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THE "DUAL SOURCES ACCOUNT", PREDESTINATION, AND THE PROBLEM OF HELL

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Abstract. W. Matthews Grant's "Dual Sources Account" aims at explaining how God causes all creaturely actions while leaving them free in a robust libertarian sense. It includes an account of predestination that is supposed to allow for the possibility that some created persons ultimately spend eternity in hell. I argue, however, that the prospect of an eternally populated hell raises two distinct problems that Grant provides insufficient resources to address. I suggest possible solutions to these two problems, compatible with Grant's account overall.

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I. INTRODUCTION

W. Matthews Grant argues convincingly in *Free Will and God's Universal Causality: The Dual Sources Account*, that divine universal causality (DUC) — the thesis that God directly causes the existence of every entity in the universe distinct from himself, along with all creaturely actions or passions — is perfectly compatible with robust libertarian freedom when it comes to the actions of creatures endowed with intellect and will.[1] He calls his position on God's causation in relation to creaturely freedom overall the "Dual Sources Account" (DS), and contrasts it with others currently on offer such as Open Theism and Molinism. Grant's position is a sort of incompatibilism; he agrees that libertarian freedom is incompatible with determination. But he denies that God's causing a creature's action determines the creature to act the way she does, or removes her ability to have done otherwise than she did, all antecedent conditions remaining the same. It follows from Grant's position that the free will defense (FWD) fails as an explanation of the presence of moral evil in the universe. God could have directly created a universe with free creatures who never sin. On the other hand, Grant argues, God's causing a creature's sinful actions does not mean that he causes their sins or is himself sinful. What's more, there are other possible morally justifying reasons that even an omnipotent and omnibenevolent God may have had for permitting moral evils of the sort we find in the world.

Some of the reasons Grant suggests appear initially quite plausible. However, DS is supposed to allow room for the possibility that some created persons, as a result of their sins, ultimately end up spending eternity in hell — alienated from God and sundered from happiness. Once this possibility is taken on board, I will argue here, Grant's view encounters at least two serious problems. First, it depicts God as arbitrarily, and hence unfairly, selecting certain persons to whom he will not extend grace without which, he knows, they will sin in such ways as to end up in hell. Second, the morally justifying reasons Grant proposes for God's permission of moral evil in general appear either not to require hell or to fail as justifications for God's

1 W. M. Grant, *Free Will and God's Universal Causality: The Dual Sources Account* (Bloomsbury Academic, 2019). Grant's book incorporates and builds on material he has published in a series of papers, including "Can a Libertarian Hold That Our Free Acts Are Caused by God?", *Faith and Philosophy* 27, no. 1 (2010); "The Privation Account of Moral Evil", *International Philosophical Quarterly* 55, no. 3 (2015); and "Moral Evil, Privation, and God", *European Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 9, no. 1 (2017).

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allowing it to be eternally populated. Hence, as it stands Grant's view appears to depict God both as unjust and as lacking reasons for allowing created persons to spend eternity in hell.

One recourse might be to skeptical theism; Grant might deny that we are in a position to know God's reasons for allowing hell, or understand how it is just for him arbitrarily to decide who will populate it. I will suggest here as well, however, that there are ways Grant might respond directly to the problems I raise while remaining within the framework of DS. By adopting these possible solutions proponents of DS are in a position to offer a defense in response to the problem of hell.

I focus on Grant's account because I think DS is a particularly stellar effort at reconciling God's universal causality with libertarian creaturely freedom, and grappling with the consequences of this reconciliation. Much of what I argue here, however, should be of interest to theological determinists, who likewise have a stake in responding to the problem of moral evil without relying on the FWD. It should also be of interest to Augustinians, Thomists, Calvinists, Edwardsians, etc. interested in thinking through some of the ways these thinkers might have grappled with the problem of hell while accepting DUC.

This paper has three sections. I begin by unpacking Grant's views insofar as they bear on predestination and the problem of hell. I then articulate the two problems mentioned above that hell raises for Grant's position, and provide a provisional solution to the first. It is provisional in that its success depends on whether Grant can reply successfully to the second problem as well. In the paper's final section I propose one way that he might do so.

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II. THE DUAL SOURCES ACCOUNT, PREDESTINATION, AND HELL

To understand what DS has to say about predestination and the problem of hell some preliminaries are needed. I'll begin by explaining how Grant reconciles DUC with the libertarian freedom of creaturely actions, and why it entails that the FWD fails. I'll then explain his general approach to the problem of moral evil, before turning directly to predestination and hell.

For Grant, creaturely actions are free in the libertarian sense just in case:

(i) They are intentional — i.e., done on purpose, with knowledge of what the agent is up to.

(ii) They are uncoerced.

(iii) They are undetermined — i.e., not caused by anything that is both logically sufficient for and prior to (in a temporal or explanatory sense) their occurrence (unless the determining factor in question is something for which the agent was, herself, responsible).

Grant thinks that creaturely actions caused by God quite possibly satisfy not only criteria (i)–(iii) but also two further criteria:

(iv) Alternative possibilities — the agent could have done otherwise, all antecedent conditions remaining the same.

(v) Ultimate responsibility — the agent is ultimately responsible for their actions, in the sense of "ultimate responsibility" specified by Robert Kane.[2]

Grant provides arguments to show how DUC is compatible with (iii)–(v), but I'll focus on those for (iii) and (iv) as they seem most important for present purposes.

Both arguments depend on what Grant calls the extrinsic model (EM) of divine causality. An intrinsic characteristic is (roughly) one that something possesses just by itself, while an extrinsic characteristic is one it possesses because of how it stands in relation to something else. Many have supposed that God's

2 Grant, *Free Will and God's Universal Causality: The Dual Sources Account*, 68 quotes the version of Kane's criterion for ultimate responsibility (UR) from Robert Kane, *The Significance of Free Will* (Oxford Univ. Press, 1996), 35. Importantly, Kane's criterion requires that an agent be the cause of her free actions in the sense that there are no other causes of these actions for which she is not herself personally responsible. But Grant argues that on DS God's causing a creature's actions introduces no such causal factor that lies outside the creature's voluntary control.

