

Abstract

Author: Abraham Habibullah Khan.

Title: A Comparison of the Free-Will Issue as is Seen in al-Ash'ari and Luther.

Department: Institute of Islamic Studies and Faculty of Religious Studies.

Degree: M.A. Comparative Religion.

Summary: This thesis is a comparison of the free-will issue as is seen in the writings of two theologians: one Muslim, al-Ash'ari, the other Christian, Luther. The topic is approached by asking ~~whether~~ man is free to determine by himself his ultimate destiny. More specifically the question is: Can man through his works earn the reward of the Beatific Vision? A related question is: Can the all-powerful and just God be spoken of without ascribing to Him the responsibility for man's evil? The findings of the thesis reveal differences in the two theologians' views, regardless of their different religious backgrounds. Nonetheless each shared the belief that the supreme, omnipotent and omniscient God wills every aspect of man's life; therefore man is not free to determine his ultimate destiny. And although man's evil is traced to God, He is in no way evil, for the question of Divine Morality is inadmissible.

COMPARISON OF THE FREE WILL ISSUE IN AL-ASHARI & LUTHER

A Comparison of the Issue of Free-Will
as is Seen in Al-Ash'ari and Luther

by

Abraham H. Khan

In partial fulfillment for the Master of Arts degree in Comparative
Religion at McGill University, January 1971.

© Abraham H. Khan 1971

Acknowledgments

I wish to extend my thanks to Professor Charles J. Adams, director of the Institute of Islamic Studies and my thesis advisor, for permission to write on the subject chosen for this thesis. I am greatly indebted to him because his demands for precision and clarity has led me to some of the issues which would have normally escaped all, but sharp minds. Also his demands have instilled in me a true sense of scholarship.

Equal thanks are extended to Professor Eric G. Jay who, as associate advisor for my thesis, found time inspite of his professional duties and being then Dean of the Divinity School to offer me the guidance which can be obtained only from mentors who take a genuine interest in their students' work.

At the Institute of Islamic Studies, Dr. M.H. Ha^ciri has been kind enough to share with me his understanding of philosophical and theological matters pertinent to this thesis from a Muslim view point. Dr. R.N. Verdery, my teacher, has stimulated my thinking, Dr. D.P. Little has called attention to useful Quranic materials, and my fellow graduate students at the Institute, M.H. Naqib and C. Jah, assisted me with the difficulties encountered in translating the Arabic texts. At the Faculty of Religious Studies, Professor J.C. McLelland and Dr. J.C. Kirby read sections of the manuscript and offered suggestions. To them, I acknowledge my indebtedness.

Also to Mrs. E. Hausfather, Miss R. Snider and Mrs. Pamela Khan,

I extend my thanks for reading the manuscript in search of errors.
A special thanks to Mrs. Khan for her suggestions and long-suffering.
Finally to the typist, Mrs. J. Neville, I thank her for her effort
to make this thesis presentable.

May this work help to promote further understanding among
Muslim, Christians and those who seek truth and peace in this world.

Table of Contents

<u>Introduction</u>	<u>Page</u> 1
Footnotes	4
<u>Chapter 1: Preliminary discussion on Free-Will and</u>	
<u>Qadar</u>	6
<u>Free-Will</u>	6
<u>Qadar</u>	10
Footnotes	15
<u>Chapter 2: The historico-theological background</u>	
of the issue	20
A. <u>For Al-Ash'ari</u>	20
Footnotes	29
B. <u>For Luther</u>	33
Footnotes	42
<u>Chapter 3: The Free-Will</u>	
A. <u>For Al-Ash'ari</u>	45
Footnotes	63
B. <u>For Luther</u>	68
Footnotes	85
<u>Chapter 4: Comparison of the two views</u>	
Footnotes	119
<u>Conclusion:</u>	
Footnotes	130
<u>Bibliography:</u>	
	131

Abbreviations

- Ar. = Reference to the Arabic text.
- B.W. = Martin Luther, On the Bondage of the Will.
- E.I.¹ = The Encyclopedia of Islam.
- E.I.² = The New Encyclopedia of Islam.
- E.R.E. = Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics.
- F.W.P. = W.M. Watt, Free-Will and Predestination in Early Islam.
- M.C. = A.J. Wensinck, Muslim Creed.
- S.E.I. = The Shorter Encyclopedia of Islam.
- De Servo = Martin Luther, De Servo Arbitrio or Bondage of the Will.
- Diatribes = D. Erasmus, Diatribes seu collatio de libero arbitrio.
- Ibānah = Al-Ash'arī, Al-Ibānah^{an} 'Uṣūl al-Diyānah.
- Luma^c = _____, Kitāb al-Luma^c.
- Maqālāt = _____, Maqālāt al-Islāmīyīn.
- Milal = Al-Shahrastānī, Kitāb al-Milal wa al-Mihāl.
- Mihāyatu 'l-Iqdam = Al-Shahrastānī, Kitāb Mihāyatu 'l-Iqdām Fi 'Ilm
'l-Kalām.

In this thesis Arberry's translation of the Qur'ān is used for direct reference. Biblical texts cited by Luther are used as they appear in Bondage of the Will (ed. and trans. Packer and Johnston), although they have been checked against the RSV translation.

Introduction

The problem of determination and freedom is one of those fundamental problems in which relegation to obscurity is not easy. It is a classical problem to which the human mind, however discouraged, invariably returns. Each generation debates it and no age settles it. Each formulates it anew, but in wrestling with it each gains an insight that does not come ordinarily.

Individuals from most nations and cultures have given serious thought to this question in one form or another. Perhaps Paul's reflection on the issue expresses plainly and simply one aspect of the question which has troubled great and small minds alike:

For I do not do the good I want, but the evil
I do not want is what I do. Romans 7:19.

Two other individuals, both theologians, who have devoted some attention to the question of man's will are Abū al-Ḥasan al-Ashʿarī (A.D. 873-935) and Martin Luther (A.D. 1483-1546). Both of these men are outstanding personalities within their own religions. Sunnī Islam is greatly indebted to al-Ashʿarī for his intellectual defense of Islam's central dogmatic positions¹; and Christianity² may rightfully claim Luther as a discoverer and an unflinching defender of its Biblical truths.

This thesis seeks to establish the similarities and distinguish the differences which are evident in the views of these two men on free-will. The task is approached by way of enquiry into man's ability to determine his ultimate destiny. The question might be

posed: Is man able through his own strivings to earn the reward of the Beatific Vision?³ A second and closely related question is: Can one speak of an all-powerful and just God without ascribing to Him the responsibility for man's evil deeds?

Sources

For primary sources of al-Ash'arī's works, the two selected are: Al-Ibānah 'An Uṣūl Al-Diyānah and Kitāb Al-Luma'. Both works have been translated into English. The Luma' has been translated with an introduction by Richard J. McCarthy, S.J. in The Theology of Al-Ash'arī⁵: this translation contains the Arabic text and other materials pertinent to the study of al-Ash'arī. The translations have been well received by western scholars, and this thesis makes use of the translations. However, the writer does not rely solely on the translations. On many occasions the Arabic texts have been consulted in order to grasp the meaning of various words and phrases not readily discernable in the translations.

We are well aware of the doubt which has been cast on al-Ash'arī's authorship of the Ibānah. This work conveys the strong traditionalist leanings of its author. Having ascertained that al-Ash'arī adopted Kalām as a method, some western scholars⁶ wonder whether al-Ash'arī could have been the author of a work that had a traditionalist tone⁷. The position adopted in this thesis is that al-Ash'arī is the author of both the Ibānah and Luma'. G. Makdisi reminds us that the main current in Muslim theological thought of that period should be sought in the direction of traditionalism.⁸

Also, it is not impossible to think of a traditionalist making use of the principles of reasoning to defend the basic tenets of his faith.

The work selected for Martin Luther's view on free-will is his brilliant masterpiece De Servo Arbitrio. This work is available in the English translations, Martin Luther on the Bondage of the Will.⁹ This translation, done by J.I. Packer and O.R. Johnston, is used in the thesis and occasional references are made to the Latin text, De Servo Arbitrio found in Luther's Works (Weimerer Ausgabe) Vol. 18, 597 ff.

A number of secondary sources on both al-Ash^{carī} and Luther have also been consulted and used. These works are listed in the bibliography.

Footnotes to Introduction

¹Al-Ash'arī is a representative of Sunnī Islam, and the "founder of the schools of orthodox theology." See: W.M. Watt, "Al-Ash'arī, Abū'l-Ḥasan," Encyclopedia of Islam, new edition (Leiden, 1960). Hereafter cited E.I.²; the older edition cited E.I.

²The reference here is to Protestantism. However, now that the passions have begun to cool within both Protestantism and Catholicism, the tendency to treat Luther as either a hero or a villain has been somewhat mitigated. For both Protestantism and Catholicism Luther is important, if not for his doctrinal position then certainly as a historical figure in the history of Christianity. See: J.M. Todd, Martin Luther: A Biographical Study (London, 1964). pp. XII - XIX.

³For the orthodox Muslim, the reward is Paradise where the highest bliss is experienced, and where the vision of God is a possibility. The question of the vision (ruḥya) of God was one of the principle points on which al-Ash'arī and later Muslims who subscribed to al-Ash'arī's creed differed from the Mu'tazilites. There were people like the Karranites, who owing to their anthropomorphic ideas, held the possibility of the vision of God in the ocular sense, bi al-absār. However, the Mu'tazilites denied the Vision of God, and according to E.E. Elder the philosophers and Shi'ites also denied it. Al-Ash'arī, the Ash'arites and the Hanifite-Māturīdites upheld the vision of God, but emphasized the bilā kayf: Thus, God will be seen in Paradise through man's eyes but they will not see Him as one sees objects spatially situated and limited. E.E. Elder (trans.) A Commentary on the Creed of Islam: Sa'd al-Din al-Taftāzānī on the Creed of Najm al-Din al-Nasafī (New York, 1950) pp. 74-79 and footnote 1, p. 74; L. Gardet, "Allah", E.I.², A.J. Wensinck, citing The Catholic Encyclopedia and al-Ghazzali's Ihyā' claim that God as seen by the blessed in Paradise is a chief point in both Christianity and Islam. The Muslim Creed (Cambridge, 1932) p. 65. Hereafter cited as M.C. In Christianity, Paradise is a term commonly used to designate heaven. In the development of western religious thought, the meaning of the term has shifted. In the Septuagint the term refers to the "Garden of Eden" (cf. Gen. 2:8). Consequently it also came to designate man's reinstatement with regard to his original destiny (cf. Luke 23:43; 2 Cor. 11:4). In these texts, the term designates the present and future sojourn of the blessed. The Beatific Vision has been viewed as the supreme bliss when the glory and joy of God is fully realized in heaven. Traditionally, it is the supreme reward of the righteous, the unimpeded sight of God in heaven. The idea of seeing God was a matter of deep concern for both Muslims and Christians. I.F. Wood, "State of the Dead (Muhammadan)" and

G. Harris, "State of the Dead (Christian)", Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics, Vol. II (New York, 1955), pp. 148-149, 110-129. Hereafter, cited E.R.E.; "Beatific Vision", Van A. Harvey, A Handbook of Theological Terms (New York, 1966), p. 39. See footnote 9, in Chapter 1 of this thesis.

⁴Abū al-Ḥasan al-Ashʿarī, Al-Ibānah ʿAn Uṣūl Al-Diyānah, second edition (Hyderabad, 1948) trans. by W.C. Klein, The Elucidation of Islam's Foundation, American Oriental Series, Vol. 10, (New Haven, 1940).

⁵Abū al-Ḥasan al-Ashʿarī, Kitāb-al-Lumaʿ with translation by Richard J. McCarthy, S.J., The Theology of Al-Ashʿarī (Beyrouth, 1953).

⁶A.J. Wensinck and R.J. McCarthy are two scholars who question al-Ashʿarī's authorship of the Ibānah. See: A.J. Wensinck M.C., p. 93-94, and R.J. McCarthy op. cit., p. 232.

⁷See: G. Makdisi, "Ashʿarī and the Ashʿarites", Studia Islamica, Vol. 18 (1963) pp. 20-22.

⁸Ibid., p. 38.

⁹Martin Luther De Servo Arbitrio, trans. as On the Bondage of the Will by J.I. Packer, O.R. Johnston, (Westwood, New Jersey, 1957). Hereafter cited B.W.

Chapter 1

Preliminary Discussion on Free-Will and Qadar

Free-Will: The free-will controversy has given rise to a cluster of problems which are mainly due to an incompatibility between sets of beliefs, neither of which the disputants are quite ready to abandon. There is no single doctrine of either freedom or determinism. Each presents diversity depending on its defender's particular interest: philosophical, theological, psychological, ethical, legal, scientific, political, or otherwise.

Of the varieties of determinism the extreme is in the form of necessitarianism; in theological language it is predestination. According to the doctrine of necessity, everyone is under the control of circumstance: the will of the individual amounts to nothing. Man thinks that he is able to "will" and change his destiny, but in reality his life is managed by external forces beyond his control.

Other varieties of determinism are less harsh with man. Contemporary philosophers exemplify the varying degrees of determinism which have been championed so far. William James in his essay "The Dilemma of Determinism"¹ made a useful distinction between those philosophers whom he labeled "hard" determinists, and those whom he called "soft" determinists. The former are those who do not shrink from such words as fatality, bondage of the will, necessitation and the like.² Of contemporary philosophers, were James still alive, he might have included such people as Blanshard and Weiss among the "soft" determinists. In his case for determinism

Blanshard's main argument against those who claim that they feel free (this is an objection to the belief in determinism) is that they are oriented towards the future. He says:

. . . when we are making a choice our forces are always turned towards the future, towards the consequences that one act or the other will bring us, never towards the past with its possible sources of constraint. Hence these sources are not noticed. Hence we remain unaware that we are under constraint at all. Hence we feel free from such constraint.³

Growth of interest in twentieth century physics, modern psychology, psychiatry, social research, and similar fields has resulted in a revival of traditional determinism. The modification of classical mechanics resulted in the theory of quantum mechanics. This theory which was framed around 1925, led some of its acknowledged leaders like Neils Bohr, Max Born, Werner Heisenberg, and others to admit some degree of indeterminacy in nature. They were convinced that the theory of quantum mechanics is a self-consistent whole, and microphysical events such as molecular collisions could not be predicted. For a while, many scientists and philosophers yielded to the relinquishing of the notion of "cause and effect" in nature, but the view of Einstein and others prevailed; nature is uniform and whatever happens is the result of causes and conditions. This is also the view of the majority of scientists today.

Like determinism, indeterminism or libertarianism has a variety of doctrines. Most libertarians acknowledge that freedom is in some degree restricted by conditions of the past, but they differ very much in regard to the scope of the restriction. In its extreme form libertarianism makes caprice its essential principle. What is

asserted is: man is completely detached and is under no compulsion or impulsion to choose or act. Aside from the contemporary moral philosopher Nicolai Hartmann, we are unlikely to find an advocate of extreme libertarianism among present day philosophers and savants.

Among contemporary thinkers William James, Percy W. Bridgman, Karl R. Popper, and Alfred Landé are advocates of some mild form of indeterminism and should therefore be considered libertarians.

Landé has expressed his form of indeterminism as follows:

Since deceitful demons have no place in scientific theories, I have reluctantly joined the party of indeterminacy pure and simple.⁴

. . . as a scientist who observes games of chance
. . . I must concede that the deterministic interpretation fails, and this applies not only to "games of Chance" in which the statistical dispersion is obvious but in general to those cases where a similar dispersion of effects is revealed only by microphysical events.⁵

There is a wide range of positions between extreme determinism and extreme indeterminism. For instance, H.L.A. Hart draws attention to "the rationality for our insistence on the importance of excusing conditions in criminal law"; conditions he feels no form of determinism that he might construct could impugn.⁶ Then there are those such as Ayer, Hobart and Nowell-Smith who try to show that the truth of determinism does not exclude the possibility of free actions. Yet, others like Max Black and the adherents to the school of "ordinary language Philosophy" attempt to rephrase ordinary spoken sentences, or show that certain concepts used in the freedom and determinism controversy are unstable or invalid. For instance, Max Black states the following:

Many of the traditional problems of causation disappear when we become sufficiently clear about what we mean by "cause" and remind ourselves once more of what a peculiar, unsystematic and erratic notion it is.⁷

Of all the various positions taken on the freedom and determinism controversy, the one which may be described as upholding self-determination is of interest to us. The emphasis in this position is placed on the individual, his "will" to achieve a certain course in life. The notion of freedom here is that the person is autonomous; within him is the spring of action. He need not borrow prompting power from outside himself and he is not subject to causation, from without. Freedom in such a case may be defined as the absence of any "alien" intervention in the form of aid from divine beings.

The man who is in the habit of referring everything to God, if he should believe in man's freedom, is faced with the task of trying to work out an explanation of how God's sovereignty might be reconciled with man's freedom. The task is not a simple one. If God's sovereignty is asserted without qualifications, any such reconciliation is unlikely. If man's freedom is denied, then those who see man as the measure of all things (the anthropocentrists⁸), may claim that ethics is reduced to nonsense and man is denied the very power which makes him different from other beings. One of the main reasons for the vigorous opposition to determinism is that its acceptance leads to a denial of man's desire for freshness, novelty and genuine creativity. To assert that man has complete freedom would imply a denial of God's sovereignty. On the other

hand, if God's sovereignty is denied, the implication seems to be that the world is morally chaotic and "ideals" have no reality upon which one can depend. The holiest of man's hopes may never be satisfied, for there is no guarantee that God's will is effective. The history of the free-will issue in theology is an oscillation between these two interests: the assertion of man's freedom and the vindication of God's sovereignty.

Islam and Christianity demand that God's sovereignty be supreme; God is ruler and lord of the world. Yet both religions speak of reward. Hell and damnation is the reward for unbelievers and the reward for the believers culminates in an Ultimate Encounter.⁹ Thus man's ultimate destiny is seen as something personal in nature. Both Muslims and Christians look forward to this Encounter. It is the hope of all such believers that their souls would be spared from Hell and damnation, and the reward of the Ultimate Encounter be theirs.¹⁰ Such hope forces one to ask whether man can strive to earn the reward by doing good acts while God remains the supreme and omnipotent Monarch.

Qadar: In Islam, the key terms found in the discussion of free-will are qadā' and qadar. Both terms are used to describe God's eternal decree regarding human destiny. The Shorter Encyclopedia of Islam states that qadā' means literally "deciding" and the root is developed into a field of meanings such as "commanding", "judging", or discharging an obligation; and qadar means primarily "to measure", "to estimate", "to assign specifically by measure".¹¹

After having reviewed the various shades of meaning given to both terms, D.B. MacDonald concludes that qadā' is the eternal and universal decree of Allah and qadar is the measuring out of the qadā' in time.¹²

On the other hand, Daud Rahbar's investigation of the use of qadar in the Qur'ān discloses that it is not used as a term denoting determination. His investigation of qadar reveals the following: there are two basic meanings derived from the root word: power and quantity or measure. Whenever qadar is used with God as subject, there is no meaning of "decreed" or "appointed". Such meanings are due to theological development.¹³

Helmer Ringgren agrees that the technical meaning is a later theological development which the Qur'ān has not assumed.¹⁴ However, the assertion that qadar did not reflect a deterministic tendency in pre-Islamic times is questioned by Ringgren. His claim is that both qadā' and qadar are two words inherited from pre-Islamic times. According to him, Caskel's instances of qadar and the cognate miqdār show that the two words refer partly to a "decree" which brings man calamity, and distress and partly to death as decreed by Destiny.¹⁶

Montgomery Watt suggests that despite the denunciation of such impersonal and atheistic ideas in the Qur'ān, such conceptions continued to be held by Muslims and they even made their way into "orthodox teachings".¹⁷ Watt's position is supported by al-ash'arī's usage of qadar in the Ibānah:

The Qadari is he who asserts that he himself and not his Lord has the qadar and that he and not his Creator, determines (yūqaddir) his acts.¹⁹

Concerning the basic idea of qadar as a technical term

J. Obermann claims the following:

It expresses, generally speaking, the share of God in the destiny of man; . . . In as far as man perceives his life and fate, whether in totality or in any given particular, as controlled by God, as depending on God, this control is qadar. As an attribute it is applicable only to God.²⁰

He also points out that to al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī and his contemporaries the term denotes "the principle of pre-determination and pre-destination in Allah's administration of the affairs of man."²¹ For Obermann, al-Ḥasan's aim in his Risālah²² is to demonstrate that "so far as man is concerned, the principle must not be thought to extend beyond the metaphysical realm of that administration."²³ The fact that al-Ḥasan is arguing for the restriction of the qadar of Allah to the metaphysical realm is proof that the early Muslims did think of qadar as God's decree whereby he determines or foreordains the affairs of man.²⁴

A recent study²⁵ of the Risālah has made new data available. The study reveals the following: al-Ḥasan's position was that of an interdeterminist, he was responsible for initiating "discussion on al-qadar" and the term Qadarite²⁶ was first used to refer to anyone who took an indeterminist position, then later it became a term of abuse, a term totally unacceptable to the Mu'tazilites and the Ahl al-Sunnah.

Being indeterminists, the Qadarites would have logically

rejected the principle that God decreed both good and bad acts. Their position implied that they ascribed to man qudrah (power) over his own acts. No wonder they are viewed as the upholders of free-will and human responsibility in Early Islam!²⁷ By denying that God's power determined the affairs of man, they asserted that the evil and good which befall man are due to his own effort. This not only meant that God was "relieved" of the responsibility of Kufr (unbelief) and shirk (evil),²⁸ but it seemed to imply that the whole course of human life was no longer under the absolute control of the will of God.²⁹ This would mean that God's sovereignty and omnipotence is not really absolute.

The Qadarite views were later to form in part, the basis of the Mu'tazilite movement.³⁰ In their earnest attempt to deny that God is responsible for evil and to preserve man's freedom, the Mu'tazalites had undertaken to give a reasonable account of evil by starting with the assertion of God's justice and omnipotence. Could one logically maintain God's justice and omnipotence while asserting that man is responsible for his own evil? With the Mu'tazilites, we find the first systematic attempt in Islam to deal with the question of man's evil in relation to God's omnipotence. From the ranks of the Mu'tazilites arose al-Ash'ari, the man who "settled" the question in Islam.

Like Islam, Christianity has given serious thought to the question of man's evil, but it has been from an entirely different perspective. While Islam has been primarily concerned with actions which are evil,³¹ Christianity has emphasized and developed a

doctrine on the source of evil. Man's corrupt nature, it is believed, is the source of man's evil. Paul wrote:

Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer
I that do it, but sin which dwells within me.
Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me
from this body of death? Rom. 7:20, 24.

Christian theology³² has struggled long and valiantly to explain that the fundamental iniquity of the human heart has alienated man from God and that man's evil is a result of his own rebellious will against God's will. If man's will is responsible for man's evil and his being deprived of the Beatific Vision, how is the breach within man's own will to be healed? Among those who have given an answer to such a question is Martin Luther, an important figure in the history of Christian thought. Luther's answer is not only explanatory but also descriptive. In explaining how the breach is to be healed, he has also given a description of the status of man's will.

Footnotes to Chapter 1

¹William James, "The Dilemma of Determinism"; The Will To Believe and other Essays in Popular Philosophy; (London, 1897) pp. 145-149.

²Ibid., p. 149.

³Brand Blanshard, "The Case for Determinism"; Determinism and Freedom in the Age of Modern Science; ed. S. Hook (New York, 1961) p. 21.

⁴Alfred Landé, "The Case for Indeterminism"; Determinism and Freedom. p. 85.

⁵Ibid.

⁶H.L.A. Hart, "Legal Responsibility and Excuses"; Determinism and Freedom. p. 98.

⁷Max Black, "Making Something Happen"; Determinism and Freedom. p. 45.

⁸According to Paul Weiss, such people are confident that the world is thoroughly determined, but man is free; this involves the denial that man is a part of nature. That denial makes such people's view incompatible with the theory of evolution. See: "Common Sense and Beyond"; Determinism and Freedom. p. 235.

