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The Free Will Defense And Determinism

James Sennett

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James F. Sennett

Edward Wierenga has argued that the free will defense (FWD) is compatible
with compatibilism (*Faith and Philosophy*, April 1988). I maintain that
Wierenga is mistaken. I distinguish between the *conceptual* doctrine of com-
patibilism and the *metaphysical* doctrine of soft determinism, and offer ar-
guments that the FWD fails if either doctrine is true. Finally, I reconstruct
Wierenga's argument and argue that it fails because either it is equivocal or
it contains a false premise.

Introduction

Edward Wierenga has charged Alvin Plantinga with hastiness in the latter's
concession that the free will defense (FWD) fails if compatibilism is true
([6], p. 216—see [4], pp. 44-47).[1] The major requirement of the FWD is that
"if *God* causes someone else's action to occur it's not a free action." But this
is perfectly consistent with compatibilism, which is the thesis that "it's pos-
sible that all actions are both free and caused—caused, that is, by antecedent
conditions and not by the agent himself."[2]

The consistency of these two claims is seen when we understand that "not
just any cause is compatible with an action's being free; free actions have to
have *the right kind* of cause." That is, the agent's beliefs and desires must be
the principal causal elements, and these beliefs and desires must have arisen
in the proper ways. They must not have been artificially manipulated or
created. But this conception of free action entails that no one (hence, not even
God) could *cause* a given agent to perform a free action. Only his desires and
beliefs—properly formed and properly functioning—can cause him to do so.
Hence, since compatibilism and the FWD both entail the same crucial the-
sis—that God cannot cause an agent to perform a free action—they need not
be understood as being in conflict. As long as God does not cause the free
actions that cause the evil, there is room for the free will defense. Thus
Plantinga's concession that compatibilism defeats the FWD is unnecessary.

I contend that Wierenga is wrong, and that Plantinga's original misgivings
are essentially sound.[3]

I. *Preliminary Matters*

Determinism is the thesis that all events (including all actions) are causally determined to occur by past events.[4] The *free will thesis* is the thesis that there are some free actions. *The compatibilist thesis* is the thesis that determinism and the free will thesis are compatible: it is possible that they both be true. Let us use 'D' for the proposition *All events are causally determined* and 'F' for the proposition *There are some free actions*. We may then construe the compatibilist thesis thus:

CT: ◊ (D & F).

Plantinga notes the "the canny compatibilist" will argue not simply that D and F are compatible, but that an action is free only if it is determined ([4], p. 46). Using "F*" for the predicate *is a free action* and 'D*' for the predicate *is causally determined*, we may then distinguish between a *weak* and a *strong* compatibilist thesis:

WCT (=CT): ◊ (D & F)

SCT: $\Box$ (x) (F*x→ D*x).[5]

I will deal primarily with WCT, and refer to it simply as CT.

The *incompatibilist thesis* is that F and D are inconsistent. That is (using '¬ D' for the proposition *Some events are not causally determined*),

IT: $\Box$ (F → ¬ D).

Note that CT and IT are both theses about the logical relation of the concepts of free action and causal determination. Neither of these theses makes any assertions at all about the metaphysical structure of the actual world. That is, both are consistent with D. They are also consistent with *indeterminism*, the thesis that some events are not causally determined (i.e., ¬ D). (Throughout this paper, it is assumed that if there are any undetermined events, they are actions. Questions of indeterminism on a quantum level are bracketed for the sake of simplicity.)

In order for CT or IT to have metaphysical import, they must be coupled with D or ¬ D. There are two such couplings that interest us here. First, there is the *libertarian thesis*, which states that IT is true, and there are some free actions. That is, 'F & $\Box$ (F → ¬ D): The second conjunct of this sentence is inconsistent with CT. Assuming it would, therefore, beg the question against the compatibilist from the start. I therefore present a weaker formulation of the libertarian thesis for our purposes:

L: ¬ D & F.[6]

I will show before the end of this paper, however, that a successful FWD must entail not only L but the stronger formulation as well. Finally, there is *soft determinism*, which is the claim that both D and F are true (and *a fortiori*, CT is true). That is,

SD: D & F.