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willing, choosing or causing that something happen in creation involve an entity (or entities) intrinsic to God, yet distinct from the divine nature, namely God's act(s) of willing, choosing or causing. EM, however, denies that God's willing, choosing or causing involves any such entity or entities. This denial is motivated by concerns for God's freedom and simplicity. If God is simple then anything intrinsic to God is identical to the divine nature. But if God's act of causing something in creation is identical to his nature, then it doesn't seem as though he is free to do otherwise than act as he does. It is just God's nature to cause in this way. Instead of supposing that God's acts of causing are intrinsic to him, therefore, we should think of them as extrinsic factors — they are in fact nothing more than the creaturely effects God causes *qua* dependent on God. God causes, wills or chooses for reasons to be sure. God's reasons for causing a given creature or creaturely event stem from respects in which he knows the creature or event to be good. But he knows these reasons simply in virtue of knowing himself as the potential creator of such goods; they are intrinsic to him and identical to his nature. Hence, when God causes (or wills, or chooses) creaturely action X, there are involved:

(a) God.

(b) God's reasons for causing X.

(c) God's act of causing X.

(d) The causal dependence relation between God and X.

(e) X.

Grant argues that when a creature performs action X, none of (a)–(e) determine X, nor remove the creature's ability to do otherwise than X. Here is why.

As Grant sees it, a given action is determined just in case there is some factor that is both logically sufficient for and prior to (in either a temporal or an explanatory sense) the action's occurrence. If we suppose that God's acts of causing creaturely entities or actions such as X are intrinsic to him, then they would indeed represent determining factors. They would be explanatorily prior to X, since they would be that in virtue of which God causes X. They would be logically sufficient for X insofar as God's will is efficacious, and cannot fail to be done. So they would indeed determine X. But on EM matters are different. Consider (a)-(e) above. Starting with (a), God is certainly explanatorily prior to X because he causes X, but he isn't logically sufficient for X, since he could exist perfectly well without X existing. The same goes for (b) — God's reasons for causing X. Presumably God causes creatures or creaturely acts because of some respect in which he knows they are good, or fit well into an overall good scheme of creation, or something like this. God knows these reasons in knowing himself — they are intrinsic to him, but aren't distinct from his nature. They aren't logically sufficient for any given creature existing or creaturely act taking place, though, since God doesn't have to create any creature or make them do any of the things they do. He could do otherwise. As for (c), God's act of causing X is logically sufficient for X, but isn't prior to X, since God's act of causing X just *is* X *qua* causally dependent on God. Nor is (d) prior to X, since relations aren't prior to their relata. The last item (e) is X itself, which is logically sufficient for itself, but obviously not prior to itself. Hence we can see that on EM, God's causing a given creaturely act doesn't require any factor that would determine the act. God can cause creaturely acts while leaving them undetermined.

What about alternative possibilities — item (iv) above? Grant argues that on the understanding just described, God's causing a creaturely act clearly leaves intact the creatures ability to do otherwise. Because God's causing a creaturely act like X just is X itself *qua* causally dependent on God, it isn't prior to X, and hence "happens too late" to prevent the creaturely agent from doing otherwise than X, all antecedent conditions remaining the same. God's causing X and the creature's performing X, on this view, are simultaneous necessary and sufficient conditions for one another. If God doesn't cause X, then X doesn't happen, to be sure. But it remains the case that the creature could have performed X, all antecedent conditions remaining the same.

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Grant doesn't provide independent arguments to show that DUC is compatible with creaturely acts remaining intentional and uncoerced — items (i) and (ii) above. He simply says he sees no reason why God couldn't cause acts that are intentional and uncoerced. I'll discuss these criteria further in section four below.

First, though, here's why Grant thinks the FWD fails. The FWD depends on the assumption that God can't directly cause creatures to act in some way or other. But for the same reasons that God's causing a creaturely act doesn't take away the creature's ability to do otherwise, so too the creature's acting in a certain way doesn't take away God's ability to have done otherwise than cause the creaturely act in question. The creaturely act "happens too late" to impinge on God's ability to do otherwise. Grant gives the example of his deciding in certain circumstances to tell a lie. If Grant tells the lie, then necessarily God causes his act of lying (although, on Grant's understanding, not the sinfulness of the lie — a separate argument that I'll explain shortly). But that doesn't mean God couldn't have done otherwise than cause Grant's act of lying. God could have refrained from causing it, and then Grant wouldn't have lied. Or maybe he could have caused in Grant an act of considering that lying shouldn't be done, and then Grant wouldn't have lied either. The point is that God is perfectly at liberty to have caused an infinite number of morally good creaturely acts, or prevented bad acts from ever happening, without taking away the freedom of the creaturely agents themselves. So the assumption on which the FWD rests is false, and the defense fails.

As far as I can tell, Grant is largely correct about this, although considerations about the beliefs, desires and other states that form the background of creaturely actions complicate the picture, as I'll argue below. Two questions suggest themselves at this point, however. First, if God could have prevented all moral evil in the universe, but didn't, then is he responsible for its occurrence? Second, why didn't he prevent moral evil?

Grant answers the first question in the negative. God neither causes sin nor is responsible for its occurrence. According to a traditional understanding stemming from Neoplatonism, evil in general is privation — something that *should* be there, but isn't. Moral evil in particular is a lack of conformity to the moral rules (however these are to be understood). A sinful action, then, is a composite of some action *plus* the lack of conformity to the moral rules that makes it sinful. While on DUC God causes everything that exists, including every creaturely action, he doesn't cause the privations that make sinful actions sinful. Hence maintaining that God is the universal cause doesn't require us to say that God causes sin. That's a quick sketch of Grant's reasoning; he responds to at least six different objections to defend his conclusion.[3] The last will be important for my purposes to mention. An objector might ask: "if *we* cause the sinfulness of our sinful actions by something we *fail* to do, namely, by failing to conform them to the moral rules, then why doesn't God *also* cause the sinfulness of our actions by something *he fails* to do, namely causing them to conform to the moral rules?" Grant's answer is that we cause the sinfulness of our sinful actions when we fail to conform them to the moral rules because we have a responsibility to follow the moral rules. God, however, doesn't have a responsibility not to cause creaturely acts that lack conformity to the moral rules. If he *did* have such a responsibility, Grant points out, then he'd fail to do as he ought, which most theists agree he can't do. Now Grant recognizes that even if this response provides theists a principled reply to the objection, it doesn't by itself explain *why* an omnipotent, omnibenevolent God wouldn't be obligated to cause creaturely acts to conform to the moral rules — that is, to prevent sin.