⁹Both Muslims and Christians believe in the resurrection from the dead. Muslims look forward to Paradise which is the reward for being believers, having īmān. In Paradise, God is encountered through the "beholding of His vision". See: al-Ash'arī's Creeds; Theology of Al-Ash'arī; p. 242. The evil soul, that does not know its Lord, is tormented and goes to Hell. The life in Paradise is described in terms of the senses (Q. 55:45ff; 56:1-39; 48:16ff; etc.) which would naturally appeal to the desert Arabs. Some modern day Muslims have not restricted Paradise to the "after-life." M. Ali's commentary on the Qur'ān is evidence. See: M. Ali (tr. and com.) The Holy Qur'ān, 4th edition, (Lahore, 1961) pp. XXVII-XXX. There are however, elements of spiritual appreciation connected with the Muslim view of Paradise. Al-Ghazzālī is quoted as saying: 'nothing of the delights of paradise can be compared to the delights of meeting God; for the other bodily enjoyment of paradise dumb animals share with believer, but this is reserved for him alone.' I.F. Wood, "State of the Dead (Muhammadan)", E.R.E., p. 850. See also: al-Ghazzālī, The Alchemy of Happiness, trans. H.A. Homes (New York, 1873); Chap. 3 and 4. In Christianity, since God is the object of

the Christian's supreme love, to behold him face to face must be the Christian's hope. The unveiled vision of God (Mt. 5:8) will also be the final reward of the pure in heart (Mt. 18:10). G. Harris, "State of the Dead (Christian)"; E.R.E., p. 834. However, unlike orthodox Islam, in Christianity the personal encounter begins in this life when man receives the "gift" of the Spirit of God (infra. Note 10). By means of the "gift" man is able to establish a relationship with God. The relationship finally reaches its zenith beyond the grave. See: T.P. Kilpatrick, "Salvation (Christian)", E.R.E. p. 126. Compare Rev. 21: 1-5. The New Testament ends with a glowing picture of a new creation. The atonement which Christ has wrought between God and man has, as its ultimate goal, this new creation. It is also to be noted that the final picture of the new creation is a city.

Although the images of Heaven or Paradise and Hell are prominent in the Bible and the Qur'ān; both Islam and Christianity place more emphasis on Heaven, especially 20th century Christianity which has emphasized Heaven by almost eliminating the notion of Hell. This attitude of Christianity has been prompted by the text: "God desires all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of God." (Tim. 2:4). Both Protestant and Catholic theologians, in the past regarded Hell as a state of utter and irrevocable damnation. Scholastic theologians have divided suffering into two categories: 1) Poenā damni; this is the forfeiture of divine presence or Beatific Vision, and 2) Poenā Sensus; this is the inner tortures of despair, anguish, etc. Van A. Harvey, "Hell", Handbook of Theological Terms, p. 115.

Islam on the other hand, insists on the reality of Hell or the Fire, but at the same time it admits that God forgives all sins (39: 53, 54), except the sin of polytheism. See: Luma' No. 189. Dr. M.Y. Hāfiri, at the Institute of Islamic Studies, has informed the writer that in Islam, it is believed that those polytheists who have not heard of monotheism or cannot understand monotheism will be forgiven by God. Dr. Hāfiri has also said that some Muslims view Hell as spiritual punishment, not as a place. Also, there are traditions in Islam which claim that God's mercy has preceded his anger, and mankind will come forth from Hell. See: Mishkāt Al-Maṣābiḥ trans. J. Robson (Lahore, 1964) pp. 1219, 1194, 1195; "Two Creeds of Al-Ash'arī", Theology of Al-Ash'arī; Ibārah Creed, sec. 24, 29, pp. 242-244. Islam therefore is not unflinching in its belief in Hell as a place. And, there is evidence (Hadīths) which illustrates a belief that all mankind will not remain in Hell forever. This would imply that sooner or later all mankind would be rewarded with the Beatific Vision.

¹⁰One should not be misled into thinking that the sole aim of both Muslims and Christians is to be saved from Hell. The Muslims' aim is to submit to God. The Muslim is one who practices islām (إسلام) which means "submission." Therefore the name "Islam" is a suggestive name, one which suggests "a religion of submission to God." From this, one may derive the Muslim imagery of man's relation to God. The personal nature of the relation is in this life: Man is the Servant of Allāh (God). This is the quintessence of Islam. See: "Islam"; Shorter Encyclopedia of Islam (Leiden, 1961), hereafter cited S.E.I. The Christian's sole aim according to Luther, is to glorify God. This means "being set free from sins." Paul tells us (Rom. 3:21-25) that it is through God's redemptive act that man is made acceptable to God. Glorification of God is linked with a doctrine of Salvation in Christianity. The importance of the redemptive act is that through it God justifies the sinner and makes him righteous; as a result man is both "sinner and saint" simultaneously. Cf. L. Newbigin, Sin and Salvation (London, 1956), pp. 104-109. When the sinner is justified, he is able to glorify God. Through God's grace, His redeeming love, man establishes a relation with God whereby he glorifies God. The man without God's grace is alienated from God. Such a person is not spared from damnation and Hell. See: B.W.; pp. 289-291, passim. Also T.P. Kilpatrick, "Salvation"; E.R.E.

¹¹"Kaḍā' and Kadar", S.E.I.; pp. 199, 200.

¹²Ibid.

¹³David Rahbar, The God of Justice; Vol. 1 (Copy of Ph.D. thesis submitted to Cambridge University, 1953) pp. 117-130.

¹⁴Helmer Ringgren, Studies in Arabian Fatalism, (Upsala, 1955), p. 103.

¹⁵N. Caskel, Das Schicksal in der altarabischen Poesie, (Liepzig, 1926), p. 20; cited by Ringgren op. cit., p. 9.

¹⁶Ibid.

¹⁷W.M. Watt, Free Will and Predestination in Early Islam, (London, 1948), p. 20; hereafter cited F.W.P.

¹⁸Al-Ash'arī, Kitab al-Ibānah op. cit., p. 61. Hereafter cited Ibānah; p. 61 (av.) as reference to Arabic Text.

¹⁹Cf. Klein's translation of Ibānah, p. 113; cited hereafter as Ibānah.

²⁰J. Obermann, "Political Theology in Early Islam", Journal of the American Oriental Society; Vol. 55 (1935) p. 143.

²¹Ibid., p. 144.

²²The Risālah is a document written to the Umayyad Caliph 'Abd al-Malik, who reigned (A.D. 685-709). See: Ibid., p. 139. It has been translated by D. Ede in his M.A. thesis: Some Considerations on the Freedom-Determinism Controversy in Classical Islamic Theology (McGill University, 1967), pp. 159-199. Arabic text ed. H. Ritter "Studien zur Geschichte der islamischen Frömmigkeit", Der Islam, Vol. 21, (1933), pp. 1-83.

²³Obermann, op. cit., p. 144.

²⁴The Umayyad rulers availed themselves of the belief in fatalism. They argued that since they were the rulers, the rule has been given to them by God and revolt against them implied disobedience to God. H. Massé; Islam, trans. H. Edib (Beirut, 1966), p. 204.

²⁵D. Ede, op. cit., p. 144-145.

²⁶Cf. "Kadariya", S.E.I., p. 202. J. Obermann, op. cit., p. 144. F.W.P., Ch. 3. Al-Ash'ari discusses why these people deserve the name Qadariya in Ibānah, p. 72. For Hasan's relation to the Kadarite see: H. Ritter; "Hasan al-Baṣri", E.I.², pp. 247-248.

²⁷W.M. Watt, Islamic Philosophy and Theology (Edinburgh, 1962), p. 32.

²⁸Shirk has a definite meaning i.e. idolatory or polytheism. See: "Shirk", S.E.I.

²⁹T. Izutsu claims that the Qur'ān puts the whole course of human life under absolute control of God's will. Watt makes the same point as well. T. Izutsu, God and Man in the Koran (Tokyo, 1965), p. 131. Watt, F.W.P., pp. 20, 29.

³⁰A.J. Wensinck, M.C., p. 52. For Mu'tazilites see: H.S. Nyberg, "al-Mu'tazila", E.I.², pp. 787-793.

³¹The Fikḥ Akbar I Art. 2 states "We enjoy what is just and prohibit what is evil." This is recommended in the Qur'ān (Cf. 3:110, 115; 7:156 et.al.). See: A.J. Wensinck, M.C., pp. 103, 106. That Muslims have placed great emphasis on evil actions is also evident in their consideration of sin. The question of Kufr was raised for the first time in Islam by the Kharijites, a group concerned with ascertaining who is an unbeliever (kāfir). Around the central

concept of Kufr arose two other concepts: kabīrah ('great sin') and saghīrah ('small sin'). These sins were viewed in terms of human actions. See: T. Izutsu, The Concept of Belief in Islamic Theology, (Tokyo, 1965), Ch. 1, 2. According to Wensinck, the Hadith is regarded as representing the first stage in the development of kabīrah (M.C., p. 39). There is one tradition in which the Prophet said that, the greatest sin is shirk (Polytheism) then next, acts which are abusive to others in the society (25:68) eg. murder of one's child etc. Also, there is another tradition in which the Prophet said, "avoid the seven noxious sins." They are polytheism, magic, unlawful manslaying, spending the money of orphans, usury, desertion from battle, slandering chaste women who are believers and indiscreet; (traditions are based on the authority of Muslim cited by Wensinck, M.C., p. 51.) These traditions testify that Islam is very concerned with evil actions. However, although the source of evil is mostly not emphasized, Muslims believe that all evil is a result of man's inner nature. There are traditions in support of such a belief. Traditions relate the Prophet saying the following:

The hearts of all men are between two of the
Compassionate's fingers as if they were one
heart which He turns about as He wills.

(Muslim)

God forgives my people the evil promptings
which arise within them. . .

(Muslim)

If anyone has a good or evil inner nature
God will make apparent sure sign . . .

(Baihaqī)

citing from Mishkāt Al-Maṣābīh, pp. 20, 25, 1107.

³²There have been different strands of thought on the question of freedom in the history of Christian theology. Significant contributions have been made by Augustine, Luther, and Calvin. These are a few of the people who have struggled long and hard with the problem of man's fractured will, the consequences of such a will, and the possibility of its healing. In contrast with the above theologians is Pelagius who maintained the worth of human endeavor or the freedom of man to effect works which could heal man's broken relationship with God. For the position of major theologians on the efficacy of man's works, see: A.D. Galloway (ed.) Basic Readings in Theology (London, 1964). Then, there are groups which emerged from the Reformation: the Quakers, and the Unitarians. The former believe that the Divine Light is in every man, and the latter proclaim the virtue and perfectibility of man. See: W.C. Braithwaite, "Friends, Society of" and J.E. Carpenter, "Unitarianism", in E.R.E., Vol. 6, 12 respectively.

Chapter 2

The Historico - Theological Background of the Issue

A. For al-Ash'arī

The Mu'tazilites had as their forerunner the Qadarites.¹ On the crucial question of the human will, they held identical positions: man is free.² But while the Qadarites' aim was in part, a rejection of the notion of predestination, the Mu'tazilites went further to develop a series of positions.

Although this series does not characterize a particular system, it constitutes a corpus of dogmas resting on definite rational principles which betray an unmistakable Greek influence. According to Watt³ al-Khayyat lists five points on which all Mu'tazilites agree. These points constitute the Mu'tazilite body of dogma.⁴ They are: 1) Divine unity, 2) Divine justice, 3) Promise of reward and threat of punishment, 4) The affirmation of state intermediate between that of belief and unbelief and 5) The doing of right and prohibiting of wrong.

The founder of⁵ the Mu'tazilite dogmatic principles and methodology is Abū al-Hudhayl. He has been called, "the first speculative theologian of the Mu'tazilites",⁶ since it was he who introduced the Greek metaphysical concepts that were later to characterize the Mu'tazilite methodology, Kalām. Although Kalām is used to refer to scholastic theology in Islam, it was first used in a technical sense to mean either the Qur'ān or Allāh's "speech",

as in the case of Kalām Allāh.⁷ Wensinck claims that the rise of scholasticism in Islam took place by coincidence at the time of the debate on Kalām Allāh.⁸ Perhaps when the Mu'tazilites had become acquainted with the dialectic of Greek philosophy, the term developed a cognate meaning of discussion or disputation. It is Wensinck's opinion however, that in the course of time the term came to acquire broader usage; it designated that branch of Muslim theology which was rationalistic and speculative.⁹

By adhering to the principles of Kalām, the Mu'tazilites found themselves subjecting the data of revelation to the scrutiny of reason. Undoubtedly, there must have been Christian influence on the Mu'tazilite theologians, and they may have emulated the Christian theologians with whom they came in contact.¹⁰ Christian influence is evident on the problem of divine attributes. H.A. Wolfson states:

No basis for this problem is to be found in the Koran. It originated under the influence of the Christian doctrine of the Trinity, and already in the early part of the eighth century there were attributes and anti-attributes.¹¹

Acquaintance with Greek dialectics led the Mu'tazilites to depend on reason.¹² And it soon became for them a distinct and autonomous source of truth. With the rise of theodicy, which came as a consequence of their belief in Divine Justice, the Mu'tazilites declared that an individual might become a believer in God independent of revelation. According to them, religion was based on rational insight.¹³ Things were not good or evil because God declares them so. The distinction between good and evil was based

upon things being good or evil in themselves. This view is explained by al-Shahrastānī as follows:

The adherents of justice say: All objects of knowledge fall under the supervision of reason and receive their obligatory power from rational insight. Consequently, obligatory gratitude to the divine bountiousness precedes the orders given by the (divine) law, and beauty and ugliness are qualities belonging intrinsically to what is beautiful and ugly.¹⁴

The Muʿtazilites sought to rationalize the problem of human action in such a manner that God would not be held responsible for evil. One of the five cardinal points in the Muʿtazilite dogma is that God is just. They argued that there is enough Quranic evidence in favor of the principle of Divine justice. Besides, the frequent use of al-Rahman al-Rahim (the Compassionate, the Merciful) as qualities of Allāh is further evidence that He is just. In order to maintain God's justice, it was necessary to postulate that man is capable of self-determination. It was rather easy to profess human freedom, but to make human freedom compatible with their belief in Divine justice and the metaphysics to which they subscribed was quite another matter.

Their metaphysics resembled that of the Greeks.¹⁶ It was a metaphysics of atoms and accidents formulated in such a way that they could prove that the world was not eternal but created. According to Maimonides, when they had established that the world is created, they were able to demonstrate God's existence, unity and incorporeality¹⁷; the unity of God was one of the Muʿtazilite

dogmas. Maimonides said that all Mutakallims¹⁸ shared the belief that the universe as a whole is composed of indivisible particles which God is continuously creating and annihilating at His will.¹⁹ They also believed that atoms do not exist for two moments²⁰ and as a result there does not exist anything to which action could be ascribed.²¹ Thus there was no reason to admit a principle of secondary causality, while it is asserted that creation is a continuous process, renewed with every moment of time, and if God were to refrain from willing the atoms which constitutes the universe, the latter would vanish.

Although human acts were considered in the light of such an atomic theory which denies secondary causality but maintains that God is the efficient cause, the Mu'tazilites were divided on the conclusions to be drawn from this premise. Following their trend of argument, the logical conclusion on the question of man's acts should imply that God is responsible for man's actions. But this was not the case according to some of the Mu'tazilite positions cited by al-Ash'arī in his Maqālāt.²²

The position of al-Ṣālihi is: God should not be described as enabling His creatures to create bodies, but He is powerful enough to make them 'do' such accidents as life and death.²³ Bishr b. Al-Mu'tamar's position is: God is powerful to enable His creatures to 'do' such accidents as colors, flavors, and so on, but as for power of life and death, it is not permitted that He enables them to do such.²⁴ Al-Nazzām's position is: There is no accident which is not permissible for God to empower His creatures

to perform, but He has only empowered them to do movements.²⁵ The position of Abū al-Hudhayl, a representative of the Basra School, who "is credited for formulating a fairly consistent position on the question of moral freedom"²⁶ is cited thus:

God is able to empower His creatures to do movements and rest and all that whose "howness" (Kayfiyyah) they know. As for accidents whose "howness" they do not know such as colors, taste and smell, life, death, inability, ability; it is not permitted to describe God as able to empower (His creatures) to do any of them.²⁷

From the above citation, Abū al-Hudhayl has divided acts of man into two categories: those for which man has the "know-how" and those for which man does not have the "know-how". Of the former Abū al-Hudhayl argued that man is the author of such acts. An example of such acts for which man has the "know-how" is the flight of an arrow.²⁸ Whereas the latter, which are inscrutable, must be attributed to God; an example of the latter is hunger.²⁹

Majid Fakhry argues that despite the above minor disagreement between the heads of the two rival Mu'tazilite Schools,²⁹ Bishr and Abū al-Hudhayl agreed on two points "which are central to any effective belief in moral freedom."³⁰ These two points Fakhay lists as:

a) First, that in the inward domain of willing and choosing man exercises a definite freedom of initiative.³¹

b) Secondly, that man can effect through his will, certain deeds in the outward sphere of nature by causing (or generating) such effects. In this way, the concept of a causal connection between

the will as cause and the event as effect
is tacitly pre-supposed³² and a certain
measure of consistency achieved.³³

Both Bishr and Abū al-Hudhayl betrayed evidences that they were strongly influenced by the atomic theory in their analysis of human activity which occurs within the sphere God has entrusted to man. In their attempt to explain man's power Bishr developed the doctrine of tawallud, 'generated or secondary effects';³⁵ and Abū al-Hudhayl developed the theory of waqt, "moments or times."³⁶ Watt tells us that the view common to all Mu'tazilites was the one connected with Abū al-Hudhayl. It may be stated thus: An act is made up of two moments; the first moment is that in which man acts, thus the mental aspect of the act takes place, and the second is that the execution of the act when it occurs in the external world, i.e. the man has acted.³⁷

Watt seems to think that in their attempt to make man a responsible agent, the Mu'tazilites formulated a doctrine of human responsibility in terms of power (qudrah): "Man has power (qudrah) over both the act and the opposite of it, and this does not oblige him to the doing of it." Then he (Watt) goes on to link this doctrine of human responsibility with Abū al-Hudhayl's doctrine of "moments" whereby a distinction is made between the mental and physical aspects of an act.³⁸ Whether Watt is correct is another matter for discussion.³⁹ The Mu'tazilites solution to the problem of freedom is a very complex matter not within the province of this thesis.

Nonetheless, the picture which emerges from the complexity is that whenever man acted God's power was withdrawn or God entrusted man with power so he may act as he chooses. This point became more evident with al-Jubbā'ī, who later came to head the Baṣra school, and under whom al-Ash'arī was a student. In opposition to the Baghdad school,⁴⁰ al-Jubbā'ī maintained that God continues to have power over a class of acts over which He has granted men power.⁴¹

Al-Jubbā'ī was not really a "philosopher",⁴² but a theologian, a Muslim and a Mu'tazilite who professed a strong belief in Reason.⁴³ He realized that failure to assert what he maintained would logically mean applying limits to God's power. That being the case, such failure was tantamount to disbelief in God.⁴⁴

In spite of al-Jubbā'ī's efforts to vindicate the mode of thinking to which he was an heir, there were questions to which the "school" could supply no reasonable answer without relegating the questions to some sphere of obscurity. By making man a responsible agent, the Mu'tazilites thought that they would make him responsible for his own evil. Then, God would neither be held responsible for evil nor be accused of injustice for punishing evil doers. But the scheme could not work. Al-Jubbā'ī realized it,⁴⁵ and al-Ash'arī exposed it.

The Mu'tazilites asserted man's self-sufficiency in obeying God's law whereby through man's own effort he may attain Paradise. Al-Shahrastānī puts it this way:

The Mu'tazilites unanimously maintained that man decides upon, and creates his acts, both

good and evil; and that he deserves reward or punishment in the next world for what he does. In this way the Lord is safeguarded from association with any evil or wrong or any act of unbelief or transgression. For if He created the wrong, He would be wrong and if He created justice, He would be just.⁴⁶

Al-Ash'arī presented a test case⁴⁷ to his teacher al-Jubbā'ī.

Al-Ash'arī enquired about the ultimate destiny of each of three brothers; the first was good, the second wicked, and the third died as a child. Al-Jubbā'ī claimed that the first brother went to Paradise, the second went to Hell and the third was in an intermediate stage. Al-Ash'arī took the matter further and asked: "Supposing the child had asked why didn't God give him a chance to be obedient and merit Paradise, then what?" Al-Jubbā'ī replied that God knows what is best for him. Had he survived, he would have been disobedient. Then al-Ash'arī said, "Supposing the second brother asked why didn't God consider his welfare, and like his younger brother allow him to die young so he would not be wicked, then what?" Al-Jubbā'ī was unable to provide an answer. His failure to answer may be interpreted as failure to justify rationally the Mu'tazilite idea⁴⁸ that God does what is best for man.

The test case revealed a flaw. The ideas of God's justice and man's freedom were in conflict as they were posed by the Mu'tazilites. Rational concepts of justice and injustice could not adequately account for God's dealings with man. The Mu'tazilites sought earnestly to comprehend the infinite and eternal Being in terms of concepts which are the products of finite minds.

Reason proved to be insufficient. It could not adequately account for the destiny allotted to each man. Al-Ash'arī became disillusioned with the tradition in which he had been reared. As a result, he turned his attention to the full study of the Qur'ān and Sunnah. After a period of severe mental struggle, not without the accompaniment of psychological effects⁴⁹ usually associated with states of transition, al-Ash'arī found the answers to the restlessness of his soul. And before long, al-Ash'arī emerged to vindicate the truths found in the Qur'ān by using the very methodology of the Mu'tazilites. It is in the latter context that we find al-Ash'arī faced with the question concerning free-will.

Footnotes to Chapter 2 - Section A

¹This statement is valid when the Mu'tazilites are viewed as a theological school. For more information on the relation between Qadarites and Mu'tazilites see: H.S. Nyberg "al-Mu'tazila" E.I.², Al-Baghdādī speaks of the views of Mu'tazilite Qadarites when he divides the Murji'ites into three classes. See Al-Farq Bayn Al-Firaq (Cairo, 1910) p. 190. Sec. 3, Ch. 4 - Sec. 5, Ch. 4 is translated by A.S. Halkin as Moslem Schisms and Sects (Tel-Aviv, 1935) p. 6,7; and Watt, F.W.P., pp. 51, 52.

²al-Baghdādī, Farq, pp. 327f. See also Nyberg "Al-Mu'tazila" and Al-Shahrastānī, Kitāb Nihāyatu'l-Iodām Fī'l-Ilmi'l-Kalām, edited with a translation by A. Guillaume (Oxford, 1934) p. 25, and Wensinck, M.C., p. 60.

³See: W.M. Watt, "Political Attitudes of the Mu'tazila" Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, (1963), p. 54.

⁴Nyberg, "al-Mu'tazila," E.I.¹.

⁵According to Watt, although Abū al-Hudhayl may be regarded as the real founder of the Mu'tazilite school, he was by no means alone. There were others such as al-Nazzām, Mu'ammār, and Mu'tamir. Islamic Philosophy and Theology (Edinburgh, 1962), p. 59. There were two Mu'tazilite schools, one at Basra to which Abū al-Hudhayl belonged and the other in Baghdad. See Watt, F.W.P., pp. 61-65.

⁶Nyberg "al-Mu'tazila," E.I.¹.

⁷"Kalām Allāh" is a Quranic expression (2:75, 7:139). See: "Kalam," S.E.I., pp. 210-215.

⁸Kalām as "speech" came to mean Kalām as dogmatic theology. See: M.C., p. 79.

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰We know for sure that Muslims were acquainted with John of Damascus, died ca. A.D. 748. Among John's work is a dialogue: Disputatio Saraceni et Christiani reproduced in J.P. Migne Patrologia, Vol. 94, col. 1585 ssq; cited and a section translated by Wensinck in M.C., pp. 146, 147. In the very work (p. 87) Wensinck informs us that al-Ash'arī's Maqālāt-al-Islāmiyyīn has a division which is identical to that of John's work. The above mentioned work of John was written as a manual for the guidance of Christians in their arguments with the Muslims. These polemics were not aimed at making converts to Christianity, but at maintaining the status quo of

Christianity by showing that it should be respected as a system of thought. H.G. Dorman, Jr., Towards Understanding Islam (New York, 1948), p. 11.

¹¹H.A. Wolfson, "Philosophical Implications of the Problem of Divine Attributes In the Kalam" Journal of the American Oriental Society, Vol. 79, (1959), p. 73.

¹²Here reason is to be understood as the rational process (nazār) in general, not the particular qiyas. See: J. Schacht, The Origins of Muhammadan Jurisprudence (Oxford, 1950), pp. 98, 102, 128, 129, 258, 259.