A caveat is in order before going on. I do not pretend that L, CT, and SD capture all the conceptual richness of the philosophical doctrines of libertarianism, compatibilism, and soft determinism. My formulations are, rather, distillations of the crucial features of these doctrines that bear on the FWD. Perhaps it is best to understand these formulae as *entailed* by the respective doctrines, rather than as representative of them.

II. *Plantinga's FWD*

a. *The Defense*

Before discussing the bearing these distinctions have on Wierenga's claims, we must say a few words about Plantinga's specific formulation of the FWD. The FWD in general is the thesis that God is not responsible for the moral evil in the world, since it has come about as a result of free actions by human agents. Plantinga provides modal substance for this claim. He begins by noting that there are some possible worlds that God could not have actualized ([3], pp. 169ff).

Consider a set of states of affairs $\{S_1, S_2, \ldots, S_n\}$ such that its members are all God actualizes in bringing about the actual world. Call this set T(W). If there are free agents, then the actualization of T(W) does not determine that any particular world will come about. Rather, there is a set of possible worlds $\{W_1, W_2, \ldots W_n\}$[7] such that any one of these worlds might be actualized as a result of the actualization of T(W). Call this set the *range* of T(W).

Plantinga maintains that it is possible that the actual world (call it W_1) is only one of many possible worlds that could have been actualized as a result of God's actualizing T(W). The crucial feature determining that W_1 be actual rather than any other W_i is the set of free actions actually performed. For any free action *a* performed by some agent J at a given time t, there are many possible worlds in the range of T(W) that are identical to W_1 prior to t and in which J refrains from performing *a* at t. Call one such world W_2. W_1 and W_2 both include T(W), but are not the same world. But it is not God's responsibility that W_1 rather than W_2—or any other W_i in the range of T(W)— is actualized. It is rather the responsibility of J (or other free moral agents).

Now, suppose W_1 contains more moral evil than W_2. It was within J's power to actualize W_2 rather than W_1, but not within God's. God's power reaches its limit at the actualization of T(W).[8] Hence the moral responsibility for the moral evil in W_1 rests not on God's shoulders, but on the shoulders of free agents. God (alone) could not actualize W_1 or W_2 or any possible world containing free actions ([3], p. 172).[9]

b. *Plantinga's FWD and L*

It can be shown that Planting must assume L to be true in the foregoing development. Consider again time t, the time at which J performs *a* in W_1. If Plantinga's FWD is to work, then for any time t' prior to t, it must be

possible, given the state of the world at t', *both* that J perform *a* at t *and* that J refrain from performing *a* at t. That is, at no time prior to t can the state of the world entail either that J perform *a* at t or that J refrain from performing *a* at t. This can be the case only if T(W) does not include the state of affairs *All events in W_1 being causally determined to occur by events in W_1*.[10]

If we use 'A' for the proposition, *J performs a at t*, '$\neg$ A' for *J refrains from performing a at t*, and 'Tg' for *God actualizes T(W)*, then the above point can be made by asserting that both of the following two propositions must be true if Plantinga's FWD is to work:

JA: $\Diamond$ (Tg & A)

and

J $\neg$ A: $\Diamond$ (Tg & $\neg$ A).[11]

That is, the actualization of T(W) cannot be sufficient to determine whether A or $\neg$ A is true in W_1.

Now, suppose that D is true in W_1. That is, one of the states of affairs included in T(W) is *All events in W_1 being causally determined by events in W_1*. It follows that T(W) *is* sufficient to determine whether A or $\neg$ A is true. Since *J's performing a at t* is an event, either it or its complement will be entailed by T(W). So one (and, of course, only one) of the following propositions is true:

(i) D $\rightarrow$ $\Box$ (Tg $\rightarrow$ $\neg$ A)

or

(ii) D $\rightarrow$ $\Box$ (Tg $\rightarrow$ A).

The consequents of (i) and (ii) are equivalent to the negations of JA and J $\neg$ A, respectively.[12] So, given that D is true, JA and J $\neg$ A cannot both be true. That is,

(iii) D $\rightarrow$ $\neg$ (JA & J $\neg$ A).

Since Plantinga's FWD depends on JA and J $\neg$ A both being true, it depends on determinism being false. Since the FWD (naturally) depends on there being free actions, it follows that Plantinga's FWD presupposes L ($\neg$ D & F) to be true.

