperfect except as a result of the lack of some absolute perfection; therefore necessarily He knows A.

I maintain that 'absolute perfection' is sometimes used for the perfection which is God, to which no perfection can be added, and knowing A is not an absolute perfection in this sense, for [knowing

*Article IV, Part Three bears some resemblance to Question I, Objection 5 (see pp. 41-42). On 'Lord' see Article IV, Part Four (p. 70).
Predestination, God’s Foreknowledge, and Future Contingents

A] is a concept or an utterance. At other times it is used for some concept from the negation of which with respect to something it follows that that thing is imperfect, and so knowing A is not an absolute perfection in this sense either. For ‘God does not know A; therefore God is imperfect’ does not follow, since if A is false, God does not know A.

Suppose it is said that ‘God does not know A and A is true; therefore God is imperfect’ does follow. I grant that if both premisses are true the conclusion does follow. But from the truth of the first premiss alone no imperfection in God follows. Still, that is what is required if [knowing A] is to be an absolute perfection. For example, from the truth of the two propositions ‘God is not the Lord’ and ‘Man is a servant’ it does follow that there is an imperfection in God—viz., that He is not the Lord of every servant. But from the first proposition alone no imperfection follows, for if we suppose that there are no creatures, ‘God is not the Lord; therefore He is imperfect’ does not follow.

P

[Part Five]

[It is argued that] everything that God knows will be, necessarily will be, and A is something that God knows will be; therefore necessarily A will be. The major premiss is a de necessario proposition, since the predicate necessarily inheres in the subject. The minor premiss is omnitemporally assertoric, since it is true for eternity. Therefore a de necessario conclusion follows.

I maintain that the major premiss is false, since it expresses the sense of division, and many things that God knows will be, contingently will be and not necessarily. Therefore a false conclusion follows. If, on the other hand, the major premiss is taken in the sense of composition—so that ‘everything that God knows will be’ is necessary—then the mixed inference does not hold good, for the minor premiss is temporally assertoric, and so the conclusion does not follow.

99The phrase “a concept or an utterance” is evidently an abbreviated version of the expression Ockham used towards the end of Part Three: “a certain concept or name that is sometimes predicated of God and at other times not.”

99The technical terminology in Part Five may need some explanation. On “de necessario” propositions see note 37. On “mixed inference” and “omnitemporally” or “temporally” assertoric propositions see note 72. On the senses of division and of composition see note 60. Ockham specifically discusses mixed inferences involving assertoric propositions and de necessario propositions in Summa logicae, III (1), c. 31—c. 33 (ed. Boehner, pp. 402—414).

QUESTION III]

A How can the contingency of the will, both created and uncreated, be preserved in [the case of its] causing something external? That is, can the will, as naturally prior to the caused act, cause the opposite act at the same instant at which it causes that act, or can it at another, subsequent instant cause the opposite act or cease from that caused act?

Scotus maintains101 that in the created will there is a double

101Question III is the most difficult of the five Questions in the Treatise. Some of its specific difficulties will be discussed in other notes, but because even its organization is more difficult than that of the other Questions we supply the following outline (in terms of marginal letters and paragraphs).

(A) Par. 1. The posing of the question
Par. 2. A presentation of Scotus’s answer to the question, centering around Scotus’s doctrine of a “nonevident capacity” of the will
(B) Par. 3. Ockham’s initial attempt to reduce that doctrine to an absurdity
Par. 4. An objection to Par. 3
Par. 5. Ockham’s reply to Par. 4
(C) Par. 6. Ockham’s revised attempt to reduce Scotus’s doctrine to an absurdity, based on Par. 5
Par. 7. Ockham’s reply to a remark in Par. 4 intended to assimilate his own treatment of future contingents to the present discussion
Par. 8. An attempt to show that an example introduced in Par. 2 leads to an absurdity in the absence of Scotus’s doctrine
Par. 9. Ockham’s reply to Par. 8
Par. 10. A simpler version of the argument in Par. 8
Par. 11. Ockham’s reply to Par. 10
(D) Par. 12. Ockham’s explicit rejection of Scotus’s doctrine of the “nonevident capacity”
Par. 13. A question challenging Ockham to show how his own view preserves the contingency of the will
Par. 14. Ockham’s reply to Par. 13, consisting mainly in his distinction of three senses of “the will acts contingently at the instant at which it acts.”

