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DENYING THAT GOD'S PAST KNOWLEDGE IS FIXED

William Ockham (ca. 1285-1347) responded to the incompatibilist argument in his *Tractatus de praedestinatione et de praescientia Dei et de futuris contingentibus* by denying its most fundamental and seemingly incontrovertible premise: that if God believed at all past times that *S* would do *X* at t_2 , then it is beyond the power of anyone to change this fact about the past. Ockham maintained that such propositions are merely “verbally about the past” but are in reality about the future and therefore do not partake of the necessity of the past. That is, Ockham would deny that premise (B4) is true. Ockham stated: “Propositions having to do with predestination and reprobation, whether 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.”¹ Ockham held that propositions about God’s acts bringing about future events such a predestination are not really but merely verbally about the past and are really about the future. He also asserted that propositions about God’s beliefs about future contingents are not unchangeable and fixed because they are propositions only verbally about the past but are really about the future. The future event which God knows is still within the power of persons to alter because the event known is still future, though it is certain that no person will exercise her power to alter God’s knowledge. Future contingents remain contingent even though they are past, according to Ockham,