III. *Contra Wierenga*

Now we can return to Wierenga's contention that compatibilism is consistent with the FWD. It is not clear whether he is claiming that CT is compatible with Plantinga's FWD, or just that it is possible to construct a FWD that is compatible with CT. I will assume that he means the latter, and will proceed to show that even this claim is false. I will make three points against Wierenga. First, I will argue that it is not so much CT as SD that is of concern to the free will defender, and SD is incompatible with the FWD. Second, I

will argue that even the weaker notion CT is incompatible with the FWD. Finally, in light of these arguments, I will show exactly where Wierenga's argument that CT is compatible with the FWD is flawed—it is either equivocal or unsound.

a. *SD and the FWD*

It is not clear that CT as specified above is the sense of 'compatibilism' that Plantinga is worried about when he states that the FWD is inconsistent with compatibilism. Rather, it seems that he has conflated the *possibility* of 'D & F' with its *actuality*. For instance, he says, "[W]hat is at stake here, fundamentally, is the conception of agent causation" ([4], p. 46). But agent causation is inconsistent with SD, *not* CT. That it is *possible* that determinism be true in no way entails that agent causation is *actually* false.

In fairness to Plantinga, I must point out that agent causation is also inconsistent with SCT (see page 341 above), which is actually what is bothering Plantinga at this point. But SCT plus F entails SD—given the proviso that all undetermined events are actions. Since the FWD depends on the assumption that F is true, concern over SCT for the free will defender reduces to concern over SD.

So perhaps Plantinga is more concerned with SD than with CT. At any rate, it does seem that it is SD that is really of interest to the free will defender. That is, is it possible that: (i) all events are determined, *and* (ii) there are some free actions, *and* (iii) the FWD successfully rebuts the argument from evil? If Wierenga thinks that he has successfully defended *this* claim, then he is mistaken.

Consider the following argument:

(1) Suppose that SD is true.

(2) If God freely performs action A and knows that A will causally determine event B, then God is to some extent morally responsible for any moral significance B might have.

(3) God's actualizing T(W) was a free action.

(4) God is omniscient, and therefore knew that his actualizing T(W) would causally determine that W₁ be actualized.

(5) The actualization of W_1 entails the actualization of the evil there is.

(6) Therefore, God is to some extent morally responsible for the evil that there is.

(7) If God is morally perfect, then he is in no way morally responsible for any evil.

(8) Therefore, God is not morally perfect.

(9) The FWD is intended to show that God's moral perfection is compatible with the evil in the world.

(10) Therefore, the FWD fails.

(11) Therefore, if SD is true, the FWD fails.

This argument has seven premises: (1) - (5), (7), and (9). Of these, (1) is the assumption for conditional proof, and is therefore above reproach. (3), (4), and (7) are data of any FWD. That is, they are points of agreement (for the sake of argument) between the problem of evil advocate and the free will defender. To deny any of them would be, it seems, to deny the need for a FWD. (5) is necessarily true, and (9) seems wholly unproblematic.

This leaves (2). The crucial question to be raised against (2) is: What reason do we have to think that knowledge of *causal* determination entails some *moral* responsibility? After all, double-effect counterexamples seem to abound. A doctor can save a life—a good—only by amputating a limb—an evil. The doctor knows that his actions will causally determine the loss of a limb. But what sense can we make of the claim that he bears any *moral* responsibility for the loss of the limb?

Perhaps the most effective way to defend premise (2) is to concede the examples, but to argue that the import of such cases does not extend to God's actions. Paramount in the double-effect scenario is the fact that the evil caused is an unavoidable means to a greater good. Were there any other, less morally costly way for the doctor to save the life, then he would be morally responsible if he chose to amputate rather than to take the better alternative. So an agent escapes moral responsibility for an evil event causally determined by his free action only if the evil was an unavoidable means to a greater good—only if, that is, the evil was justified in the strong sense that it contributed to a greater good and was the only means (or a necessary condition for the only means) to that good.