101In Opus Oxoniense, I, d. 59, q. u., nn. 16 ff. (ed. Vivès, t. 10, p. 628). Cf. Book One of Ockham’s Commentary on the Sentences (the Ordinatio), d. 38, q. 1, B and E [Appendix I, pp. 81—82 and 85 below]. (Boehner)
capacity for opposites. The one is evident and is a capacity for opposite objects or for opposite acts in succession, so that [a created will] can will something at 1 and not will it or will against it at 2. The other is a nonevident capacity, which is for opposites without succession. For it is imagined [by Scotus] that at one and the same instant of time there is more than one instant of nature. And in that case if there were now a created will that only remained through one instant and at that time willed some object contingently, that will itself, as naturally prior to that volition, has a capacity for the opposite act at the same instant of duration at which that willed act is posited, so that, as naturally prior, it can will against that willed act at that instant. And so this capacity is called non-evident, for it is a capacity for opposite acts at one and the same instant of time without any succession.

Against that opinion it is argued as follows. That capacity which can be actualized by no power is not a real capacity and

The will has a capacity for opposites without succession is ambiguous. It can be taken to mean that (1) at a single time the will can will X and the will can not will X (or will not-X). (A will with such a capacity is evidently one that acts contingently in the first sense distinguished by Ockham in the concluding paragraph of Question III, p. 76.) On the other hand, it can be taken to mean that (2) at a single time the will can will X and not will X (or will not-X). (A will with such a capacity would evidently be one that acted contingently in the impossible second sense distinguished by Ockham, p. 76.) Ockham construes Scotus’s doctrine as involving interpretation (2). His reasons for doing so may be connected with his rejection of Scotus’s “instants of nature” (see notes 49 and 104 and Introduction, pp. 31–32). But in at least one passage in his Opus Oxoniense (1, d. 39, Appendix A) Scotus takes account of such an ambiguity and rejects an interpretation analogous to this interpretation (2). “A will willing a can will a. This . . . [proposition] is false in the sense of composition, since what is signified [in that sense] is the possibility of the composition ‘a will willing a does not will a’. It is true in the sense of division, since what is signified [in that sense] is a possibility for opposites successively, since a will willingness for a can not will for b.” (Quoted in Latin by Bernardine M. Bonansea in “Duns Scotus’s Voluntarism” [pp. 89–121 in John Duns Scotus, 1265–1965, ed. J. K. Ryan and B. M. Bonansea; Studies in Philosophy and the History of Philosophy, Vol. 5; Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1965], p. 89, n. 24.)

The Latin preposition usually occurring in such phrases is ‘in’: ‘in A instanti (at 1), in eodem instanti (at the same instant)’. But here and at several other points in Question III Ockham uses ‘pro’ instead of ‘in’. This difference of course suggests the possibility of a distinction to be taken account of in the translation, but a survey of all such uses in Question III indicates that the difference is random and does not affect the sense. Since alternating between such English prepositions as ‘at’ and ‘for’ would suggest a difference in sense, we use ‘at’ for both ‘in’ and ‘pro’ in such time phrases.

The notion of natural priority alluded to here stems from Aristotle’s Categories Ch. 12, 14b12: “For of things which reciprocate as to implication of existence,

is not to be really posited. This non-evident capacity is of that kind. Therefore [this non-evident capacity is not a real capacity and is not to be really posited]. The minor premiss is proved as follows. If so [i.e., if this non-evident capacity can be actualized by some power], then [suppose that] the will wills X is true at 1. But it can be actualized by you at the same instant in respect of not willing. Therefore at one and the same instant ‘the will wills X’ and ‘the will does not will X’ would be true together, and so contradictions will be true at one and the same time.

Suppose that it is said that if [this non-evident capacity] is actualized so that ‘the will does not will X at 1’ is true, then its opposite ‘the will wills X at 1’ is false (just as, according to you, although ‘Peter will be saved’ is true now, if it is posited that Peter is damned then ‘God does not will supreme blessedness for Peter’ is true).