¹³Wensinck, M.C., p. 214f.

¹⁴Al-Shahrastānī, Kitāb al-Milāl wa'l-Nihāl, ed. Cureton (London, 1846), Vol. 1, p. 30 citing Wensinck's translation in M.C., p. 63.

¹⁵See the following: 2:86; 4:44; 22:10; 31:40; 44:10; 99:7,8.

¹⁶M. Fakhry states that the Mu'tazilites' definition of substance was different from Aristotle's. Islamic Occasionalism (London, 1958) p. 34, and f.n. 47. Not all Western scholars are in agreement that Islamic atomism was due to acquaintance with Greek philosophy. Horowitz presents a case for Stoic origins, Pines points out parallels found in the atomism of Epicurus, Horten opts for Indian origins, and Pretzel finds evidence of Gnostic parallels. See: F.E. Peters; Aristotle and the Arabs: The Aristotelian Tradition. (New York, 1968), p. 143; S. Pines, Beiträge Zur islamischen Atomlehre (Berlin, 1936), pp. 97-99, 102, 103; O. Pretzel, "Die frühislamische Atomlehre," Der Islam, Vol. 19 (1931), p. 127-130; and D.B. Macdonald, "Continuous re-creation and atomic time in Muslim scholastic theology," Isis, Vol. 9, (1927), pp. 341-344.

¹⁷M. Maimonides, The Guide to the Perplexed, trans. by M. Friedländer, 2nd edition (New York, 1956), Ch. 71, p. 110.

¹⁸Mutakallims are those theologians and philosophers who employed Kalām as a methodology, as opposed to theologians, like Ahmad b. Hanbal, who are traditionalists. See: "Kalām" S.E.I. for further information.

¹⁹Maimonides, op. cit., Ch. 73, prop. 1, pp. 120, 121.

²⁰Immediately after an atom or indivisible particle is created, it is destroyed and another atom of the same kind is created. The substance and its accident is simultaneously created by God. So long as God wishes to preserve the accidents in a substance, He keeps re-creating the atoms. When he refrains from creating accident in that atom, the atom ceases to exist. See: Maimonides, Ch. 73, prop. 16, p. 124.

²¹Ibid., p. 125.

²²Maqālāt, pp. 377-378.

²³cf. al-Ṣāliḥi in Majid Fakhry, "Muʿtazilite View of Free Will," Muslim World, Vol. 43, (1953) pp. 100, 107.

²⁴cf. Ibid.

²⁵cf. Ibid., p. 103.

²⁶cf. Ibid., p. 98.

²⁷Maqālāt, p. 378.

²⁸M. Fakhry, "Muʿtazilite View of Free Will," p. 98.

²⁹Bishr b. al-Muʿtazil headed the Baghdād school and Abū al-Hudhayl headed the Basra school. See: Watt, F.W.P., pp. 62, 73.

³⁰M. Fakhry, "Muʿtazilites View of Free Will," p. 99.

³¹Abū al-Hudhayl distinguishes between what man causes within himself and what he causes in other things. cf. Maqālāt, p. 403.

³²cf. Maqālāt, p. 412, al-Ashʿarī lists Abū al-Hudhayl as one of those who held that "will necessitates its object".

³³Fakhry, "Muʿtazilite View on Free Will," p. 99.

³⁴Al-Ashʿarī, Maqālāt, p. 401. See: Watt, F.W.P., pp. 74, 81.

³⁵Al-Ashʿarī, Maqālāt, pp. 233, 443. See: Watt, F.W.P., p. 70.

³⁶Ibid., for further discussion see: W. Thompson, "Free Will and Predestination in Early Islams." Muslim World, Vol. 40 (1950) pp. 281-287.

³⁷Watt, F.W.P., pp. 70, 71.

³⁸Ibid., pp. 70-72.

³⁹W. Thompson argues that according to Watt, it would seem that the free-will issue in Islam rests on the distinction between mental and physical aspects of the act, whereas the distinction should be on voluntary and involuntary acts. op. cit., p. 287. Watt thinks that the power man has is the power to "will." F.W.P., p. 72.

⁴⁰The Baghdad school held that when God gave men power over certain acts, He removed all such acts from His own power. Al-Ash'arī, Maqālāt, p. 549f. See: Watt, F.W.P., p. 83.

⁴¹Al-Ash'arī, Maqālāt, pp. 199f, 551. See: Watt, F.W.P., p. 83.

⁴²According to Watt, Abū al-Hudhayl and his pupils were not very much concerned with matters of practical religion. F.W.P., p. 72. Therefore it would not be unfair to label them as "philosophers" in comparison to Bishr or al-Jubbā'ī who took religious matters more seriously.

⁴³Al-Ash'arī, Maqālāt, pp. 480f.

⁴⁴Watt, F.W.P., p. 84.

⁴⁵Al-Jubbā'ī realized that God's operation could not always be understood. He admitted that God may pardon one man and yet not pardon another who has committed the same offence. See: Al-Ash'arī, Maqālāt, p. 276.

⁴⁶Al-Shahrastānī, Milāl, pt. 1, p. 30, cited by Wensinck, M.C., p. 62.

⁴⁷The stories are cited by both Klein op. cit., p. 25, Watt, F.W.P., p. 136, and Stanley Lane-Poole, Studies in a Mosque (London, 1883), p. 172. A variant of the story is cited by al-Shahrastānī, Nihāyatu'l - Iqḍām, p. 131.

⁴⁸According to al-Shahrastānī, both the Mu'tazilites at Baṣra and those at Baghdad maintained that the creator is wise and does what is best for man. Ibid., p. 129.

⁴⁹Ibn 'Asākir records an account of al-Ash'arī's three dreams during which al-Ash'arī is said to have encountered the Prophet. The Prophet asked al-Ash'arī to defend the doctrines and traditions related to him. R.J. McCarthy, Theology of Al-Ash'arī, pp. 154-156. cf. Watt, F.W.P., pp. 137f.

The Historico - Theological Background of the Issue

B. For Luther

The Reformation is one of the most important events in the history of the world: it serves as a great landmark in the intellectual, political, and social development of Europe. But the Reformation was primarily a religious movement and any evaluation of it which disguises its religious significance should be considered inadequate.

The cry of the Reformation had its inception in the search for the answer to a religious question: How can I be saved? This was the question which caused Luther great spiritual anxiety. Luther was driven to the abyss of desperation because the Church's way of salvation was considered vain. The Church played alternately upon fear and hope. God was popularly displayed not as a loving Father, but as a terrifying Judge.¹ Luther, entered a monastery² only to discover that the Church's sacramental system, which was designed to bring about reconciliation between God and man, could not guarantee him the certainty of salvation.³ Luther, plagued by guilt, fear and anxiety could find no solace through the sacrament of penance. He subjected himself to the most conscientious scrutiny, and yet remained frightened that he might have forgotten to confess a sin of omission or commission.

Finally, the most devastating doubt of all surfaced in his mind: perhaps not even God himself is just. Roland Eainton tells us that such a misgiving could have taken two forms neither of

which could bring Luther any relief. One form was to view God as absolute and unconditioned, being under no obligation to reward man. To Luther this would mean that God was capricious and man's fate was unpredictable. The other form, was to begin with God's absoluteness being so total as to render nothing contingent. The latter upheld the postulate that man's fate had already been decreed from the foundation of the world.⁴ Bainton thinks that the latter view commended itself more to Luther because it had been expounded by Augustine, and even earlier by Paul who testified that God had already chosen some vessels for honour and others for dishonour.⁵ (cf. Eph. 1:4,5)

Scholastic theology could not offer any assurance to Luther, plagued by his problem of personal salvation. At the University of Erfurt, he had imbibed a Nominalist philosophy,⁶ founded by William of Occam who had effectively fractured the Thomistic synthesis of faith and reason. This religious philosophy was falling into disrepute. Occam claimed that religious doctrines rested solely on faith; and what is declared by authority (the Church or Scripture) cannot be demonstrated by rational proof, not even the existence of God.⁷ Occam's slogan was: "An article of faith cannot be proved demonstratively".⁸ Like Duns Scotus,⁹ Occam advocated a theology whereby God is seen as the almighty Will, absolute and despotic, bound to no order except the one which this free and independent Will has established.¹⁰ Under this scheme the scholastics thought that God was bound by neither rules nor obligation to confer reward

for man's achievements, no matter how meritorious. And, it was in this framework that one form of Luther's misgivings had its roots. If the scholastics believed that God's will was absolute and arbitrary, then this meant that man's fate was unpredictable, and God might never intervene to save man from sins for which man himself was not responsible.¹¹ For Luther, the scholastic scheme offered no certainty of salvation.

Luther's struggle with the question concerning the certainty of salvation reached its peak and ended as he concentrated on a study of the scriptures. While he was preparing to deliver his first lecture on the book of Psalms,¹² Christ's words upon the cross "My God, my God why hast thou forsaken me?" revealed to Luther that Christ was not the judge sitting upon a rainbow condemning sinners. Like himself, Christ endured desolation and experienced desperations.¹³ Luther's image of God then became decisively transformed. God was not only the All Terrible, but He was loving and All Merciful too. In some inexplicable way God was able to "reconcile the world to himself." The contemplation of the drama that took place on the Cross convinced Luther that God was neither malicious nor capricious.¹⁴

However, Luther still had to cope with the problem of God's justice to which the scholastics gave subtle answers.¹⁵ It was not until Luther reached the Pauline epistles that he found the solution to the entire problem. Romans 1:17 reads; "the righteousness of God is revealed in the Gospel." Luther at first could not understand how Paul could call the gospel itself "righteousness."

This verse was both a threat and a challenge to him. It was a threat in the sense that a righteous God punished sinful and wicked men on account of Original Sin. It was a challenge in that he wanted to understand what Paul was saying to the Romans. After he had pondered greatly upon the verse, it suddenly dawned upon him that the "righteousness of God" was not that which is taught by the scholastics, that which seeks retribution, but that which is imputed to the believer through God's grace. It was only when he saw the "righteousness of God" in relation to the statement "the just shall live by faith" that the significance of the "justice of God" came to light for Luther. His own words read:

Then I grasped that the justice of God
is that righteousness by which through
grace and sheer mercy God justifies us
through faith. Thereupon I felt my-
self to be reborn and to have gone
through open doors into paradise.¹⁶

It was then that Luther understood Paul. This resulted in the resolution of the conflict between the statements concerning God's justice and His forgiveness. Paul had reconciled it for Luther. The significance of the drama on the Cross had become completely revealed. Christ, in His anguish, had fused the wrath and mercy of God. This was the glorious paradox in the gospel of Christ.¹⁷ To Luther this meant that God was merciful towards sinners and not just towards the righteous. For this reason, Luther turned all his strength against the attempts of the scholastics and others who tried to destroy the notion of the "miracle" of God's grace by trying to make it more comprehensible through reason.

One of those who attempted to destroy this paradox of the gospel was Erasmus. He had earned for himself an international reputation and was looked upon as "the prince of the Humanists." The Humanists were responsible for the new spirit of scholarship that had swept through the European citadels of learning. These people, who were the enthusiastic followers of classical studies, were rapidly undermining the scholastic discipline in the universities.¹⁸ Yet, with the exception of one man, they always stood outside the theological circles watching the rising conflict with great interest. The one exception was Erasmus, the man who stood closer to Luther than probably any other Renaissance figure.

Erasmus was both a scholar and a Christian: he devoted his literary labours not only to the classics, but to the New Testament and the Church Fathers as well. Both Erasmus and Luther wanted a recovery of true religion within the Church. Erasmus proposed the accomplishment of this task by the dissemination of the sacred and classical writings, but Luther felt that divine truths were imparted by the Word and received through faith by the simplest of believers.¹⁹ Although both men had much in common²⁰ and even appeared to their contemporaries to be preaching almost the same gospel, their orientations were different.

Erasmus laid particular emphasis upon the inwardness of religion, virtuous living, and proper moral conduct. In 1503 his writing, The Handbook of the Christian Knight, was published. It was really a handbook of Christian ethics based on his 'philosophy

of Christ'. The emphasis was placed upon the inwardness of religion: piety and love which are furthered by learning should determine man's conduct. Christianity for him had to be brought within the compass of man's understanding and the difficult issues in Christianity had to be relinquished for Judgement Day when they were to be resolved.²¹

Luther, on the other hand was not so much concerned with the moral conduct of man which could be fostered by religion, but with the nature of man. For Luther, man's nature was fundamentally corrupt. Unlike Erasmus, he could not in good conscience stress the goodness of man and ignore the doctrine of Original Sin. As far as he was concerned, neither good conduct nor learning could set man right in the sight of God. Divine grace was necessary and not to admit its necessity was to deny the truth contained in the sacred writings which Erasmus was so eager to have men read.

The sharp and subtle differences between Luther and Erasmus became publicly evident when Erasmus was pressured into declaring his position concerning Luther's early reforms.²² Yielding to the pressure from his esteemed acquaintances,²³ Erasmus consented to explain his stance. After giving careful thought to the differences between Luther and himself, the "prince of the Humanists" penned against Luther a tract entitled Diatribes seu collatio de libero arbitrio (Discussion, or Collation, concerning Free Will) which appeared in September 1524. In this tract, he came to grips with the cardinal difference between Luther and the Humanists: belief

in the impotence of man's will as opposed to the freedom of the will in religious matters. His selection of the topic was so well thought out and appropriate that Luther thanked him for centering the discussion on the vital spot. Wrote Luther:

You alone have gone to the heart of the problem instead of debating the papacy, indulgences, purgatory and similar trifles. You alone have gone to the core and I thank you for it.²⁴

Roland Bainton has appropriately remarked: "Luther's fundamental break with the Catholic Church was over the nature and destiny of man, and much more over the destiny than the nature."²⁵ Free-will was no academic question for Luther, since it was related to man's destiny. Luther's question was whether doing right (if it is possible to do right) could affect man's fate. Erasmus' concern was whether the ethical precepts found in the Gospels have any point if they cannot be obeyed. Erasmus failed to recognize Luther's evangelical understanding concerning the destiny of man. This was because he, unlike Luther, did not approach the problem as a believer, but as a critical scholar. While Luther, as a believer, was committed to the teachings and promises found in the Bible, Erasmus, as an intellectual, was mainly interested in the moral teachings of the Bible as it reflected the dignity of man. Ignoring the personal and religious motives of Luther's stand, Erasmus considered the denial of the freedom of the will a dangerous doctrine, since it implied that man is relieved from moral responsibility.

Luther replied to Erasmus by publishing in 1525 his De Servo

Arbitrio (The Bondage of the Will) in which he criticized Erasmus and restated his own theological position. It is this work which tells us how Luther saw and understood Erasmus' Diatribes.

It is with the vehemence of an outraged preacher, rather than the detachment and finesse of a schoolman or the dialectics of the nominalists, that Luther responded to Erasmus in the De Servo for interfering with the religious matters which pertain to man's destiny and which guarantee his salvation. Before presenting his own doctrine of free-will, Luther exposes Erasmus' fallacy and poor understanding of Christianity. He accused Erasmus of relegating the free-will issue to the realm of unnecessary knowledge.²⁶ He condemned Erasmus for his attitude on the issue. Erasmus, he claimed, held matters of doctrine to be comparatively unimportant²⁷ and mysteries mattered little: as a result Christianity was thought to be essentially concerned with morality and a minimum of doctrinal statements loosely appended.²⁸ Luther therefore saw Erasmus' motto as: "what is above us does not concern us."²⁹ On the contrary, Luther thought that the question of the will, whether or not it is free, was most important to the Christian. The Christian must know whether or not his will has any ability in matters pertaining to salvation, since to be ignorant of such a thing is to know nothing of Christianity and is to be ignorant of God.³⁰

Although Erasmus did present his position on free-will, it was not a position that reflected the proper understanding of Scripture and Christian doctrine, according to Luther. It was therefore incumbent upon Luther to reply to Erasmus and disclose the fallacy

and absurdity of the arguments which were used to affirm free-will, since Erasmus' understanding of free-will appeared to make a mockery of the promises in the Scriptures; promises which guaranteed Luther certainty of salvation.

It would seem fair then, to insist that Luther's contribution regarding the free-will issue be seriously considered. For his contribution is not only an exposition of the essence of Christianity, but is also a portrayal of the certainty of a man with strong religious convictions, and of a scholar on the question of the freedom of the will.

Footnotes to Chapter 2 - Section B

¹Roland H. Bainton, Here I Stand: A Life of Martin Luther (New York, 1950), pp. 20-25.

²Luther entered the monastery because he had made a vow to St. Anne during a thunderstorm in which "he saw the denouement of the drama of existence." Ibid., p. 25.

³Ibid., p. 42.

⁴Ibid., p. 44.

⁵Ibid.

⁶Nominalist philosophy had as its representative Gabriel Biel. It was Biel who influenced Staupitz and Nathin who in turn introduced Luther to Nominalism. E. Brehier, The Middle Ages and the Renaissance, trans. W. Baskin (Chicago, 1965), p. 202.

⁷B.A. Gerrish, Grace and Reason: A Study in the Theology of Luther (Oxford, 1962), p. 50. Occam, therefore, lost no opportunity to criticize Scotus's proof for the existence of God. Ibid.

⁸Ibid., p. 52.

⁹Shortly after Aquinas, Duns Scotus evolved a new philosophical approach. Unlike Aquinas, Scotus' concern was primarily with the will of God. Whatever God wills is good under all circumstances. That being the case, God's will is the sole cause of the fruits of predestination. See: D. Knowles, The Evolution of Medieval Thought (London, 1962), p. 307.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 324.

¹¹This is an implication of the doctrine of Original Sin, which declares man to have a corrupt nature. The sin which caused Adam's fall from Paradise is transmitted from generation to generation. All descendants of Adam are therefore corrupt by nature. Early Christian theologians never undertook to explain how such transmission is possible. However, Augustine was able to develop a theory which was later accepted by medieval Roman Catholicism. The Augustinians, Luther's order, stressed the radical sinfulness of man over the sovereignty of divine grace. According to Augustine, man's corrupt nature can only be made whole through divine grace. But even if man's work was sanctified, there was no assurance of salvation, since the predestinating choice of God was necessary.

"Original Sin," An Encyclopedia of Religion, ed. Vergilius Ferm, (New York, 1945), p. 551; R.H. Fife, The Revolt of Martin Luther (New York, 1957), p. 158.

¹²According to Bainton, Luther recognized that Psalm 22:1 - "My God, my God . . ." is an unmistakable reference to Christ. Lecture commenced August, 1513, op. cit., p. 47.

¹³Ibid.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 48.

¹⁵For information on the answers of the scholastics, consult H.A. Oberman, The Harvest of Medieval Theology (Cambridge, Mass., 1963).

¹⁶Bainton, op. cit., p. 49.

¹⁷W.J. Kooiman, By Faith Alone: The Life of Martin Luther, trans. B.L. Woolf (New York, 1955), p. 42.

¹⁸cf. Fife, op. cit., p. 22, and O. Chadwick, The Reformation (Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1965), p. 36.

¹⁹H.J. Grimm, The Reformation Era (New York, 1954), p. 83.

²⁰Both men insisted that the church had relapsed into Judaistic legalism. Both questioned indulgences and pilgrimages and both quarreled with the pope. Bainton, op. cit., p. 97.

²¹Ibid., p. 98.

²²At the Diet of Worms which was summoned in 1521 to decide upon Luther's fate concerning his early reforms, the Humanists constituted the middle party. Erasmus, the leader of this party, was at first very cautious and non-committal with respect to Luther's reforms. He even showed sympathy towards Luther, since he felt that Luther had done some good and was no heretic. However, Erasmus did not stay neutral for long. He was unremittently pushed by his prominent and esteemed acquaintances to declare his stand. H.J. Grimm, op. cit., pp. 136-147, 166-167.

²³The acquaintances were kings, cardinals and his friend Pope Hadrian. Ibid., p. 167; Bainton, op. cit., p. 196; E.W., pp. 36-38.

²⁴Bainton, op. cit., p. 196.

²⁵Ibid.

²⁶E.N., p. 68.

²⁷Doctrine was very important for Luther. He accused Erasmus of dividing Christian doctrine into two parts: those recondite and those very plain. According to Luther, this was what the godless Sophists did, and Erasmus was plainly echoing them. Ibid., p. 71.

²⁸Ibid., p. 42, 43.

²⁹Ibid., p. 70.

³⁰Ibid., p. 78.

Chapter 3

Free-Will

A. For Al-Ash'arī

Al-Ash'arī, convinced that the Mu'tazilite view did not adequately explain man's eternal destiny in relation to man's actions, turned to the Qur'ān and Hadīth. Acknowledging the error of free-thought, he ascended the pulpit of the Mosque of Baṣra and made a solemn declaration in which he renounced the Mu'tazilite views, announced his return to the truth, and accepted to refute the Mu'tazilites views.¹

He had renounced the Mu'tazilite views and dogmas, but he still had to face the very question the Mu'tazilites faced: How is one to explain man as the true cause of his own acts, for which he is responsible before God? That man is a morally responsible agent in the eyes of God is a given fact in the Qur'ān, and it cannot be debated since it is a revelation. The best Quranic evidence is found in its conception of the Last Judgment. Reward and punishment are allotted in accordance with a principle of justice which implies responsibility on man's part. The Qur'ān reveals thus:

Say: 'The truth is from your Lord; so let whosoever will believe, and let whosoever will disbelieve'. Surely we have prepared for the evil doers a fire, . . . Surely those who believe, and do deeds of righteousness - surely we leave not to waste the wage of him who does good works. . .
(18:28-30)

And we shall set up the just balances for the Resurrection Day, so that not one soul shall be wronged anything; even if it be the weight of one grain of mustard seed We shall produce it, and sufficient are we for reckoners.

(21:48)

So today no soul shall be wronged anything, and you shall not be recompensed, except according to what you have been doing.

(36:54)

The Qur'ān also insists that God is just in all His dealings with men.

. . . God is never unjust unto His servants.

(22:10)

And We wronged them not, but they wronged themselves.

(11:103)

Surely God shall not wrong so much as the weight of an ant; and if it be a good deed He will double it, and give from Himself a mighty wage.

(4:44)

Another integral part of the message of the Qur'ān is the conception of God as the Almighty Lord of the Worlds. He is the creator of everything and is in supreme control of all that happens, even that which man does. The supremacy of the Divine Will which permeates all things in the universe is clearly expressed thus:

To God belongs the Kingdom of the heavens and the earth; He creates what He will; He gives to whom He will females and He gives to whom He will males or He couples them, both males and females; and He makes whom He will barren. Surely He is All-knowing, All-powerful.

(42:48-50)

Surely this is a Reminder; so he who will,
takes unto his Lord a way. But you will
not unless God wills; surely God is ever
All-knowing, All-wise.

(76:29, 30)

It is naught but a Reminder unto all
beings, for whosoever of you who would
go straight; but will you shall not, un-
less God wills, the Lord of all Being.

(81:27-29)

Al-Ash'arī was faced with two truths which had to be reconciled. His Mu'tazilite teacher, al-Jubbā'ī, had asserted that man was the agent of his acts by way of "creating and producing new beings."² Although God did not cease to have power over such acts,³ man as an efficient cause remained independent of God's creative power which actualizes things in the phenomenal world. In order to maintain that man is a free agent, al-Jubbā'ī designated man as the "creator" (Khāliq) of his acts in the sense that man's acts proceeded from him by way of a determination (Qadar) which comes from God.⁴

It was against this background that al-Ash'arī had set out to formulate a theory which would leave God as the creator of everything without invalidating human responsibility or causality. Al-Ash'arī's solution was not altogether new or complicated.