Let us look at the situation somewhat more formally. The doctor in our double-effect example above has two choices: (i) he amputates; or (ii) he does not amputate. The claim before us is

(12) The doctor bears no moral responsibility for any evil determined by (i) only if

(A) there is some state of affairs S such that (i) causally determines S; and

(B) there is no state of affairs S* such that

(a)S* includes (ii);

(b)it is in the doctor's power to actualize S* or to causally determine that S* be actualized;

(c)there is some state of affairs S** such that

(α) S* causally determines S**; and

(β) S** is morally preferable to S (i.e., S** contains a balance of moral good over moral evil preferable to that of S); and

(d)the doctor knows that (b) and (c).

The general principle underlying (12) can be specified to God's actualization of T(W) (allowing for certain entailments given that worlds are maximally consistent states of affairs) thus:

> (13)   God bears no moral responsible for the evil determined by his actual-
> izing T(W) only if W_1 (causally determined by the actualization of T(W)
> is such that there is no W^* such that
>
> (a) it is in God's power to actualize W^* or to causally determine that
> W^* be actualized[13];
>
> (b) W^* is morally preferable to W_1 (i.e., W^* contains a balance of moral
> good over moral evil preferable to that of W_1); and
>
> (c) God knows that (a) and (b).

Given God's omniscience, condition (c) is met trivially for any world in which (a) and (b) are true. W^* meets conditions (a) and (b) of (13) just in case it is an SD world and it is a morally better world than W_1.[14] Since (13) claims that God is not morally responsible for the evil in W_1 only if there is *no* world meeting conditions (a) and (b), it follows that God is not morally responsible for the evil in W_1 only if there is no SD world morally preferable to W_1. Hence, if *all* events are causally determined, God is morally justified in actualizing T(W) only if W_1 is the best possible world in which SD is true.[15]

But obviously this is not the case. Consider two counterexamples, one very modest, the other very extreme. The first is a world as close to W_1 as possible, except that Ted Bundy never commits any of the horrible evils he actually committed. Certainly such a world is better—however minutely—than the actual one. If both are worlds in which SD is true, then both are worlds God could have causally determined while preserving human freedom. The extreme case is one reminiscent of John Mackie's classic objection to the FWD. Mackie asked why God did not create only those free moral agents whom he knew would always freely choose to do good ([1], pp. 56f). In the present context we can ask, why did God not actualize a world in which SD is true and the causal chains are such that all free moral agents are determined freely to choose only the good?

Here it is crucial to note that Plantinga's FWD is a direct response to Mackie's objection ([2], pp. 135-49; [3], pp. 167-68). So it is no mistake that Plantinga's FWD requires that L be true. He argues that it might not be possible for God to create free moral agents that freely choose only the good—or even that freely choose to actualize more good and less evil than is in W_1. What these free creatures do is ultimately up to them, *not* up to God. But if SD is true, then what they freely do is ultimately up to God.

The libertarian can be content that this is not the best possible world in which L is true. However, a soft determinist who wishes to construct a FWD is saddled with the enormous task of arguing that this is the best of all possible

SD worlds. In light of the above plausible counterexamples, I cannot see how this task could be accomplished. Hence, I believe that (2) is true, and the argument against an SD-FWD is sound.

Why, then, does (2) speak only of God's being "to some extent morally responsible" for B? Why not, in light of the above development, simply charge that all blame for evil is his? To do so would be to beg the question against the soft determinist, who typically claims that the fact of determinism does not absolve an agent from moral blameworthiness or exclude her from moral praiseworthiness. (2) is worded as it is in order to make room for responsibility for evil on the part of other agents besides God. If J freely performs *a* (in the SD sense), then J may be to some extent morally responsible for any evil *a* causes, so God is not *wholly* to blame. But, as (7) points out, *any* moral responsibility would be inconsistent with God's moral perfection. In order for the FWD to work, God must be exonerated from *all* blameworthiness for evil. If SD is true, he is not so exonerated.[16]

b. *CT and the FWD*

So even if CT is compatible with the FWD, SD is not, and it is SD that is actually of concern to the free will defender. But the previous argument can help us see that even CT, as weak as it is, is also incompatible with a successful FWD.[17]

Suppose that the following three propositions are true:

(14) $\Diamond$ (D & F) [=CT]

(15) $\neg$ (D & F)

(16) There is a possible world W* such that (D & F) is true in W* and W* contains less evil than W_1.