On the contrary: every proposition that is merely about the present, if it is true, has [corresponding to it] a necessary proposition about the past. But by hypothesis ‘the will wills X at 1’ is true, and it is merely about the present. Therefore ‘the will willed X at 1’ will be necessary forever after. Therefore after 1 the will did not will X at 1 cannot be true. This is confirmed as follows. If after 1 the will willed X at 1 was always necessary, then after 1 its opposite was always impossible; further, then after 1 it always was and will

that which is in some way the cause of the other’s existence might reasonably be called prior by nature.” Ockham evidently has no quarrel with this notion but rejects Scotus’s analysis of natural priority in terms of instants of nature (see p. 76), apparently because of the absurdities entailed by the supposition that there are such instants of nature. (See Baudry, Lexique, art. “Instants nature.”) But Scotus’s analysis of natural priority seems to have been modeled on the conventional analysis of temporal priority in terms of instants of time, and it need not be interpreted as committing him to the reality of instants of nature any more than the conventional analysis of temporal priority need be interpreted as committing one to the reality of instants of time. (See note 49 and Appendix I, note 7.)

Ockham produces a parallel argument against Scotus’s doctrine of the “nonsense capacity” in his Ordinatio, d. 38, q. 6 (Appendix I, p. 85 below).

This objection is evidently intended to reject Ockham’s attempted reduction to an absurdity in the preceding paragraph by claiming flatly that an actualization of the nonevident capacity would be an actualization for the one opposite or for the other, and that an actualization for either one would simply rule out an actualization for the other at the same time. That is, this objection seems to be following the line laid down as interpretation (1) in note 102. A parallel objection appears in Ockham’s Ordinatio (immediately following the passage cited in note 105; Appendix I, p. 85 below).
The response, therefore, consists in this. If the will willed $X$ at $t_1$, then after $t_1$ 'the will willed $X$ at $t_1$' always will be necessary. And in that case if its nonevident capacity can be actualized at $t_1$, then either contradictories will be true at one and the same time after $t_1$, or after $t_1$ that proposition which is necessary about the past (since it had [corresponding to it] a true proposition that was merely about the present) will be false, for its opposite will be true.

Nor does that objection hold good in which it is said ‘... ‘Peter will be saved’ is true now . . . .' for that is a future contingent, and in the case of future contingents the aforesaid proposition has no truth—viz., * every proposition that is [merely] about the present, [if it is true, has corresponding to it a necessary proposition about the past].'

But you say: According to you, an angel can sin at the first instant of his creation. Then [you go on] as follows. One never sins except at an instant at which the sinner has his act in his power, so that he can at that same instant not elicit that act. For grant the opposite—that he cannot at that instant not elicit that act—and, since ‘not possible not’ is equipollent to ‘necessary,’ it follows that at that instant necessarily he elicits that act and so does not sin.

I respond as follows. On the hypothesis [that an angel can sin

107 Reading ‘non vult hoc’ for ‘non vult hoc oppositum.’
108 Ockham produces a parallel argument in his Ordinatio (immediately following the passage cited in note 106; Appendix I, p. 85 below).
109 The first sentence of this objection presents two difficulties, the first of which is the use of the second-person verb form and pronoun in what seems to be a direct quotation: ‘sed dicit: Angelus secundum te in primo instanti sua creatio potentia pecarem.’ It looks as if Ockham is the speaker and is quoting an objector, in which case the ‘you’ in ‘you say’ refers to the objector and the ‘you’ in ‘according to you’ refers to Ockham. In the second sentence, then, Ockham is again the speaker, and the remainder of the paragraph is a quotation from the objector. The second difficulty is the unexpected reference to an angel. It seems that the objector has in mind the example Ockham used in his presentation of Scotus’s view (in the second paragraph of this Question). Since the example was of a created will existing for only one instant and capable of willing in that first (and last) instant of its existence, an angel’s will is certainly a more suitable instance than the will of a human being.