His first move was to begin by asserting the most important of the Quranic teachings: The supremacy and overwhelming majesty of God in the universe. If it is to be asserted that God's sovereignty is without limits and He is omnipotent, then there can be no limitations placed either on God's power or His creativity,

especially since the Qurʾān states: "God created you and what you make." (37:96)⁵ Al-Ashʿarī used the very verse along with verse 46:13 not only to affirm God's sovereignty, but to state his proposition: God is the creator of both man and his acts, and for the latter, man is rewarded.⁶ In order that such a proposition should remain valid, Al-Ashʿarī had to undercut the Muʿtazilite principle of "justice of God" by redefining "justice." George Hourani claims that objective values appeared in the Muʿtazilites' scheme as a factor which implied a limitation on God's power; but al-Ashʿarī denied the existence of these objective values which might act as a standard for God's action.⁷ By defining "justice" as obedience to a law or a superior, al-Ashʿarī did two things simultaneously. He 1) proved that God is the Supreme Monarch and 2) demonstrated that the human conception of justice could not be applied to God. In the Lumaʿ, al-Ashʿarī wrote:

The proof that He is free to do what ever He does is that He is the Supreme Monarch, subject to no one with no superior over Him who can permit, or command, or chide, or forbid, or prescribe what He shall do and fix bounds for Him.⁸

In the Ibānah the very point is again made:

. . . the Lord of the Worlds is not under a ʿarīʿah and there is none above Him . . .⁹

This definition of justice enabled him to deal with the problem of evil. Earlier, we noticed that his proposition stated that God created man and his acts, and rewarded man for what he does. From the proposition, it appears that God is unjust, since He creates

man and his acts, then punishes man for evil acts. On the other hand, the Qurʾān insists that God is just (22:10), and He does not will injustice to the worlds (3:104). In the Ibānah, al-Ashʿarī explained the verses: ". . . God desires not wrong for His servants." (40:33) and ". . . God desires not any injustice to living being." (3:104) accordingly:

Its meaning is that He wills not to do them injustice, because He said, 'God does not will injustice to them,' but He did not say, 'He does not will their injustice to each other,' . . . He does not will to do them injustice, even if He wills that they do each other injustice.¹⁰

In the Lumaʿ, by establishing that God is free and subject to nothing, al-Ashʿarī answered the question of evil. He argued:

. . . a thing is evil on our part only because we transgress the limit and bound set for us and do what we have no right to do. But since the Creator is subject to no one and bound by no command, nothing can be evil on His part.¹¹

By this argument, al-Ashʿarī was able to maintain that evil could not be attributed to God, even though God created all of man's acts.

The assertion that God created man's acts was very much treasured by al-Ashʿarī. In fact, even today it could arouse the interest of anyone who is new to this particular theological scene. On the one hand, there were the Muʿtazilites like al-Jubbāʾī who claimed that man creates his own acts. This claim was made so that the notion of omnipotence and justice as ascribed to God might be preserved. On the other hand, there was al-Ashʿarī who claimed the opposite: man does not create his own acts. His claim is made so

that divinity, authority and effective power over all things may be ascribed to God. How could al-Ash'ari make such a claim?

We have already presented a proof of al-Ash'ari showing that God is free and a Supreme Monarch. Yet, we will present another of al-Ash'ari's arguments given in the Ibānah, since it is more philosophically sophisticated and involves the question of the will.

To the question: 'Which is worthier of divinity and authority: he of whom it is true that nothing exists except what he knows, and nothing is absent from his knowledge, and that is not possible with respect to him; or he of whom it is true that things exist that he does not know, and most things are remote from his knowledge?' . . . the answer is: . . . likewise, he who does not will the existence of anything except what exists, and nothing exists what he wills, and nothing is remote from his will, is the worthier of the attribute of divinity. . .¹²

One of the distinguishing features of this proof is that God's divinity is established on the basis of God's ability to will everything that exists, and this includes human acts. In another of al-Ash'ari's arguments, God's over-riding will is distinctive, and a rationale is offered for such a powerful will.

. . . no human act can occur without his willing it, because that would imply that it occurred out of carelessness and neglect or out of weakness and inadequacy on His part to effect what He wills. . . May God be very far above that!¹³

These arguments, above all, support the fact that man is unable to will his own acts, good or evil, unless God wills such acts.

Such a brazen assertion of God's dominating will and an outright denial of God's responsibility for evil, makes us wonder how

a man can be responsible for his acts, especially his evil acts, when his will appears to be dominated by God's supreme will. We find the answer to this question and other cognate questions which have been raised in this thesis in considering al-Ash'arī's second move.

In the second move, al-Ash'arī consented to the idea that God creates the act, but insisted that man acquires it. Through "acquisition" (Kasb) the act is man's act and he is therefore responsible for the act. Let us turn our attention to the term Kasb or its cognate iktisāb.

Watt has shown that al-Ash'arī was not the first to employ the term, although the doctrine of Kasb is sometimes attributed to al-Ash'arī.¹⁴ Both Watt¹⁵ and J. Schacht¹⁶ believe that the term has its ground in the Qur'ān. According to Schacht, the term, as it is employed in the Qur'ān, has a commercial usage. It means "to engage, to pledge one's credit."¹⁷ Also, C.C. Torrey has included the word among those he classified as commercial-theological terms in the Qur'ān.¹⁸ Schacht is of the opinion that the meaning "to pledge one's credit," "to be held responsible" either from a commercial or religious point of view satisfies the requirements of Qur'anic passages and the theologians' definition beginning with al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī and onwards.¹⁹ An example of its Qur'anic use, in which the notion of responsibility is quite evident is: "God imposes on each person only that of which he is capable: to his credit (Kasaba) that which has been credited to him, and to his debit that

which has been debited to him." (2:286) The above passage is cited by Schacht as an example in which "the form Kasaba meant 'to be credited' and the form iktasāb meant 'to be debited'."20

In the Ibānah the term iktisāb is used once, and only in connection with the Divine will, where al-Ashʿarī claimed that what exists is what God eternally wills and really knows; therefore no human act or other act can occur without His willing and knowing it; otherwise there is weakness in God.21

In the Lumaʿ, the term signifies a connection between man and his acts. Man "acquires" or is given the responsibility for the act, by God who creates in man the ability to acquire the act and make it his own. R. Frank has put it this way:

Man is created in the totality of his being of which consequently there is no aspect which is not utterly dependent upon God's universal creation at any moment, but God does not perform the human act. . . The act is entirely the agent's insofar as it is determined by him, but his existence, the actuality of his Being (fāʿil qādir) and also the existence of the effect came to be and subsist in Being through the creative causality of God.22

We shall resist the temptation to explore whether the concept of Kasb really does make man responsible for his acts, as al-Ashʿarī has said in Chapter five of the Lumaʿ. However, let us explore a little more the implication of this term which links man to his acts.

Al-Ashʿarī has claimed that any event or act requires an agent (fāʿil) who determines it intentionally.23 An example of the acts which he has cited, that need a producer are Kufr (unbelief) and

īmān (faith). Kufr must have a mubdith who intentionally produces it as unbelief. The mubdith cannot be the Kāfir (unbeliever), since human knowledge does not encompass the totality of that which "is" i.e. Being. Therefore, God must be the agent who has determined the reality of the act of unbelief, or faith.²⁴ This holds true for all acts which have been acquired: they have as their agent God.²⁵ This assertion which al-Ashʿarī has made is perfectly aligned with the religious assertion that God is the sole cause of everything.

However, it is not necessary that the agent (fāʿil), God, be the one who performs the act (the muktasib). It is also not necessary that the created agent who performed the act be the one who determined the entire reality of the act. The event takes place through someone who performs the act, but the creative power of this "someone" (muktasib) is not sufficient for the "someone" to determine the entire reality of the act. Therefore, the fāʿil and muktasib are not the same, and this is shown by al-Ashʿarī's definition of the two terms.²⁶

In his analysis of motion, where he also discussed the notion that God is the agent of the act but not the acquirer,²⁷ al-Ashʿarī distinguished between necessary and acquired motions. Through the distinction we are able to understand exactly what al-Ashʿarī had in mind when he used the term Kasb. According to the analysis, necessity is defined as that which is constrained and compelled. There is no escape or way to get free, even though an exhaustive

endeavour is made to do so. An example of necessary motion is shivering from fever or shaking from palsy.²⁸ On the other hand, acquired motion is of a contrary description. Therefore, it cannot be necessary motion. A description of acquired motion is the motion of a man who comes and goes; this motion is quite different from the man who shivers from a fever.²⁹ Acquired motion has some degree of freedom in comparison to necessary motion, for while the latter is characterized by compulsion, there is no compulsion in the former. It is also possible to distinguish between necessary and acquired motion by a necessary knowledge which leaves no room for doubt.³⁰ The man who is shivering knows that he is shivering and cannot control it. He cannot help knowing that he has no control over his shivering, since in necessary motion power does not exist for the individual; thus, the man is impotent. In the other state or motion, which is its contrary, power must exist. This motion is therefore an acquisition.³¹ Thus the meaning of acquisition for al-Ash'arī is that the act is produced by virtue of a creative power from the acquirer.³²

This creative power or capability (istiṭā'ah) is created by God in man,³³ so that man does not create the act but acquires it. Man's responsibility for his act is through his acquisition, not through the creation. Al-Ash'arī reserved the principle of creation for God, and allotted the principle of acquisition to man. According to al-Shahrastānī, the difference between creation (Khalq) and acquisition is that creation does not affect the producer in

any way and the producer is aware of the entire reality of the act, while acquisition is willed by man's will, is within his power, and man acquires a quality from it. Thus man is affected by the act, and knows only one aspect of the act.³⁴ For this reason, al-Ash'ari did not agree with al-Jubbā'ī who asserted that man created the act. To say the latter would mean that man knows the whole reality of the act. No wonder the Mu'tazilites could assert that man is independent of God! But with al-Ash'ari, the story is different. He believed that man created nothing, and since man's capability for acquiring a work does not continue,³⁵ man is therefore dependent upon God for his act.

While the concept of Kasb refers to the connection between man and his acts, the concept of istiṭā'ah (capacity) deals with the question of power to receive the acts and make them one's own. In dealing with the latter concept, al-Ash'ari has informed us as to when a man is capable of doing something, i.e. an act. For al-Ash'ari, unlike the Mu'tazilites, istiṭā'ah is an accident which neither exists before the act nor endures.³⁶ It is an accident which exists simultaneously with the act.³⁷ In other words, the power and the act occur concomitantly. Therefore, man cannot act until the act is existent, and having capacity to act before the act occurs is denied.³⁸ Not only that, al-Ash'ari has gone further by saying that the power to do an act is to do nothing else but the act.³⁹ This means that when a person has the power to act he cannot "not act". To "not act" is impossible because

it would mean that the man has power over the "act" and "not act" in which case both would have to exist, and "it is impossible for a man to have power over both the thing and its contrary."⁴⁰

A much better case for the denial of the Mu'tazilite view that a man has the power to "act" or to "not act" involves the differentiation of human power al-qudrah al muhdathah and God's power al-qudrah al-qadim. Al-Ash'ari has defined man's power i.e. created power, such that it includes the existence of the object of the power.⁴¹ Such power has no eternal existence either.

. . . it is impossible for a man's power to exist perpetually without the existence of an act of his . . .⁴²

On the other hand, God's power is defined as an eternal power which does not necessitate the existence of an act.

. . . it is not a condition of the Eternal's power that its existence includes the existence of its object, and since it can exist without any act, it is not impossible for it to exist eternally without any sort of act.⁴³

Whereas God has the capacity to act at all times without even having to act, man's capacity must result in an act for which the power is given. If man had the capacity to act, without acting, his qudrah would have no limiting condition; and that is impossible,⁴⁴ since it is only God's qudrah which has no limits. Therefore a man is capable of acting or doing something only at the moment of the existence of the act.

Al-Ash'ari's main concern in his discussion of capacity is with the question of power. Man's power is limited and occurs

concomitantly with the act. Prior to the performance of an act, a man is incapable of doing the act. Therefore, it may be said that a man is able to do something only when he is doing it. There is no power to act before an act. Such a position undercuts the notion of "free to act," because to "act" or to "not act" is a power which is granted by God only at the existence of the event. Man is therefore dependent on God's power, and this is backed by the religious assertion which subordinates man's will to God's will. (76:30).⁴⁵ Man has no real effective power for an act. In the Ibānah, Al-Ash'arī has argued that effective power is attributed only to God.⁴⁶

Man's will or his power to act should therefore be seen in subordination to God's will and power, and, at the same time, as a necessary condition for the actualization of an act. Man does have a will and power to act, so that whatever he does may be his by acquisition only.

As a result, evil is not attributed to God but to man, and yet it is not outside God's jurisdiction because He wills it without being affected by it. The Mu'tazilites abhorred the idea of saying that God willed evil, because they upheld the assertion that only one who is foolish wills folly.⁴⁷ Al-Ash'arī countered this assertion by reference to the Qur'ān where, among other examples, the story of the two sons of Adam (5:31-32) is narrated. One of the sons tried to kill his brother, and the brother made no defensive or offensive effort, but said:

Even if thou stretch forth thine hand
against me to slay me, I will not stretch
forth my hand against thee to slay thee.
Truly I fear God, the Lord of the Worlds.
Yea, rather would I that thou shouldst
bear my sin and thine own, and that thou
become an inmate of Hell.⁴⁸

The narrative implies that the speaker willed a course of action which included his brother killing him, because he considered the alternative to be sinful. In this respect he willed his own murder without becoming evil; hence it is possible that God wills evil without being evil. This is not only true for evil but for all acts of man. Both God and man share in the act, but God remains unaffected by the act. Hammouda Ghoraba has stated that fact in the following way:

. . . capability of man does not create anything; nor yet is this share (man's share) inconsistent with God's willing everything which exists for more than one will may contribute to any one work in different ways . . . Thus God wills the creation and man the acquisition of the same work at the same time without any incongruity.⁴⁹

By forwarding this line of argument, al-Ash'ari has made compatible the two religious assertions: 1) Man is held responsible for all his actions, and he will be punished according to his actions or rewarded according to them, justly, and 2) God is the supreme and omnipotent Monarch with no limitations to his power. Thus al-Ash'ari is able to maintain the idea of an all-powerful God without ascribing to Him the responsibility of man's evil.

With the above arguments, al-Ash'ari has left us with a

distinct impression that man has no choice. Man's power being a created power is for one act only, and not for the contrary of the act. We are forced to admit, given al-Ash^carī's arguments, that choice does not belong to capability, but to the will which is not subordinated.⁵⁰

From the above, we are forced to conclude also that one cannot strive to earn the reward of the Beatific Vision. Man has no power of his own that can earn him the reward. This conclusion is further supported by the reply which al-Ash^carī gave when his opponents asked:

Is the creature ever free from being either the recipient of a favor for which he must give thanks, or the object of a trial which he must endure patiently?

He replied:

The creature is never free from favor and trial. Among trials are those which must be endured patiently such as misfortunes of sickness and disease . . . And among them are those which must not be endured patiently such as unbelief and all other acts of disobedience.⁵¹

The assertion, that the creature is never free from favor and trial, supports the conclusion. But because of al-Ash^carī's classification of trial, we are led to believe that al-Ash^carī has made a subtle move, especially when he designated unbelief as an act which should not be patiently endured. Such a designation of unbelief implies some degree of self-determination⁵² in the sense that something by man can be done to discontinue the patient

endurance of unbelief. Then the onus for unbelief is assigned to man and not God.

Besides, al-Ash'ari has also given a reason for unbelief. God has charged the unbeliever with the duty of believing. If the unbeliever is capable of believing he would believe, but he does not believe. The reason is not that he is impotent (ʿajz) but that he omits (tark) to do so, and is occupied with the contrary of belief.⁵³

If he is an unbeliever because he omits to believe, then that implies he has the ability to believe. Inability, according to al-Ash'ari, occurs when "both the thing and its contrary is beyond one's power."⁵⁴ Since he has the ability to believe, why does not the man believe rather than omit to believe? Al-Ash'ari's argument at this point is weak. Let us recall an earlier argument: the power to act is only "to act," and this power occurs concomitantly with the act. If the act of belief does not happen, then it is impossible for al-Ash'ari to claim that the unbeliever has power to believe, given the earlier argument. Any insistence on his part that the unbeliever does have the power to believe implies either a weakness in God, because God grants power to believe, and belief is not effected: man omits to believe; or there exists a sphere where man's will alone operates, since man may omit to believe inspite of the power to believe.⁵⁵ In either case this would hit directly at one of the fundamental Quranic truths which al-Ash'ari maintains: God is the supreme and omnipotent monarch.

However, man's ultimate destiny is not determined by belief alone. Faith and good works do not constitute a sufficient condition by which man's ultimate destiny can be determined. God's "predestinating"⁵⁶ choice is required. That God's "predestinating" choice constitutes the sufficient condition is evident in the arguments found in the Ibānah. In one of his arguments, al-Ash'arī has asserted that "He (God) tells us (7:178) that He produces (dhara'a) for Jahannam most of His creatures."⁵⁷ In another argument, al-Ash'arī has cited the tradition⁵⁸ in which the Prophet told 'Ā'īṣah that "God ordained (ja'ala) a people for Paradise when they were in the loins of their fathers and a people for the Fire whom He ordained for it when they were in the loins of their fathers," in order to explain that misery precedes its recipients, while blessedness precedes its recipients.⁵⁹ Both arguments insist on God's "predestinating" choice.

The argument in which the "predestinating" choice of God is strongest and most evident is that argument whereby al-Ash'arī has cited a number of traditions to prove that God knows what will be, will be, and writes it down. According to al-Ash'arī, ". . . He (God) writes down the people of Paradise and the People of Hell, and produces (dhara'a) them as two groups: a group for Paradise, and a group for the flame."⁶⁰ One of the traditions cited⁶¹ relates that in the Writ a person is assigned as belonging to either the people of Paradise or the people of Hell. Although he may perform the works of the opposite group, the Writ forestalls him.

and he enters the place to which he has been assigned.⁶²

Since al-Ash^carī has stated that God knows what will be, will be and He has written it down (supra), then we may infer that, for al-Ash^carī, man's ultimate destiny has already been decided and man can take no course of action that will effect a change in his destiny. Besides, man does not know where his ultimate destiny lies. It is strictly in the "hands" of God. All that man can do is to work his work since "everyone does easily that for which he was created (khalāqa)"⁶³ and fear God in so far as he is able to do so.⁶⁴

We can therefore conclude from al-Ash^carī's arguments that greater preponderance is placed on determinism than on freedom. But, it is not al-Ash^carī's intention to be a determinist; since he tried to allow for a concept of limited human capacity, to act. Even then, his primary concern, to preserve the religious assertion that God is the Lord of the Worlds, has overshadowed the notion of human capacity so greatly that he is forced to admit that human capacity presupposes Divine power.

Footnotes to Chapter 3 - Section A

¹"Abū Ḥasan Al-Ashʿarī" Ibn Khallikan's Biographical Dictionary, trans. E. MacGuckin de Slane (Paris, 1948) Vol. 2, pp. 227-228.

²Al-Shahrastānī, Milal, ed. M. Badrān (Cairo, 1910-1955), p. 120; cited by R.M. Frank, "The Structure of Created Causality According to al-Ashʿarī," Studia Islamica, Vol. 25 (1965), p. 24.

³Al-Ashʿarī, Maqālāt, pp. 199f, 551.

⁴L. Gardet, "Al-Djubbāʾī", E.I.², p. 570.

⁵R.M. Frank has stated that (37:96) has been widely used by "orthodox thinkers" as a "proof text" for the universality of God's creation, op. cit., p. 34.

⁶Lumaʿ, Nos. 82, 83.

⁷George F. Hourani, "Two Theories of Value in Medieval Islam", Muslim World, Vol. 50 (1960), p. 276.

⁸Lumaʿ, No. 170, The No. refers to the section of the Lumaʿ.

⁹Ibānah, p. 105; p. 54 (Ar.).

¹⁰Ibid., p. 109.

¹¹Lumaʿ, No. 170.

¹²Ibānah, p. 101.

¹³cf. Ibid., p. 103.

¹⁴W.M. Watt, "The Origin of the Islamic Doctrine of Acquisition," Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, (1943), pp. 234-247.

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶J. Schacht "New Sources for the History of Muhammadan Theology," Studia Islamica, Vol. 1 (1953), p. 30.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 30.

¹⁸C.C. Torrey, The Commercial - Theological Terms in the Koran, Leiden (1892), pp. 27ff.

¹⁹J. Schacht, "History of Muhammadan Theology," p. 30.

²⁰Ibid., p. 31.

²¹Ibānah, p. 103.

²²R.M. Frank, op. cit., p. 26.

²³Luma^c, No. 85.

²⁴Ibid., Nos. 85, 86.

²⁵Ibid., No. 88.

²⁶Ibid., No. 89.

²⁷Ibid., Nos. 90, 91.

²⁸Ibid., No. 92.

²⁹Ibid., No. 92.

³⁰Ibid.

³¹Ibid.

³²Ibid.

³³Ibid., Nos. 122-127, See: R. Frank, op. cit., pp. 53, 54.

³⁴Al-Shahrastānī, Nihāyatu 'l-Iqdam, p. 34. cf. Luma^c Nos. 94, 95.

³⁵Luma^c, Nos. 122-124. The human individual is not consciously and intentionally willing at every moment in his life. See: Frank, op. cit., p. 55.

³⁶Luma^c, Nos. 122, 125.

³⁷Ibid., Nos. 123-125.

³⁸Ibid., No. 125.

³⁹Ibid., Nos. 126, 127.

⁴⁰Ibid., No. 126.

⁴¹Ibid., McCarthy thinks that al-Ash'ari is begging the question, op. cit., p. 78. McCarthy is correct, but if such an approach works and accomplishes al-Ash'ari's aim, then the approach is justified. For al-Ash'ari, such a definition fulfills his purpose. However, in the overall scheme, there is weakness: there appears to be no rational basis for taklif (obligation). God commands it, and there is no argument. This is evident in the case of the unbeliever whom God has charged with the duty of believing. If capacity is with the act and the capacity is given by God, then how can the man who is incapable of imān be responsible for not believing? Luma' No. 135. Al-Ash'ari shifts the emphasis of incapacity from impotence to omission. The man is incapable of imān because he omits to do so, and is occupied with the contrary of belief (No. 135). This line of argument is inconsistent with his argument that power to do a thing is to do the thing and not its contrary. The reason for the weakness in the scheme may very well be his definition of man's qudrah which appears to be an empty concept that may be filled with anything. In that case: McCarthy's comment is appropriate. Further and future investigation may probably reveal whether al-Ash'ari's scheme is weak because of his definition of human qudrah.

⁴²Luma', No. 126.

⁴³Ibid.

⁴⁴cf. Ibid., No. 124.

⁴⁵See: Ibid., No. 65.

⁴⁶Ibānah, p. 101.

⁴⁷Ibid., p. 104. See: Luma', No. 63.

⁴⁸Ibānah, p. 104.

⁴⁹H. Ghoraba, "Al-Ash'ari's Theory of Acquisition" (Al-Kasb) Islamic Quarterly, Vol. 2 (1955), p. 7.

⁵⁰See: Ibid.

⁵¹Luma', No. 100.

⁵²Both McCarthy and Frank believe that al-Ash'ari allows for some degree of self-determination, and he does not expound any absolute determinism. McCarthy, Theology of Al-Ash'ari, f.n. 16, p. 59, f.n. 24, p. 65. Nonetheless such acts still need a producer cf. Luma', Nos. 25, 86.

⁵³Luma', No. 135.

⁵⁴Ibid.

⁵⁵cf. Ibānah, p. 111. In this reference al-Ash'arī seems to imply that it is not necessary for God to enable people to fulfill His commandments. This would suggest that when God commands people, they do not always execute His commands; therefore God is weak.

⁵⁶Infra. footnote 63.

⁵⁷Ibānah, p. 59 (Ar.) See: Sura (51:56) in Luma^c No. 159.

⁵⁸Ahmad b. Ḥanbal, Musnad VI, 208 as cited by Klein in Ibānah, p. 129.

⁵⁹Ibānah, p. 73 (Ar.)

⁶⁰Ibid., p. 127; cf. Luma^c, No. 111.

⁶¹al-Buḥārī, ed. Krehl IV 251, 469 as cited by Klein. Ibānah, p. 125.

⁶²Ibid., cf. p. 127.