It follows from these propositions that God need not have permitted all the evil there is, since he could have had both free will and causally determined actions. If CT is true in W_1, then there are worlds in which SD is true. (16) asserts that at least one SD world has less evil than W_1 (consider, for example, the Mackie SD world discussed in the previous section). Therefore, God needed simply to have actualized the appropriate states of affairs so as to causally determine such a world. God could have created a world in which there are free creatures and less evil than W_1, but he did not. Therefore, God seems again to be in some way responsible at least that there is the amount of evil that there is, in much the same way that he is if SD is true. CT, like SD, is incompatible with a FWD alleviation of such divine blame. If (14) - (16) are all true, then even compatibilism in the very weak form CT is incompatible with the FWD (note that (16) is necessarily true if true at all).

Notice that I have now shown what I promised to show early in the paper. Since even CT is incompatible with the FWD, a successful FWD

must assume *not* just L, but the stronger formulation of libertarianism given above: 'F & $\square$ (F → ¬ D).' If it is even possible that 'D & F' be true, then the FWD fails.[18]

c. *Wierenga on CT and the FWD*

But what of Wierenga's argument that causal determinism is consistent with the claim that free actions are not caused by God, and that this latter claim is all the FWD needs? Where did it go wrong? Our previous discussions put us in a position to see its shortcomings.

I understand Wierenga's argument to be:

(17) Causal determinism is compatible with the claim that no free action is caused by God.

(18) The proposition *No free action is caused by God* entails that the FWD is successful.[19]

(19) Therefore, causal determinism is compatible with the FWD.[20]

Either this argument is equivocal or it contains a false premise. The sense of 'caused by God' that the FWD needs to succeed is not 'proximately or appropriately caused,' or 'caused in a way incompatible with free will.' As we saw above, the FWD also requires that God not cause actions in such a way that he bears any moral responsibility for any evil resulting from the action. But, as we have seen, the compatibilist sense of 'caused' is consistent with God's being so responsible to some extent, even though he does not interfere with the compatibilist freedom of any agents.

If 'caused by God' in (17) and (18) above means *only* 'proximately or appropriately caused,'—that is, 'caused in a way incompatible with free will'—then (18) is equivalent to

(18*) The proposition *No free action is caused by God in a way that is incompatible with its being a free action* entails that the FWD is successful.

We have seen that the FWD fails unless God is absolved of all moral responsibility evil. Yet the two arguments above show that if either SD or CT is true, God bears some moral responsibility. Since the proposition in italics in (18*) is compatible with SD and CT, it *cannot* entail the success of the FWD, since both SD and CT entail that the FWD fails.[21] Hence, if 'caused by God' is read simply as 'caused in a way incompatible with its being a free action,' then (18) is false.

On the other hand, if 'caused by God' in (17) and (18) is read as 'caused in such a way that God, and not just the agent, bears some moral responsibility for any evil resulting from the action,' then (17) is equivalent to

(17*) Causal determinism is compatible with the claim that no free action is caused in such a way that God bears some moral responsibility for any evil resulting from the action.

The arguments above show that, given either CT or SD, God's actualizing T(W) is sufficient to make him morally responsible to some extent for the evil that there is. (17*) entails the denial of such sufficiency, and is therefore false. Hence, if we take the second reading of 'caused by God,' then (17) is false.

The only way to get two true premises to Wierenga's argument is to interpret 'caused by God' in (17) as 'caused in a way incompatible with free will' and in (18) as 'caused in such a way that God is to some extent morally responsible for any evil resulting from the action.' But then, of course, the argument is equivocal and invalid.

Conclusion

Plantinga is right to be concerned with the incompatibility of SD (or even CT) and the FWD. The truth of either of these propositions entails that the FWD will not relieve God from at least some moral responsibility for some evil. And Wierenga's defense of the compatibility of compatibilism and the FWD does nothing to alleviate this concern.

