Pharaoh's Magicians Redivivus

A Response to Jerry Walls
on Christian Compatibilism

Steven B. Cowan
Department of Humanities and Fine Arts
Lincoln Memorial University
Harrogate, Tennessee
steven.cowan@lmunet.edu

Greg A. Welty
Philosophy Department
Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary
Wake Forest, North Carolina
gwelty@sebts.edu

Jerry Walls does not like compatibilism. And he *really* doesn't like any *Christian* version of compatibilism. In a recent article, he asserts that "no one who is a serious theist, let alone an orthodox Christian, should accept compatibilism."[1] In addition to what he takes to be strong intuitive reasons to embrace libertarianism and well-known philosophical worries about compatibilist accounts of free will and moral responsibility, Walls contends that, "if compatibilism is true, it is all but impossible, in the actual world, to maintain the perfect goodness of God, and altogether impossible to do so if orthodox Christianity is true."[2] Walls likens compatibilists to Pharaoh's magicians (cf. Exod. 7:10–13) who "seem capable of duplicating in their own terms every power and ability that libertarians claim their view distinctively grants to agents."[3] However, Walls touts that his paper will show that "when we pass beyond purely philosophical arguments of the metaphysical and epistemic variety, and bring God into the picture, things change dramatically. At

Abstract: Jerry Walls has recently argued that no Christian theist should be a compatibilist because, on compatibilism, it is "all but impossible to maintain . . . the perfect goodness of God." More specifically, he contends (1) that Christian compatibilism involves God in manipulation that undermines human moral responsibility, (2) that such manipulation makes God morally culpable for evil human actions, (3) that Christian compatibilism exacerbates the problem of evil in a way that Christian libertarianism does not, and (4) that Christian compatibilism entails universalism. In this paper, we argue that Walls is mistaken on all counts.

1. Jerry L. Walls, "Why No Classical Theist, Let Alone Orthodox Christian, Should Ever Be a Compatibilist," *Philosophia Christi* 13 (2011): 75–104 (quotation from page 77).
2. Ibid., 80.
3. Ibid., 77.

this point, the tricks of Pharaoh's magicians begin to fall flat and are exposed for what they are."[4]

However, Christian compatibilists have far more "tricks" up our sleeve than Walls apparently realizes. If we are right, then compatibilism—even an orthodox Christian compatibilism—poses no threat to the perfect goodness of God.

Walls's Arguments against Christian Compatibilism

Walls's case against Christian compatibilism begins with a defense of three principles. The first involves an alleged logical implication of theological compatibilism:

> (CI) If freedom and determinism are compatible, God could have created a world in which all persons freely did only the good at all times.

The second principle he calls the *provenance principle* (PP), which he states thus:

> (PP) When the actions of a person are entirely determined by another intelligent being who intentionally determines (manipulates) the person to act exactly as the other being wishes, then the person cannot rightly be held accountable and punished for his actions.

The third principle, named the *evil manipulator principle* (EMP), Walls defines as follows:

> (EMP) A being who determines (manipulates) another being to perform evil actions is himself evil. It is even more perverse if a being determines a being to perform evil actions and then holds him accountable, and punishes him for those actions.

Walls believes that these principles cause serious problems for Christian compatibilists. CI calls into question God's goodness, since the free creatures he created do not freely choose only the good at all times. PP is inconsistent, on compatibilism, with the uncontroversial Christian belief that God holds people morally responsible for their actions. And EMP, on compatibilism, would make God an evil-doer since he would be implicated in the evil actions of human beings.

Walls goes on to present two related arguments, one designed to argue directly for Christian libertarianism and against compatibilism, the other intended to show that compatibilism leads to heterodox Christian theology. The first argument proceeds as follows (Walls's original numbering and wording is preserved):

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4. Ibid.

(6) If God is necessarily perfectly good, He eliminates all evil He can properly eliminate in all possible worlds.

(7) In all possible worlds in which persons are not free or are only free in the compatibilist sense, God could properly eliminate all moral evil except that evil necessary for creatures properly to appreciate good (or similar purposes).

(8) Therefore there are no possible worlds in which persons are free only in the compatibilist sense, and in which there is moral evil beyond what would be necessary for creatures properly to appreciate good (or similar purposes).

(9) Our world contains much appalling moral evil that could not plausibly be thought necessary for creatures properly to appreciate good (or similar purposes).

(10) Therefore, in our world persons must be free in the libertarian sense.

The underlying point of this argument is that compatibilism, if true, intensifies or exacerbates the problem of evil in a way that libertarianism does not. Hence, libertarianism is preferable from a Christian point of view.

The second argument Walls presents as follows:

(11) God truly loves all persons.

(12) If God truly loves all persons, then he does all he can properly do to secure their true flourishing.

(13) Therefore, God does all he can properly do to secure the true flourishing of all persons.

(14) The true flourishing of all persons is only secured in a right relationship with God, in which their nature as free beings is respected and they freely accept his love and are saved.

(15) God does all he can properly do to secure the true flourishing of all persons, and the true flourishing of all persons is only secured in a right relationship with him.

(16) If God does all he can properly do to secure the true flourishing of all persons, and the true flourishing of all persons is only secured in a right relationship with him, then God does all he can properly do to secure a right relationship with all persons.

(17) Therefore, God does all he can properly do to secure a right relationship with all persons.

(18) Freedom and determinism are compatible [compatibilist assumption].

(19) If freedom and determinism are compatible, then God can properly secure a right relationship with all persons by determining all to freely accept his love and be saved.

(20) Therefore, God can properly secure a right relationship with all persons by determining all to freely accept his love and be saved.

(21) God does everything he can properly do to secure a right relation-
ship with all persons, and God can properly secure a right relation-
ship with all persons by determining all to freely accept his love and
be saved.

(22) If God does everything he can properly do to secure a right relation-
ship with all persons, and God can properly secure a right relation-
ship with all persons by determining all to freely accept his love and
be saved, then God will determine all persons to freely accept his
love and be saved.

(23) Therefore, God will determine all persons to freely accept his love
and be saved.

(24) If God determines p, then p.

(25) Therefore, all persons will freely accept God's love and be saved.

Of course, (25) entails universalism, a doctrine rejected by Christian ortho-
doxy. Walls thus finds it ironic that Christian compatibilists, many of whom
are staunch champions of orthodoxy, hold views that appear to lead to het-
erodoxy. Moreover, concerning this latter argument, Walls thinks he has
damaged Christian compatibilism to the "breaking point" because most of
the key premises of this argument are "conceptual truths that can hardly be
denied."[5]

Well, the gauntlet certainly has been thrown down. But we do not be-
lieve that either of Walls's arguments is sound, or that their relevant premises
rise to the level of conceptual truths. We could challenge numerous premises
of these arguments, but we will major on the majors.[6] Specifically, we deign
to challenge both principles PP and EMP, as well as premise (9) of the first
argument and premise (12) of the second argument.

