BOTH/AND: considering God's Providence[2] and human responsibility –

rethinking the Either/Or of the laws of Classical Logic, 8 pgs

Universal law of reason: if one accepts the premise, he must accept the conclusion. **Classical logic begins with** the presupposition that absolutes exist, which implies antithesis. The first three moves in logic are: The Law of **Identity**, A = A; The Law of **Non-Contradiction**, Nothing can be both A and Not-A; The Law of the **Excluded Middle**, Everything is either A or Not-A. Practically these mean: if something is true, then the opposite is false (correct/incorrect, good/bad, right/wrong, real/fictional). If an animal is a cat, the same animal cannot not be a cat. **This is the language of cause and effect**. We cannot think logically or rationally in any other way. The classical laws governing macroscopic phenomena are well understood and time-tested.

Exception: Antinomies exist when a pair of principles that stand side by side seem logically irreconcilable, yet undeniably true. They **exist in Scripture and in nature**. Therefore when we find Bible passages that speak of God's providence and others that speak of man's responsibility or accountability by means of freedom of choice (which we do), they are both true concurrently and we cannot logically, mathematically, or experimentally explain it. Since antinomies exist, we must accept them as fact [see footnote **6** after addendum below for a more thorough description].

Who is controlling who? I began with **the law of non-contradiction** as applied to **God's** providence in matters related to salvation. It occurred to me that forcing God to be subject to this or any other humanly conceived law was removing him from being the supreme authority to being subject to that law. After all, a law governing human logic is a construct by humans **describing the way logic must work in order to be rational** *according to men.*

How does non-contradiction operate? It became obvious that antagonism between the 2 opposing positions was necessary for the law of non-contradiction to apply. In other words, each position must necessarily be exclusive of the other in order to be opposites. Take what the ancient formulation that characterizes Christians as being saints and sinners simultaneously. This is an incorrect notion because saints are believers and sinners are unbelievers. [Saved or redeemed people of God are never referred to as SINNERS, lawless, rebellious, or rejecting Christ in the NT. They are the holy ones, righteous children of God in contrast to the unrighteous, ungodly, wicked, rebels, children of the Devil, **1 Jn.3:10; Mt.9:13; Acts 24:15**]. The corrected statement is "Christians are saints yet people who still sin." *He has rescued us from the domain of darkness and [has] transferred us into the Kingdom of his dear Son,* ***Col.1:13***. We are saved and belong to Christ's kingdom as soon as we believe. Our salvation is now a fact and our complete transformation, **sanctification**, to become like Christ is in process and certain **because** we are redeemed. That process continues until we are glorified (made perfect). God is sovereign and people are accountable simultaneously because both are true and applicable at the same time, the period between our rebirth and death. **It involves a process** that is ongoing and incomplete. The ultimate resolution of this process is encapsulated by the phrase *just men made perfect,* ***Heb.11:39-40; 12:22-24***;[1] ***Phil.3:12***. Therefore Bible passages that speak of God's providence and others that speak to man's responsibility or accountability by means of freedom of choice are both true concurrently (both/and). Whether or not I understand **how**

this mutual correspondence works is irrelevant because it is a temporary **antinomy** that God himself puts together. [See my essay, The **A**lready and the **N**ot **Y**et]

How does God's sovereignty work? Does God totally control every detail every moment [determinism]? If that is so then we will have a hard time with human responsibility because there is no room for blame or commendation in such a scenario. That God causes all actions and is therefore responsible for everything directly contradicts ***Jas.1:13-14*** *… when you are being tempted, do not say, God is tempting me. God is never tempted to do wrong, and he never tempts anyone else. Temptation comes from our own desires, which entice us and drag us away.* I had a Bible college (philosophy) professor who thought that if one single molecule or atom was outside of God's control, the whole idea of his sovereignty would fall apart. Strictly speaking he was right. But the Bible doesn't teach **determinism** [see appendix, The Church Before the Watching World, **p.159-161**]. It does teach that God has **plans and purposes** which he intends to [providentially] work out,[2] and that these take into consideration the choices of mankind [God's purposes determine the context, boundary conditions, or form in which we exercise free will], the natural laws, and cultural norms of societies and times (which God ignores when it suits his designs). Does God grant **prayer requests**? Of course, when it suits him. There is no reason to think the world is out-of-control or in anarchy because mankind has freedom of choice.