110 The point of the objection seems to be to show that Ockham’s rejection of Scotus’s nonevident capacity of the will for opposites *without* *succession* commits him to admitting that a will that exists for a single instant only (or, more generally, every will at the first instant of its operation) *must* will as it does. at the first instant of his creation] I maintain that he does have the act in his power, since he can cease [from eliciting the act] at another instant, so that at one instant ‘the will willed [X]’ is true and at another instant ‘the will does not will [X]’ is true. I maintain also that he can at $t_1$ not elicit that act, for when $t_1$ is past ‘the will can at $t_1$ not elicit that act’ is true, since after $t_1$ it can cease from [eliciting] any act, and then $t_1$ is past and then ‘the will does not elicit that act at $t_1$’ is true.111

Suppose it is said that when it is $t_1$ and an act is elicited [at $t_1$] the will cannot not elicit that act, and therefore (by equipollence) at $t_1$ it necessarily elicits [that act].

I maintain that the inference does not hold good, since, following the teaching of the Philosopher,112 the equipollence must be understood [to apply] in absolute propositions with no assumption having been made.113 (Otherwise many absurd conclusions would follow against the Philosopher.)

D Therefore, responding to this Question [III] in another way, I maintain that in creatures there is never a capacity for opposite objects* or for opposite acts without succession, nor in divine [beings a capacity] in respect of those that are not future contingents.114 And so I do not agree with Scotus* as regards that nonevi-
Predestination, God's Foreknowledge, and Future Contingents
dent capacity in the will, for he is mistaken in all those "instants of
nature."

But how then will the contingency of the will be preserved in
respect of what is willed by it?

I answer that God's will (as regards what is external to it), as
well as the created will, acts contingently at the instant at which it
acts. But this can be understood in three ways. (1) [It can be under-
stood to mean] that the will, existing for some time prior to \( t_1 \), at
which time it causes \( [X] \), can freely and contingently cause or not
cause \( [X] \) at \( t_1 \). Understood in this way, it is true if the will does thus
preexist. (2) It can be understood [to mean] that at the same instant
at which the will causes \( [X] \) it is true to say that it does not cause \( [X] \).
Understood in this way it is not possible, because of the contradic-
tories that follow—viz., that it causes \( [X] \) at \( t_1 \) and does not cause \( [X] \)
at \( t_1 \). (3) It can be understood [to mean] that the will contingently
causes \( [X] \) at \( t_1 \), for without any variation or change occurring in it
or in another cause and without the cessation of another cause it
can at another instant, after \( t_1 \), freely cease from [causing] its act, so
that at \( t_1 \) the will causes \( [X] \) is true and at another instant, after \( t_1 \),
the will does not cause \( [X] \) is true. And in this way the will does
contingently cause \( [X] \) at \( t_1 \), but a natural cause does not con-
tingently cause in this way.\footnote{Not if it is construed as a claim about
God's antecedent disposing will. (On this distinction see Introduction,
pp. 17–20, 30–33 above.) But propositions about present
acts of a created will are settled as regards their truth or falsity by what is posited
in actuality in the present. They are thus like propositions about God's antecedent
will and unlike propositions about God's consequent will. A proposition about God's
consequent willing that \( p \) is equivalent to a future contingent proposition in case it is

697 ff.); also Book One of Ockham's *Commentary on the Sentences* (the *Ordinatio*),
d. 40, q. 1. (Boehner).}

[QUESTION IV]\footnote{See note 4.}

A Is there a cause of predestination in the predestinate and a
cause of reprobation in the reprobate?

It is proved that there is no cause of predestination [in the
predestinate], since baptized infants are saved although they never
earned merit (habuerunt merita).\footnote{See note 12.} Therefore [in at least some pre-
destinate persons there is no cause of predestination]. Again, in the
predestinate angels it does not seem that merit precedes [predestination]. Therefore [in at least some (other) predestinate persons there is no cause of predestination].

B I maintain that there is a cause of predestination in the
predestinate and of reprobation in the reprobate as long as 'cause'
is being taken in the second rather than in the first way mentioned
in Assumption 9. For this inference is correct: 'He commits the sin
of final impenitence;'\footnote{Cf. Baudry, *Lexique*, art. "Contingentia."} therefore he will be reprobate. Similarly:
'He will persevere to the end; therefore he will be predestinate.'
For just as God is not a punisher before a man is a sinner, so He is
not a rewarder before a man is justified by grace.