Can a Person be Morally Responsible
for Divinely Determined Actions?

Recall PP, Walls's so-called provenance principle:

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5. Ibid., 97.

6. E.g., Walls believes that principle CI is "a fairly straightforward implication of compati-
bilism" (ibid., 82). But as Walls himself admits in footnote 18 of his article, there are ways that
theological compatibilists can resist this implication. John Feinberg, for instance, argues that it
is not the case that God can necessarily guarantee a world with compatibilistically free human
beings and no moral evil (*No One Like Him: The Doctrine of God* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway,
2001), 787–96). He writes, "[C]hanges in circumstances for one of us would affect circumstanc-
es for others, for we don't live in isolation. But what might be needed to get us to do good might
disrupt others' lives, constrain them to do something that serves God's purposes in regard to us,
and perhaps even turn them toward doing evil" (788–89). Put another way, incompatibilists tend
to think that theological compatibilists believe that human moral responsibility is compatible
with *any* kind of determinism or determinist mechanism. But such is not the case. In most of
what proceeds, however, we will assume that CI is true.

(PP) When the actions of a person are entirely determined by another intelligent being who intentionally determines (manipulates) the person to act exactly as the other being wishes, then the person cannot rightly be held accountable and punished for his actions.

First, Walls appears to poison the well before his own argument even begins. With a parenthesis in PP, he equates "intentionally determines" with "manipulates." The term "manipulation" is highly charged with negative connotations, implying or suggesting evil intent and/or coercion. It does not seem to us that all cases (human or divine) in which one person does or says something to get another to do as the first one wishes involves either evil intent or coercion. Furthermore, it is controversial what counts as manipulation, whether or not evil intent is involved. That is, when (if at all) does the influence that one person may exert on another become manipulation—assuming that manipulation (whatever it is) is necessarily something bad?

Regardless of what terms one chooses to use, the real question is whether or not a person can be held morally responsible for actions that are "intentionally determined" by another agent. Our answer is yes, he can, depending upon *how* the determination takes place. For example, let's take a simple individual case of what might be called "manipulation."

Suppose Jill considers whether to wear her red dress or her black dress out for dinner. She prefers the black dress, but knows her husband, Jack, is often a good judge of what clothing looks good on her so she wants to know what he thinks. Now suppose that Jack knows that Jill will likely wear the dress he prefers. He knows she prefers the black dress, but he really prefers the red dress. So, even though she looks nice in both dresses, he signals approval when she models the red dress and shrugs dismissively when she models the black dress. Jill chooses to wear the red dress. Is she morally responsible for her choice even though it was "intentionally determined" (manipulated?) by Jack? We suggest that the obvious answer to this question is yes. Jack's influence on her does not mitigate her moral responsibility. Why would it? We therefore lay it down as a general principle that the presence of intentional determination in a particular situation is not, without further qualification, inconsistent with moral responsibility.

Let's examine another case. Suppose that Jill is very afraid of snakes (though she might bravely face them in order to rescue an endangered child). And let us also suppose that Jack, knowing that she is afraid of snakes, hides her birthday present in the barn and warns her not to go into the barn because (so he falsely says) there is a snake hiding in there. Stipulate that Jill's fear of snakes *is* strong enough (and Jack believes it strong enough) that it provides her with a causally sufficient motivation to avoid the barn even though she might have relatively trivial reasons to enter the barn (no reasons rising to the level of endangered children). So Jill avoids the barn until her birthday when Jack reveals the ruse. Is Jill's barn-avoidance behavior morally responsible

behavior? We suppose that intuitions may vary on this question, but it is at least plausible to think that even in this kind of case she is morally responsible, all other things being equal.

But what about a more global scenario in which a person's character, and thus most if not all of his actions, are the result of "intentional determination" or "manipulation"? Walls actually supports PP by appealing to such a case of global manipulation. He tells the story of a school teacher who psychologically manipulates her students to develop specific character traits. As Walls tells the story,

> Some of the children she conditions to grow up and behave as virtuous persons typically do, and to live productive lives. Others she conditions to behave in a perverse manner, some of whom even become rapists or child molesters themselves. Let us assume she completely succeeds in her project and each of the children turns out just as she intends. Somehow she manages to avoid detection, and a few years later, she decides to go to law school and several years later still she becomes a judge.[7]

Walls then considers the case of one of the teacher-now-judge's students who was conditioned to become a child molester and later arrested for his crimes. Though he likes and approves of his own perverse actions, he comes to realize that his character is the result of the teacher's conditioning process. Walls suggests that this person would likely "find himself baffled as to how he is responsible" for his actions when he appears before the judge and she condemns him. Walls apparently believes that such bafflement is justified. This person (and apparently all the others the teacher-judge manipulated— whether to develop good characters or bad) is not morally responsible for his actions.

In response, we will focus attention instead on an *ordinary* case of child character development. The case involves a man named Smith who has a young son, Junior. From the moment of his birth Smith has been concerned to raise Junior "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." In addition to teaching him the Christian religion, Smith has tried (imperfectly to be sure) to instill in his son a virtuous character. He desires that Junior grow up to be wise, patient, self-controlled, honest, courageous, compassionate, and so on. Therefore, he has taught him the moral law of God; he has taught him the difference between virtue and vice, including the benefits of the former and the perils of the latter. He has reinforced this teaching with rewards and punishments. And Smith has tried (again, imperfectly) to be an example of the virtuous man for Junior to follow. In short, like every concerned and responsible parent, he has engaged in intentional action designed to shape

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7. Walls, "Why No Classical Theist, Let Alone Orthodox Christian, Should Ever Be a Compatibilist," 86.

and mold the character of his son in order to see to it, as far as he is able, that Junior grow up to be a virtuous man.

Now suppose that Junior grows up and, as a consequence of Smith's moral instruction, he has a virtuous moral character and, for the most part, acts virtuously. Is Junior morally responsible for his actions? We submit that he is and believe that most everyone else will agree.[8] Yet notice that the role Smith played in Junior's character development is parallel in significant ways to the role played by the teacher-judge in Walls's hypothetical case. The most obvious difference, of course, is that Smith worked to instill in Junior a virtuous character while the teacher-judge worked to instill a vicious character in her subject. But is that difference morally relevant? Why is Walls inclined, like many of us, to assert that the teacher-judge's subject is *not* morally responsible?