⁶³Ibid., p. 74 (Ar.). Either there is a linguistic confusion in al-Ash'arī's use of the terms dharaʿa, jaʿala and Khalaga, or al-Ash'arī meant that God has predetermined man in the strict sense of the word "predetermined." Khalaga, the Arabic word for "created," signifies the bringing of something into being without the pre-existence of its similitude cf. 6:1, 2, whereas dharaʿa and jaʿala signifies a coming into existence of something from its similitude. Dharaʿa may mean the creation via multiplication of the similitude, cf. 16:13; 42:9, while jaʿala may signify an alteration or change in a state or condition. cf. 6:1; 2:20; 16:80. When the latter two are used, there is no indication that God creates man for Paradise or Hell; it only suggests that God causes, urges, "predetermines" man for Hell or Paradise. This He may do by deciding to withhold or not withhold the power to believe. However, when Khalaga is used, the usage suggests not a transformation or the leading of man astray, but the bringing into being of man who is made to do the works of Hell or Paradise as the case may be. He is created as such, with a decree cf. 6:2. This is predestination in a strict sense as opposed to "predestination" which is consequent to creation (Khalaga). The justification for the latter interpretation of predestination is based on the verse: I have not created (Khalagatu) jinn and men, but that they should worship Me. (51:56). See: Ibānah, p. 59 (Ar.). According to this verse God created men to worship Him, and not for evil. By not granting His guidance, men become infidels. Ibānah, pp. 120, 121. Therefore it is only after

creation, that men are caused to err or become evil. God must certainly foreknow who will err and because He foreknows we feel justified in the use of the term "predestination" as that which takes place subsequently to creation as a result of God's action.

Detailed investigation, not within the scope of this thesis, on al-Ash^carī's understanding and use of the three Arabic terms cited above is needed. Such investigation would probably reveal a better understanding of al-Ash^carī's position on predestination. For the various usages of the above Arabic terms see: E.W. Lane, An Arabic-English Lexicon (London, 1863); and J. Penrice, A Dictionary and Glossary of the Kor-ân (London, 1873).

⁶⁴That man is to fear God in so far as he is capable, is one interpretation of the Quranic verse: "So fear God as well as you can" (64:16), given by al-Ash^carī; the other interpretation is "Fear God in whatever you are able to do." Luma^c, No. 146.

Free-Will

B. For Luther

Luther's view on free-will was not the result of a deep theological reflection, but an assertion of conscience. Luther's certainty of salvation was based on religious assertions: "The righteousness of God is revealed in the Gospel," and "the just shall live by faith" (Romans 1:17). Because these assertions guarantee for Luther full assurance¹ of salvation, it is not surprising to find him relying on assertions and maintaining that they are fundamental to Christianity. Luther said:

Take away assertions, and you take away Christianity. What Christian can endure the idea that we should deprecate assertions? That would be denying all religion and piety in one breath -- asserting that religion and piety and all dogmas are just nothing at all.²

Another important assertion which is dear to Luther is: that God foreknows all things which must therefore necessarily happen. It was over this assertion that Luther disagreed with Erasmus. The latter claimed that it is irreligious, idle and superfluous to investigate any such matter.³ But not so for Luther, who claimed that "knowing whether God foresees anything contingently, or whether we do all things of necessity" is an item in the summary of Christianity.⁴ It is this assertion which raised the question concerning the status of the human will.

Unlike Erasmus, Luther believed that it is most necessary for a Christian to know whether or not his will has any efficacy in

matters pertaining to the destiny of his soul. And, it was around this issue that the Erasmus - Luther controversy revolved. Luther himself admitted it:

Indeed, let me tell you, this is the hinge on which our discussion turns, the crucial issue between us; our aim is, simply, to investigate what ability 'free-will' has, in what respect it is the subject of Divine action and how it stands related to the grace of God.⁵

To know nothing of such things, according to Luther, is to be ignorant of Christianity and anyone who claimed that the knowledge concerning such matters was unnecessary could hardly be considered a Christian.⁶ Luther felt that lack of such knowledge meant that a person was ignorant of God's work and power, and was therefore ignorant of God himself.⁷ Indeed, such a person could hardly worship, praise or give thanks to someone he did not know, let alone to God for what He has done for him.⁸ Luther, therefore, wanted a clear understanding of God's power and man's power, so that man might know how much he should attribute to himself and how much to God. Man, also, would then know that for which he should be thankful to God.

To accomplish the above, Luther began by insisting on the assertion that God foreknows all things which must necessarily happen. He stated it thus:

It is, then, fundamentally necessary and wholesome for Christians to know that God foreknows nothing contingently, but that He foresees, purposes, and does all things according to His own immutable, eternal and infallible will.⁹

This assertion, according to Luther, has scriptural basis. Isaiah 46:10 records: "My counsel shall stand, and my will shall be done." Luther insisted that any schoolboy understands quite clearly the meaning of the words in the text, and there is no obscurity or ambiguity about things taking place by necessity.¹⁰ Luther's point here was that the assertion is a datum of revelation. (cf. Rom. 9:15ff).

However, a second warrant for the assertion was presented. Luther reminded Erasmus that the belief that "God foreknows all things" is not only a datum of revelation, but it is a belief held in pagan antiquity. By pointing to the pagan poets Luther found support for the assertion for even poets and wise men have denied the efforts of man. In Luther's words:

Those wise men knew, what experience of life proves, that no man's purposes ever go forward as planned, but events overtake all men contrary to their expectation. Hence that commonest of all remarks which is on everyone's lips (is) - 'God's will be done'; and: 'If God will, we will do it'; and: 'God so willed,' such was the will of those above.¹¹

The knowledge of predestination and God's foreknowledge, according to Luther, is a common knowledge; and such notion has remained in the world no less strongly than the notion of a Divine being.¹²

A close examination of Luther's assertion reveals that it is in fact made up of two assertions:¹³ 1) God foreknows all things and, 2) whatever God foreknows and foresees happens by necessity. Luther attempted to establish the first assertion on scriptural

evidence and popular belief. He said that nobody questions that there is a great deal hidden in God of which man knows nothing. Consequently, the scripture is cited to show the things which only God knows. For example, matters pertaining to the last day are known only by God: "Of that day knoweth no man, but the Father" (Matt. 24:36); and Paul records: "It is not for you to know the times and seasons" (Acts 1:7); also: "The Lord knoweth them that are his" (2 Tim. 2:19); and again God said: "I know whom I have chosen" (John 13:18).¹⁴ It is an implicit biblical understanding that God foresees all things, still Luther's evidence can be questioned by a logician. All that the evidence states is that there are some things such as the times, the elect, etc. which God alone knows. At no point does the evidence used by Luther state explicitly that God knows all things beforehand. But let us bear in mind that Luther does not claim to be a philosophical theologian. He is simply a believer and a confessor. This first assertion, therefore, should be seen as a confession of a sinner.¹⁵

The second assertion is established, not by scripture, but by way of rational argument, beginning with Erasmus' assertion: God is by nature just and kindness itself.¹⁶ Luther argued thus: If God is by nature just and kind, then it follows that He is immutably just and kind; and, as His nature remains unchanged to all eternity, so does His justice and kindness; whatever is said of His justice and kindness must also be said of His knowledge, wisdom, will, and other Divine attributes.¹⁷ Luther stopped short of his conclusion

only to call attention to that on which Erasmus has insisted. Luther, directing his remarks to Erasmus, wrote:

You (Erasmus) insist that we should learn the immutability of God's will, while forbidding us to know the immutability of His foreknowledge! Do you suppose that He does not will what He foreknows, or that He does not foreknow what He wills?¹⁸

Luther's argument continued as follows: If God wills what He foreknows, His will is eternal and changeless, because His nature is so; therefore, logic forces us to admit that whatever man does, however it may appear to us to be done mutably and contingently, is done necessarily and immutably with respect to the Divine will.¹⁹

This latter point is further supported by an insistence on the effectiveness of God's will. God's will cannot be impeded, since power belongs to God's nature; and His wisdom cannot be deceived. Since God's will is not impeded, whatever is done, therefore, can only be done by whom, when, where, how, and to the extent God foresees and wills.²⁰

With these two assertions established, Luther was then able to reach his desired conclusion:

1. GOD FOREKNOWS ALL THINGS

2. WHATEVER GOD FOREKNOWS MUST HAPPEN NECESSARILY

Conclusion: ALL THINGS HAPPEN NECESSARILY

It is from this conclusion that Luther was able to assert that God foreknows nothing contingently but that He foresees purposes, and does all things according to His own immutable, eternal, and infallible will.

Since all things happen necessarily, then man acts of necessity. Luther was very careful to qualify what he meant by necessity. He did not mean a necessity of compulsion, but of immutability. The difference between these two types of necessity is important in understanding that the will is at no time forced. Necessity of compulsion is in the case of a person doing something against his will, like a thief being dragged off against his will to be punished.²¹ Necessity of immutability is exemplified in the case of a person acting spontaneously and voluntarily; this volition cannot be eliminated, restrained or altered; rather the volition is more provoked to crave if opposed.²² Luther was somewhat hesitant in using the term "necessity." Necessity cannot accurately be used to speak of man's will or God's will because it suggests compulsion, its meaning is too harsh, and Luther did not wish to leave the impression that the will is compelled. Whether the will be God's or man's will, the will does as it pleases. And, Luther's point was to stress that God's will is immutable while man's will is impotent and corrupt.²³

The preceding sentence carries for us the force of Luther's conviction as embodied in his general assertion: God foreknows all things and they must necessarily happen. The force of the assertion centers on the question of salvation. Luther wished to emphasize that man's salvation depends solely on God and man can do nothing to contribute to his salvation. Man's destiny does not depend on himself.²⁴ The reason that man cannot make any contribution.

to his destiny is that his will is corrupt and impotent. It is therefore necessary for man to know this fact.

However, those who do not know this fact are ignorant of God, and salvation is incompatible with such ignorance. The assertion is "a gateway to righteousness, an entrance into heaven, and a road to God."²⁵ Those who are ignorant of the assertion "labour under a false assurance of salvation, never learning the fear of God and true humiliation . . ."²⁶ To know the assertion is to fear God, to rely on the Divine Will alone, and to realize that no effort on man's part can enable him to enter heaven.²⁷ Man's will is therefore not free to help him to achieve the reward of the Beatific Vision. The will is not free in the sense that it is corrupt and impotent. Therefore, if man is to attain the Beatific Vision, he must depend on the Spirit of God, the Spirit which justifies man.²⁸

God's necessitating foreknowledge guarantees also that God will keep His promises, that He can be depended upon. Luther has written thus:

When He makes promises you ought to be out of doubt that He knows, and can and will perform, what He promises; otherwise, you will be accounting Him neither true nor faithful, which is unbelief, and the height of irreverence, and a denial of the most high God!²⁹

Luther's firm conviction of the reality of God's promise was based on the New Testament: Romans 9:6, 2 Timothy 2:19, Titus 1:2, and in Romans 3:4 which states the fact thus: "Let God be true,

but every man a liar."³⁰

Another text which Luther has cited to show that God does not lie, but keeps His promises is Hebrews 11:6, "He that cometh, must believe that God is and that he is a rewarder of them that hope in Him."³¹ This text, besides being evidence that God will execute His will, states explicitly that God is a rewarder of them that hope in Him. The text speaks of God as promising reward, but how can God promise reward, when man can do nothing in the affairs of his destiny?

According to Luther, the promise does not prove that man can do anything; it simply states that there is a reward for man. This is made clearer by Matthew 5:12, "Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven," which Erasmus has interpreted as the reward of free-will, and to such interpretation Luther has objected.³² Luther believed that these texts³³ which speak of reward, seek to establish the consequence of reward, not the worthiness of merit. He was well aware that necessity has neither merit nor reward; but that is true of necessity of compulsion only, not necessity of immutability.³⁴

Luther had in view only "consequence" not "worthiness." He has written "who will reward an unwilling workman, or ascribe merit to him?"³⁵ If "worthiness" is in view there is no reward. However, for "those who do good and evil willingly, even though they cannot alter their will by their own strength, reward and punishment follow naturally and necessarily." (cf. Ps. 62:12).³⁶ An example

of natural consequence which he has cited is the case of a person in water: if he sinks, he will be drowned, and if he swims, he will be saved.³⁷ With "consequence" in view, there is nothing good or evil that cannot be rewarded. According to Luther, both the wicked and the good have their reward:

Hell and judgement of God await the wicked as a necessary consequence; though they do not themselves desire or conceive of such a reward for their sins, and indeed think it abominable and, as Peter says, rail against it (cf. 2 Peter 2:12). In the same way, a kingdom awaits the godly, though they themselves neither seek it, nor think of it; for it was prepared for them by their Father, not only before they themselves existed, but before the foundation of the world (cf. Matt. 25:34).³⁸

Luther appears to have found himself in some difficulty in trying to explain "reward". His distinction between necessity of compulsion and necessity of immutability does not seem to have been of much help to him, even though he felt that he had adequately explained "reward." Necessity of immutability in relation to reward is simply an insistence on the fact that man will be rewarded. By introducing the term "consequence," he only emphasizes the fact that reward is the consequence of some action or thing.

Perhaps Luther did realize some difficulty and for this reason he made an odd move which appears to resolve his quandary. He placed the merit where his opponent placed the reward. In other words, the Kingdom of God merits its sons, not the sons the Kingdom. His rationale was that the Kingdom is not in the process of preparation, but was prepared for its sons beforehand (Matt. 25:34). The sons

of the Kingdom do not prepare the Kingdom; for they themselves are in preparation; thus, the Kingdom merits them. Likewise, Hell merits its sons. (Matt. 25:41).³⁹ According to him, the reason that the Scripture is insistent on reward is that man might be disturbed about, awakened to, and instructed concerning sin. Luther has stated this reason quite explicitly and firmly in these words:

. . . the law (God's words⁴⁰) serve their turn by instruction and illumination to teach us both what we ought to do and what we cannot do, so the words of reward, signifying what is to be, serve their turn by exhorting and threatening, and animate, comfort and uphold the godly to press on in doing good and unduring evil, lest they should be wearied, or their spirit broken.⁴¹

Thus, passages in the Bible which speak of reward should be interpreted as consoling passages. For Luther the texts (1 Corinth. 16:13; 15:58) "Quit you like men, knowing that your labour is not in vain in the Lord," is an exhortation of Paul to his Corinthian converts; while, by the words of threat and future judgement, the ungodly, it is hoped, will be terrified and abstain from wickedness.⁴² The move which Luther has made is appreciated, however, when we understand that Luther is trying to prove to Erasmus, that the texts dealing with reward do not prove free-will. Luther, therefore, has shown that merit is not proved from reward, nor is free-will proved from merit.

If promises and threats serve as a warning of that which follows sin, and neither of them ascribe any worth to merit,⁴³ then this presupposes that man is responsible for his evil actions. But, how can this be logically possible when Luther firmly believed that

God foreknows and wills all things? Above all, Luther has admitted that God makes man "proper subject for damnation." This is clearly seen in Luther's definition of faith. Luther has written that the highest degree of faith is:

. . . to believe that He is merciful, though
He saves so few and damns so many; to believe
that He is just, though of His own will He
makes us perforce proper subjects for damna-
tion . . .⁴⁴

Here we have, in Luther's own words, the picture of a just God who makes us fit subjects for damnation, and who is responsible for saving few and damning many.

Luther believed that he placed the responsibility of man's evil actions on man and not on God, without having to compromise the reality of God's omnipotence and sovereignty. By arguing that those things which man does not produce can still be man's own, Luther has shown that actions carried out through necessity are still man's actions. For instance, Luther, in his attack against Erasmus that necessity destroys moral responsibility, wrote:

Shall we omit to call Christ ours, because
we only received Him and did not create
Him? Again: if we create the things that
are called ours, it follows that we created
our eyes, we created our hands, we created
our feet, for ourselves; unless our eyes,
hands and feet are not to be called ours!
(cf. 1 Cor. 4:7)⁴⁵

Luther's motive in this argument is to make it possible to speak about grace. If things are ours because we produce them, then grace can never be ours, since it is from God.⁴⁶

Grace is offered without works⁴⁷ It is grace from God, through

Christ, to man. Thus it is man's grace. Similarly, God creates man's work for man, so things which he did not produce are still his. Evil, then, is still man's evil, although created by God.

God creates evil in the sense that He works through man's evil nature. God does not create evil as a potter creates pottery from clay. For Luther, God multiplies man's evil nature: all men are born corrupt.⁴⁹ Luther, has cited Paul (Eph. 2:3, cf. Job 14:4, Ps. 51:50) in support of his belief that man is by nature sinful and corrupt.⁵⁰ Through man's nature, which is void of the Spirit and is warped by sin, God creates evil. Luther asserted the latter:

Though God does not make sin, yet He does not cease to form and multiply our nature from which the Spirit has been withdrawn and which sin has impaired. He is like a carpenter who makes statues out of warped wood. As is the nature so are men made; for God creates and forms them out of that nature.⁵¹

The evil which man does, although it is done out of necessity, is a spontaneous evil. It is not against his spirit, since it is evil done through the necessity of immutability. Luther has given a vivid picture of evil done by way of immutability:

A man without the Spirit of God does not do evil against his will, under pressure, as though he were taken by the scruff of the neck and dragged into it, like a thief or footpad being dragged off against his will to punishment; but he does it spontaneously and voluntarily.⁵²

Therefore, when God works in and through an evil man, evil deeds are the outcome. He, God, uses evil tools which cannot escape His

omnipotence. The evil man is impelled to action by the movement of Divine power.⁵³ As a result of the movement of Divine power, God operates through all men: those with the Spirit producing good works, and those void of the Spirit producing evil works. According to Luther no one, not even Satan, is outside the sphere of God's operative power.

Since God moves and works in all, He moves and works of necessity even in Satan and the ungodly.⁵⁴

Notwithstanding God working through evil man, as in the case of Pharaoh which is Luther's illustration of how God works evil,⁵⁵ God is not evil. It is true that God hardened the heart of Pharaoh through His operation and action; but God cannot be accused of unrighteousness, nor is there need to make excuses for God. God is good and cannot do evil. Luther has made it clear in these words:

Yet God, though He does evil by means of evil men, cannot act evilly Himself, for He is good and cannot do evil.⁵⁶

God is not only good but is also just with man. Luther is quite certain about this. His assurance is backed by the scriptures - John 10:28-29, and Paul's words in Romans 11:33: "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God: How unsearchable are His judgements, and His ways past finging out!"⁵⁷ God's justice is beyond human comprehension and man's reckoning, and for that reason God's judgement is Divine.⁵⁸ We can hardly argue with Luther who admitted that the problem of God's justice is

debated in every age and is never solved.⁵⁹ Luther's statement on God's justice is a statement of faith. Through the light of glory, the question concerning God's justice, which is not resolved by the light of grace, becomes resolved for Luther who declared:

Both the light of nature and the light of grace here insist that the fault lies not in the wretchedness of man, but in the injustice of God; nor can they judge otherwise of a God who crowns the ungodly freely, without merit, and does not crown, but damns another, who is perhaps less, and certainly not more, ungodly. But the light of glory insists otherwise, and will one day reveal God, to whom alone belongs a judgement whose justice is incomprehensible, as a God whose justice is most righteous and evident - provided only that in the meanwhile we believe it, . . .⁶⁰

The picture which we have of Luther's account of evil is a picture of how God works in man. God works both good and evil in man. God is incessantly working and active in all His creatures.⁶¹ He does not alter man's will, but by means of His own inescapable movement of Divine and omnipotent action, He moves in man.⁶² Thus, God the Just and the Omnipotent impels those without the Spirit to act in accordance with their own nature, thereby effecting evil works, while those with the Spirit He impels to act so that they effect works in accordance with their "regenerated" nature; hence good works are effected by them. Man, therefore, is subject to God's working by passive necessity.⁶³

Luther, of course, has anticipated the question: "Why then does not God cease from the movement of omnipotence by which the will of the ungodly is moved to go on being evil, and to grow worse?"

and "Why did God let Adam fall, and why did He create us all tainted with the same sin. . .?"⁶⁴ The answer to the first question for Luther implies asking God to cease being God, in which case God would cease being good.⁶⁵ The movement of His Divine omnipotence affects different people differently and effects works according to the nature of each person. If God were to cease the movement of His power just for the ungodly, the movement would also cease for the good. The ungodly work evil not through God's fault, but by reason of their own defect.⁶⁶ The alternative is to ask: Why then, cannot God alter the evil will of the ungodly?⁶⁷ Luther's answer, unlike the above answer, is given through his usual parrying technique. To ask such questions is to only probe into the secrets of the Divine Majesty where His judgements are inscrutable. (Romans 11:33).⁶⁸

The second question involves a similar manoeuvre. To ask of God the reason He permitted Adam to fall, or the reason He created man tainted with Adam's sin is to ask concerning the cause or basis (ratio) for God's will. Luther is of the conviction that:

God is He for whose will no cause or ground (ratio) may be laid down as its rule and standard; for nothing is on a level with it or above it, but it is itself the rule for all things.⁶⁹

God, then, has no superior, nor is He bounded by any law or rule. What He wills must be therefore right because He so wills it. Thus, when God let Adam fall, or created man from a corrupt seed, it was the right thing that God did. Also, He does not have to

account to anyone for what He does. Unlike man, He does not have imposed on Him any necessity. He is completely free in His actions.

Divine freedom and the necessitating foreknowledge of God must imply human necessity. According to Luther, it follows by irrefutable logic that man does nothing by himself, but only by God's omnipotence.⁷⁰ Thus, God's foreknowledge and omnipotence are diametrically opposed to man's free-will. The De Servo Arbitrio is strewn with rebuttals to free-will arguments which are given by Erasmus in his Diatribes. Luther's arguments are of two kinds: 1) axiomatic and logical, and 2) Biblical.⁷¹ However his arguments are deployed, Luther's sole aim is to show that man's will is unfree. On one level, Luther has left us uncertain about the human will. We are not certain, whether it is free, unfree, or man has no free-will. Evidences may be found for all three conditions of the will. For instance, in one place Luther has argued that God has granted man a free use of things at his own will. Concerning the things below man, in the created world, man is left to his own will and is under no precepts of God.⁷² This argument may be interpreted as man having free-will concerning terrestrial affairs.

However Luther has left us certain about one thing: man has no free-will concerning his destiny. His salvation depends solely on God. This is the predominant note which De Servo Arbitrio sounds. Luther has not failed to remind his reader that man can do nothing on his part to effect a change in the course of his destiny. Time and again, this point is emphasized. In the latter section of De

Servo, Pauline and Johannine writings are cited in support of the point. Romans 10:20; 9:30-31 are given to show that man's destiny is not dependent on his previous endeavour.⁷³ This is because "salvation is by Christ alone" (John 14:6),⁷⁴ and there is comfort in knowing that one's destiny does not depend on free-will.

Luther argued that if his own salvation was dependent on his free-will, he might not be able to stand his ground against the many temptations of the devil. Besides, he would never be comfortably certain as to whether or not he had done enough to please God. But with his salvation under God's will instead of his own will, and with God's promise to save him according to His grace and mercy, he has certainty concerning his destiny; for God does not lie, is faithful, great, and so powerful that none of his children would be plucked from His hands. (cf. John 10:28-29).⁷⁵ On such knowledge and promise of God is built Luther's assurance concerning his ultimate destiny.

Luther has argued very forcefully against free-will. He has not been concerned about either the psychology of human choice, or the metaphysics of action. His sole concern has been to deny free-will and thus affirm man's total inability to determine his ultimate destiny, also to affirm at the same time the sovereignty of Divine grace in man's salvation. In relation to God and the things of God, man has no free-will. Thus, man cannot determine his ultimate destiny.

Footnotes to Chapter 3 - Section 3

¹Luther claims that even Paul calls for full assurance or an assertion of conscience: Paul, according to Luther, calls assertion of conscience a confession (Romans 10:10) B.W., p. 67.

²Ibid.

³Ibid., p. 76.

⁴Ibid., p. 79.

⁵Ibid., p. 78.

⁶Ibid.

⁷Ibid.

⁸Ibid.

⁹Ibid., p. 80.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 82. See p. 212 where Luther offers proof that Paul teaches the necessitating foreknowledge of God. (Rom. 9:15ff).

¹¹Ibid., p. 83.

¹²Ibid.

¹³H.J. McSorley, Luther: Right or Wrong? (New York, 1969), p. 311. McSorley has pointed out that Luther's necessitarian argument has a major and minor premise. The two premises are what I have called assertions.

¹⁴B.W., p. 71

¹⁵It is necessary to see the assertion "God foresees all things" as a confessional statement on Luther's part. If God foresees all things, then Luther would no longer live in fear that he has not confessed all things and thereby be plagued by doubts concerning his salvation. That God foresees all things is a guarantee of salvation. See: E. Schlunk, The Coming Christ and the Coming Church (Philadelphia, 1968), p. 175.

¹⁶B.W., p. 80.

¹⁷Ibid.

¹⁸Ibid.

¹⁹Ibid.

²⁰Ibid., p. 80f.

²¹Ibid., p. 102.

²²Ibid., p. 102f.

²³Ibid., p. 81.

²⁴Ibid., p. 100.

²⁵Ibid., p. 99.