Nevertheless, I maintain as well that a cause of reprobation (or
of predestination) can precede (reprobation (or predestination)) in
the reprobate (or predestinate) or in [his] parents. For instance, an
infant dying in original sin is punished with the penalty of damn
ation (poena damnit) because of the sin of the parents, but not with the
penalty of bodily suffering (poena sensus) unless because of his own
sins. Similarly, a baptized child can be saved and hence predesti-
name because of the good works of the parents.\footnote{See note 12.}

The cause of predestination may, however, admit of an excep-
tion in the Blessed Virgin and in the good angels if they did not
merit their supreme blessedness. If, on the other hand, they did
finally merit it, it does not admit of an exception.

And thus [my response] to the two arguments is plain.
[QUESTION V]

A. In view of the fact that the propositions 'Peter is predestinate' and 'Peter is reprobate' are opposites, why cannot the one succeed the other in truth?\(^{119}\)

I maintain that, as is clear from the preceding discussions, if those propositions are simply about the future, not conveying anything present posited in fact or anything past, then they cannot be successively verified unless 'Peter is predestinate' is first true and afterwards false; but that is impossible. For, as has been said above, every proposition that is simply about the future was always true if it is ever true;\(^{120}\) for there is no reason why it should be true at one time rather than at another. Consequently, since propositions such as 'Peter is predestinate' are equivalent simply about the future, if those propositions can be verified successively and it is certain that they cannot be true at one and the same time (since they entail that contradictories are true at one and the same time\(^{121}\)) then if 'Peter is reprobate' is true now it was always true earlier,\(^{122}\) since it is simply about the future. Consequently it was true when its opposite was true, and so contradictories were true at one and the same time.

This is confirmed as follows. Propositions do not change from truth to falsity except as a result of a change on the part of a thing, according to the Philosopher in Categories [Ch. 5, 4a22 ff.]. But there is no change in God or in Peter or in anything else as a result of which 'Peter is predestinate' is first true and afterwards false. (I

\(^{119}\) Question V is devoted to an elucidation and defense of two principles fundamental to Ockham's position in this treatise: (1) that such propositions as 'Peter is predestinate' and 'Peter is reprobate' are "simply about the future, not conveying anything present posited in fact or anything past"; (2) that a proposition that is simply about the future is "always true [prior to the time of its realization] if it is ever true."

\(^{120}\) See pp. 61–62.

\(^{121}\) Speaking strictly, it is not they but their being true together that entails that contradictories are true at one and the same time.

\(^{122}\) Reading 'prius' for 'postea.'

B. Suppose you say that if you die today then 'you will sit down tomorrow' is false and was true of you earlier, and that as a result of such a change in you that proposition can change from truth to falsity. And in the same way if Peter is now predestinate and afterwards dies in final impenitence he will then be reprobate. Therefore as a result of a change occurring in Peter through an act of sin the proposition 'Peter is predestinate' can change from truth to falsity.

In that case I maintain that (as has often been said) if it is posited that someone predestinate commits the sin of final impenitence, then 'he is reprobate' is true and 'he is predestinate' always was true and consequently its opposite is now false and always false. And in the same way if you die today the proposition 'you will sit down tomorrow' is now false and always was false and its opposite always was true.

And the entire difficulty in the subject-matter [of predestination, God's foreknowledge, and future contingents] might be said to rest on this response.\(^{124}\)

\(^{123}\) Boehner conjectures that the word 'Deus' was inadvertently omitted at this point and reads 'postea Deus' rather than 'postea'.

\(^{124}\) The following closing formulas are found in various manuscripts of the TREATISE. "Amen: Here ends the treatise on future contingents and divine predestination set forth by brother William Ockham, O.F.M." "Here ends the treatise on predestination and future contingents of the reverend brother William Ockham, O.F.M. Praise be to God." "Here ends Ockham's treatise on predestination and future contingents." "Here ends Ockham's treatise on predestination and foreknowledge or on future contingents set forth by the venerable brother William Ockham, professor of Holy Scripture, O.F.M." (Boehner)