Walls could respond in several ways, none of which is satisfactory. First, he could agree that Junior is morally responsible for his actions even though Smith "manipulated" him into forming the character that he possesses. But, he could add, this case of ordinary character development is to be distinguished from the kind of manipulation used by the teacher in the teacher-judge case. The latter, unlike the former, leaves the agent without morally responsible action.

If this were Walls's response, then it would be incumbent upon him to provide a principled means for making the distinction between ordinary character development and responsibility-inhibiting manipulation. One way to do that would be to describe the specific kinds of actions taken by the "manipulator" in each case, together with the psychological effects of his actions on his "manipulatee." Perhaps in the responsibility-inhibiting case, the "manipulator" lies to and deceives the child about important matters relevant to his character development. Perhaps the "manipulator" physically and psychologically abuses the child, and otherwise treats him harshly. And the intensity and extent of the effects of the responsibility-inhibiting "manipulator's" character-forming actions are such that the manipulatee's own deliberative processes, his critical thinking skills, and his moral conscience are severely handicapped. Such actions on the part of the "manipulator," and

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8. Libertarian Ed Wierenga, responding to libertarian Dean Zimmerman agrees with this point: "[Zimmerman] writes, 'If I were to discover that someone had this sort of control over me, I would conclude that I was not a free agent. And I suspect that most people would have similar reactions.' I demur. I know that someone can occasionally arrange to have me do what they want me to do—through temptation, or politely asking, or making known their wishes, or countless other possibilities. For any number of my choices that are both free and yet arranged by someone else, there could always be another one like that. . . . Therefore, it could be that every free choice I make is arranged by someone else who exploits the relevant counterfactuals" (Wierenga, "Tilting at Molinism," in *Molinism: The Contemporary Debate* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011, 137)). I owe this quote from Wierenga to Paul Manata.

their adverse psychological consequences, we may surmise, are absent from the ordinary case.

We are pleased to grant that someone whose character formation is manipulated in this extraordinary way is very likely not (or not as) morally responsible for his actions as is someone "manipulated" like Junior in the ordinary type of character formation—a process that leaves his deliberative faculties, critical thinking skills, and moral conscience intact. But we are also pleased to insist, as Christian compatibilists, that God's determination of our characters need only be conceptualized along the lines of a parent's ordinary character-forming activities. There is no reason to think that compatibilism must envision God's intentional determination of our characters and actions on the model of what we might call "brainwashing."

At this point, however, an incompatibilist like Walls might contend that what is really different and unique about the ordinary character formation case is just that the "manipulator" does not *entirely* determine the person's character and actions (contrary to what is stipulated in the responsibility-inhibiting case). This is because there are other factors at work in the child's environment besides the parent's "manipulation." The parent's influence, instruction, and discipline are just some factors among a myriad of others that ordinarily play a role in shaping a child's character. These would include the culture in which he lives, the physical environment, interactions with other people besides the parent, and so on. Whether understood in libertarian or compatibilist terms, in ordinary character-formation cases, a person's character is not simply and entirely the product of a manipulator as we may assume to be the situation in the responsibility-inhibiting cases.

But one may wonder why the degree of the "manipulator's" determination is relevant unless one is already assuming the necessity of libertarian conditions on moral responsibility (for example, alternative possibilities or source conditions). Leaving such question-begging assumptions aside, what if the "manipulator" could control for those other factors in such a way that they also played a role in his determination of the child's character? What if, for example, a parent has perfect wisdom and prescience of every event that might occur during his child's character formation, and thus knew every word he could say, or event he could change or orchestrate, so that he could guarantee that his child would form a virtuous character? Would that mitigate the child's responsibility? Why would it? It can't be simply because the one parent is ignorant of the outcome while the other is not. The knowledge (or foreknowledge) of the parent would seem irrelevant to the child's moral status.

Is it after all because the child has libertarian freedom that makes the difference? That is, perhaps the difference lies in the fact that Junior has the ability, with regard to all or most character-forming influences that Smith exerts, to act otherwise than Smith designs. The teacher-judge's subject, we

may surmise, lacks (or has less of) this ability due to the teacher-judge's "brainwashing" techniques. We find this highly doubtful for two reasons. First, such an appeal to libertarianism assumes that it is the presence or lack of determinism that lies behind our moral judgments about manipulation cases. This assumption seems to be a central theme in Derk Pereboom's famous "four-case argument" for incompatibilism.[9] However, Alfred Mele has argued persuasively that neither the presence nor lack of determinism explains our intuitions about manipulation cases. Rather, our judgments to the effect that certain manipulated agents lack moral responsibility are due exclusively to the presence of the (relevant kind of) manipulator.[10]

Second, our ordinary practices of child character development, and the desires and intentions that underlie them, strongly suggest that we all have compatibilist intuitions about character development. We teach our children moral virtue, and discipline them and encourage them, *because* we believe that such efforts *will*—barring unforeseen and unwanted interference from external factors that in our finitude and ignorance we cannot control—result in the development of virtuous character. We hope and think that this potentially deterministic connection between moral instruction and virtuous character is a *good* thing. Indeed, would we engage so diligently in our character formation efforts if we did not believe that there was a causal connection between moral education and moral character? Would we take so seriously the biblical admonition to "train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old *he will not depart from it*" (Prov. 22:6)? And why do we all empathize with the parents whose child grows up badly and ask, "Where did we go wrong?" We respond to such cases, *not* by appealing to the child's libertarian freedom, but by either questioning the parents' claim to due diligence or by appealing to all of the external influences on their child outside of their control which overrode their positive influence. We suggest that most parents would not find libertarian freedom desirable in their child's character formation. Put positively, ordinary, virtuous parents would want, and would find it morally acceptable, to act in such ways as to *guarantee* that their child developed a virtuous character, so long as those actions did not involve those kinds noted above in the responsibility-inhibiting case. Indeed, all things being equal, we would find the absence of such a desire from a good and virtuous parent to be unintelligible.[11]

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9. See Derk Pereboom, *Living without Free Will* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 112–26.

10. See Alfred R. Mele, *Free Will and Luck* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 138–44.

11. It is open to Walls to respond to our argument by claiming that even in what we have called the ordinary character formation case, the agent—Junior—is not morally responsible despite what we have said. We doubt that Walls (or anyone else) would take this route. For on that view, the only people who would be morally responsible are those whose parents took a lackadaisical, hands-off approach to their child's character development! We trust that no argument is needed to rebut this view.