So why doesn't God prevent all the moral evil that he could prevent? Grant suggests various considerations theists might appeal to apart from free will to account for the presence of moral evil in creation. He proposes "a range of goods for the sake of which ... God might plausibly be thought to have created a world with [moral] evil", namely the following: "facing certain morally significant choices and challenges", mercy, repentance, forgiveness, atonement, conversion from evil, and just punishment.[4] Grant

3 See Grant, "The Privation Account of Moral Evil" and Grant, "Moral Evil, Privation, and God", along with Peter Furlong, "Is God the Cause of Sin? An Examination of the Unadorned Privation Defense", *Faith and Philosophy* 31, no. 4 (2014) and Grant's reply to Furlong, "The Privation Solution: A Reply to Furlong", *Faith and Philosophy* 33, no. 2 (2016).

4 Grant, *Free Will and God's Universal Causality: The Dual Sources Account*, 124–26.

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explains the first of these goods by analogy with Richard Swinburne's theodicy for natural evil, one strand of which argues that natural evils put us in situations where we must develop courage (or cowardice, compassion or callousness, etc).[5] Swinburne is a free-will defender when it comes to moral evils, but thinks the presence of moral evil alone in the world would provide insufficient opportunities for the kinds of character-development opportunities he has in mind, hence the need for natural evil too. Grant just turns this on its head. If the FWD doesn't explain the presence of moral evils, maybe the need for character-development opportunities does. Grant doesn't unpack the rest of the goods in his "range." But repentance, forgiveness, conversion and mercy are all states of character that it might plausibly take the presence of some moral evils to develop. As for atonement, Grant cites Alvin Plantinga's 2004 article "O Felix Culpa" in which he argues that the "towering and magnificent good of divine incarnation and atonement", might require the presence of sin in the world, and might enormously outweigh the presence of sin in the world (so, an explicitly Christian as opposed to generically theistic proposal).[6] Finally, there is the good of just punishment. I take it the idea here is that it is just, and hence good, for God to punish those who have sinned, and that this good can't be had without people sinning. I'll say more about this idea and the rest of Grant's "range of goods" in the following section, where I'll present two reasons for doubting that any of them provides a sufficient explanation why God would allow moral evil, provided we take on board the view that some created persons end up in hell.

First, however, it will be necessary to say something about the views of predestination and hell that follow from DS, or at least are supposed to be compatible with it. According to DUC, for a creature to do anything whatsoever God must cause the creature's action. It follows that for a creature to do anything "meritorious" — deserving of reward — God must also cause the creature's meritorious deed. Now simplifying matters greatly, Grant thinks we can distinguish between a sort of "antecedent grace" on God's part, by which God produces in a creature the inclination and ability to perform some meritorious work, and a "simultaneous" or "coincident grace", which simply *is* God's causing the creature to perform the meritorious work itself. We can also recognize a further "consequent grace", which is God's rewarding the meritorious work with further goods such as beatitude. That God predestines at least some creatures means that he gives to them whatever coincident grace is necessary such that they "accept the offer" of salvation he extends to them, such that he subsequently gives them further grace to reach, ultimately, beatitude or eternal happiness. It is important to note that on DS God's predestining a creature to salvation does not determine their choices. Predestination leaves intact a creature's ability to do otherwise than accept God's offer of salvation. Likewise if any creatures refuse the offer. It's true that they refuse just in case God doesn't extend to them the coincident grace that would cause their accepting the offer. Nonetheless, they could have done otherwise than refuse, and had they done so, salvation would have been granted them.

As Grant sees it, God's decision to predestine some of his creatures cannot be based upon anything meritorious that the creatures themselves have done. This follows because anything meritorious they might do would itself be caused by God, and hence part and parcel of his predestining them, not the cause of predestination. By the same token, presumably, if God should decide to withhold the grace without which, he knows, certain other creatures will *not* "accept the offer" of salvation such that they ultimately attain beatitude, this decision on God's part also isn't based upon anything *de*meritorious that the creatures have done. Here Grant contrasts DS with Molinist accounts on which God predestines (or not) based on his "middle knowledge" of what creatures would or wouldn't do in certain circumstances.[7]

DS isn't supposed to be committed to any particular view on created persons' final destination. It leaves open the possibility of universalism about salvation — that God predestines everyone. It is also supposed to be compatible with the possibility of hell — that God predestines only some, while withhold-

5 See Richard Swinburne, *Is There a God?* (Oxford Univ. Press, 1996), chap. 6.

6 Alvin Plantinga, "Supralapsarianism, or 'O Felix Culpa'", in *Christian Faith and the Problem of Evil*, ed. Peter van Inwagen (W.B. Eerdmans Pub, 2004), 10.

7 Grant, *Free Will and God's Universal Causality: The Dual Sources Account*, 173–74.

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ing from others the grace necessary for their accepting the offer of salvation, such that they ultimately end up eternally alienated from him. Grant argues that if God decides not to cause the salvation of all created persons when he could save all, this would be compatible with God's "justice, goodness, love and salvific will."[8] It would be unjust for God to withhold salvation from persons to whom he *owed* it. But on DS, if any persons ultimately fail to attain beatitude, it is because they haven't accepted the offer of salvation. God issues no "positive act of reprobation" whereby he determines that a creature *not* attain salvation.[9] If he reprobates any, he does so simply by refraining from causing them to accept salvation, but without this refraining taking away their power to have accepted. As for goodness, love and salvific will, a proponent of DS who thinks hell is populated will need to arrive at a some understanding of God's love for all persons and desire that all be saved that is compatible with his choosing not to save all he could. Perhaps, for example, God desires that all be saved only in abstraction from the "range of goods" mentioned above, some of which require that not all be saved.[10] At any rate, having seen this much about the view of predestination that Grant thinks follows from DS and the eschatological positions he considers compatible with it, I am now in a position to present two potential problems with his account, provided the possibility of a populated hell.

