

# Cambridge Elements

Elements in the Problems of God

edited by

Michael L. Peterson

*Asbury Theological Seminary*

## CHRISTIANITY AND THE PROBLEM OF FREE WILL

Leigh Vicens

*Augustana University*



CAMBRIDGE  
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge University Press & Assessment  
978-1-009-27046-5 – Christianity and the Problem of Free Will  
Leigh Vicens  
Frontmatter  
[More Information](#)



Shaftesbury Road, Cambridge CB2 8EA, United Kingdom  
One Liberty Plaza, 20th Floor, New York, NY 10006, USA  
477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia  
314–321, 3rd Floor, Plot 3, Splendor Forum, Jasola District Centre,  
New Delhi – 110025, India  
103 Penang Road, #05–06/07, Visioncrest Commercial, Singapore 238467

Cambridge University Press is part of Cambridge University Press & Assessment,  
a department of the University of Cambridge.

We share the University's mission to contribute to society through the pursuit of  
education, learning and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

[www.cambridge.org](http://www.cambridge.org)  
Information on this title: [www.cambridge.org/9781009270465](http://www.cambridge.org/9781009270465)

DOI: 10.1017/9781009270427

© Leigh Vicens 2023

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception and to the provisions  
of relevant collective licensing agreements, no reproduction of any part may take  
place without the written permission of Cambridge University Press & Assessment.

First published 2023

*A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library.*

ISBN 978-1-009-27046-5 Paperback  
ISSN 2754-8724 (online)  
ISSN 2754-8716 (print)

Cambridge University Press & Assessment has no responsibility for the persistence  
or accuracy of URLs for external or third-party internet websites referred to in this  
publication and does not guarantee that any content on such websites is, or will  
remain, accurate or appropriate.

## Christianity and the Problem of Free Will

Elements in the Problems of God

DOI: 10.1017/9781009270427  
First published online: May 2023

---

Leigh Vicens  
*Augustana University*

**Author for correspondence:** Leigh Vicens, [lvicens@augie.edu](mailto:lvicens@augie.edu)

**Abstract:** Central to the teachings of Christianity is a puzzle: on the one hand, sin seems something that humans do not do freely and so cannot be responsible for, since it is unavoidable; on the other hand, sin seems something that we must be responsible for and so do freely, since we are enjoined to repent of it, and since it makes us liable to divine condemnation and forgiveness. After laying out the puzzle in more depth, this Element considers three possible responses – libertarian, soft determinist, and free will skeptic – and weighs the costs and benefits of each.

**Keywords:** free will, sin, responsibility, Christianity, God

© Leigh Vicens 2023

ISBNs: 9781009270465 (PB), 9781009270427 (OC)  
ISSNs: 2754-8724 (online), 2754-8716 (print)

## Contents

1 The Puzzle of Sin and Free Will	1
2 Libertarian Solutions	5
3 Soft Determinist Solutions	16
4 Free Will Skeptical Solutions	29
References	49