The application of all this to divine providence should be clear. God is the virtuous parent *par excellence*. He is perfectly wise. He has perfect knowledge of the future and, more to the point, perfect knowledge of what agents would do in counterfactual circumstances (whether understood compatibilistically or Molinistically). If it is plausible to think that Junior is morally responsible for his actions even though his character is "intentionally determined" by Smith's moral instruction, then it is certainly plausible to think that human agents can be morally responsible for their actions if God is the "manipulator" who "intentionally determines" their characters and actions through similar means. So, if PP is interpreted broadly enough to include the kind of intentional determination that is involved in ordinary character formation, then PP is false. On the other hand, if PP is restricted to the responsibility-inhibiting kind of manipulation involved in the teacher-judge's "brainwashing," then the Christian compatibilist may readily grant the truth of PP but deny that his compatibilism is any the worse for it since the way in which God determines our actions is not of that kind.

Is a Divine Determiner Necessarily Evil?

In addition to arguing that "manipulated" agents are not morally responsible for their actions, Walls also contends that God would be negatively implicated if, as a compatibilist "manipulator," he "manipulates" people to do evil things. This is the force of his principle EMP:

(EMP) A being who determines (manipulates) another being to perform evil actions is himself evil. It is even more perverse if a being determines a being to perform evil actions and then holds him accountable, and punishes him for those actions.

The second part of EMP apparently assumes the truth of PP. The additional perversity of an evil manipulator lies, that is, in that manipulator holding accountable people who are not truly accountable. We will return to this issue in due time. For now, our focus will be on the first and (presumably) primary clause of EMP. Is it the case that a being that determines another being to perform evil actions is himself evil?

We find it telling that the example that Walls uses in his defenses of both PP and EMP (the teacher-judge case) involves a "manipulator" whose intentions in conducting her manipulations are unknown. We are never told why the teacher set out to determine the characters of her students as she did. The reader is left with the distinct impression, however, that the teacher, in working to influence or determine the actions of her students, is up to no good. And we suggest that it is this impression—that the teacher has some evil or callously amoral intent—that lies behind Walls's and our intuition that she is evil. Certainly, manipulators/determiners who have evil intentions are them-

selves evil—after all they have evil intentions! But on the assumption that the manipulator/determiner has *good* intentions, counterexamples to EMP are fairly easy to find.

Here is a case in point. Suppose that Sam is a convicted murderer who, with the help of his wife, Sofia, has escaped from prison. In the course of evading police, the two fugitives invade the rural home of Manny and his twelve-year-old son, Vic. Manny observes his captors and learns that Sofia is a reluctant participant in their kidnapping, and that she is very concerned to assure them, especially Vic, that they will not be harmed. Indeed, Manny is certain that if Sofia believes that Sam posed a real threat to Vic, she would help them escape their captivity. And indeed, Manny comes to strongly suspect that Sam plans to kill both him and Vic when Sam decides that it is safe to leave their home. But, alas, Sofia won't just take Manny's word for it that Sam has such plans. Lastly, Manny observes that Sam has a very quick temper and that it is easily set off by the slightest insult. One evening, when supper was finished, Sam ordered Vic to clear the dishes from the table. As Vic walked by with dirty dishes in hand, Manny quietly stretched out his leg and caused Vic to trip and dump all the dishes in Sam's lap. Enraged, Sam threw Vic across the room, rushed over to him and slapped him repeatedly, and screamed, "You clumsy brat! I ought to kill you now and get it over with!" Sure enough, that night, while Sam was sleeping, Sofia helped them make their escape.

In this scenario, both Sofia and Sam are manipulated. Sofia is manipulated by Manny to do good, so her case is not pertinent to our discussion of EMP. However, it seems that she is morally responsible for her action in helping Manny and Vic escape despite that action being determined by Manny's manipulation of Sam. More to the point, Manny's manipulation of Sam in this case—manipulation that determined that Sam perpetrate the evil of abusing Vic—does not cast any evil aspersions on Manny. Though he knew—even intended—that Sam would abuse Vic, he acted for the sake of a much greater good, namely, their escape from captivity and the saving of their lives. And what is more, returning to the *second* part of EMP, Manny's manipulation of Sam does nothing to mitigate the latter's moral responsibility for abusing Vic.

So, EMP is clearly false. Therefore, it cannot be used to question the goodness of God on Christian compatibilism. For all that Walls has said it is perfectly possible that God determine/"manipulate" human agents to do evil actions and God remain untainted by evil and, what's more, the human agents still be morally responsible for their actions. Patrick Todd (no friend of compatibilism) concurs with this conclusion. In consideration of objections similar to Walls's, he writes,

> It seems perfectly possible that an author of a given script should intensely dislike some of the actions of the characters in his script, es-

pecially when those actions are considered in themselves, in isolation from the rest of the story. In other words, I take it that God's aim in writing a script is to write a very good script. . . . And from his including a particular episode in the script, one cannot infer that he approves of that episode considered by itself—that he would not object to a script consisting solely (or mostly) of such episodes.[12]

He later remarks,

> Does God act wrongly in creating a world that is overall very good, if there are bad parts of that world which are necessary to secure its overall goodness? Very plausibly, he does not. In short, God will take responsibility for creating the world, and he will take responsibility (even moral responsibility) for what everyone does in his world. But when someone does something wrong, he will not accept that *he* acted wrongly in bringing such an action about. For he did not—instead, if anything, he acted rightly (or certainly permissibly) in doing so, since he knows that such an action at such a time is necessary to secure some good which outweighs it.[13]

Todd also responds to the thesis contained in the second part of EMP. In discussing the case of a man named Ernie who was compatibilistically determined to kill Jones, Todd offers the following example:

> [O]ne might worry how God can blame Ernie for killing Jones when his intent in putting the relevant causes into place was for him to do so. . . . Suppose Bob knows that Fred is the culprit [of earlier stealing from him] and wishes to catch him in the act of stealing. Bob invites Fred over and sets out an expensive item where he thinks Fred will see it and likely steal it; if he does so, Bob will have caught Fred's thievery on tape. Sure enough, Fred takes the item. In this case, Fred acts precisely according to Bob's intent; Fred did just what he intended him to do. But Bob can certainly blame Fred for stealing the item in question.

> So even if God did intend that Ernie kills Jones, it is not clear how this fact in itself rules out God's standing to blame Ernie.[14]

Take, then, the story of Joseph being sold into slavery by his brothers in Genesis 37. Let us suppose (as Christian compatibilists would) that God, knowing the moral characters of Joseph's brothers, so orchestrated events (for example, Joseph's dreams and his father's gift of the many-colored robe) that they would be moved to jealousy and find themselves unable to refrain from selling Joseph to the slave traders when the opportunity arose. Does God's action in this case make him evil? Joseph did not think so. At the end

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12. Patrick Todd, "Manipulation and Moral Standing: An Argument for Incompatibilism," *Philosophers' Imprint* 12, no. 7 (2012): 9.