III. TWO PROBLEMS HELL RAISES

The first problem hell raises for the set of views described in the previous section is that it would be unfair and hence unjust of God to predestine some but not all in the way Grant thinks DS requires, namely apart from any differences in the worthiness of created persons themselves either to receive his aid or not. On Grant's view God's decisions either to extend grace or withhold it cannot be made with any creaturely merits or demerits in mind. If, then, he decides to predestine *these* ones to beatitude but not *those* others, this decision is evidently arbitrary in that it isn't based on anything (meritorious or demeritorious) in the creatures themselves. But arbitrarily aiding some but not others seems unfair. And while fairness may not be the whole of justice, it is surely part of it. Hence, it seems on the face of it, Grant's view depicts God as acting unjustly if indeed he permits some but not others to reject the offer of salvation once and for all, and thus to end up in hell.

It is true that on Grant's view God does enough for everyone that they are able to choose salvation if they wish to. It is true that, for any created person, if God decides not to cause them to accept his offer of salvation then they won't accept it. But this decision on God's part does not take away the created person's ability to have accepted. Given this fact, Grant thinks, God can't be charged with injustice for condemning created persons who reject his offer. This certainly makes it easier to see how hell could be compatible with God's justice on DS than if God's decision not to cause a given creaturely action did indeed remove the creature's ability to perform it, as some theological determinists might maintain. Yet for the reasons given in the previous paragraph it still seems as though Grant's account leaves it doubtful whether God acts justly in permitting some creatures but not others to reject his offer of salvation. On Grant's view, God knows eternally that creatures whom he permits to reject his offer will in fact reject it, even if they aren't forced to do so.[11] Hence the situation seems to me like the following. Suppose I command my son and daughter to clean their rooms, telling them I'll reward them if I do, and punish them if they don't. I assist both to the point where finishing the job is well within their power. Yet I know (or at least strongly suspect) that unless I continue helping until the job is done, neither will in fact complete it. For reasons having nothing to do with him or her, I decide to assist my daughter with the rest of her work, but not my son. Sure enough, he doesn't finish the chore. When I punish him, he complains that I helped his sister but not him. I point out that I *did* help — enough that he was perfectly capable of seeing his task through.

8 Ibid., 177 and following.
9 Ibid.
10 Ibid., 179.
11 See ibid., 150–55 for Grant's account of divine foreknowledge.

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He might still reasonably complain, it seems to me, that for no good reason I withheld from him aid I granted to his sister, knowing full well (or at least strongly suspecting) what the result of my doing so would likely be. It was unfair of me to act this way. Reprobate sinners might complain along similar lines about the God portrayed by DS.

Now one reply Grant might make at this point is to argue that although unfairness is bad when avoidable, it can be consistent with justice overall when it can only be avoided at the cost of certain great goods. Suppose that in the scenario with my son and daughter it was impossible that I assist both to the completion of their task —there wasn't enough time for that. In that case, it seems to me much less clear whether it would be unjust overall for me to aid at least one child to the extent I know they'll need to succeed in obeying my command, even if it remains unfair for to help the one more than the other. Along similar lines, consider God's decision to create a natural world — one that operates, generally speaking, in a predictable, lawlike fashion — containing biological organisms capable of pleasure and pain. If God does this, it is fairly certain that some organisms will fare much better than others. Some will enjoy long, healthy, flourishing lives, while others will live and die in agony due to disease or whatever else. It might be considered unfair for God to allot such varying fortunes to organisms. But it might also be thought worthwhile overall, since the unfairness couldn't be avoided without eliminating the natural world or sentient organisms altogether. Drawing on examples like these, Grant might argue that certain great goods require God to permit certain created persons to reject his offer of salvation, and thereby to spend eternity in hell. There is no non-arbitrary means for God so select which created persons these will be. Hence, while it remains unfair for God to grant salvation to *these* created persons and not *those* others — to permit Judas but not Paul to reject his offer of salvation — the unfairness is worthwhile, justifiable by appeal to the goods it makes possible.

Obviously a reply along these lines is provisional in that it depends upon whether Grant can successfully identify some great goods for the sake of which God is justified in arbitrarily deciding to withhold salvific aid from some but not others. At this point, then, we should return our attention to the "range of goods" discussed in the previous section for the sake of which Grant thinks God might permit moral evil in general. Might some of these require that God permit what are traditionally called "mortal sins" — that is, those that imply the sinner's rejection of God's offer of salvation? If so, might they require that God consign mortal sinners to hell?

Unfortunately, the second problem hell raises for Grant's view as described in the previous section is that the reasons cited for God's permission of moral evil appear either not to require any created persons to occupy hell at all, or else to fail as justifications for his allowing them to occupy it eternally. Hence on the face of it, Grant appears not to provide an explanation why God would permit persons to spend eternity in hell at all, much less one that would help mitigate the problem of his apparent arbitrariness in choosing persons for salvation or damnation.

Most of the items we saw Grant list above as reasons why God might permit moral evil appear not to require hell at all. These include the good of created persons "facing certain morally significant choices and challenges", along with the goods of mercy, repentance, forgiveness, atonement, conversion from evil. It stands to reason that these goods couldn't be had without moral evil. But it isn't at all clear that they couldn't be had without hell. Grant points out that each comes in more and less impressive instantiations often depending on the gravity of the sins that make them possible, and it's plausible that really impressive instantiations of each requires that some sinners commit mortal sins at some point in their careers. Still, God can and does convert sinners, including really wicked ones like Saul of Tarsus (if we can believe his claim to have been the "foremost" of sinners prior to the dramatic events on the Damascus road — 1 Tim. 1:15). Given that on DS God can cause created persons to convert and repent freely, it isn't immediately clear why God couldn't convert all mortal sinners before their deaths. It seems as though God could bring about all of the goods mentioned above without any created persons occupying hell. On the face of it, then, it doesn't seem as though these goods provide an explanation why God permits hell to be populated, nor a response to the unfairness objection articulated at the beginning of this section.