²⁶Ibid.

²⁷cf. Ibid., p. 100.

²⁸cf. Ibid., p. 103.

²⁹Ibid., p. 84.

³⁰Ibid., p. 84.

³¹Ibid.

³²Ibid., p. 179.

³³Texts which Luther have cited as referring to reward are:
2 Chronicles 15:7, Genesis 15:1, Job 34:11, Romans 2:7, 1 Corinthians
16:13, 15:58. See E.W., p. 183.

³⁴Ibid., p. 181.

³⁵Ibid.

³⁶Ibid.

³⁷Ibid.

³⁸Ibid., p. 182.

³⁹Ibid., p. 182f.

⁴⁰Those words which are God's commandments, The Law. It is
that which shows us what we must do; that which leads man to God
by causing him to despair in his self. The Law is the word of

God which reveals to man man's own sinfulness, and which is antithetically related to the Gospel through the act of faith. T.M. McDonough, The Law and the Gospel in Luther (Oxford, 1963), p. 1, 2, 30, 31. See: E.H., p. 284-287.

⁴¹Ibid., p. 183.

⁴²Ibid., p. 183f.

⁴³Ibid., p. 183.

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 101.

⁴⁵Ibid., p. 186.

⁴⁶Ibid.

⁴⁷Ibid., p. 187.

⁴⁸Ibid.

⁴⁹This reflects the belief in Original Sin. Before the Fall, God made man very good, then man became evil through Adam's sin. Thus God abandoned man and left him to himself. Through Adam's corruption all men are corrupted, and through Christ, God has redeemed man. The coming of Christ into the world, creates for all men the opportunity to establish the proper relationship with God. Ibid., p. 187, 202.

⁵⁰Ibid., p. 202, 203.

⁵¹Ibid., p. 203.

⁵²Ibid., p. 102.

⁵³Ibid., p. 204.

⁵⁴Ibid.

⁵⁵Ibid., p. 207, 208.

⁵⁶Ibid., p. 204.

⁵⁷Ibid., p. 314, 315.

⁵⁸Ibid., p. 315.

⁵⁹Ibid., p. 316.

⁶⁰Ibid., p. 317.

⁶¹Ibid., p. 206.

⁶²Ibid., p. 207.

⁶³Ibid., p. 206.

⁶⁴Ibid., p. 208, 209.

⁶⁵Ibid., p. 208.

⁶⁶Ibid., p. 206.

⁶⁷Ibid., p. 208.

⁶⁸Ibid.

⁶⁹Ibid., p. 209.

⁷⁰Ibid., p. 216.

⁷¹So far this thesis has presented the first argument, i.e., that which is axiomatic and logical. In this argument, Luther relies on natural reason and logic. e.g. God is omnipotent in power and action, and He knows and foreknows all things; therefore He cannot err. See: B.W., p. 218. The Biblical argument which comes later in the De Servo is based on Pauline and Johannine writings. For instance, Luther marshalls the verse Romans 4:2-3 to show the total irrelevance of man's works to man's righteousness before God. Then, John 1:5, 10-13, 16 are used to show that salvation is by the grace of Christ through faith alone. See B.W., p. 295-314. Towards the end of this chapter on Luther's view of free-will, I have made allusions to Luther's biblical arguments against free-will. Infra.

⁷²B.W., p. 150f, 309.

⁷³Ibid., p. 301.

⁷⁴Ibid., p. 302, 303, 307-309. "Salvation is by Christ alone" is a guarantee for Luther that God wills to save man. To believe such a statement is an act of faith. Luther ended the De Servo by writing thus: "If we believe that Christ redeemed men by His blood, we are forced to confess that all of man was lost; otherwise we make Christ either wholly superfluous, or else the redeemer of the least valuable **part** of man only; which is blasphemy, and sacrilege." Ibid., p. 318. The preceding is linked to the concept of grace. For Luther, "grace" is God's merciful will to save as it was revealed to us in Christ, thus "the gracious disposition of God," is what Christ offers to mankind as a whole and to us individually. Certainty of God's grace through Christ is certainty of God and His gracious disposition, and this means certainty of salvation for Luther.

⁷⁵Ibid., p. 313, 314.

Chapter 4

Comparison of the Two Views

The two approaches to the issue of free-will are strikingly different. While al-Ash'arī became involved in a discussion which impinged upon the metaphysics of human action, Luther confined his discussion to the nature of being: the nature of man, and that of God as it is revealed to man. The theological and intellectual milieu of the period in which each theologian lived may well account for the differences between the two approaches to the issue.

Al-Ash'arī lived in a period when the Arabic-speaking people were becoming acquainted with Greek ideas. The Mu'tazilites, the school to which al-Ash'arī first belonged, took hold of Greek philosophy, studied it with great ardour, and received it without question.¹ Thus, they became acquainted with a form of atomism and a technique for theological discussion, Kalām. Under the influence of Hellenism and Christianity,² the Mu'tazilite theologians initiated serious theological discussions on Quranic concepts in an attempt to project an edifying picture of God for the refined minds among the Arabic-speaking people.³ The image of God held by the Mu'tazilites was one in which God is thought to be just and acting from moment to moment, in contrast to the image of a God who has fixed the course of the world and human events within the world, and is not actively involved with His creation at each moment. As a result, we find in the Islamic world of that time, two parallel and predominant streams of thought: one stream

which attempted to appropriate Greek ideas to the service of Islam, and the other which tended to remain comprehensive, simple, "unformulated," and fundamentally Islamic.

Al-Ash'arī's view on free-will reflects an attempt to reconcile these two streams of thought by appropriating the Mu'tazilite methodology to defend the basic and simple beliefs that were fundamentally Islamic.⁴ Not only did al-Ash'arī endorse their methodology, but he appropriated their atomistic view as well. We find faint traces of an atomism reflected in his dealing with the question of power to receive an act and make it one's own (istiṭā'ah).⁵ Al-Ash'arī claimed that istiṭā'ah was an accident existing simultaneously with the act, not enduring of itself, and given for an act and not the contrary of the act.⁶ In this way, al-Ash'arī could deny that natural bodies had any potentiality, except through the direct efficacy of God. Also, at the same time he could affirm the absolute power of God in the universe and in all spheres of human activity.

We tend to feel that al-Ash'arī was committed to the idea of atomism. This feeling is based on his use of an atomism to support his argument for God's absolute power. However, the atomism does not logically make room for taklīf (duty) or human responsibility. Al-Ash'arī must make room for human responsibility, if taklīf is to be maintained as a meaningful concept. But, if God re-creates a new atom at every new instant, the notion of human capacity has no real meaning; it remains only as a verbal affirmation.

Al-Ash'arī realized the inadequacy of the application of an atomistic view. Instead, of relinquishing or modifying his atomistic idea, al-Ash'arī resorted to an artful subtlety.⁷ This subtlety is most glaring on the question of īmān.⁸ He ascribed to the unbeliever the duty of believing, and the reason for the unbelief was not man's inability to believe, but his omitting to believe and his preoccupation with the contrary of belief. Rather than placing the onus on God for inability to believe, al-Ash'arī ascribed it to man by introducing the idea of tark (omission).

If you mean by your words (that God enjoins on man a duty he cannot fulfill) that he is incapable of believing because of his impotence to do so -- no. But, if you mean that he is incapable of believing because he omits (tark) to do so and is preoccupied with the contrary of belief -- yes.⁹

The notion of tark does not help. If the man omits to believe, his omission implies that man has the ability to believe. That the implication is correct is supported by al-Ash'arī's distinction between impotence and inability given in the above answer: ". . . that he is incapable of believing because of his impotence to do so -- no," and by the definition of "inability to do a thing" as the individual not having the power to do the thing or its contrary.¹⁰ Since the unbeliever does the contrary of believing, inability to believe cannot be ascribed to such a person. Rather, we must say, with al-Ash'arī, that the unbeliever has the ability to believe.

We may argue that if the man has the ability, then he should

believe, since ability, already defined, is had when both the power to act and the act occur concomitantly. Since he does not believe, we may conclude rightly that God did not give him the power to believe,¹¹ or the power to believe endures. Either conclusion reveals a logical inconsistency, thus making the application of atomism by al-Ash'arī inadequate. Yet al-Ash'arī persisted in appropriating an atomistic view to support God's absolute power and to explain human responsibility in relation to God's absolute power. We cannot help but feel that al-Ash'arī is committed to an idea of atomism which was prevalent within the theological circles of his day. And, it is commitment to the idea of atomism which greatly determined his approach to the issue of free-will.

Luther's approach, also, was in several ways influenced by the theological and intellectual posture of his day. The mystics and humanists had together introduced a different atmosphere to the theologico-intellectual world. There was a movement of the spirit and of the mind which found its expression in an inward religious consciousness of piety and learning. There was a new atmosphere of individualism, and great interest was taken in the delight of being human, in nature, in art and in other achievements of mankind.¹² This movement stood directly opposed to the popular superstitions and idolatrous practices perpetrated by some in the name of Christianity.¹³

Then, there were the Nominalists whose philosophy had been strongly influencing the universities of northern Europe for nearly

two centuries, and this philosophy was slowly beginning to give way to humanism. The Nominalists disputed the whole claim that philosophy is able to confirm or deny the data of revealed religion. To them, God became intelligible not through man's favorite weapon of reason, but through God's own acts of self-revelation. Nominalism, opposed to the scholasticism of Aquinas and Scotus, began to decay when it turned itself from the realm of theology to logic and the problems of meaning.¹⁴ Although, the study of logic provided a basic discipline for the mind, it offered no nourishment for the soul. And, before long, earnest men of religion ceased to believe in the world of scholastic reasoning.¹⁵ Also, there were the humanists who were skeptical of metaphysical reasoning and syllogisms. Their skepticism undoubtedly helped to undermine any scholastic approach.¹⁶

Luther was not uninfluenced by the Nominalists. It is generally agreed that Luther was grounded in the philosophy and theology of Nominalism,¹⁷ as it was taught by the disciples of Gabriel Biel. We are told that Luther acknowledged his adherence to the Nominalist party, and we know he even spoke of Occam as his "beloved master" calling him "the most eminent and the most brilliant of the scholastic doctors (princeps et ingeniosissimus)."¹⁸ He showed a fondness for the "dialectics" and sermonical arts in which the Nominalists excelled, and it is possible that he might have taught logic at the university for a while.¹⁹

The foregoing is not intended to suggest that Nominalist

teachings provided Luther with key doctrines, but only to call attention to features in Luther's discussion of free-will which reflect Nominalist influence. The first feature is Luther's adherence to revelation, and his insistence on faith. We find it hard to believe that Nominalist influence did not help to validate and fortify his stress on Biblical authority. Above all, he doubtlessly absorbed some of the Nominalist emphasis on the majesty and omnipotence of God to which he constantly refers in his arguments against free-will. The second feature is his training in Occamist logic²⁰ and the subtleties of scholastic discipline, which are betrayed in his discussion on free-will. The subtlety is seen in his distinction between necessity of compulsion and necessity of immutability;²¹ then again, in his odd move of putting the merit where his opponent places the reward.²² His use of logic is seen in the establishment of the fact that man cannot do anything by himself if the foreknowledge and omnipotence of God is conceded,²³ then again, in establishing that the perspicuity of the scripture is two-fold. In the latter case he admits to the use of logic.²⁴ Without the scholastic method of reasoning and logic, it is possible that Luther might not have been able to expose the fallacy in Erasmus' definition of free-will,²⁵ and to locate the weakness in the arguments for free-will.²⁶

We cannot help but agree with J.M. Todd that "Luther's training in Occamist logic helped him to find his way towards a radically "economical" theology attributing all to God rather than to secondary

causes."²⁷ For this reason we feel that the theological and intellectual movement of Luther's day does account in part for his approach to the discussion of free-will.

The difference, therefore, between the two approaches may be traced to the dominant theologico-intellectual movement to which each theologian was exposed, respectively. Al-Ash'arī was influenced by an atomism prevalent in his day, while Luther was influenced by the Nominalist philosophy of his day. However, we should not fail to acknowledge their psychological differences as a possibility for their differences in approach. Al-Ash'arī, a man reared as a Mu'tazilite and who strangely enough was susceptible to dreams,²⁸ reflected a type of personality which was dependent on the voice of authority. In a dream, he had received a mandate from Muhammed.²⁹ As a result, al-Ash'arī appears to us as a compromiser. In Luther we find a personality, which is gravely conscience stricken, in search of an answer to an existential question.³⁰ There is no mandate given directly and personally to Luther, and stock answers of the Church do not provide any assurance concerning his destiny. When he finally found that which guaranteed certainty and was convinced of it, Luther had no choice but to defend that which brought him certainty and peace of mind. For this reason we find him unflinching in his vindication of God's promise, adamant in his belief in such promises, and vindictive towards those who tend to support a view that will make God appear as a liar.

Although their approaches were different, both theologians

were committed to the defense of the proposition: God is the Divine omnipotent and supreme sovereign. Each accepted the omnipotence and supremacy of God's divine lordship as a datum of revelation, a datum which for al-Ash'arī is found in the Qur'ān, and for Luther is found in the Bible. Because it is a datum of revelation, there was no question about its truth. And having insisted on the primacy of revelation, they subordinated reason to revelation. In this respect both theologians are on common ground, since they relied on revelation but did not dispense with reason.

They are also on common ground in the content of their propositions which they upheld: God is the Divine Lord who has none above Him, and all things, including the will of man, are subjected to His will. Neither theologian lost sight of the omnipotence of the Divine Sovereign, nor did either fail to call his opponent's attention to the overwhelming majesty of God throughout their discussions. In the Ibānah, Al-Ash'arī has brought forward arguments to show that God alone is worthy of effective power, divinity and authority.³¹ Also, in the Luma', al-Ash'arī has not failed to bombard his opponents with the idea of God's majesty. He argued that God is free to do as He pleases in his answer to the question whether God is free to inflict pain on infants in the next life.³²

The proof that He is free to do whatever
He does is that He is the Supreme Monarch,
subject to no one . . .³³

He is a **Supreme** Monarch because He alone is worthy of effective

power, authority and divinity, for there cannot be under His dominion anything which He does not will, nor anything in the world which He does not will.³⁴

Likewise Luther was unyielding in his claim of God's divine majesty.³⁵ Luther insisted that it is God who necessitates all things, and without Him nothing is effective nor effected: "for He is omnipotent, and effective action belongs to His omnipotence, . . . (cf. Eph. 1:11)."³⁶ On the question whether God could alter evil wills, Luther answered by stating that such a question "touches upon the secrets of His Majesty," for God has neither rule or standard laid down for Him, nor anything on the same level with Him.³⁷ We can continue to point out evidences of Luther's insistence on the reality of God's majesty, but it is more fruitful to understand the reason for his and al-Ash'arī's insistence on the reality of divine majesty, a reality which is linked to the principle of divine omnipotence.

The reason is a relatively simple one. Each theologian understood within his own religious tradition that God is one, truly divine and omnipotent. Christianity and Islam are basically monotheistic religions and uphold a God who is truly a divine and omnipotent Sovereign governing all aspects of man's life and reality. The opponents of each theologian argued as proponents of their religious tradition, acknowledging the omnipotence of God. But, in their attempt to acknowledge man's freedom in relation to his acts, they were implying that God's omnipotence was divorced from

a certain aspect of reality. According to al-Ash^carī and Luther any such divorce can only imply that God's power might be limited. And, if God's omnipotence did not extend to every aspect of reality, it is possible that God might not be truly omnipotent. Al-Ash^carī and Luther suspected their opponents of not believing in a truly omnipotent God and thereby not being faithful to the scriptures. For, the Qur'ān insists on God's omnipotence and supreme control over all things (1:2; 2:186, 187); and the Bible declares His sovereignty and might (Acts 17:24-29; Rom. 1:19, 20; Eph. 1:11, 19-21), and announces that salvation is solely by His grace (Rom. 1:16; Eph. 2:8, 9).

The Mu^ctazilites, the opponents of al-Ash^carī, in their attempt to maintain the principle of Divine Justice and to ascribe to man an effective role as an agent, were forced to acknowledge that their position implied a restriction on God's omnipotence. However, if God's omnipotence were to be limited, then this would suggest that within the universe there are certain operations which are excluded from God's will and power. Al-Ash^carī, committed to the truths found in the Qur'ān, could not subscribe to such a position, for the Qur'ān insists that nothing can be willed unless God willed it.³⁶ Not only that, but his commitment rested on a mandate given to him by Muhammad in a vision. Therefore, al-Ash^carī had no choice but to insist that God is omnipotent and supreme, if he were to be true to his commitment and convictions.

Similarly, Luther's opponent, Erasmus, and those who believed

in free-will, argued for a principle which Luther believed not to be in agreement with the principle of divine omnipotence. Erasmus who sought to re-instate the "true religion"³⁹ argued that man has a free-will. Luther saw Erasmus' arguments as falsifying the gospel which clearly stated that salvation is dependent on God's grace,⁴⁰ in which case free-will has no effect in relation to man's destiny.⁴¹ Luther's own understanding of God as He is revealed to man, led him to believe that he may be certain about his salvation because God justifies man through His grace. God is able to do this because He is God, Divine and Omnipotent.⁴² To uphold a principle of free-will in the manner which Erasmus argued would suggest that God's omnipotence is limited, and therefore God's promises could not be relied upon. By the time De Servo was written, Luther had already become psychologically dependent on God's word.⁴³ God's promises had given him assurance concerning salvation, and the assertion of the principle of free-will would intimate that there can be no reliance on God's words. Luther strongly believed that God's word is true and stands unshaken.⁴⁴ Probably Luther emphasized his conviction because it was supported by many Biblical evidences.⁴⁵ Nonetheless we cannot help thinking that Luther's emphasis on God's omnipotence is linked with his quest for the certainty of salvation; a certainty guaranteed by God's promise in the Scripture.

God's omnipotence is so overwhelming that Luther, out of sheer conviction, denied that man has free-will; but al-Ash'ari, although he affirmed God's overwhelming majesty and omnipotence, did not

state bluntly his position concerning the freedom of the will. However, we may adduce enough evidence from al-Ash'ari's arguments to show that implicit in them is a principle of unfree-will. In this way, we may truthfully say that both theologians maintain a principle of unfree-will.

However, neither theologian should be considered a strict determinist, because their denials of free-will are primarily with respect to man's eternal destiny, especially in Luther's case where it is more evident. Luther was willing to concede that man has free-will concerning things of the world as in the case of a man milking his cow when he pleases, deciding to go to sleep, etc. In the realm of things below man, man is led by his own will. God has given him the free use of things, and in this respect man has free-will.⁴⁶ Yet, man is dependent on God. Man needs God's cooperation in all things, since God necessitates all things.⁴⁷ However, in relation to the things above him, man has no free-will.⁴⁸ This free-will, which man has, becomes ineffective when it is applied to spiritual affairs. This is because man is morally defective. He is unable to perform good works owing to the domination of sin, which has caused man to become corrupt.⁴⁹ This corruption is in the heart of man, according to Luther:

And doubtless that ignorance and contempt are not seated in the flesh, in the sense of the lower and grosser affections, but in the highest and most excellent powers of man . . . that is, in reason and will, and so in the very power of 'free-will', in the very seed of uprightness, the most excellent thing in man!⁵⁰

Therefore, unaided by God's grace man by himself is powerless to win God's favour.⁵¹ Luther was quite happy with this fact, since it guaranteed him certainty concerning his own salvation:

. . . now that God has taken my salvation out of the control of my own will, and put it under the control of His, and promised to save me , not according to my working or running, but according to His own grace and mercy, I have the comfortable certainty that He is faithful and will not lie to me, . . .⁵²

It is this comfort which Luther enjoyed, that made him insist that man has no free-will in relation to his ultimate destiny. The thrust in Luther's argument is on sin and its effect on the inner heart of man rather than "on the outward members of the body" relative to the Law.⁵³

That being the thrust of Luther's argument, the question concerning man's ability to act in whatever way he may choose is only of secondary importance to him. It is considered by Luther only because the principle of free-will leads to the denial of God's sovereignty and His grace which is necessary for the Ultimate Encounter. And, Luther did not hesitate to place man's terrestrial freedom under God's jurisdiction. This is clearly seen where Luther wrote:

Not that God leaves him (man) alone in the sense that He does not co-operate with him in all things; but in the sense that He has granted him a free use of things at his own will, and not hedged him in with any laws or commands.⁵⁴

It is in this sense that we may conclude that Luther was not a

strict determinist, although for him personally, the will is psychologically enslaved, and even if the will were free it would still be under God's movement of omnipotence.⁵⁵

Unlike Luther, the thrust in al-Ash'ari's argument is on the human act. Al-Ash'ari, although preoccupied with the omnipotence of God, endeavoured to understand the validity of the human act as truly the act of man within the context of God's creative process and omnipotence. Reflected in his arguments is a principle of un-free-will. The evidence of such a principle is given below.

In the Ibānah, al-Ash'ari argued that God's will is not originated, but is eternal;⁵⁶ and because it is true that nothing exists excepting what He knows or will, and nothing is absent from His knowledge or is remote from His will, He is worthy of the title of divinity.

. . . he who does not will the existence of anything except what exists, and nothing exists except what he wills, and nothing is remote from his will is the worthier of the attribute of divinity.⁵⁷

Here, we find that al-Ash'ari was insisting, against his opponents the Mu'tazilites, that the Divine will, being an essential attribute of God, embraces everything which can be willed, including evil as well. In the Luma', al-Ash'ari cited the Quranic verse (76:30) "You shall not will unless God will" in support of the position that God's will embraces everything that is truly willed;⁵⁸ a position enunciated in his preface to the Ibānah.⁵⁹

That God's will extends to cover human acts is made clear in

another of al-Ash'arī's answers on the question concerning the Divine Will:

There cannot be, under the authority of God, any acquisition (iktisāb) on the part of human beings that God does not will, just as there cannot be any universally recognized act of God's own that He does not will, because if any act of His occurred without His knowing it, it would imply a lack in God, and the same would be true if any human act occurred without his knowing it. Therefore, in the same way, no human act can occur without His willing it, because that would imply that it occurred out of carelessness and neglect or out of weakness and inadequacy on His part to effect what He wills, . . .⁶⁰

This answer definitely strikes a blow against the principle of free-will, although al-Ash'arī's concern in giving the answer was to affirm that God wills that everything that exists should exist, and God eternally wills what He really knows. Since man "acquires" his acts from God, man's willing, which in itself is an act, is "acquired" from God; therefore man is dependent on God. Given such an argument, we are left with no alternative, other than to think that man has an unfree-will.

This principle of unfree-will is even detected in al-Ash'arī's position concerning man's ultimate destiny. On the question of īmān (belief), a question on which Isutsu⁶¹ finds al-Ash'arī very confusing, al-Ash'arī asserted that the capacity to believe is a gift on God's part: a gift given exclusively to the faithful.⁶² When we consider Islam as being established on the five Pillars,⁶³ one of which is "belief," then we realize how important a role

"belief" plays in Islam.⁶⁴ He who "submits" must believe in the oneness (tawhīd) of God, if he is to attain the Beatific Vision. But if the power to believe is not granted by God, none can believe. Al-Ash^carī stated that God may even command people to believe and yet not grant them the power to believe. On the question of ability to believe, he asserted:

It belongs to the Bestower of favors, if
He enjoins faith, to suspend His power
of bestowing favors and not bestow favors
by it, and so to enjoin faith upon them,
even if He deserts them and does not give
them the ability to believe.⁶⁵

We cannot help but think that such a position taken by al-Ash^carī can only mean that man's ultimate destiny, or at least whether or not man could believe, is dependent on God.

However, that man's ultimate destiny is determined solely by God, becomes more evident in al-Ash^carī's discussion in the Ibānah concerning Qadar.⁶⁶ A number of traditions⁶⁷ are cited in support of Qadar, some already cited above.⁶⁸ They relate that it is not man's works, but God's "predestinating"⁶⁹ choice which determines whether a man will attain Paradise. To deny God's "predestinating" choice would suggest that man may be able to determine his ultimate destiny. Al-Ash^carī would not allow the position that man's ultimate destiny may be determined by man, because it would mean that God is deficient.⁷⁰

. . . he who claimed that servants (Muslims) do and determine (yucaddirun) what God did not determine (yucaddiruh) and they have power (yacdirun) over what God has no power over, thus he has attributed (ja^cala) to them authority, and power and ability which he does not attribute to God, the Merciful.⁷¹

The use of the term Qadar definitely strikes a death-blow to any free-will principle which would imply that man is able to determine, solely by himself, his ultimate destiny. Here is where we find that Al-Ash^carī assumed the posture of a staunch determinist.