13. Ibid., 7.

14. Ibid., 8.

of the account, he tells his brothers, "You intended it for evil, but God intended it for good" (Gen. 50:20). Joseph believed that God *intended* for his brothers to sell him into slavery. But God's intention, unlike that of the brothers, aimed at greater goods, namely saving the Mediterranean world from a famine, preserving his covenant people from perishing, fulfilling his divine promise to do just that, and so on. And Joseph obviously believed that God's intentions morally justified his allowing the brothers to do their evil deed. If, as we surmise, God not only allowed the brothers to do this evil but also determined somehow that they do it—as Manny determined that Sam abuse Vic—we do not see why this would cast any evil aspersions on God, nor how it would exonerate the brothers from blameworthiness.[15]

So, we have seen that two principles on which Walls relies in order to argue against Christian compatibilism— namely, (PP) and (EMP)—are quite dubious. We move now to consider Walls's two main arguments against Christian compatibilism.

Does All the Appalling Evil in the World Pose a Devastating Challenge to Christian Compatibilism?

As noted above, the first of Walls's arguments—(6)–(10)—is designed to show that compatibilism exacerbates the problem of evil in a way that libertarianism does not. The premise of this argument that we wish to challenge is:

(9)   Our world contains much appalling moral evil that could not plausibly be thought necessary for creatures properly to appreciate good (or similar purposes).

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15. One of us (Welty) has long put the point in the following way in the classroom: Clearly, in the account of Joseph's betrayal (Gen. 50:20; 45:5; Ps. 105:16–17), we have *one* set of events that involve moral evil (the betrayal of Joseph by his brothers, his being left for dead, his being sold into slavery), but we have *two* sets of intentions with respect to those events. Joseph's brothers meant evil. That was their intent, their goal. But God meant it with another intention or purpose in mind: great good (*tov*), the preserving of many lives. The grammar of the Hebrew confirms this interpretation. The word for "evil" (*ra'ah*) is feminine singular, and the word translated "it" is a feminine singular suffix (the 'ah' in '*hashevah*' or "intended it"). The pronoun perfectly matches its nearest antecedent ("evil"). So Joseph's brothers and God are intending the same set of events. But although God *meant* the evil events which befell Joseph, he meant them *for good*, and it's the *divine* intention behind these events that makes all the difference in the world! We praise God for his good intentions with respect to the events which befell Joseph, even while we recognize the sin of Joseph's brothers because of *their* intentions with respect to those same events. There is a *teleological asymmetry* here. Compatibilists will say this is a model for understanding any and every sin which occurs in God's universe. It is overdetermined with respect to intention, so that *men are blamed* for their intending of the act for evil, while *God is praised* for his intending of the act for a greater good, as he providentially takes it up into his all-wise plan. God meant the evil done to Joseph, but he meant it for good.

Walls uses (9) in the (6)–(10) argument to show that the appalling moral evil in our world gives us good reason to think that we live in a libertarian world rather than in a compatibilist one. Thus, this is an argument from evil against the truth of compatibilist free will. But in our view, premise (9) is either inadequately argued or if accepted would provide equally compelling arguments against Christian libertarianism. It is then polemically infelicitous for Walls to argue against Christian compatibilism in this way.

A Skeptical Theist Argument

Here's one problem with (9): *its vagueness undercuts Walls's claim of implausibility*. What is it that Walls claims is implausible? Well, that the world's "appalling moral evil" is "necessary for creatures to properly appreciate good (or similar purposes)." That's what's implausible. But if Walls can't be bothered to specify these "similar purposes," then the game is up. How does he know it is wholly implausible that the evils are needed to fulfill such purposes if he can't even *specify* what the purposes are? Isn't the burden on Walls to show that God *can* properly eliminate even these appalling moral evils? Since he is the one making the implausibility claim, doesn't he have to show that it is implausible for God to have a justifying purpose with respect to them? Well, how does he propose to do this? By appeal to negative seemings, to the idea that it *seems to him* that there are no such justifying purposes and therefore most likely there are none? But why would God's justifying reasons be discernible to *him*?

So the vagueness of (9)'s final clause—"(or similar purposes)"— makes it impossible to assess Walls's claim. He might as well say, "X is very unlikely to be the case, and I shall not specify X." Think about it this way. If Walls holds that it is *not plausible* to think that the existence of many appalling moral evils are necessary to fulfill any divine purposes, then he must hold that it is *plausible* that God can fulfill all of his divine purposes quite apart from the appalling moral evils we see in the world. But in that case, he needs to specify the full range of divine purposes at work in the actual world, and then sketch out how God could accomplish them apart from the evils in question. We highly doubt he can do either. But if (9) is thus unwarranted, so is any conclusion that crucially relies on it, such as Walls's idea that we in fact have libertarian free will. (Note that Walls's unspecified reference to divine purposes—"(or similar purposes)"—so crucial to his argument, appears not only in premise (9) of his argument but in premises (7) and (8) as well.)

A Parity Argument

We contend that an equally plausible analogue to (9) enables us to argue against libertarian free will just as forcefully as Walls believes he can argue against compatibilism. The argument unfolds in two major stages.

The value of libertarian free will

Walls reminds us that "No theist gets a free pass on Nero, Hitler, and Ted Bundy."[16] But Walls thinks that the value of libertarian freedom makes all the difference in the world in providing an adequate theistic response to such evils. He "fully concur[s] with Plantinga's judgment that it is highly implausible to think such [terrible] things would occur if we are not free in the libertarian sense," that is, if we have compatibilist freedom. By way of contrast, he holds that it is highly plausible to think that "there are goods essentially related to such [libertarian] freedom that are worth the awful price of such evil."[17]

Though he does not name them, goods typically mentioned in connection with libertarian freedom are: *human choices satisfying the source condition* (I am the ultimate cause of my intention to act, and perhaps I image God in this respect), *human choices satisfying the leeway condition* (for any action I choose, I could have refrained from that action in the same exact circumstances, and perhaps here I image God as well), and *the opportunity for humans to freely enter into loving relationships with God and with each other* (where the exercise of such freedom is uncaused and indeterministic). It is precisely the total *lack* of such goods in compatibilist worlds that is said to deprive such worlds of great value. Again, as Walls puts it, "there are goods essentially related to such freedom that are worth the awful price of such evil." So the appalling moral evils in *our* world are "worth it" because of this great value of libertarian freedom. (In saying this we allegedly see that the evils in this world are consistent with this being a libertarian world, but such evils are not consistent with this being a compatibilist world.)