But Plantinga and other free will defenders need not despair. It is by no means a foregone conclusion that CT, SD, or even D is true. There are still many libertarians alive and well, and even the plethora of soft determinists and compatibilists permeating the philosophical ranks today lacks anything by way of a conclusive argument.[22] Given the undecided nature of these theses, the libertarian view is still epistemically possible. Apparently it is possible that one be rational in accepting libertarianism in the strong or weak senses explicated, and hence in rejecting SD or even CT. Since Plantinga intends the FWD to be a tool in establishing the rationality of theistic belief, it may still stand as a successful rebuttal of the argument from evil, even if SD or CT is true. All that is required is that one be rational in believing them to be false.[23]

Pacific Lutheran University

NOTES

1. All quotations of Wierenga in this and the following paragraph are from page 216 of [4]. All italics are his.

2. As stated, Wierenga's formulation of compatibilism may be too strong. The compatibilist need not claim that it is possible that *all* actions be both free and caused, but only that *some* actions be both. It is the incompatibilist thesis—that *no* free action is caused (or, more accurately, causally determined)—that is the stronger position. See the discussion of these theses later in the paper. See also note 5 below.

3. Plantinga has related to me in conversation that he is impressed with Wierenga's

point, and has decided he was wrong to see compatibilism and the FWD to be incompatible. If I am right, then Plantinga is in the enviable position of the mythical professor who claimed he was only wrong once—when he thought he was mistaken about something, but it turned out he was not!

4. The question of whether or not *facts* or *states of affairs* can be causal factors will be bracketed for sake of simplicity. For those worried about such matters, the definition of *determinism* can simply be amended to read "the thesis that all events are causally determined to occur by past events *and facts.*"

5. Note that CT as here construed (WCT) is Wierenga's formulation, and not the weaker thesis alluded to in note 2 above. Hence, there is a third possibility—a still weaker compatibilist thesis:

SWCT: $\lozenge\ (\exists\ x)(F^*x\ \&\ D^*x)$.

I retain CT—Wierenga's formulation—for simplicity. Since CT is compatible with L (see below), I need not worry about SWCT (which is *a fortiori* compatible with L).

6. A more accurate characterization would be 'F & (F $\rightarrow$ ¬ D),' which is, of course, equivalent to '¬ D & F.' And, given the assumption that all undetermined events are free actions, the two formulations have the same philosophical import. I retain the more explicit latter characterization for simplicity.

A further notion, which is not crucial to the current discussion is *hard determinism*, the thesis that IT is true and D is true—that is,

D & $\square$ (F $\rightarrow$ ¬ D).

The weaker formulation, parallel to L and compatible with CT, would be

D & ¬ F.

7. The set may be infinite (i.e., $\{W_1, W_2,\dots\}$), but this is irrelevant to the present point.

8. Plantinga argues in [3] that this thesis is compatible with God's omnipotence.

9. Plantinga distinguishes between *weak* and *strong* actualization. God *strongly* actualizes a state of affairs S just in case God's action is sufficient to bring about S. God *weakly* actualizes S just in case God's action alone is not sufficient to bring about S, but God's action *plus* the free action of some other agent (or agents) is sufficient to bring about S. Thus God strongly actualizes T(W) and weakly actualizes W_1.

10. Technically, since W_1 is a set of states of affairs (as are all possible worlds for Plantinga), it includes no events at all. The state of affairs that T(W) must exclude is actually something like *All events described in propositions whose corresponding states of affairs are members of W_1 being causally determined to occur by other events described by propositions whose corresponding states of affairs are members of W_1.* I retain the shorthand version in the text, sacrificing accuracy for simplicity. The idea, I think, is not as difficult to grasp as is its exact expression to formulate. So also with several other intuitive but technically inaccurate statements regarding possible worlds in this paper.

11. I am grateful to an anonymous referee for *Faith and Philosophy* for these formulations of JA and J ¬ A, which are marked improvements over previous formulations of mine.

12. Re.: the negation of JA:

¬ $\lozenge$ (Tg & A) $\leftrightarrow$ $\square$ ¬ (Tg & A) $\leftrightarrow$ $\square$ (Tg $\rightarrow$ ¬ A).