Partnership: There have long been questions among believers regarding how prayer can be significant if God has already planned what he intends to accomplish and how he will proceed. I think the scriptural answer is that God has determined to work together with his people by their prayers to accomplish what he has planned. There are a few passages in the NT that mention prayer but most particularly refer to bringing the Gospel. Nevertheless it doesn't make sense not to include the prayers of the saints with witnessing. There are plenty of OT passages that illustrate our joint effort with God in prayer: **Jas.5:16-18; Jer.29:10-14; Dan.9:1-19**. The NT speaks to this in terms of Christians working together and cooperating with God in achieving his goals.

*After the Lord had spoken to them, He was received into Heaven, and sat at the right hand of God. And they went forth and preached everywhere. And **the Lord worked with them and confirmed the word** with signs that followed (**Mk.16:19-20; 2 Cor.5:19-20; 6:1; 1 Cor.3:7-9**).*

*we sent Timothy to visit you. **He is our brother and God's co-worker** in proclaiming the Good News of Christ (**1 Thes.3:2**).*

Form and freedom: I have a friend who prayed much seeking **God's leading** as to whether or not he should marry a certain girl. His mindset was that God's will included a specific girl for him, which carried the implication that marrying another would be to miss God's perfect will for him and that implies to marry someone else would lesson his part in God's program. Did God direct him to a particular woman? He is convinced that he did. In fact the word of God describes God's will in terms of absolute limits or boundary conditions describes a circle, not a point.[3] That is, it doesn't point to anyone in particular, but to what constitutes the circle or the form within which there is **an eligible population from which we are free to choose**. How well we choose is a matter of wisdom and consent.[4] God can of course bring people together either in answer to prayer or not, but let each one be assured in his own mind that making his own choice from among eligible candidates is not sin.

Likewise, neither does planning, acting wisely or utilizing tactics and strategy necessarily mean **depending on them instead of God**. God has left us a lot of room to decide our own path and we do well to consider his objectives and take heed of his warnings. By the same token we must allow **him** leeway and time to bring in his kingdom in his own way. It's still a matter of both/and, not either/or.[5]

---

[1] *But [NOW] You have approached ... the city of the living God ... and myriads of angels, and an assembly and church of* ***firstborn*** *who have been enrolled in heaven, and God, judge of all men, and spirits of righteous men who have been perfected [at last], and Jesus, mediator of a new covenant, and the sprinkled blood, which [calls for] something better that of Abel,* ***Heb.12:22-24****.*

[2] *Fellow Israelites, listen to this: Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs, which God did among you through him, as you yourselves know. This man was handed over to you* ***by God's deliberate plan and foreknowledge*** *[providentially]; and you [Jews], with the help of wicked men [Gentiles], put him to death by nailing him to the cross,* ***Acts 2:22-23***

The term ***sovereignty*** *does not contain the idea of purposeful action but the term* ***providence*** *does. Sovereignty focuses on God's absolute right and power to do all that he wills. Of course it is not simply powerful, but purposeful, has design, and pursues a goal. Providence is used for this more specific focus. It means supplying what is needed like the idiom "I'll take care of it," he'll see that things happen in a certain way, [see Providence* ***p.29-31****,* ***p.4*** *below].*

[3] For a more thorough discussion of absolute limits (tension & balance), biblical norms, boundary conditions, and form & freedom, see books by Francis Schaeffer: **p.63-68; 157-171** of **The Church at the End of the 20th Century** with **The Church Before the Watching World** included (1971); The Francis Schaeffer **Trilogy** (1990) **p.123, 220**; **The Great Evangelical Disaster** (1984) in **The Complete Works of Francis Schaeffer** (1985) **Chap.1 & 5; p.308; 396**; **A Christian Manifesto** (1982) **p.25**.

[4] **Gen.24** contains the account of God's leading Abraham's servant to a particular girl for his son, Isaac. That girl's willingness to accompany the servant was a requirement (**5, 8**) and she chose to go with him (**v.58**).

[5] One of the strongest arguments for the authenticity of man's ability to choose freely comes with God's warnings which must be taken as serious directions to follow, or avoid. They don't make any sense otherwise. After all, Nineveh repented and avoided disaster at the warning God sent through Jonah (**Jonah 3**).