Peter Geach on restricted free will

Well, let's think about this a bit, by way of an argument found in Peter Geach's *Truth and Hope*: "God could have simply given us free choice among only good alternatives. . . . it is surely plausible that God could have wired us so that thoughts of evil acts never occurred to us, while thoughts of diverse good courses of action always would, thus leaving us plenty of genuine alternatives in choice."[18] Or again, Daniel Howard-Snyder suggests,

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16. Walls, "Why No Classical Theist, Let Alone Orthodox Christian, Should Ever Be a Compatibilist," 91.

17. Ibid.

18. Peter Geach, *Truth and Hope* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2001). This sentence is Michael J. Murray's summary of Geach, in Michael J. Murray, review of *Truth and Hope*, by Peter Geach, *Notre Dame Philosophical Reviews*, February 4, 2002, https://ndpr.

"Suppose he [that is, God] had simply prevented us from ever having geno-cidal thoughts."[19] This suggests the following argument:

(1) In the actual world it is obvious that God has hardwired us so that certain thoughts that would otherwise be thinkable by us, are not in fact thinkable by us (perhaps because of their size or complexity). Perhaps angels can think these thoughts, but we cannot.

(2) Therefore, it is plausible to think that it was open to an omnipotent God to hardwire us in *other* ways, so that other kinds of thoughts wouldn't occur to us as well: thoughts of evil actions.

(3) If God were to so hardwire us, then there would be no moral evil whatsoever.

(4) If God were to so hardwire us, we would nevertheless satisfy both the source and leeway conditions on libertarian free will:

(*a*) For any action we choose (among the various good actions that occur to us), *we are the ultimate cause* of our intending that action.

(*b*) For any action we choose (among the various good actions that occur to us), *we could have refrained* from performing that action in the same exact circumstances, and performed some other action instead.

(5) Therefore, it was open to God to create an *indeterministic* world in which there is no moral evil, all human persons satisfy the source and leeway conditions on libertarian free will, and they always in-deterministically choose the good.

Given (5), then, why would God create a world that ends up having evil in it? Invoking libertarian free will now seems otiose. Is it because of the value of libertarian free will? But the world described satisfies source and leeway conditions on libertarian free will.[20] Is it because of the value of humans freely entering into loving relationships with God? But the world described

nd.edu/news/23380-truth-and-hope-the-furst-franz-josef-und-furstin-gina-lectures-delivered-at-the-international-academy-of-philosophy-1998/.

19. Daniel Howard-Snyder, "The Problem of Evil," in *Reason for the Hope Within*, ed. Michael J. Murray (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998), 100. Compare David Lewis: "If freedom in such choices as this is significant enough, unlike free choice of breakfast, then God need not permit evil for freedom's sake. He can leave us free to choose between goods, but not free to choose evil. (Just as He leaves us free to stand or to walk, but not to fly)" (Lewis, "Evil for Freedom's Sake?," *Philosophical Papers* 22 (1993): 153).

20. Steve Cowan has recently argued that the bare existence of free will simply cannot be worth all the actual evils in the world; cf. "Compatibilism and the Sinlessness of the Redeemed in Heaven," *Faith and Philosophy* 28 (2011): 416–31. E.g., if I stand idly by while my son seri-ously injures a playmate and I do so simply for the sake of allowing his exercise of free will, it is intuitively obvious that I should have intervened to prevent my son's exercise of free will in this case. We all echo this sentiment when we prevent suicide attempters from killing themselves or lock up criminals to prevent further crimes. Free will, though perhaps valuable in itself, is not *that* valuable.

has that as well. To be sure, such a world has *something* missing from it: human beings actually thinking evil thoughts. Is *that* something that God would find to be so valuable, that he would permit all the horrific evils that we find in the actual world? That seems most implausible.

We seem then to have an argument for an analogue of Walls's (9):

(9′) Our world contains much appalling moral evil the possibility of which could not plausibly be thought necessary for the great value of libertarian free will.

And whereas Walls plugs (9) into an argument against the actuality of *compatibilist* free will, we can plug (9′) into an argument against the actuality of (unrestricted) *libertarian* free will. Indeed, we are now provided with *an analogue of Walls's (CI)* or "Compatibilist Implication," articulated at the beginning of his article and so crucial for the subsequent argument. Call it (II) or "Incompatibilist Implication":

(CI) If freedom and determinism are compatible, God could have created a world in which all persons freely did only the good at all times.

(II) If restricted free will is possible, God could have created a world in which all persons freely did only the good at all times.

Final thoughts on this parity argument response to (9)

If the libertarian nevertheless insists that the kind of "restricted" freedom we've described isn't really valuable, then we must be crystal clear as to what he is saying: the value God places on libertarian freedom is *not* that it allows us to be the ultimate cause of our intentions, or that it frees us from determinism, or that it allows us to do otherwise in the same exact circumstances, or that it allows us to freely choose the good. All such desiderata are satisfied on the view just sketched out, and yet there is no moral evil in the universe. Rather, the value of free will must be, *specifically*, the opportunity it gives us *to do moral evil*. *That* is what its value consists in. And that strikes us as very implausible—that a perfectly good God would permit the full range of horrific evil on display in the actual world because of the value he places not on source conditions, not on leeway conditions, not on the opportunity to do good, but on the *opportunity to do evil!* God permitted the Holocaust because it is extremely valuable to God that persons have the opportunity to do evil? If we're right, no other reason can plausibly be cited here, if one is a libertarian. And yet the consequence seems incredible: why would *that* be a thing of value in God's eyes, as opposed to the other things we've named?

So when Walls says that "libertarian freedom gives us at least plausible reasons for much of the evil in our world," and that "libertarian freedom gives us at least working material to construct plausible rebuttals for

skeptical arguments from evil,"[21] we conclude that he is simply mistaken. The sole value of libertarian freedom cannot consist simply in *the opportunity to do evil*. (If I give you opportunity to do evil that you didn't have before, have I increased the value of the world? How?) And yet the *other* things traditionally said to make libertarian freedom quite valuable can be had in a world without evil. So, libertarian freedom *doesn't* make the prospects for theodicy any brighter than compatibilist freedom.

Walls says that "the problem of evil is intensified to the point that it is all but insuperable if the only freedom we have is of the compatibilist variety."[22] But it's not clear how libertarian freedom makes a whit of difference. Walls says that the skeptic of the Christian faith should "be completely dubious of the notion that any God could be good, let alone perfectly good, who would create a world full of misery and intense suffering when he could just as easily have made one relatively, if not altogether, free of evil."[23] But unless Walls wishes to hang all the "misery and intense suffering" in the world on God's value judgment that *thinking evil* or *doing evil* is extremely valuable to God, skeptics should be equally dubious of the goodness of a God who created creatures with *libertarian* freedom. (Indeed, at least on compatibilist freedom God can infallibly ensure that every evil works out to a greater good, whereas it's not clear God can do this at all, given unrestricted libertarian freedom.)

