

# GOD AND THE CAUSAL STRUCTURES OF NATURE: SOME PUZZLES

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Modern physics presents intriguing puzzles for understanding God's relation to the causal structures of nature. Classical theological accounts of creation affirm that God calls the universe into being and directly sustains it at every moment. This has been paired with the claim that the world includes created causes and agents, so that (*contra* occasionalism) God is not the immediate cause of every change, but instead bestows causal powers upon creatures and acts by means of them in the unfolding history of the world. This is the venerable scheme of primary and secondary causation, and it provides a powerful strategy for thinking about God's action in and through the natural order. Contemporary physical theory, however, raises difficult questions for this scheme, which was developed in the context of Thomistic-Aristotelian metaphysics. For example, are entities at the quantum level sufficiently well-defined and discrete to be bearers of causal powers and roles? If one adopts a Copenhagen-type interpretation of quantum mechanics, how should we understand God's relation to events that do not have sufficient conditions among secondary causes? Should we say that God, ignoring Einstein's disapproval, plays dice with the universe? Or should we conclude that God determines what nature leaves determinable?