Re.: the negation of $J \neg A$:

$$\neg \Diamond (Tg \& \neg A) \leftrightarrow \Box \neg (Tg \& \neg A) \leftrightarrow \Box (Tg \rightarrow A).$$

13. This is, of course, *strong* actualization (see note 9 above).

14. I claim that W^* must be an SD world rather than simply a D world on the assumption that one world can be morally preferable to another only if it is a world with free actions for which agents are morally responsible. Even if my assumption is false, however, no harm is done. Condition (a) of (13) entails that W^* is a D world. Since all SD worlds are D worlds, my assumption actually strengthens the requirement for W^* if anything. I show in the following text that there are SD worlds meeting conditions (a) and (b), so my point succeeds even if one believes that it is possible that a world be deterministic, void of free actions, and morally better than W_1.

15. I do not say simply "best possible world," because if L is possibly true, then there may be some possible worlds better than the actual world, but such that L is true in those worlds *and* they are worlds such that the relevant free moral agents would choose not to actualize them. These would be possible worlds that God could not actualize, since he would need assistance of libertarian free creatures that would not be forthcoming. So there could be possible worlds better than the actual world such that God could not actualize those worlds (and hence is not responsible for not actualizing them)—but none of them would be SD worlds.

16. For the sake of simplicity I am understanding moral responsibility to be equivalent to moral praiseworthiness or blameworthiness. This is a far too simple and perhaps misleading assumption. Exploration of the distinctions would take us too far afield, however, and I do not see that it would be particularly helpful in adjudicating my claims.

William Barrett has asked whether or not there is a paradoxical shift implicit in this argument, in that the question of God's moral responsibility in the actualization of T(W) is a reversion back to the notion of libertarian freedom. That is, am I not assuming that God's actualizing of T(W) was free in the *libertarian* sense, and it is only by assuming such that I am able to find him morally culpable? While I believe that God's free actions are free in the libertarian sense (as I believe *all* free actions to be), my assumption of his culpability in the actualizing of T(W) is not dependent on this. The general principle of moral responsibility underlying (12) and (13) is neutral to the question of whether the freedom involved is libertarian or compatibilistic. I believe it is a true principle of moral responsibility even if the SD sense of freedom is the correct one. It is not that God is a libertarian free agent (whether or not we are) that makes him guilty for the evil in W_1 given (13). He is guilty by a principle of moral responsibility that holds even in SD worlds.

17. I am grateful to Patrick Francken for the following argument.

18. There are actually two possible scenarios under which a CT-FWD might be thought to work. The first is to claim that SD freedom, even if possible, would be inferior to L freedom to the point that *any* L world, just on the strength of its merit *as* an L world, would be better than any SD world. The second is to claim that there are SD worlds, and even SD worlds such that the balance of good over evil in them is preferable to W_1. However, every SD world is one in which God does not exist, hence is a world which God could not actualize. This latter argument is tantamount to the claim that it is

necessarily true that, if God actualizes a world with human freedom, such freedom is libertarian—a claim I see little difficulty in endorsing.

My only response to these two cases is that, if we grant either starting point (that all L worlds are better than all SD worlds, or that God actualizes no SD world), there seems to be no motivation for a CT-FWD at all, since each of these cases entails that W_1 is an L world (given the FWD provisos that W_1 is an F world and that God is morally perfect). It seems that the strength of a CT-FWD would be in its power to show that, even if W_1 were an SD world, the FWD would still be successful in W_1. Both cases above entail that this is false, and hence gut the force of the CT-FWD. That is, both arguments entail that the FWD fails in any SD world with moral evil. By contrast, I suggest that a CT-FWD is successful only if it entails (a) that there is at least one SD world in which the FWD is successful *and* (b) for all we know, W_1 is just such a world. Under such an assumption, the two arguments above fail as CT-FWD's. At the very least, I want to claim that a CT-FWD is philosophically and theologically interesting only if it meets these two conditions.

I am grateful to Vic Reppert for the latter case, and to Hugh Chandler for the former (who, in turn, credits it to St. Anselm—though he did not, I assume, learn of it through personal conversation).

19. Given other premises not in question here; e.g., "God is morally responsible for moral evil only if he causes the free actions that cause the evil"; and "The FWD succeeds if it shows that God is not morally responsible for moral evil."

20. If P is compatible with Q, and Q entails R, then P is compatible with R.

21. If P entails $\neg$ Q and R is compatible with P, then R cannot entail Q.

22. For a very fine recent defense of libertarianism, see Peter van Inwagen, *An Essay on Free Will* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983).

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