Must a Loving God Secure the Flourishing of All Human Beings?

Walls gives a fifteen-step argument (premises (11)–(25)) for the truth of universalism given compatibilism. Since Christians reject universalism as false, he claims this is a reason to reject Christian compatibilism. Crucial to Walls's argument is premise (12):

(12) If God truly loves all persons, then he does all he can properly do to secure their true flourishing.

As with premise (9) above, we offer a skeptical theist argument in rebuttal of (12). We also offer an empirical argument.

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21. Walls, "Why No Classical Theist, Let Alone Orthodox Christian, Should Ever Be a Compatibilist," 93.
22. Ibid., 92.
23. Ibid., 93.

A Skeptical Theist Argument

Recall that premise (9) was vague about *"(or similar purposes)."* Well, premise (12) seems equally vague about *"all he can properly do."* This comes out in Walls's footnote gloss on "properly," which we quote in full:

> The "properly" qualification [in premise (12)] is needed in case one faced a situation where one could promote the flourishing of a person *P* only by harming person *Q*, or diminishing her flourishing, or by losing some other good of equal or greater value. In that case, one might love *P* but *not* promote her flourishing as much as one could. While this sort of limitation might hold for those with limited means or creativity, I doubt that it applies to God, at least in the long run.[24]

What are we to make of this argument? Walls says the limitation "might hold" in some contexts, but he has "doubt" that it applies to God. While Walls offers no explicit reasons for his doubt, presumably it has to do with God's *unlimited* "means or creativity." God's omniscience and omnipotence are such that he would simply *never be* in a situation where his promoting P's flourishing would involve "harming person *Q*, or diminishing her flourishing, or . . . losing some other good of equal or greater value." But the problem is that a provident God is not merely omniscient and omnipotent. He also has *purposes*, and it is implausible in the extreme to think that God's *only* purpose is to "secure the true flourishing" of human beings. Presumably this is one among *many* purposes God aims at with his creation. Walls hints at this with his language of "losing some *other* good of equal or greater value" (emphasis ours): he recognizes that there are more goods, *other* goods, to be had in creation, than the true flourishing of human persons. Since the existence of these goods, and of divine purposes which aim at these goods, may very well affect what God "can properly do" *consistent with accomplishing these other purposes*, then for all we know (12) is consistent with quite substantive limitations on what God "can properly do"!

The fact that I can easily accomplish purpose *X* given my degree of knowledge and power helps us not at all to reliably judge that I can just as easily accomplish purpose *X and* purpose *Y and* purpose *Z* (and so on) given my knowledge and power. As an example, assume purpose *X* is to promote true human flourishing, and purpose *Y* is to display divine justice in the punishment of sin (or, alternatively, to take human choices, even bad ones, with great seriousness). If *Y* involves punishment in hell, then it seems to serve as an obvious constraint on securing purpose *X*. So the warrant for Walls's (12) is undercut for reasons similar to why the warrant for Walls's (9) was undercut. Walls hasn't bothered to reckon with the full range of divine purposes at

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24. Ibid., 95n38 (emphasis added).

work in the actual world. How plausible is it to think that (12)—important as it is!—encapsulates God's *only* purpose with respect to the creation?[25]

Strictly speaking, we can *grant* Walls's (12) as long as we are aware of the significance of his qualifier, "can properly do." But what the above considerations tend to show then is that the warrant for his premise (19) is now undercut:

> (19) If freedom and determinism are compatible, then God can properly secure a right relationship with all persons by determining all to freely accept his love and be saved.

(19) is no longer a "clear conceptual truth that can hardly be denied,"[26] because its inference is only valid if we have assurance that the divine purposes to secure other goods (purposes and goods tucked away under "properly secure") *don't* stand in the way of "determining all to freely accept his love and be saved." Leaving these goods and purposes unspecified, we simply don't know this. *This single issue pervades the entire argument*; once Walls introduces "properly" in premise (12), notice he must explicitly repeat it in premises (13), (15), (16), (17), (19), (20), (21), and (22). The whole argument rests upon something he hasn't bothered to specify: *what is it* that God can *properly* do?

While Walls anticipates the above line of response in section 6 of his paper, he seems to think the burden of proof is on the *compatibilist* to supply such purposes and goods. But he who affirms must prove, and it is *Walls* who is asking us to accept (12) and (19), replete with the claim about what God can "properly" do. So, *he* must make the case for these premises, as we have tried to make clear above. Walls says, "Such incomprehensible goals, obviously, are hard to address or assess."[27] That might be true, but that's his problem, not ours. If "properly" (in "he does all he can properly do") *includes* the diversity of divine purpose, then for all Walls has argued, (19) is just false. Of course, if God *has* no other purposes with respect to creation than to "secure the true flourishing" of human beings, then perhaps he can secure *that* purpose. But Walls has to *argue* for this restriction of divine purpose to the single thing enshrined in (12), if (19) is to have warrant.

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25. Interestingly, Philip Quinn concurs with our assessment. He writes that "Christians need to avoid . . . assuming that humanity is the most important thing or the only important thing from a God's eye point of view. Such assumptions would bespeak a prideful cosmic anthropocentrism. . . . Within a balanced Christian perspective . . . facts about what is good or bad for humans to do or suffer have some cosmic importance because God cares about them, but Christians would be unwarranted if they supposed that God cares more about such facts than about anything else that transpires in the created cosmos" (Quinn, "The Meaning of Life according to Christianity," in *The Meaning of Life: A Reader*, ed. E. D. Klemke and Steven M. Cahn (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 39–40).

26. Walls, "Why No Classical Theist, Let Alone Orthodox Christian, Should Ever Be a Compatibilist," 97

27. Ibid., 99.

Walls contends that "unless it is *necessary* that he display his justice by punishing sin in order fully to glorify himself, then premise (19) remains intact."[28] And Walls regards as extraordinary the claim, not that God *is* just, but that he must *necessarily display* his justice in various ways (such as "by punishing sin in order to fully glorify himself"). But why is this any *less* plausible than the alleged "conceptual truth" of premise (12)?: "If God truly loves all persons, then he does all he can properly do to secure their true flourishing." Why is it *necessary* for God to "display his love" by doing something ("secure their true flourishing") but *not* necessary for God to display his justice by doing something? Why do libertarians get a necessary connection between divine love and divine action, but compatibilists don't get *any* necessary connection between divine justice and divine action? Walls is disturbed by the idea that "God must display his justice," but he wholly accepts the idea that God must display his love. We can't see how one necessity is more objectionable than the other.

