
 APPENDIX C

 DIVINE CLAIRVOYANCE AND
 DIVINE DETERMINISM:
 ANOTHER APPROACH

Is it possible for God to know the future by seeing the future (divine clairvoyance) when the future does not yet exist in our present time? Here is another way to frame this question:

Suppose that we map every spatial location in the cosmos at any given time t_m (a time defined relative to my own existence such that t_0 was at the point of my conception) onto the points contained within a circle, and suppose that we assign a unique descriptor $D_m S_n$ to each point n in the circle such that the descriptor accurately and exhaustively describes the state of affairs at spatial location S_n at time t_m . Now we will have an infinite set of circles where any given time t_m has a circle C_m and the set of descriptors $\{D_m S_n \text{ for } n = 1 \text{ to infinity}\}$ corresponding to it. Now consider each circle C_m placed one after the other consecutively, forming a cylinder. If we extend this cylinder into eternity in both directions, it would represent a complete description of everything that ever occurred in reality over the whole extent of all time. Now the question is this: does the cylinder that we have just defined exist statically or dynamically?

If it exists statically, then the entirety of the cylinder is just there, existing unchanged at all times relative to my time. In this case, my experience is just a matter of entering sequentially into the experience of what is, always has been, and always will be real.

If this cylinder exists dynamically, then the actuality of the cylinder progresses sequentially as I pass through time sequentially. In other words, C_m comes into real existence only as I come to exist at t_m . In this case, reality is progressively growing and increasing as I progress through time. If I exist at t_m then C_{m+1} does not yet have real existence.

In order for divine clairvoyance to make any sense, then the cylinder of reality described above must be static, not dynamic. For only on the assumption that C_{m+1} actually exists can God “see” and report to me what will happen at t_{m+1} when I am at time t_m . But C_{m+1} only exists on the static view. On the dynamic view it does not exist. Hence, the critical question is whether the cylinder of reality is static or dynamic.

One can salvage divine clairvoyance by proposing that the cylinder of reality is static. But one makes such a proposal at a price. The price is this:

(i) The hypothesis that the cylinder of reality is static is a bizarre doctrine. If one is seeking to avoid believing divine determinism because it strikes one as a weird belief, he has not gained much. For belief in a static cylinder of reality is at least as weird, if not more so.

(ii) Belief that the cylinder of reality is static makes everything that occurs in the future logically determined and, hence, necessary and unavoidable. If the future just is what it is, then it cannot be other than what it is. Hence, if one is inclined to reject divine determinism on the grounds that divine determinism makes the future necessary, then he has not gained anything. The future is just as necessary under the cylinder-of-reality-as-static doctrine as it is under divine determinism.

Therefore, divine clairvoyance can be salvaged as a rational belief if one is willing to embrace the cylinder-of-reality-as-static doctrine. But if one embraces the cylinder-of-reality-as-static doctrine, he gains nothing over divine determinism; for any objectionable result that one was trying to avoid by rejecting divine determinism is implied by the cylinder-of-reality-as-static doctrine as well.