Addendum ... ***antinomy***

The following passages are quoted from **p.26-28** of J. I. Packer's book Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God (1961). *An* ***antinomy*** *[contrasted with a* ***paradox****, excerpts from* ***p.24-30****], exists when a pair of principles stand side by side seemingly irreconcilable, yet both undeniable [like the sovereignty of God and responsibility of man.* The Church at the End of the 20th Century/Church

Before the Watching World, *cited above, contrasts* ***determinism*** *with* ***freedom*** *in the appendix,* ***p.159-171****]. There are cogent reasons for believing each of them; each rests on clear and solid evidence; but it is a mystery to you how they can be squared with each other. Each must be true on its own, but you do not see how they can both be true together. This has been the case of the study of light throughout history. There is cogent evidence that light consists of both waves and particles … The two seemingly incompatible phenomena must be held together, so both must be treated as true. [see discussion on quantum phenomena below* [6]*] An* ***antinomy is neither dispensable nor comprehensible****. It is not a figure of speech, but an observed relation between two statements of fact. It is not deliberately manufactured; it is forced on us by the facts themselves. It is unavoidable and insoluble. We do not invent it and we cannot explain it. Nor is there any way to get rid of it, save by falsifying the very facts that led us to it.*

The only thing we can do is accept it *for what it is and learn to live with it. Refuse to regard the apparent inconsistency as real; ascribe the semblance of contradiction to the deficiency of our own understanding; think of the two principles as not rival alternatives, but, in some way that at present you do not grasp, [accept them as being] complimentary to each other.* ***Be careful****, therefore, not to set them at loggerheads, not to make deductions from either that would cut across the other. Such deductions would, for that very reason, certainly be unsound. Use each within the limits of its own sphere of reference (the area* ***delimited*** *by the evidence from which the principle has been drawn). Note what connections exist between the two truths and their two frames of reference. Teach yourself to think of reality in a way that provides for their peaceful coexistence. Remember that reality itself has proven to actually contain both.*

This is how antinomies must be handled*, whether in nature or in Scripture. The apparent opposition between divine sovereignty and human responsibility actually concerns what God does as King and what he does as Judge. As King, he orders and controls all things, human actions among them, in accordance with his own eternal purpose ... [I prefer, He orders all things necessary* ***to*** *providentially accomplish his purposes.]*

… My intentions will come to pass. I will make things happen as I determine they should, ***Isa.46:10****. As His heirs we are predestined to play a key role in His unfolding purpose that is energizing everything to conform to His will,* ***Eph.1:11****.*

[Creation anticipates providence, providence suggests purpose, and purpose leads to a predetermined end goal (telos). For an in-depth, easy-to-read and understandable discussion on sovereignty & providence, see the **Introduction and Chap.1** to *PROVIDENCE* by John Piper (2020) 751 pages. See my essay, The Servant of the Lord] *As Judge, he holds every person responsible for the choices they make and the courses of action they pursue.* ***God's sovereignty and man's responsibility are taught side by side in the same Bible****, sometimes in the same text. Both are thus guaranteed by the same divine authority; both, therefore, are true. It follows that they must be held together and not played off against each other …*

To our finite minds, the thing is inexplicable. It sounds like a contradiction, so our first reaction is to complain that it is absurd ... Our part, however, is to acknowledge these facts and to adore God's

*righteousness both as **King** and as **Judge**; not to speculate as to how his just sovereignty can be consistent with his just judgment. **It is certainly not to question** the justice of either because we find the problem of their relationship too hard for us. Our speculations are not the measure of God ... We ought not to be surprised when we find mysteries of this sort in God's Word [or in nature for that matter] … **The temptation** is to undercut and maim the one truth by the way in which we stress the other … [The three in one of the Trinity, the humanity & deity of Jesus, the mystical union of the individual believer with Jesus Christ, and the mystical union of the church as a whole with Jesus Christ. See Approaching the Bible with Prejudice, notes 1 & 2] See if you can figure this out! … **the LORD** ... caused David to harm Israel by taking a census . [**Satan** rose up against Israel and caused David to take a census of the people of Israel, **1 Chron.21:1**] Go and count the people of Israel and Judah, the LORD told him … But after he had taken the census, **David's conscience began to bother him** … And he said to the LORD , **I have sinned** greatly by taking this census … So the LORD sent a plague upon Israel ... A total of 70,000 people died throughout the nation … **I am the one** who has sinned and done wrong ... **2 Sam.24:1-17***

---

[6] **Quantum theory** describes the nature and behavior of matter and energy on the atomic and sub-atomic levels. Newtonian or Classical mechanics address topics **on a macroscopic scale** and operate according to the rules of classical logic. Classical non-contradictory physics and nonlogical **Antinomies** are both part of our reality.

