

Excerpt from the book *Four Views of Divine Providence*¹, Chapter 4: God Limits His Control;
(Heading) The Open Model of Providence, (Sub-heading) Love and Freedom

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“If love is the goal of creation, however, then the creation must include free agents, according to the open view. As the early church uniformly understood, for contingent beings such as humans, love (as well as every other moral virtue) must be freely chosen.² Had God created us such that we had to love, our love could not be genuine. To illustrate, suppose a scientist invented a microchip that could control every neuron in a person’s brain and that was so sophisticated it could be implanted without the person knowing it. If this scientist programmed the microchip to do so, she could coerce any person to feel, think, speak, and behave in perfectly loving ways toward her, and her subjects would even believe they were doing this of their own volition. While they would certainly appear to love this scientist, and while they themselves would believe they loved this scientist, would we not consider her demented if she mistook the coerced appearance of love to be actual love? In making subjects “choose” to love her, the scientist was actually preventing them from genuinely choosing to love her, for they no longer had the capacity to do this of their own volition. In reality, this demented scientist was just loving herself through these subjects, as much as if she were manipulating puppets on her hand to mimic loving expressions toward her.”

¹ William Lane Craig et al., *Four Views On Divine Providence (Counterpoints: Bible and Theology)*, ed. Dennis Jowers (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 2011), 188.

² *Ibid.*, See, e.g., Tatian Address to the Greeks ANF 2: 7. For the early church’s understanding and emphasis on free will, see Dale R Stoffer, “The Problem of Evil: An Historical Theological Approach,” *Ashland Theological Review* 24 (1992): 60 – 62; Roger Forster and Paul Marston, *God’s Strategy in Human History* (Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House, 1973), 243 — 57; Boyd, *Satan and the Problem of Evil*, 39 — 49. The necessity of libertarian freedom for love to be genuine does not hold for God, I argue, for unlike contingent beings who by definition could be otherwise, God is by definition a necessary being whose eternal, God-defining character could not be otherwise