However, it was not al-Ash^carī's intention to be a staunch determinist, for his task was to show how man is still responsible for his action within the context of Divine Omnipotence. Al-Ash^carī had to allow for some measure and form of freedom. He supposedly achieved some form and measure of freedom by trading on the term Kasb, a term already discussed. Thus by the use of the term Kasb, al-Ash^carī could point to the 'taking over' aspect of a created act; and, therein lies man's freedom. According to the phenomenologists,⁷² such a freedom is the freedom of awareness; a freedom within the realm of lived experience. This kind of freedom allows the man to make meaningful for himself the act which he has 'taken over'.

We strongly believe that al-Ash^carī may have had in mind a psychological freedom which he did not postulate, lest he be accused of Mu^tazilite views. The reason for this belief is that al-Ash^carī had to account for reward and punishment which will be meted out on the Day of Judgement (cf. Q. 18:28-30; 21:48; 36:54). When a man thinks of reward and punishment, his face is turned towards the future. According to Blanshard, the man is oriented in his thinking towards the consequences that one act or the other will bring, not towards the possible spring of action, and in such case the man feels free.⁷³ When man is preoccupied with the reward and

punishment which results from his deeds, the most natural thing happens: man forgets temporarily about the causes or origins of his actions. Each time he acts, he does not stop to think or assert that God is making him act. Thus, not giving any attention to the spring of his actions in the process of acting, man feels that he is free to act as he pleases. This type of freedom, one in which the man feels free, is only "natural" to man. We cannot help thinking that al-Ash'ari most likely acknowledged such a freedom, since it would make compatible to a great degree the principles of Divine Omnipotence and human responsibility. Because al-Ash'ari argued for the compatibility of these two Quranic truths, we feel that it is fair to say that he had in mind some measure of freedom for man. Thus al-Ash'ari cannot be labelled a strict determinist.

On the question of free-will, we may conclude that both theologians were determinists who were willing to allow man some measure of freedom within the experiential world. Yet, this freedom is not the same in each theologian's case. While al-Ash'ari seems to have made allowance for a psychological form of freedom whereby man thinks that he is free, Luther was willing to concede that man has a terrestrial freedom whereby God has granted man free use of things on the Earth. But this limited freedom in each theologian's case is overshadowed by the principle of Divine Omnipotence which results in both theologians denying that man has any ability or freedom to determine his ultimate destiny. Thus, the truth of any freedom which is ascribed to man, in either theologian's case, does not exclude nor limit God's will, His action, or His omnipotence

in any way. Accordingly, man's will can never be really free, since it is subject to God's will.

That being the case, it would seem that man's will to do evil is also subject to God's will, in which case God is the one who effects evil. Both theologians argued that God effects evil, but there could not be any legitimate principle of Divine morality which is applicable to God.

In the case of al-Ash'ari, he argued that although God effects evil, He could not be described as being evil. The Mu'tazilites claimed that God did not effect evil because if He did He would be evil whereas He is always just. But in claiming that God did not effect evil, the Mu'tazilites had unintentionally placed a limitation on the principle of Divine Omnipotence. Al-Ash'ari did not lose sight of God's omnipotence on the question of evil. He insisted that God being omnipotent must have power and authority over every aspect of man's life, in which case man's evil is under God's omnipotence and is therefore willed by God. Yet, in no way is God evil.

Al-Ash'ari backed the claim that God is in no way evil by two arguments. The first argument demonstrated that it is possible to will sin without being sinful and he illustrated it by the story of Adam's sons.⁷⁴ In like manner, God wills evil without being evil.⁷⁵ God creates the evil not as His evil but as man's evil. He does not will to do man injustice, but wills that men should do each other injustice.⁷⁶ The second argument is that God, being

a doer of what He wills (11:109), is free to do as He pleases. Since He is under no law, subject to no one, and has no limits, nothing can be evil on His part.⁷⁷ Therefore, if He wills that men do each other injustice, there can be no question of Divine morality. Whereas God is not under any law, man remains subject to God's law. As a result, evil which is created by God for man is not God's evil, but man's evil.

In Luther's case, likewise, there is no question of placing evil outside the sphere of God's omnipotence. Through the action of His omnipotence, God moves and works in all, including Satan. The fault for evil, according to Luther, lies in man and not in God's action.⁷⁸ God does not make evil, but through His actions He forms and multiplies man's evil nature. Luther wrote, "He (God) is like a carpenter who makes statues out of warped wood."⁷⁹ Thus, under the impulse of Divine power, all men work. But the works of ungodly men are evil. Through the Divine action therefore, God works evil through evil men, and yet He is not evil. Luther also cited the example of "the hardening of Pharaoh"⁸⁰ as a model of how God works evil by His omnipotent action upon man's evil will.

The existence of man's evil will raises the question of its origin, and this question impinges upon the question of Divine morality. Through the fall of Adam all men became tainted with Adam's sin, for all men were created from a seed corrupted by one man (cf. Eph. 2:3).⁸¹ However, God cannot be questioned nor is He

obliged to give reasons for what He does as in the case of His creating man from a corrupt seed, or allowing Adam to fall. Luther's reason for insisting that God cannot be questioned on such matters was that there is no cause which can be laid down for God's will.⁸² There is no rule or standard laid down for the will of the Creator, whereas causes and rules are laid down for the will of the creatures; thus whatever God does is not right because God is bound to will it, but whatever takes place is right because He wills it so.⁸³ Therefore it should never be said that God is either wrong or evil.

Above all, there should be no question of Divine morality, as far as Luther was concerned. God's justice cannot be comprehended in terms of human conception of justice, because His justice would no longer be Divine. Luther supported his belief that man's knowledge and judgements are unable to comprehend God's wisdom and justice by recalling Paul's words: "O, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgements, and His ways past finding out! (Romans 11:33)."⁸⁴ Thus, God's justice remains incomprehensible and inaccessible to man's understanding, and there is no way man could really judge and evaluate God's judgement. However, Luther firmly believed that by the light of glory it will be revealed one day that God's justice is most righteous and evident.⁸⁵ Since man cannot understand God's ways nor His judgements, then in reality man cannot reasonably assign evil to the Creator even though His omnipotent action effects evil, for it also effects good at the same time.⁸⁶

The question of good and evil frequently touches the issue of moral responsibility. If all things are necessitated by God, the will of the creature subjected to the will of the Creator, and all human acts are foreknown and willed by God, then it would appear that man cannot be morally responsible. But the Qur'ān insists that man is responsible for his deeds. How can man be morally responsible when God foreknows and wills the acts of man? This was the crucial issue for al-Ash'arī, whereas for Luther it was not crucial, but important for the doctrine of grace, and for the instilling of God's "fear." Erasmus argued for the principle of free-will, so that man should remain morally responsible. Luther, however, felt that neither the overwhelming majesty of God and His omnipotence, nor the bondage of the human will implied a denial of the principle of moral responsibility.

We have already mentioned how al-Ash'arī tried to make man responsible for his acts. In the first place human responsibility is affirmed in the Qur'ān e.g. (18:28-30). Al-Ash'arī's goal was to reconcile the latter with the Quranic datum of Divine Omnipotence. He did this by focussing attention on taklīf (duty) and (istitā'ah) as found in the Quranic text (2:28) which includes the use of Kasb.

God charges (yukallif) no soul save to its capacity (wus'aha); standing to its account is what it has earned (Kasabat), and against its account is what it has merited (iktasabat).

According to al-Ash'arī, God's words : "God enjoins upon a soul

only what it can do" means that "God does not enjoin upon a soul anything which would afflict it too severely;" God enjoins upon a soul "only what He makes possible for it."⁸⁷ Thus, what is commanded is not difficult for the soul to effect. This, of course, is consistent with the line of argument which al-Ash'ari took on the question of īmān. God imposes belief on the soul. However it is not difficult for the individual to believe, but the individual "omits" to believe. At the same time the verse (2:28) insists that man is held responsible for the things he has acquired, i.e. his deeds. Therefore "acquisition" of a thing is no excuse for denial of moral responsibility. "Acquisition" illustrates the connection of the act between the creature and the Creator, but obligation (taklīf) implies that the creature is morally responsible for the act which, however it may appear, is not beyond his capacity (istiṭā'ah). Since man's acts are never beyond his capacity, al-Ash'ari believed that the creature is made morally responsible for his acts which are always under God's control and are willed by Him.

In Luther's case, his opponent Erasmus insisted on a free-will which would allow for a principle of moral responsibility, but Luther felt that although man's will is in bondage and God necessitates all things, the principle of moral responsibility is not destroyed. It was Erasmus' intention to grant man free-will so that man could be morally responsible. Erasmus, being a humanist, stressed the fundamental goodness of man and ignored the Augustinian doctrine of original sin. In order to support the view of free-will, Erasmus

interpreted (Matt. 7:16), "By their fruits ye shall know them," saith the Lord' as an indication that all is not carried on by necessity, but man has a share in his works.⁸⁸

On the other hand, Luther, who believed in the doctrine of Original Sin, maintained that the text did not affirm free-will; and although God necessitated all things, that which man receives is nonetheless his. Luther supported this argument by citing Paul (I Cor. 4:7) to show that there is nothing which man has that he did not receive.⁸⁹ For instance, things which are given to man such as his eyes, ears, and hands are still his, even though he has not created them; for man is accustomed to claim such things as the eyes and ears as his own "in the most proper sense."⁹⁰ In like manner, the works which God has given man by His Spirit are to be called man's own works.⁹¹ By insisting that man does not have to create something before it can be called "his," Luther accomplished two things: 1) He made a place in his scheme for God's grace and the Spirit; thus man is able to speak of Christ as his own, even though man did not create Christ; and 2) He maintained moral responsibility by citing I Cor. 4:7 to show that whatever man does, although necessitated by the will of God, still remains man's deed.

In favour of moral responsibility is an argument based on the text Eccl. 11:6 which Luther cited to answer the Diatribes question: "How is it of man to prepare the heart, when Luther affirms that all things are controlled by necessity?"⁹² Luther's answer⁹³ was

that man should strive to do his best, for all things future are uncertain to man, and this fact is made known in Ecclesiastes:

"In the morning sow thy seed and in the evening hold not thine hand: for thou knowest not which shall prosper, this or that"

(11:6).⁹⁴ Man's knowledge of such things is uncertain, although the outcome of such things is necessary; this necessity, however, is enough to strike the fear of God in man, so that man does not entertain any false hope of security.⁹⁵ Therefore, because of the fear of God, man should strive always to do his best. In this way God's necessitating action does not destroy moral responsibility. On the other hand, man's uncertainty of the necessary outcome of all things, should all the more urge man to place his trust in God.

Neither theologian denied that man is morally responsible for his deeds, however, each theologian affirmed man's moral responsibility differently. In al-Ash'ari's case, he affirmed it because it is a datum of revelation. Whereas, Luther affirmed it, not because it is a datum of revelation (cf. I Cor. 4:7), but because it followed from the very argument which allows man to admit that the Spirit and God's grace belong to man even though man has not created either: the Spirit and God's grace are essential to Luther's doctrines of justification, and salvation.

Before bringing this chapter to a close, a few remarks on the question of predestination are fitting, for predestination has traditionally been associated with the question of free-will in a theological context. Although mention has been made concerning

predestination, the thesis has not focussed its attention on the question. This is because the question was not central for either theologian. Let us recall that for al-Ash'arī the task was: how to explain man as the "cause" of his own act for which he is responsible before God, whereas for Luther the task was: to explain that man's sinful nature, which is the cause of his enslaved will, cannot effect works that will bring salvation; thus man's will is not free and man must remain dependent on God's grace for his salvation.

There is no doubt that al-Ash'arī's arguments carry a note of predestination. Concerning God's will, al-Ash'arī cited arguments which imply a predestinarian view. For example, God's knowledge cannot be originated, therefore what He foreknows, He must will or else He will be accused of being careless.⁹⁶ Then, on the question concerning Qadar and its proof, al-Ash'arī, as in some of his other arguments, spoke in a predestinarian tone when he said:

These hādiths⁹⁷ prove that God knows that what will be, will be, and writes it down; and that He writes down the people of Paradise and the people of Hell, and creates them as two groups: a group for Paradise and a group for the flame.⁹⁸

However, such predestinarian reflections are countered with Quranic exhortations⁹⁹ such as:

But as to him who giveth (alms) and feareth God and yieldeth assent to the Good, to him will we make easy the path to happiness (92:5-7)¹⁰⁰

or, with sayings of Muhammad, such as, "Work your works for everyone does easily that for which he was created;"¹⁰¹ a saying which may

imply that man should do his best at whatever he is involved with, and he should not worry about the fruits of his actions.

On the whole, the question of predestination is not denied by al-Ash'ari. For him, however, the question gave way to the more important question of making compatible the affirmation of human responsibility with the affirmation of God as the sole Creator and Sovereign of the universe.

Like al-Ash'ari, Luther did not deny predestination nor did he shy away from the use of such words as "ordained", "foreknowledge", "decreed", and "elected." He admitted that the knowledge of predestination is something which has been left in the world with a great degree of certainty; and poets along with the common people recognize predestination as familiar.¹⁰² However, the details of God's predestination are not known to man.¹⁰³ Therefore, the topic of predestination should give place to that which God has revealed to man, and about which man is certain.

What the question of predestination adumbrated for Luther was the two wills of God: His revealed and His secret will, or God preached and God not preached.¹⁰⁴ According to Luther, there is in God an inscrutable will. It is enough for man simply to know that God has an inscrutable and incomprehensible will, and it is unlawful to inquire concerning it. Rather, it should be reverently adored. On the other hand, the revealed will is the will of God made known to man, and the very will which is preached. God preached is the God who has dealings with man, who is worshipped, and who

works to justify man by His grace so that sin and death are vanquished. Man should therefore concern himself with that which is known of God, His revealed will; and he should "fear and adore" the God who is hidden in Majesty.

Since predestination is a question which touches on God's hidden will, Luther felt that it should not be discussed. Rather, the more important issue of God's grace should be emphasized, for God has chosen to reveal to man details of His saving grace. It is therefore essential that man should know of God's saving grace whereby He makes man righteous, if man is to attain the Beatific Vision. Also, knowledge of God's saving grace is essential for man, since it makes clear that man by himself cannot effect his own salvation; God's saving grace is necessary.

We see then, that although al-Ash^carī and Luther acknowledged the principle of predestination, each treated it differently. Al-Ash^carī saw it as evidence of God's divinity, foreknowledge, and sovereign rule, and used it to affirm God's supreme control of every aspect of man's life. Luther, on the other hand, felt that although the knowledge of predestination has remained very certain in the world, man should nonetheless be concerned about what God has revealed in detail to man. We find in both theologians a tendency to not come to grips with the principle of predestination as it affected man's immediate life. Both theologians seem to say: Don't be bothered about whether you will go to Hell or Heaven, such knowledge is unimportant.

What is more important for man to realize is that God is the Mighty, Powerful, All-Knowing and Supreme Monarch who wills, governs and controls all aspects of man's life. Even man's ultimate destiny is dependent upon the Supreme Monarch. This is the emphatic point in al-Ash'arī's and Luther's arguments, and what follows necessarily is: Since man's will is under the authority, will, and omnipotence of God at all times, man is impotent in effecting by himself a change in his ultimate destiny. Therefore, man cannot have a truly free-will.

Footnotes to Chapter 4

¹De Lacy O'Leary, Arabic Thought and its Place in History (London, 1954), p. 124.

²The Mu'tazilites probably emulated the Christian theologians, like John of Damascus, at Basra, Baghdad, and elsewhere. Evidence of Christian and Muslim contacts are the writings of John of Damascus and his disciple Abū Qurra (d. 826). M. Fakhry, Islamic Occasionalism, p. 23, 49; cf. M.C., p. 53.

³Ibid.

⁴Concerning the question of the unity of God, the Mu'tazilites claimed that God is pure essence, having no eternal names, and quality. Al-Ash'arī taught that God has real, eternal attributes which are neither identical with His essence nor different from it. They are real, although we do not know their "how." F. Rahman says that in the latter connection, al-Ash'arī was making use of "the negative dialectic of the Mu'tazilites. . ." F. Rahman, Islam, (London, 1966), p. 92. An example of al-Ash'arī's way of reasoning i.e. his methodology, is seen in his arrival at a positive answer concerning the question whether Allah may be seen in Paradise. Ibānah, p. 56-60; 10-16(Ar), and M.C., p. 88-90.

⁵According to McCarthy, al-Ash'arī made no distinction between istitā'ah and qudrah. Both words are used synonymously to mean power, or ability. Luma', p. 76, footnote No. 1.

⁶Ibid., Nos. 123-126, supra, p. 55.

⁷The subtle move on al-Ash'arī's part, involved the introducing of tark (omission), Luma', No. 135; defining inability as not having the power to do a thing or its contrary Luma', No. 135; and assigning unbelief to that class of trials which should not be endured patiently. Luma', No. 100. However, such a move does not really make human responsibility meaningful: it still remains an outward avowal.

⁸Luma', No. 135. On the question of īmān in al-Ash'arī, Izutsu thinks that there is a semantic confusion on al-Ash'arī's part. Concept of Belief, p. 207-210. One tends to agree with Izutsu. However, it is possible that al-Ash'arī is being subtle, in which case al-Ash'arī's scheme displays inconsistency.

⁹Luma', No. 135.

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹Ibānah, p. 108. Al-Ash'arī admits that capacity to believe is a gift of God. cf. sura 10:99. cf. Luma', Nos. 85, 86.

¹²Chadwick, op. cit., p. 30.

¹³For information on such superstitions and practices, see: A.G. Dickens, Reformation and Society in Sixteenth Century Europe (London, 1966) p. 34-51.

¹⁴Chadwick, op. cit., p. 36.

¹⁵Philosophy was not completely dead in the time of Luther. The Franciscans were still Scotist, the Dominicans still Thomists. Ibid.; Although Occam, the founder of Nominalism, was anti-Scholastic, his manner of expression and his method of exposition was scholastic. S.H. Mellone, "Scholasticism" E.R.E., Vol. II, p. 248.

¹⁶Thomas More is reported to have said that "he might as soon obtain bodily nourishment by milking a he-goat into a sieve as spiritual nourishment by reading the schoolmen," and Erasmus wrote contemptuously that the divines were "underpropping the Catholic Church with their syllogistic buttresses" like "Atlas bearing the heaven upon his shoulder." Chadwick, op. cit., p. 36.

¹⁷B.A. Gerrish, is among those who has given well documented evidences of such agreement. Grace and Reason, p. 44.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 44f, 45, and footnote 3. See: Luther's Werke, (Weimaren Ausgabe), Vol. 30, pt. 2, p. 160, line 3; Vol. 38.160.3; Vol. 6.183.3. Gordon Rupp has suggested that 'many of Luther's diferential remarks about Occam prove to be ironical': Luther's Progress to the Diet of Worms (New York, 1964), p. 17. In De Servo he called the Nominalists his friends. B.W., p. 139.

¹⁹Gerrish, op. cit., p. 38, 46, 47. It is possible that Luther taught "Little Logic" before completing his master's degree, for one of the conditions of attaining a bachelor's degree was a promise to teach for two years in the faculty of philosophy. According to Fife, op. cit., p. 45, 48. "Little Logic" was the introductory course based on Books I and IV of the Summulae Logicales of Petrus Hispanus.

²⁰Melanchthon testifies that Luther read with pleasure the writings of Occam, D'Ailly, and Biel and knew them by heart. T.M. McDonough, op. cit., p. 34. Undoubtedly, Luther must have read about Occam's logical theory which Gerrish shows as being surprisingly advanced, although it suffered from the lack of any system of symbols. Gerrish gives one illustration to show that Occam was acquainted with "De Morgan's Laws", op. cit., p. 46. Luther's teachers also wrote books on logic, and Luther undoubtedly read the Logic of Aristotle. Documented by Gerrish, op. cit., p. 37, 38 and Fife, op. cit., p. 58-59; cf. B.W., p. 151.

²¹Supra., p. 94f.

²²Ibid., p. 97-99. Another example of his subtlety is his interpretation of "nothing" in John 15:5. See: B.W., p. 259ff.

²³Ibid., p. 217.

²⁴Ibid., p. 71, see also p. 81 where he uses logic again.

²⁵Luther said that on the grounds which Erasmus had established free-will, it was easy to establish that a stone or a log had free-will. Ibid., p. 142.

²⁶It is not insinuated in this thesis, that without the Nominalist training Luther could not have established an unfree-will. He need not have destroyed Erasmus' argument by exposing the weakness of the arguments. Luther could have simply proceeded to establish unfree will as he did in the latter section of De Servo; by presenting a Biblical doctrine of unfree-will to oppose Erasmus' argument of free-will and to point out that the Bible in its teachings does insist on unfree-will.

²⁷J.M. Todd, Martin Luther, p. 56.

²⁸W. Spitta, Zur Geschichte Abū'l-Ḥasan al-Ash'arī's (Leipzig, 1876), p. 118 in Arabic. This Arabic text is translated by D.B. Macdonald, The Religious Attitude and Life in Islam (Chicago, 1912), p. 89, 90. The preceding reference gives an account of al-Ash'arī's experience as it is told by him. Macdonald has said that it is remarkable to find al-Ash'arī's experience taking that form, since to a Mu'tazilite dreams had little value. Ibid., p. 89.

²⁹The mandate was given by the Prophet Muhammad. It was to support the truths found in the Qur'ān and Sunna by Kalām, Ibid., p. 89, 90.

³⁰The existential question is: How can I be assured that I am saved? Luther felt that the Church's traditional answers did not guarantee any certainty. When he had done what the Church had prescribed, he still had doubts as to whether he was worthy in the sight of God to be saved.

³¹Ṭanah, p. 100-103; cf. Luma', Nos. 49-53.

³²Luma', No. 169.

³³Ibid., No. 170.

³⁴Ibid., Nos. 49, 53.

³⁵B.W., p. 169. Luther refers to God as the Divine Majesty.

³⁶Ibid., p. 83, 203.

³⁷Ibid., p. 208; cf. p. 209.

³⁸Sura 76:30, cf. Luma^c, No. 65.

³⁹Chadwick, op. cit., p. 38, 39.

⁴⁰cf. John 14:6, 3:14, 15, 18, 27; B.W., p. 301-310.

⁴¹cf. Romans 4:2-3, 9:30-31, 10:20; B.W., p. 295-301.

⁴²Luther argued that God's will cannot be resisted, and it is fulfilled by what to us is necessity. cf. Luke 11:2, Romans 9:15ff; B.W., p. 212-218.

⁴³De Servo was published in December 1525, (B.W., p. 39), and Luther's solution to his problem concerning the certainty of salvation came with his understanding of the Scriptures between the years 1513-1518, sometimes called "the crucial years" of Luther. cf. McDonough, op. cit., p. 17f and Todd, op. cit., p. 80ff.

⁴⁴B.W., p. 82, 84.

⁴⁵For example, some such texts cited by Luther are: Isaiah 46:10, Romans 3:4; 9:6, 2 Timothy 2:19, Titus 1:2 etc. Ibid.

⁴⁶Ibid., p. 150, 151.

⁴⁷God foreknows and wills all things necessarily and immutably. Ibid., p. 83, 84. Man's will, good and bad, is moved to will and to act by movement of the Divine will and operation of God. Ibid., p. 259. "He works all things in all men." Ibid., p. 267, 268.

⁴⁸cf. Ibid., p. 151, 271.

⁴⁹The whole world is sinful, for we are all children of wrath. (cf. Eph. 2:3). This is because we have been created from a seed that has been corrupted by the sin of Adam. Ibid., p. 314, 273-278.

⁵⁰Ibid., p. 260.

⁵¹Ibid., p. 270.

⁵²Ibid., p. 314.

⁵³McDonough, op. cit., p. 29. The Law is the Decalogue precepts and promises, i.e. the word as Law which is antithetically related

to the Word as Gospel. The Law is a mirror of man's sinfulness, and a preparation to the advent of the Gospel promise of forgiveness. It leads to Christ by giving knowledge of sin. B.W., p. 287f. Luther did not discuss the Law from the point of view of ontology; but he spoke of the Law only as showing man what man is to do. McDonough, op. cit., p. 31.