False or Artificial Antinomies: Modern science has created a whole slew of antinomies by secularization. That is, in it's headlong rush away from the truths of Scripture, it has left itself in the peculiar position of not being able to explain anything that exists in the world in terms of natural **cause and effect**. If something, anything in the material universe exists, it absolutely must have a cause. Things do not just pop into being on their own. They are not self-generated out of nothing. This defies all logic and common sense. If the Bible is correct in its explanation of a given cause, no non-biblical explanation will be able to explain the phenomenon. Any non-biblical explanation or proposal necessarily leads in the wrong direction, away from reality.

One Example: Genesis describes the origin of all natural things. **Gen.1:14-19** tells us that the origin of the stars was supernatural. *God also made the Stars, **v.16** . And God saw that it was good … the fourth day, **v.18-19** .* It also says he approved of his work and that it was completed, implying that he was not going to create anymore, *God saw all that he had made, and it was very good … Thus the heavens and the earth were completed … By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so … he rested from all his work … **Gen.1:31-2:3** .* The clear implication of such language is to convey the idea that at creation God brought into being something **unique**, something that natural processes could not; and that once God was finished and was satisfied with his work, he stopped making stars. Nature could not have done these things then and "she" cannot do them now, which means what for example? New stars are not being formed today!

Now since God himself did this, one would **not** expect to find a sound naturalistic explanation for the

existence of stars, and we don't, regardless of what you have been led to think. Therefore since stars do exist but there is no SCIENTIFIC, logical, rational, or natural reason that they should according to scientific naturalists, they must classify it as an antinomy. But Christians do not because it is super-natural. **I highly recommend** a DVD, *What you aren't being told about ASTRONOMY, vol.2* , Our created stars and galaxies, by Spike Psarris, in which he quotes a number of prominent astrophysi-cists saying that **the origin and formation of stars is a MYSTERY**.

Why do quantum effects only happen on the atomic scale?

https://www.wtamu.edu/~cbaird/sq/2014/04/22/why-do-quantum-effects-only-happen-on-the-atomic-scale/ Published: April 22, 2014 by Christopher S. Baird

A "quantum effect" is an effect that is not properly predicted by classical physics, but is properly predicted by quantum theory. Classical physics describes matter as composed of little, solid parti-cles. Therefore, anytime we get the pieces of matter to act like waves, we are demonstrating a quan-tum effect. (Classical waves such as sound and sea waves don't count as quantum because the motion is a wave, but the pieces are still little solid balls. In order to be a quantum effect, the particle itself must be acting like a wave.) In order to act like quantum waves, bits of matter must not just have their motions aligned, the bits of matter **must also have their quantum wave natures aligned**.

Quantum effects are not only confined to the atomic scale. There are several examples of macro-scopic quantum behavior. Quantum physics describes **matter and energy as quantum wave-functions**, which sometimes act like waves and sometimes act like particles, but are actually more complicated entities than just waves or particles. In reality, **every object in the universe (from atoms to stars) operates according to quantum physics**.

In many situations, such as when throwing a baseball, quantum physics leads to the same result as classical physics. In such situations, we use classical physics instead of quantum physics because **the mathematics is easier and the principles are more intuitive**. The laws of quantum physics are still operating in a baseball thrown across the field, but their operation is not obvious, so we say the system is non-quantum. A situation is described as quantum when its quantum behavior becomes obvious, even though it is really always quantum. A "quantum effect" is therefore an effect that is not properly predicted by classical physics, but *is* properly predicted by quantum theory. Clas-sical physics describes matter as composed of little, solid particles. Therefore, anytime we get the pieces of matter to act like waves, we are demonstrating a quantum effect. (Classical waves such as sound and sea waves don't count as quantum phenomena because the motion is a wave, but the pieces are still little solid balls. In order to be a quantum effect, **the particle itself must be acting like a wave**.)