In addition, from the perspective of orthodox Christianity, Walls needs to reckon with whether it was *necessary* for God to create a world in which people ended up in hell. Surely God didn't *have* to create. So God must have made a value judgment: creating a world in which people end up in hell is "worth it," either because of the value of free will, or the value of loving relationships, or the value of heaven for those who end up being there, etc. But if so, then we have a straightforward falsification of (12), for God *did not* do all he could do to avoid the reality of people ending up in hell. He could have refrained from creating these people. But he didn't. In effect, Walls capitalizes on a premise ((12)) that insists that God "does all he can properly do to secure their true flourishing." But he's silent on whether God does all he can properly do *to avoid their genuine and eternal ruin*. Isn't it a condition of true flourishing that one at the very least *avoids* such ruin? If so, then there's one thing God clearly could have done but didn't: *not create them*. Thus, the falsity of universalism seems to disprove *Walls's* account of the love of God. Ephesians 1 teaches that God's love is from eternity, prior to the creation. But how is it love for people to ensure from eternity a ruin for them that you could have easily precluded for them, by not creating them?

Finally, notice that (12) is irrelevant against compatibilism unless (19) is true, and (19) is surely not a "clear conceptual truth that can hardly be denied"![29] In "Evil for Freedom's Sake?," David Lewis considers the creative options of God in a compatibilist universe:

> [L]et's consider the compatibilist alternative a little further. Suppose God did determine our choices via our characters, preventing evildoing while leaving us free. How might He do it? By a wise choice of initial conditions and uniform, powerful, simple laws of nature?—

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28. Ibid., 100 (emphasis added).
29. Ibid., 97.

> That might be mathematically impossible. The problem might be
> overconstrained. It might be like the problem: find a curve which is
> given by an equation no more than fifteen characters long, and which
> passes through none of the following hundred listed regions of the
> plane.[30]

Notice that such constraints have nothing to do with the multiplicity of
the divine purposes, and everything to do with matters of logic. Surely the
exercise of compatibilist freedom by billions of human agents couldn't oc-
cur in a vacuum, but rather needs an environment stable enough to ensure
the intelligibility of deliberation, guidance control, reasons-responsiveness,
and so forth. The requisite stability would impose constraints of some sort.

An Empirical Argument

According to Walls's (12), "If God truly loves all persons, then he does
all he can properly do to secure their true flourishing." Walls's point is that an
evident fact of orthodox Christian tradition—that universalism is false—may
be combined with (12) to argue for the falsity of compatibilism. But Walls's
argument proves too much. For an evident fact of empirical experience—that
multitudes are born, live, and die, without ever *hearing* the gospel—seems
inconsistent with (12). A necessary condition for "true flourishing" is to be
"in a right relationship with God, in which . . . [they] are saved" (Walls's
premise (14)). No one will be saved apart from hearing and believing the
gospel, and surely an omnipotent God is able to bring the gospel to any cre-
ated person. But it is an evident fact of history that multitudes of people are
born, live, and die without ever hearing the gospel, even though it would
be a trivial thing for divine omnipotence to directly reveal the gospel mes-
sage to them. Therefore, God does not ensure they get the gospel message
even though he could do so. Therefore, God *doesn't* do all he can properly
do to secure the true flourishing of all persons. It follows that either evident
empirical experience is delusive, or that (11) is false (that is, God *doesn't*
love all persons), or (our preference!) that (12) is an inaccurate claim about
divine love.

If Walls is going to salvage (12) from this critique, he needs to "go es-
chatological" and affirm that all persons who do not hear the gospel in this
life receive it in a postmortem state.[31] That is, God "does all he can properly

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30. David Lewis, "Evil for Freedom's Sake?," 156. A footnote after the fifth sentence of this
quotation reads as follows: "Remember how much the laws of nature must be 'fine-tuned' be-
fore they even permit life. See John Leslie, *Universes* (London, Routledge, 1989), 4–6, 27–65."

31. If we understand Walls's recent book on purgatory correctly (*Purgatory: The Logic of
Total Transformation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), chaps. 5 and 6), this is pre-
cisely what he believes God does! Walls even goes so far as to say that God continues to work
with people in hell after they have rejected the gospel either in this life *or* in a postmortem state,
in order to secure their salvation.

do to secure their true flourishing," but he doesn't do it *now*. He does it *later*. But doesn't this trivialize the good of a lifetime of Christian service and worship? For many people, like us and like Walls, our "true flourishing" begins on earth, when we become Christians. Why would God preclude that flourishing for some? Multitudes *could have enjoyed* the blessing of salvation along with that of their parents, their children, and their closest friends, all of them impacting the lives of others as Christians in a fallen world. But apparently God decided to wait to fulfill that necessary condition for salvation (bringing the preaching of the gospel to them only in a postmortem context), even though he didn't have to wait. Is it that God *didn't really want* any of the people who in fact fail to hear the gospel on earth, to ever be converted on earth, to live a Christian life on earth, to impact others for Christ on earth? Is *that* compatible with the love of God as understood in (12)?

In his book *Hell: The Logic of Damnation*, Walls writes, "If the Christian message is crucial for human fulfilment and happiness, it is good for all persons to hear that message as soon as possible."[32] So why doesn't God ensure that good? And if God is lazy or negligent in this respect, doesn't that encourage us to be? Walls raises an "obvious question" for compatibilists: "why, if God can determine all persons freely to accept salvation eventually, he could not do so now. Or why would he not do so now"?[33] But we can raise an equally obvious question for Walls: Why, if God can get the gospel to all persons eventually, could he not do so now? Or why would he not do so now? There's an easy way out here for Walls to take: acknowledge that God's doing all that he can *properly* do to secure the true flourishing of persons is constrained by his pursuing *more* than just the single purpose of true flourishing of persons. And it is because of these *other* purposes God has, that God refrains from getting the gospel to all, even though he could do this. But, as earlier argued, being clear on this point undercuts the usefulness of (12) against Christian compatibilism.

It is time to sum up. The Scriptural narrative indicates there are indeed limits to what Pharaoh's magicians can do. As compatibilists, we regret that we cannot turn sticks to snakes (Exod. 7:11), the Nile to blood (7:22), or summon frogs from the waters (8:6). Sadly, our dark arts are restricted to undercutting dubious arguments against Christian compatibilism, such as those which proceed from premises (PP), (EMP), (9), and (12).[34]

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32. Jerry Walls, *Hell: The Logic of Damnation* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1992), 95.

33. Walls, "Why No Classical Theist, Let Alone Orthodox Christian, Should Ever Be a Compatibilist," 103.

34. An addendum to this article, "More Rebuttals of Walls from Pharaoh's Magicians' 'Bag of Tricks'!" is available at the *Evangelical Philosophical Society* website at http://epsociety.org/library/articles.asp?pid=269&mode=detail.