⁵⁴B.W., p. 150.

⁵⁵Ibid., p. 267, 268.

⁵⁶Ibānah, p. 100.

⁵⁷Ibid., p. 101, 102.

⁵⁸Luma^c, No. 65.

⁵⁹Ibānah, p. 43; cf. p. 44.

⁶⁰Ibid., p. 103; cf. Luma^c, No. 49.

⁶¹Izutsu, Concept of Belief, p. 207-210.

⁶²Ibānah, p. 108, 109.

⁶³The five Pillars are the five essential constituents of Islam established in early Muslim theology. See: M.C., Ch. 2.

⁶⁴See: Izutsu, Concept of Belief, p. 57-66.

⁶⁵Ibānah, p. 109.

⁶⁶Ibid., p. 124-130.

⁶⁷These traditions which are cited on the authority of Malik and others, according to al-Ash^carī, prove that "God knows what will be, will be, and writes it down;" thus "He writes down the people of Paradise and the people of Hell and creates (dhara'a) them as two groups." Ibid., p. 127ff.

⁶⁸Ibid., also supra in Ch. 3, sec. A, footnotes 57-61.

⁶⁹The meaning of "predestinating" is given in Chapter 3, sec. A., footnote 63, supra.

⁷⁰Ibānah, p. 74 (Ar).

⁷¹Ibid.

⁷²For example: Merleau-Ponty, Sartre, and Wild. John Wild, for instance, holds to a concept of freedom operative in a world where causality is not fundamentally applicable. It is a world of lived experience. Existence and the World of Freedom (Englewood Cliffs: N.J., 1963), p. 109, 148.

⁷³Blanshard, op. cit., p. 21.

⁷⁴Ibānah, p. 104; supra., p. 57.

⁷⁵Ibid., p. 105.

⁷⁶Ibid., p. 109; cf. Luma^c, Nos. 97, 98.

⁷⁷Luma^c, No. 170.

⁷⁸B.W., p. 203, 204, 205.

⁷⁹Ibid., p. 203; supra., p. 79.

⁸⁰Ibid., p. 207, 208.

⁸¹Ibid., p. 202, 314.

⁸²Ibid., p. 209.

⁸³Ibid.

⁸⁴Ibid., p. 315.

⁸⁵Ibid.; also cf. p. 234.

⁸⁶Ibid., p. 204, 205.

⁸⁷Luma^c, No. 149.

⁸⁸B.W., p. 185, 186.

⁸⁹Ibid., p. 186.

⁹⁰Ibid., p. 185, 186.

⁹¹Ibid., p. 186.

⁹²Ibid., p. 257.

⁹³Ibid., p. 257f.

⁹⁴Ibid., p. 258.

⁹⁵Ibid., Luther did not leave man in despair by saying that man should fear God. He pointed out that man's uncertainty concerning things of the future should lead him all the more to trust God.

⁹⁶Ibānah, p. 100-103; cf. p. 95-96 for God's foreknowledge.

⁹⁷The contents of some of the hādiths have been cited earlier.
See: Ibānah, p. 124-131.

⁹⁸Ibid., p. 127.

⁹⁹Luma, No. 146 (cf. Quranic verses 46:16; 2:1)

¹⁰⁰Ibānah, p. 127.

¹⁰¹Ibid., p. 129.

¹⁰²B.W., p. 83.

¹⁰³Ibid., p. 179; cf. p. 101.

¹⁰⁴Ibid., p. 169-171.

Conclusion

The comparison of the two views on free-will has revealed that both al-Ash^carī and Luther are on common ground regarding many points. For instance, both men have acknowledged and affirmed the undisputable supremacy and sovereignty of God, an affirmation which is central to Islam, and Christianity. Neither theologian denied that man is morally responsible for his deeds; both men affirmed human responsibility, but the affirmation is given greater prominence by al-Ash^carī. For both al-Ash^carī and Luther the concept of God's omnipotence entails the admission that God works evil, though each insisted that God is not evil, and the question of divine morality is inadmissible. The principle of predestination is certain, but its details remain uncertain; a position reflected in al-Ash^carī's arguments, and enunciated by Luther. The sovereignty of God and His omnipotence is so overwhelming that He is thought of, by both theologians, as being in immediate control of all events and acting at every moment; thus man's will is always under the control and direct authority of God, and in no way is man free, nor has he the ability, to determine his final destiny.

However, despite such similarities or the common ground, there are many differences in the two views. The basic differences are differences in approach and in each man's understanding of his task. These account for the difference discussed in the thesis. In al-Ash^carī's approach is reflected an understanding of a form of atomism, whereas in Luther's approach is reflected a biblical

exposition of the nature of man to which scholastic subtleties are applied. The task of al-Ash'arī was to explain how man is responsible for his deeds when God remains Lord of the Worlds and there cannot be on man's part any "acquisition" which God did not will. Luther's task was somewhat different. He set-out to deny free-will in order to affirm man's total inability to save himself and the sovereignty of Divine grace in man's salvation. Thus, in Luther's arguments reference is made to grace because of a definite doctrine of grace which is evident in Luther's theology. Whereas, in al-Ash'arī's arguments, no definite doctrine of grace is seen as essential. Naturally, the arguments of each theologian reflect his religious tradition, and as such al-Ash'arī cannot be expected to present a doctrine of grace. Rather, he presented that which is central of Islam: belief in the sovereignty of the Divine Majesty, the oneness of God, and submission of all things to His will.

This study has dealt with two theologians who are from different philosophico-theological backgrounds, and who lived almost six centuries apart. Although the task of each was different, it impinged on the question of free-will. The findings of this study has revealed that in their arguments each affirmed the following: (1) the question of Divine morality is inadmissible, (2) man is a morally responsible agent even though all his human attributes have been given to him, and (3) man is not free to determine his ultimate destiny, and in this sense man has no free-will.

The inadmissible question of Divine morality served as a good warrant for both theologians to ascribe the responsibility for evil to man. Moreover, man is a responsible agent because God's will is made known to him. For al-Ash^carī, God's will is revealed in the Qur'ān,¹ whereas for Luther it is revealed in the Bible. Because God's will is clearly made known to man, man is held morally responsible for his deeds and in this sense he may be described as a free-agent: free to believe or not to believe in God's words.

However, man is not a free agent when it comes to the affairs of his ultimate destiny. Al-Ash^carī, who was committed to the truths of the Qur'ān,² left the matter of the guidance of the soul strictly with God,³ for the "appointed time" of each person, and whatever will be, is known only to God.⁴ Since God has not revealed such matters to man, he does not have any knowledge of them. As a result, he is unable to effect a change in things which are known only to God.⁵ Similarly, Luther, who affirmed the Biblical truths,⁶ felt that he should leave these things which apply to salvation to the eternal order of God; for such things are not known to man, but to God alone. Therefore, man cannot will what he does not know.⁷

These findings reflect a position also taken by some men who do not necessarily start with the data of revelation. Among those contemporary philosophers who have devoted attention to the problem of the freedom of the will, Stuart Hampshire's discussion reflects the common position contained in al-Ash^carī's, and Luther's

arguments; thus making the views of both theologians relevant in out time. His argument is based on knowledge about man's unconscious dimension.⁸ From such knowledge, Hampshire concludes that a man becomes more and more a free and responsible agent when he at all times knows clearly what he is doing.⁹ The latter condition is fulfilled when the man

. . . knows his own situation in the world
and generally recognizes the relevant
features of the situation confronting him
at any time.¹⁰

In light of this condition set down by Hampshire, we may come to a better understanding and appreciation for the position reflected in the findings of this study: man is impotent in determining his ultimate destiny. The will of man is never truly and entirely free, since man's knowledge is unclear about many things confronting him in the universe, especially those things which pertain to the final destiny of the soul. Regardless of the difference in approach and in the task which men set before themselves, so long as the task impinges on the question of man's freedom, conscientious men will always find a common ground of agreement on the question of free-will.

Footnotes to Conclusion

¹Ibānah, p. 119, 123.

²cf. 2:274, 32:13, 10:26, 45:22 are example of Quranic statements which reveal that God determines whom He guides to faith. See: Ibānah, p. 122.

³Ibid., p. 119-123; cf. p. 107, 108.

⁴Ibid., p. 127.

⁵cf. The tradition cited on the authority of Mu awiyah ibn Amr concerning the writ. See: Ibānah, p. 124, 125; cf. supra, p. 71 and footnote No. 34.

⁶cf. I Cor. 2:9,10; Is. 64:4; Luke 23:34. See: B.W., p. 139, 186.

⁷Ibid., p. 186.

⁸Hampshire makes use of twentieth century interpretations of the unconscious mind. He relies on the works of people such as Freud, Russell, and Wittgenstein. See: Stuart Hampshire, Thought and Action (New York, 1967), Ch. 3.

⁹Ibid., p. 177, 267.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 181. A second condition follows: "There must be a comparatively wide range of achievements open to him, in which he would succeed if he tried. . ." Ibid.

Bibliography

- Abu Zayd, A.R. A Critical and Annotated Translation of the Chapters on Divine Attributes and Their Properties in Al-Iqtisād Fi-l-I'tiqād of Imām al-Ghazālī (M.A. Thesis) Institute of Islamic Studies, McGill University, 1968.
- Al-Ash'arī, Abū al-Hasan. Al-Ibānah 'An Uṣūl Al-Diyānah. 2nd Edition. Hyderabad, 1948; Translated into English as The Elucidation of Islam's Foundation with notes, by W.C. Klein, American Oriental Series, Vol. 10, New Haven: American Oriental Society, 1940.
- _____. Kitāb Al-Luma'. Arabic text bounded with an English translation. Father R.J. McCarthy, Theology of Al-Ash'arī. Beyrouth: Imprimerie Catholique, 1953.
- _____. Maqālāt al-Islāmiyya. Pts. 1, and 2. Istanbul, 1929.
- Al-Baghdādī, Al-Farq Bayn Al-Firaq. Cairo: Maarif Press, 1910; sections 3-5 translated by A.S. Halkin, Moslem Schism and Sects. Pt. 2. Tel-Aviv, 1935.
- Al-Shahrastānī, Kitāb Nihāyatu 'L-Iqdam Fi 'Ilm 'L-Kalām. ed. and trans. A. Guillaume, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1934.
- Althaus, Paul. The Theology of Martin Luther. Trans. R.C. Schultz, Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1966.
- Andrae, Tor. Mohammed the Man and His Faith. Trans. T. Menzel. New York: Harper & Row, 1960.
- Bainton, R.H. Here I Stand: A Life of Martin Luther. New York: The New American Library, 1950.
- _____. The Age of the Reformation. Princeton: Van Nostrand Co., 1956.
- Boehmer, E. Road to the Reformation. Trans. Doberstein and Tappert. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1957.
- Bornkamm, H. Luther's World of Thought. Trans. M.H. Bertram, St. Louis: Concordia Publication House, 1958.
- Brehier, Emile. The Middle Ages and the Renaissance. Trans. W. Baskin. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1965.

- Brocklemann, Carl. History of the Islamic Peoples. Trans. J. Carmichael and M.S. Perlmann. New York: Capricorn Books, 1960.
- Chadwick, Owen. The Reformation. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Penguin Books, 1965.
- Dickens, A.G. Reformation and Society in Sixteenth Century Europe. London: Thames and Hudson, 1966.
- Dorman, H.G., Jr. Towards Understanding Islam. New York: Bureau of Publication, Teachers College; Columbia University, 1948.
- Dudley, H.C. New Principles in Quantum Mechanics. New York: Exposition Press, 1959.
- Ede, D. Some Considerations on the Freedom Determinism Controversy in Classical Islamic Theology (M.A. Thesis). Institute of Islamic Studies, McGill University, 1967.
- Elder, E.E., (trans.) A Commentary on the Creed of Islam: Sa'd al-Dīn al-Taftāzānī on the Creed of Najm al-Dīn al-Nasafī. New York: Columbia University Press, 1950.
- Fakhry, M. Islamic Occasionalism. London: George Allen & Unwin, 1958.
- Ferm, V. (ed.) An Encyclopedia of Religion. New York: Philosophical Library, 1945.
- Fife, R.H. The Revolt of Martin Luther. New York: Columbia University Press, 1957.
- Flew, A. and Macintyre A. (eds.) New Essays in Philosophical Theology. London: SCM Press, 1966.
- Frisch, O.R. Atomic Physics Today. New York: Fawcett Publication, 1965.
- Galloway, A.D. (ed.) Basic Readings in Theology. London: George Allen & Unwin, 1964.
- Gerrish, B.A. Grace and Reason. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962.
- Gibb, H.A.R. Mohammedanism: A Historical Survey. 2nd ed. New York: Oxford University Press, 1969.
- Goldziher, I. Vorlesungen Über Den Islam. Heidelberg: Carl Winter University Press, 1910.

- Grimm, H.J. The Reformation Era: 1500-1600. New York: The Macmillan Co., 1966.
- Hampshire, S. Thought and Action. New York: The Viking Press, 1967.
- Hartmann, N. Ethics. 3 vols. (trans.) New York: The Macmillan Co., 1932.
- Harvey, Van A. A Handbook of Theological Terms. New York: The Macmillan Co., 1964.
- Hitti, P.K. History of the Arabs. London: Macmillan and Co., 1953.
- Hook, S. (ed.) Determinism and Freedom in the Age of Modern Science. New York: Collier Books, 1961.
- Huzinga, J. Erasmus. trans. F. Hopman, New York: Charles Scribner and Sons, 1924.
- Ibn Khallikan. Biographical Dictionary. Trans. B. MacGuckin De Slone. Vol. 2. Paris: Benjamin Du Prat, 1948.
- Izutsu, T. The Concept of Belief in Islamic Theology. Tokyo: The Keio Institute of Cultural and Linguistic Studies, 1965.
- _____. Ethico-Religious Concepts in the Qur'ān. Montreal: McGill University Press, 1966.
- _____. God and Man in the Koran. Tokyo: The Keio Institute of Cultural and Linguistic Studies, 1964.
- James, W. Pragmatism. New York: Noonday Press, 1955.
- _____. The Will to Believe and Other Essays in Popular Philosophy. London: Longmans & Co., 1899.
- King, W.L. Introduction to Religion. New York: Harper & Row, 1968.
- Knowles, D. The Evolution of Medieval Thought. London: Longmans Green & Co., 1962.
- Kooiman, W.J. By Faith Alone: The Life of Martin Luther. Trans. E.L. Woolf, New York: Philosophical Library, 1955.
- Köstlin, J. Theology of Luther. 2 Vols. Trans. C.E. Hay. Philadelphia: Lutheran Publishing Society, 1897.

- Lane, E.W. An Arabic-English Lexicon. 2 Books. London: Willams and Norgate, 1863.
- Lane-Poole, S. Studies in a Mosque. London: W.H. Allen & Co., 1883.
- Lehrer, K. (ed.) Freedom and Determinism. New York: Random House, 1966.
- Luther, Martin. De Servo Arbitrio in Luther's Werke. Vol. 18, Weimarer Ausgabe. Translated by J.I. Packer and O.R. Johnston as Martin Luther on the Bondage of the Will. Westwood, New Jersey: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1957.
- _____. Luther's Werke. Vols. 6, 30, 38. Weimarer Ausgabe, 1883.
- _____. Luther's Works. 55 Vols. (American Ed.) ed. J. Pelikan and H. Lehman. Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press and St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House.
- McCarthy, R.J. Theology of Al-Ashcarī. Beyrouth: Imprimere Catholique, 1953.
- McDonough, T.M. The Law and the Gospel in Luther. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1963.
- McSorley, H.J. Luther: Right or Wrong. New York: Newman Press, 1969.
- Merleau-Ponty, M. Sense and Non-Sense. Trans. E.L.A. Dreyfus and P.A. Dreyfus. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1964.
- Newbigin, L. Sin and Salvation. London: SCM Press, 1956.
- Nicholson, R.A. A Literary History of the Arabs. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1962.
- Nowell-Smith, P.H. Ethics. Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1954.
- Oberman, H.A. The Harvest of Medieval Theology. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1963.
- C'Leary, De Lacy. Arabic Thought and Its Place in History. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd., 1954.
- Palmer, G.H. The Problem of Freedom. Cambridge, Mass.: Riverside Press, 1911.

- Pelikan, J. Luther The Expositor. Companion Volume of Luther's Works. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1959.
- Penrice, J. A Dictionary and Glossary of the Korān. London: H.S. King & Co., 1873.
- Peters, F.E. Aristotle and the Arabs: The Aristotelian Tradition in Islam. New York: New York University Press, 1968.
- Pfūrtner, S. Luther and Aquinas - A Conversation. London: Darton Longman & Todd, 1964.
- Pines, S. Beitrage zur islamischen Atomenlehre. Berlin: A. Heine GmbH., 1936.
- Rahbar, D. God of Justice. Copy of Ph.D. thesis submitted to Cambridge University, 3 Vols., 1953.
- Rahman, F. Islam. London: Weidenfeld And Nicolson, 1966.
- Robson, J. (ed.) Mishkāt Al-Maṣābīh. Pts. 1-5, 11-15 as 2 books. Lahore: Muhammad Ashraf, 1963-1964.
- Ringgren, H. Studies in Arabian Fatalism. Uppsala: Almqvist & Wiksells, 1955.
- Rupp, G. Luther's Progress to the Diet of Worms. New York: Harper & Row, 1964.
- _____. The Righteousness of God. London: Hodden and Stoughton, 1953.
- Sartre, J.P. Being and Nothingness: An Essay on Phenomeonological Ontology. Trans. H.E. Barnes, New York: Philosophical Library, 1956.
- Schacht, J. The Origins of Muhammadan Jurisprudence. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1950.
- Schlink, E. The Coming Christ and the Coming Church. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1968.
- Seale, M.S. Muslim Theology. London: Luzac & Co. Ltd., 1964.
- Smith, H. The Elements of Comparative Theology. London: Duckworth, 1937.
- Smith, W.C. The Faith of Other Men. Toronto: CBC Publication, 1964.

- _____. The Meaning and End of Religion. New York: The Macmillan Co., 1963.
- Todd, J.M. Martin Luther: A Biographical Study. London: Burns & Oates, 1964.
- Torrey, C.C. The Commercial-Theological Terms in the Koran. Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1892.
- Tritton, A.S. Muslim Theology. London: Luzac & Co. Ltd., 1947.
- Trueblood, D.E. General Philosophy. New York: Harper & Row, 1963.
- Walzer, R. Greek Into Arabic. Oriental Studies Vol. I. Oxford: Bruno Cassirer Ltd., 1962.
- Watson, P.S. Let God be God. Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1950.
- Watt, W.M. Free Will and Predestination in Early Islam. London: Luzac & Co. Ltd., 1948.
- _____. Islam and the Integration of Society. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1961.
- _____. Islamic Philosophy and Theology. Edinburgh: University Press, 1962.
- Wellhausen, J. The Arab Kingdom and its Fall. Trans. M.G. Weir. Calcutta: Calcutta University Press, 1927.
- Wensinck, A.J. The Muslim Creed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1932.
- Wild, J. Existence and the World of Freedom. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1963.

Sacred Texts

- The Bible (RSV). London: Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1957.
- The Koran Interpreted. 2 Vols. Translated by A.J. Arberry. New York: Macmillan Co., 1955.
- The Holy Qur'ān (Arabic Text). 4th ed. Translation and commentary by M. Ali, Lahore: Ahmadiyya Anjuman Ishā'at Islam, 1951.

Articles

- Black, M. "Making Something Happen." Determinism and Freedom in the Age of Modern Science. ed. S. Hook. New York: Collier Books, 1961.
- Blanshard, B. "The Case for Determinism." Determinism and Freedom in the Age of Modern Science. ed. S. Hook. New York: Collier Books, 1961.
- Fakhry, M. "Some Paradoxical Implications of the Mu'tazilite View of Free-Will." Muslim World. Vol. 43 (1953) pp. 95-109.
- Frank, R.M. "The Structure of Created Causality According to Al-Ash'ari." Studia Islamica. Vol. 25 (1965) pp. 13-76.
- Ghoraba, H. "Al-Ash'ari's Theory of Acquisition (Al-Kasb)." Islamic Quarterly. Vol. 2 (1955) pp. 3-8.
- Guillaume, A. "Some Remarks on Free-Will and Predestination in Islam Together with a Translation of the Kitābu-l-Qadar from the Sahih of Al-Bukhari." Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society. (1924) pp. 436-446.
- Hart, H.L.A. "Legal Responsibilities and Excuses." Determinism and Freedom in the Age of Modern Science. ed. S. Hook. New York: Collier Books, 1961.
- Hournani, G.F. "Two Theories of Value in Medieval Islam." Muslim World. Vol. 50 (1960) pp. 269-278.
- Landé, A. "The Case for Indeterminism." Determinism and Freedom in the Age of Modern Science. ed. S. Hook. New York: Collier Books, 1961.
- Macdonald, D.B. "Continuous Creation and Atomic Time in Muslim Scholastic Theology." Isis. Vol. 11 (1927) pp. 326-344.
- Makdisi, G. "Ash'ari and the Ash'arites in Islamic Religious History." Studia Islamica. Vol. 17 (1962) pp. 37-80, Vol. 18 (1963) pp. 19-39.
- Obermann, J. "Political Theology in Early Islam." Journal of the American Oriental Society. Vol. 55 (1935) pp. 138-162.
- Pretzel, C. "Die frühislamische Atomlehre." Der Islam. Vol. 29 (1931) pp. 117-130.
- Ritter, H. "Studien zur Geschichte der islamischen Frömmigkeit." Der Islam. Vol. 21 (1933) pp. 1-83.

- Salisbury, E.E. "Muhammadan Predestination and Free-Will." Journal of the American Oriental Society. Vol. 18 (1866) pp. 122-147.
- Schacht, J. "New Sources for the History of Muhammadan Theology." Studia Islamica. Vol. 1 (1953) pp. 23-42.
- Shaikh, M.S. "Mu'tazilism: Its Historical Development." Iqbal. Vol. 8 (1960) pp. 46-58.
- Siirala, A. "Freedom and Authority in Erasmus and Luther." Dialogue. Vol. 7 (1968) pp. 108-113.
- Thompson, W. "Al-Ash'arī and his Ibānah." Muslim World. Vol. 36 (1942) pp. 242-260.
- _____. "Free-Will and Predestination in Early Islam." Muslim World. Vol. 40 (1950) pp. 207-216, 276-287.
- Watt, W.M. "Free-Will and Predestination in Early Islam." Muslim World. Vol. 36 (1946) pp. 124-152.
- _____. "Kharijite Thought in the Umayyad Period." Der Islam. Vol. 36 (1961) pp. 215-231.
- _____. "The Origin of the Islamic Doctrine of Acquisition." Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society. (1943) pp. 234-247.
- _____. "The Political Attitudes of the Mu'tazilah." Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society. (1963) pp. 38-57.
- Weiss, P. "Common Sense and Beyond." Determinism and Freedom in the Age of Modern Science. ed. S. Hook, New York: Collier Books, 1961.
- Wolfson, H.A. "Philosophical Implications of the Problem of Divine Attributes." Journal of the American Oriental Society. Vol. 79 (1959) pp. 73-80.

Articles from Encyclopedia of Islam

1. Shorter Encyclopedia of Islam. Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1961 = S.E.I.
2. The Encyclopedia of Islam. Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1913 = E.I.¹
3. The Encyclopedia of Islam. New Edition (A-I) Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1960 = E.I.²

Arnold, T.W. "Islām." S.E.I.

Bjorkman, W. "Shirk." S.E.I.

Gardet, L. "Al-Djubbā'ī." E.I.²

_____. "Allāh." E.I.²

Macdonald, D.B. "Ḳadā'." "Ḳadar." "Ḳadariya." "Kalām." "Kasb." S.E.I.

Nyberg, H.S. "Al-Mu'tazila." E.I.¹ and S.E.I.

Ritter, H. "Al-Ḥasan al-Baṣri." E.I.²

Watt, W.M. "Al-Ash'arī, Abū-l-Ḥasan." E.I.²

Articles from Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics
New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1955

Braithwaite, W.C. "Friends, Society of." Vol. 6.

Carpenter, J.E. "Unitarianism." Vol. 12.

Harris, G. "State of the Dead (Christian)." Vol. 11.

Kilpatrick, T.P. "Salvation (Christian)." Vol. 11.

Mellone, S.H. "Scholasticism." Vol. 11.

Wood, I.F. "State of the Dead (Muhammadan)." Vol. 11.