While quantum effects are not strictly confined to the atomic scale, they certainly are more common at the atomic scale. To be a quantum effect, we have to get matter to act like waves. To be a **macro-scopic quantum effect**, we have to get many bits of matter to act like waves *in an organized fashion*. If all the bits of matter are acting like waves in a random, disjointed manner, then their waves interfere and average away to zero on the macroscopic scale. In physics, we refer to an organized

wave-like behavior as "coherence". The more the wave-like natures of **the bits of matter are aligned**, the more coherent is the object overall. And the more coherent an object, the more it acts like a wave overall.

The key here is that a large-scale coherent state is improbable as long as the individual parts are behaving randomly. There are only a handful of possible ways to have a system of pieces act in a coordinated fashion, while there are far more ways to have the system act in an uncoordinated fashion. Therefore, coordinated behavior is less likely than uncoordinated behavior, although not impossible. Quantum coherence on the macroscopic scale is improbable, but not impossible. If the quantum wave natures of the individual bits of matter can be aligned into a coherent state, then quantum effects will become evident on the macroscopic scale. Below are some examples of **macroscopic quantum effects**. [I'm classifying such phenomena as counter intuitive **antinomies**]

Superconductivity. When a conducting material is cooled enough, its conduction electrons spread out into large-scale coherent wave states. These coherent wave states are able to flow past impurities and atoms without being perturbed, so that a material with zero electrical resistance results. Superconductivity leads to interesting macroscopic effects such as quantum levitation (the Meissner effect).

Superfluidity. When certain materials are cooled enough, their atoms can spread out into coherent wave states that resist surface tension, allowing the material to flow like a liquid with zero viscosity.

Bose Einstein Condensates. When certain materials are cooled enough, their atoms spread out completely into a single, giant, coherent wave state. A macroscopic chunk of matter that has condensed in this way acts like a wave and exhibits wave properties such as interference.

Laser light is often mentioned as a macroscopic quantum effect. However, coherent light such as laser light is successfully explained by the classical Maxwell equations and therefore is *not* a quantum effect. However, the way laser light is *produced*; through stimulated emission and a transition between discrete energy levels is a quantum effect. But, stimulated emission in lasers is **an atomic-scale effect** and therefore does not make our list of macroscopic quantum effects. Similarly, there are many atomic-scale quantum effects that lead to results that are observable on the macroscopic scale, like the quantum effects that make modern computers possible. These effects are not really happening on the macroscopic scale. Rather, **the effects happen on an atomic scale, and then the results of the effect are amplified to a macroscopic level**.

Why is Gravity not a Real Force? Published: August 5, 2022 By: Christopher S. Baird

Gravity is indeed a real force, but not in the traditional sense. In other words, gravity is not a direct, classical, action-at-a-distance force between two objects. However, in the broader sense, gravity is indeed a force because it describes the resulting interaction between two masses. Gravitational effects are fundamentally caused by the warping of spacetime and the motion of objects through the warped spacetime. However, the end result is as if a force was applied. Therefore, the most accurate approach would be to call gravity **an "emergent force," meaning that what looks like a direct force is actually emerging from more fundamental effects** (the warping of spacetime). With this in mind, it is perfectly reasonable to call gravity a real force.

Interestingly, **all of the fundamental forces are actually emergent forces** and not classical, action-at-a-distance forces. If you insist on calling gravity not a real force, then you must call all of the fundamental forces not real forces. It is more accurate to call them all emergent forces. For instance, two electrons repel each other through the electromagnetic force. However, the one electron does not exert a literal, direct, electromagnetic force on the other electron. Rather, the more fundamental description is that the first electron creates a quantum electromagnetic field in the space surrounding it, and then the other electron moves and interacts with this electromagnetic field. The end result is that it looks like the second electron experienced a force from the first electron. On the fundamental level, **there are no action-at-distance forces**. It is really just certain objects creating and/or warping certain fields and then other objects moving and interacting with these fields.

Some scientists think that even calling gravity, electromagnetism, and so forth "emergent forces" can be misleading because it makes people think of action-at-a-distance forces. They prefer to avoid the word "force" entirely and instead prefer the name "interaction." For instance, instead of saying that one electron exerts an electromagnetic *force* on another electron (which is perfectly reasonable to say as long as you know you are talking about electromagnetism as an emergent force), some scientists prefer to say that the electrons participate in the electromagnetic *interaction*.