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One item Grant mentions as a possible justification for God's allowing moral evil does seem as though it might require hell; the good of just punishment. If it is good for God to punish sinners, then, it might be thought, it is necessary for some created persons to spend eternity in hell so that God might eternally enact the good of just punishment. This suggestion has a long pedigree in the Christian tradition.[12] Nevertheless, I find it doubtful, especially for proponents of DS and DUC. One reason is that I cannot see whom the good of just punishment is supposed to be good for. Not for God, who was already perfectly good before creating anything at all and can't get any better. Nor, presumably, for the sinners who are permanently severed from beatitude. For the blessed, then, who get to witness God forever justly punishing the sinners? This seems like the only thing to say. But I cannot see why it should count as a good that would justify hell, or justify the unfairness mentioned above. I have a hard time seeing it as a good at all. It might be alleged that asking for whom just punishment is a good misses the point; it is a tenet of some retributivist theories of punishment that it is simply good for wrongdoers to be punished, even without any further reference to goods accruing to society, the wronged parties, wrongdoers themselves, etc.[13] Retributivism is of course controversial both as a theory of punishment, and as a component of theorizing about hell.[14] Even if retributivism about hell is defensible generally speaking, however, it seems especially difficult to reconcile with DS given its commitment to DUC. On this combination of views, recall, God causes each and every act of sin, albeit not the sins themselves, when he could have refrained from doing so. In the article of Plantinga's mentioned above he discusses as a possible objection against his view "Munchausen-by-Proxy syndrome", which describes caregivers who create easily preventable situations of peril for those under their charge so that they can enact glorious rescues.[15] The objection proposes that God's allowing moral evil then becoming incarnate and dying to atone for our sins seems like disturbingly similar behavior. There may be good replies to the objection available to Plantinga.[16] But it seems to me that a parallel objection looms if we suppose that God permits easily preventable unrepentant acts of mortal sin so that he can punish their culprits. Even if it is true that God doesn't owe to created persons that he should either prevent them from sinning mortally or bring about acts of repentance and conversion should they do so, it is hard to see what good his deciding not to do so might serve. If it serves no good, however, then we are stuck with the impression that a world without hell is obviously preferable to one with it. It is difficult then to see how permitting hell is a choice a good God would make. Particularly if, as I suggested earlier in this section, permitting hell requires him to treat his creatures unfairly. Overall, then, I find it doubtful that the good of just punishment might provide Grant adequate means of responding to the two objections I have raised in this section.

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12 In Romans 9:22–24 Paul appears to suggest that God might damn some in order to make his wrath, power and glory known to others, on whom he has mercy. At least, this is how many in the Christian tradition have read these verses. Thomas Aquinas, for instance, comments on Romans 9 that "the end of the reprobation or hardening of the wicked is the manifestation of divine justice and power" (*Super Epistolam B. Pauli ad Romanos lectura* 9.4.793). Jonathan Edwards writes that "God aims at satisfying justice in the eternal damnation of sinners: which will be satisfied by their damnation, considered no otherwise than with regard to its eternal duration" (*A Dissertation Concerning the End for Which God Created the World*). Daniel M. Johnson calls the strategy of addressing the problem of evil by appeal to God's desire to manifest his justice, power, etc. the "Divine Glory Defense", and defends it in Daniel M. Johnson, "Calvinism and the Problem of Evil: A Map of the Territory", in *Calvinism and the Problem of Evil*, ed. David E. Alexander and Daniel M. Johnson (Wipf & Stock, 2016), 43–48. Matthew J. Hart employs a similar strategy to address the problem of hell in particular in Matthew J. Hart, "Calvinism and the Problem of Hell", in *Calvinism and the Problem of Evil*, ed. David E. Alexander and Daniel M. Johnson (Wipf & Stock, 2016).

13 H.A. Bedau calls this idea the "principle of just requital", namely that "[t]he justification for punishing persons is that the return of suffering for moral evil voluntarily done is itself just or morally good", Hugo A. Bedau, "Retribution and the Theory of Punishment", *The Journal of Philosophy* 75, no. 11 (1978): 602-603. He goes on to challenge this principle.

14 Jonathan Kvanvig, for example, identifies as the "hard core" of the "traditional doctrine of hell" what he calls "The Retribution Thesis", namely, the view that "[t]he justification for and purpose of hell is retributive in nature", but argues that "any solution to the problem of hell ... needs to begin afresh, replacing the hard core of the [traditional] view with a different approach", Jonathan Kvanvig, *The Problem of Hell* (Oxford Univ. Press, 1993), 19 and 103.

15 Plantinga, "Supralapsarianism", 21–25.

16 See, nonetheless, Marilyn M. Adams, "Plantinga on "Felix Culpa": Analysis and Critique", *Faith and Philosophy* 25, no. 2 (2008) for a thoroughgoing critique of Plantinga's theodicy; p. 132 discusses "Munchausen-by-Proxy syndrome."

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To respond to these objections adequately, it seems we need to identify either some additional good for the sake of which God might permit unrepentant mortal sinners to spend eternity in hell or some reason why he might not be able to bring about some of the goods already mentioned without hell being eternally populated. In the following section, I'll attempt a version of the latter strategy, arguing that despite initial appearances God may have to permit hell in order to bring about impressive instantiations of goods such as mercy, forgiveness, repentance, conversion and atonement. If correct, my proposal will provide solutions to the two problems I've outlined in this section, supplying proponents of DS with a defense for responding to the problem of hell.

IV. A DUAL SOURCES DEFENSE FOR HELL

The core of my proposal in this section is that proponents of DS adopt what is often called "the choice model of hell" (CMH), namely the idea that persons occupy hell because they choose to be there.[17] This might initially seem impossible. Typical formulations of CMH assume that God cannot cause free creaturely decisions, such as decisions to accept his offer of salvific grace or to reject it. On DS, however, God can cause free creaturely decisions, and on DUC whether creatures choose virtuously or viciously, God causes their acts of decision-making (though not the sinfulness of vicious decisions). Hence, proponents of DS and DUC cannot adopt CMH without further ado. I will argue, however, that they can still employ the main idea of CMH provided they make a few other assumptions:

(1) That God wants, and has good reasons for wanting, there to be really impressive instantiations of goods such as mercy, forgiveness, repentance, conversion and atonement.

(2) That God wants, and has good reasons for wanting, a natural world — one that operates, generally speaking, in a predictable, lawlike fashion.

(3) That even given the truth of DS, God cannot necessarily move a created will immediately, or without taking quite drastic measures, or both.

As I'll explain in what follows, if these assumptions are correct, then they can jointly help us to understand why even given the truth of DS, God may not be able to prevent certain created persons from dying in a state of unrepentant mortal sin, that is, dying in a state of desiring separation from God. As CMH maintains, God respects these desires by permitting unrepentant sinners to exist in separation from himself in hell. Since the truth of assumption (1) is something Grant's presentation of DS already takes on board, I won't argue further for it here. As for assumption (2), it is common to point out that God may desire a natural world in part as a necessary condition for creaturely freedom — so that we can reasonably predict the results of our actions, for instance.[18] I think this is a plausible, if controversial, line of reasoning; I won't add further to it. I'll begin this section, however, by defending assumption (3), then explain how (1)–(3) jointly help to explain why God might permit hell. I'll conclude by considering three objections.

To see why even on DS God might require a period of time, dramatic intervention in the natural order, or both to bring about free creaturely decisions, recall Grant's first couple of criteria for creaturely actions that are free in the libertarian sense: (i) they are intentional, and (ii) they are uncoerced. Grant doesn't provide arguments showing divine causation is compatible with creaturely actions remaining intentional and uncoerced because he doesn't see a need to. Perhaps he's right. But it seems quite plausible to me that God might cause creaturely acts of willing that are indeed unintentional and coerced. Consider the example Grant gives, in which he decides in certain circumstances to tell a lie. The argument was that God could have acted differently than cause Grant's act of lying; he could have refrained from causing it,

17 Kevin Timpe, *Free Will in Philosophical Theology* (Bloomsbury Academic, 2014), 71, follows Kvanvig in using the term "choice model of hell" and lists Kvanvig, Swinburne, C.S. Lewis, Charles Seymour, C.P. Ragland, Michael Murray, Eleanore Stump, Jerry Walls and Raymond VanArragon as fellow defenders of the view.

18 See, for example, Richard Swinburne, "Natural Evil", *American Philosophical Quarterly* 15, no. 4 (1978): 295–301.

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or caused Grant to consider how bad it is to lie, in which case he wouldn't lie either. In the abstract, all this sounds quite correct. If Grant is indeed free in the circumstances to lie or refrain from doing so, God could cause (or refrain from causing) all of these outcomes, leaving Grant's libertarian freedom intact. But just *how* God is able to bring about these outcomes and how long it will take will vary, it seems to me, depending on various factors. First, the psychological makeup Grant brings to the table. If he is (as I have no reason for doubting!) an upstanding person who spends a lot of time and energy every semester trying to persuade his students that lying is wrong, then prodding Grant to consider the moral rules against lying such that he decides he won't do so in this case may be straightforward. But suppose Grant is such a notorious liar that he is widely called Pinocchio Forktongue behind his back. In that case getting Grant to think about the moral rules against lying may be difficult, as may be getting him to follow through with his consideration of the rules. If Grant walks into the scenario with deceit deeply ingrained, has an opportunity to lie, and then suddenly doesn't because of something God has done or refrained from doing, it is hard to imagine his decision being intentional and uncoerced. An intentional action, I assume, is done on purpose and done for reasons.[19] But Grant the notorious liar may lack reasons for telling the truth in the situation. It may take considerable time or strong measures for Grant the liar to acquire the network of background beliefs and desires that would need to be in place for him to decide intentionally not to lie.[20] Second, however, how long it takes and what measures are necessary will presumably also depend on the contours of the scenario itself. Is it a scenario where Grant is pretty sure of being caught if he lies, and quite afraid of the consequences? Then getting him to refrain may also be quick and easy, although his decision may lack much by way of merit. Is it an occasion on which by lying he could obviously avoid some painful circumstances and instead make possible some pleasant ones, whereas telling the truth would bring about the opposite — pain instead of pleasure? In that case he'd pretty certainly lie if left on his own. Once again, the reasoning processes necessary for Grant to acquire some beliefs to the effect that honesty is worthwhile in this scenario and some desires to be honest may take some time to unfold, and may take forceful intervention to kickstart. In general, to summarize the point I've been trying to make, what it takes for God to cause us to act or refrain from acting in certain ways may depend considerably on who we are and the circumstances we find ourselves in.

If I am correct about this, then it may not always be in God's power to move created wills immediately in whatever direction he chooses. He is omnipotent, and can bring about whatever he pleases that doesn't involve a contradiction, miraculously or otherwise. Yet it seems that for certain miracles *not* to involve a contradiction they must take time to unfold. Suppose my house is on fire, and I pray for God to send a rainstorm to extinguish it. He can certainly do so. But assuming that rainstorms essentially involve water falling from clouds in the sky, for God to extinguish my house by a rainstorm clouds must blow in and rain must fall. All that might happen with miraculous speed, but it will take *some* time to happen. If water simply shows up instantly to save my house I'll be grateful, but it won't be a rainstorm that's done the saving. The natures of certain psychological states also clearly place constraints on what is required for God to bring them about. As mentioned above, for God to bring about states of conversion, repentance, forgiveness, mercy, atonement, etc. moral evil would seem to be required. One cannot repent if one has nothing to repent from, for example. It may well be that the nature of conversion, similarly, requires that it unfold over time in certain persons and certain circumstances.

Here then is how assumptions (1)–(3) might work together to provide advocates of DS a defense for hell. According to (1), God wants, and has good reasons for wanting, there to be really impressive instantiations of goods such as mercy, forgiveness, repentance, conversion and atonement. But as just

19 I agree with Timpe that there is a "reasons constraint on free choice", i.e., "If, at time *t*, *A* has neither any motivational intellectual reasons for *X*-ing nor any motivational affective reasons for *X*-ing, then *A* is incapable, at *t*, of freely choosing to *X*", *Free Will in Philosophical Theology*, 23.

20 As Timpe goes on to explain, one's moral character comprises traits for which one is morally responsible because they are acquired through repeated free actions of a certain sort, but which (once acquired) may constrain the ways agents may acting freely in certain circumstances by barring them from possessing intellectual or affective reasons for performing certain actions in those circumstances. See ibid., esp. pp. 25–31.

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noted, the presence of moral evil in the world is evidently necessary for these goods to be instantiated, and grave wickedness — mortal sin, even — may be required for really impressive instantiations of these goods. If (2) is correct, however, and God wants (and has good reasons for wanting) a natural world, then presumably biological organisms such as humans will die, and sometimes die suddenly. Perhaps, then, it sometimes happens that we sin mortally in such ways that even God cannot bring us to genuine conversion and repentance before the end of our lives, given that — as (3) maintains — he cannot necessarily do so immediately. In that case, created persons may sometimes die in a state of rejecting fellowship with God and desiring to be separated from him. As CMH maintains, God respects these sinners' choices by allowing them to exist in hell.

The defense for hell I have just outlined faces many serious objections. Some of them face other versions of CMH as well. For example, is it really possible for sinners to choose hell? Surely no one who knew damnation awaited them could make a decision in favor of eternal separation from God.[21] Furthermore, even supposing that certain sinners make choices tantamount to rejecting fellowship with God, why should God honor these choices if he knows it means severing these created persons eternally from the possibility of happiness? Why not override their choices and install them in heaven against their wishes?[22] Again, if some sinners do in fact desire be eternally separated from God and God must for some reason honor these desires, why shouldn't he do so simply by annihilating them, rather than by allowing them to exist eternally in hell? While these are important objections to consider, other defenders of CMH have responded to each of them, and since as far as I can tell nothing bars advocates of DS from borrowing some of the responses extant in the literature, I won't repeat or add to these responses here.[23] I will, however, consider three further objections that I think face the combination of CMH with DS that I have proposed in particular.

To begin with, one might question whether given the truth of DS it is really possible that in some cases God is unable to bring about the conversion of mortal sinners before their deaths. Couldn't God in his omnipotence and omniscience orchestrate things such that all sinners, no matter how wicked they've gotten, experience a trajectory of moral regeneration toward repentance and conversion before the end of their lives? After all, God can sometimes bring about these states pretty quickly. Saul was still "breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord" in Acts 9:1, but after Christ's miraculous appearance we find him pretty shortly thereafter "proving that Jesus was the Christ" in the synagogues of Damascus (9:22). Couldn't God perform similar miracles, if necessary, in the lives of other sinners? Or perhaps, if he sees that their moral regeneration is going to take a while, extend their lives until it comes to pass?

Possibly not. It seems clear that if God is going to bring about goods such as mercy, forgiveness, repentance, conversion and atonement, some degree of moral evil in the world is going to be necessary. But it isn't at all clear what kinds of sinfulness, at what points, in which sinners' lives may be needed for God to bring about impressive instantiations of these goods. As for the suggestions that God intervene dramatically as he did for Saul, or extend the lives of sinners until repentance and conversion should become possible, both of these tactics would seemingly require disturbing the predictable, lawlike way that our natural world typically operates. Perhaps God can sometimes interrupt the natural order without undermining it entirely. But it does seem likely that if Christ regularly appeared to sinners in a blaze of glory, or they regularly cheated death for long spells of time, any acts of repentance or conversion these

21 Thomas Talbott puts forward this objection in "The Doctrine of Everlasting Punishment", *Faith and Philosophy* 7, no. 1 (1990): 35–38.

22 See Talbott, ibid., 38–39 for this objection.

23 See Charles Seymour, "On Choosing Hell", *Religious Studies* 33, no. 3 (1997), Jerry Walls, *Hell: The Logic of Damnation* (Univ. of Notre Dame Press, 1992), 129–36 and Kvanvig, *The Problem of Hell* for responses to the first two objections. As for annihilation, see Eleonore Stump, "Dante's Hell, Aquinas's Moral Theory, and the Love of God", *Canadian Journal of Philosophy* 16, no. 2 (1986) for one argument to the effect that God preserves the damned in existence eternally because it is more loving for him to do so than to annihilate them. Some supporters of CMH, such as Swinburne and Kvanvig, have expressed openness to the possibility that God annihilates the damned.

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interventions prompted might cease to be genuine. Some philosophers have pointed out in response to the problem of divine hiddenness that God may remain somewhat hidden in order to preserve our ability to freely choose him.[24] It may be that he doesn't intervene more dramatically in the lives of more sinners for a similar reason.

If this adequately explains why God might not be able to convert all mortal sinners before their deaths, a second objection might allege that he should do so after their deaths. In a postmortem state with no natural world to worry about surely God could employ whatever dramatic tactics or as much time as it might take to cause sinners to cease resisting his offer of salvation. Perhaps he could do so, as C.S. Lewis imagines in *The Great Divorce*, by repeatedly bussing sinners from hell to heaven for a look at what they're missing. If this sort of scenario is possible, then it would seem better and fairer all around for God to convert all sinners postmortem than to allow some to languish eternally in hell. Accordingly, the defense I have proposed would work only for a finite hell, not an eternal one.

My response to this objection is similar to my response to the first; possibly, God cannot bring about postmortem conversion. Lewis himself memorably described the doors of hell as "locked from the inside"; he thought the damned had gotten themselves into a state where even if given the opportunity to convert they wouldn't take it.[25] Other advocates of CMH have attempted to defend hell's eternal duration along similar lines.[26] It isn't clear whether their proposals are available to proponents of DS, however, since they typically assume that God cannot cause free creaturely actions — an assumption DS rejects. I say it "isn't clear" whether their proposals are available to proponents of DS, however, because it seems to me that much is unclear about the nature of postmortem existence and psychology. Thomas Aquinas cites with approval John of Damascus's view that "what in the case of man is death is a fall in the case of angels. For after the fall there is no possibility of repentance for them, just as after death there is for men no repentance."[27] John writes that an angel "is not susceptible for repentance because it is incorporeal. For it is owing to the weakness of his body that man comes to have repentance."[28] Aquinas likewise maintains that neither angels nor humans are capable of postmortem repentance for the same reason John cites here.[29] Lacking bodies — or else possessing impassible bodies after the resurrection — angels and humans after death cannot undergo the emotional shifts or cognitive processes that ordinarily make it possible for them to change their minds and revise a bad judgment such as their decision to reject God. Without delving into the details of Aquinas's arguments for this position, its upshot is that while in this life God is perfectly capable of moving a creature's will to free choices to convert, repent or whatever else, after death the will of a created person is fixed such that even God cannot shift it. Now I don't think I can demonstrate that things *must* transpire after death the way Aquinas and John think they will.[30] It seems possible that they must transpire this way, however, and if so, then possibly even God cannot bring about postmortem conversion.

A final objection worth considering is whether the goods I have appealed to as possibly justifying God's decision to permit created persons to spend eternity in hell — mercy, forgiveness, repentance, con-

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24 See, for example, Michael J. Murray, "Coercion and the Hiddenness of God", *American Philosophical Quarterly* 30, no. 1 (1993).

25 C. S. Lewis, *The Problem of Pain* (Harper Collins, 2001), 130.

26 Swinburne, for instance, thinks a damned person might have "lost his soul" in the sense that he is "a prisoner of bad desires", Richard Swinburne, "A Theodicy of Heaven and Hell", in *The Existence and Nature of God*, ed. Alfred Freddoso (Univ. of Notre Dame Press, 1983), 49). Walls likewise argues for the possibility of a "decisive choice of evil" in Walls, *Hell: The Logic of Damnation*, 117–29.

27 John of Damascus, *Exposition of the Orthodox Faith*, trans. S.D.F. Salmond in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Second Series*, ed. Philip Schaff and Henry Wace (Hendricksen Publishers, 2012), 9:21. Aquinas quotes John in *Summa theologiae* 1a.64.2.

28 Ibid., 19.

29 Aquinas's discussions of "obstinacy of the will" among demons and the damned include *Summa theologiae* 1a.64.2; *Summa contra gentiles* 4.92–93 and 95; *Quaestiones disputatae de veritate* 24.10; *Quaestiones disputatae de malo* 16.5, *Scriptum super libros Sententiarum* 2.7.1.2 and 4.50.2.1.2 and *Compendium theologiae* 1.184. Joseph Suk-Hwan Dowd helpfully discusses some of these passages in "Aquinas on Demonic Obstinacy", *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 89, no. 4 (2015).

30 Walls and Timpe dismiss Aquinas's reasoning, reckoning that God will (or at least might) grant humans postmortem a passible body thus rendering them capable of changing their minds. See Timpe, *Free Will in Philosophical Theology*, 77 and Jerry L. Walls, *Purgatory: The Logic of Total Transformation* (Oxford Univ. Press, 2012), 43.

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version and atonement, etc. — are worth the price. After all, as we saw, this decision on God's part may require treating his creatures unfairly. To be considered just overall, then, the goods for the sake of which God allows hell must outweigh both this unfairness and the badness of hell itself. Wouldn't it have been better for God to eliminate moral evil altogether than allow it so as to enable forgiveness, repentance and the rest?

In answer to this question it might be pointed out that it is difficult, if not impossible, to imagine any deep, lasting relationship in which forgiveness and repentance are never required. Perhaps these states make possible a degree of depth and maturity in our relationships with God and one another that simply couldn't be had without moral evil. Recalling Plantinga's article discussed above, it might be argued that Adam's sin was a *felix culpa* in part because through the incarnation and atonement the blessed are drawn into closer union with God than they ever could have been in a world with no moral evil.

Even if this is so, however, it might be objected further that depth and maturity in the relationships of the blessed with God and each other isn't worth the steep cost of the damned missing out on relationship with God altogether. I see no way of decisively putting this objection to rest. On the other hand, I don't see how the objector might show decisively that closer union with God isn't worth such a steep cost either.

In a recent article discussing Plantinga's "felix culpa theodicy" Hud Hudson notes a similar dialectical stalemate when it comes to whether the goods of incarnation and atonement are worth the price of sin and suffering.[31] He argues that skeptical theist considerations should lead us to conclude that we simply don't know whether the fall was a "felix culpa" or not. Perhaps Hudson is correct. It may be that proponents of DS are best served by adopting a skeptical theist approach to problems raised by moral evil and hell overall. For those like Grant himself, however, who are already convinced that goods like mercy, forgiveness, repentance, conversion and atonement are valuable enough to ground a defense for moral evil in general, the proposal I have put forward shows one way of amplifying this defense to deal with the problem of hell too.[32]

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31 Hud Hudson, "The Argument from Evil: Felix Culpa!", in *Two Dozen (or so) Arguments for God: The Plantinga Project*, ed. Jerry Walls and Trent Dougherty (Oxford Univ. Press, 2018).

32 I'm very grateful to W. Matthews Grant for his generous correspondence regarding the ideas in this paper. I thank Ryan Kemp, Greg Lynch, James Gordon, Tiffany Kriner, Alex Loney, the two anonymous referees for this journal, and the participants in the 2019 "Nature and Limits of Theodicy" workshop at the Univ. of Navarre (and its organizer, Agustín Echavarría) for helpful suggestions and corrections.

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