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Eternal damnation and blessed ignorance: is the damnation of some incompatible with the salvation of any?

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Abstract: Both Thomas Talbott and Friedrich Schleiermacher have argued, in somewhat different ways, that in the context of Christian theism the damnation of anyone would render it impossible to extend genuine blessedness to anyone else. I examine both Schleiermacher's and Talbott's version of this argument, which I call the 'incompatibility argument', and respond to criticisms levelled by Jerry Walls and William Lane Craig. I argue that the argument is more powerful than its critics admit, and that it poses a potentially devastating challenge to what Thomas Talbott calls 'moderately conservative theism', according to which the damned autonomously choose their own damnation by forever rejecting God's offer of salvation.

Introduction

Friedrich Schleiermacher, in the *Glaubenslehre*, argues that the eternal damnation of even a single person would make it impossible for God to extend eternal blessedness to anyone.¹ More recently, Thomas Talbott has put forward essentially the same argument, with some small but significant variations.² In both cases, the crux of the argument is that the eternal damnation of anyone is incompatible with the salvation of any, because knowledge of the sufferings of the damned would undermine the happiness of the saved. I will hereafter refer to this as the incompatibility argument. Because belief in the salvation of at least some created persons is an indispensable feature of Christian faith, the success of the incompatibility argument would require Christians to reject the doctrine of hell – by which I mean the doctrine that some persons (but not all) suffer eternal damnation, or endless misery in alienation from God.

Versions of Christian theism that accept the doctrine of hell have always been more popular than those that reject it. Among Christian philosophers today, the most popular version of Christian theism is the version that Thomas Talbott has

called 'moderately conservative theism'.³ Moderately conservative theism accepts the doctrine of hell, but also accepts that God is perfectly and universally loving and merciful, and hence rejects the idea that some are damned because they deserve to be. Instead, moderately conservative theism holds that damnation is autonomously chosen by the damned. Hence, moderately conservative theism must assume that God either cannot act against the autonomy of the damned in order to save them, or won't do so out of respect for them (an extension of His love).

In what follows, I argue that the incompatibility argument poses a devastating challenge to the coherence of moderately conservative theism. I begin by developing both Schleiermacher's and Talbott's versions of the argument, and then considering in some detail objections that have been raised against both versions by supporters of moderately conservative theism. In particular, I briefly examine Jerry Walls's inadequate critique of Schleiermacher's version, and then look in detail at William Lane Craig's objections to Talbott's version. What will become apparent is that defenders of moderately conservative theism can effectively block the force of the incompatibility argument only by assuming that it is both possible and morally permissible for God to violate the autonomy of His creatures in order to save them. But if this assumption is made, moderately conservative theism collapses.

The incompatibility argument

Towards the end of the *Glaubenslehre*, Schleiermacher levels two short arguments against the doctrine of hell. The second of these is what I am calling the incompatibility argument. In this argument, Schleiermacher assumes that the condition of the saved involves at least two elements: first, perfect bliss; second, universal love and sympathy for the whole human race. But those in possession of the latter element would, if they were aware of the endless sufferings of the damned, be pained by them. As Schleiermacher puts it, when the sympathy of the blessed is extended to the damned, it 'must of necessity be a disturbing element in bliss, all the more that, unlike similar feelings in this life, it is untouched by hope'.⁴ He strengthens this point in various ways, most notably by observing that 'it will always happen that some of us (the blessed) were associated with some of them (the damned) in a common life'.⁵ He thinks that our memory of this association, coupled with our knowledge that at some point in our own lives 'we were as little regenerate as they', will increase the sympathy we feel for them.⁶

Of course, these points do not imply that the damnation of some is incompatible with the blessedness of others, but only that the damnation of some is incompatible with the blessedness of anyone who is *aware of* the miseries of the damned. Schleiermacher, however, takes it as a given that the condition of the

blessed 'is not as such compatible with entire ignorance of others' misery'.⁷ We will consider reasons for this view below. For now, it is enough to note that given this assumption Schleiermacher concludes that the doctrine of hell is not coherent: the salvation of any requires the salvation of all.

More recently, Thomas Talbott has put forward essentially the same argument, with some small but significant variations. Like Schleiermacher, he holds that the condition of the saved involves not only supreme happiness, but also love for all persons, and hence a desire for 'the good for all other created persons'. Again like Schleiermacher, Talbott takes it that anyone who possesses genuine love for some person S 'cannot be happy knowing that S will be forever miserable'.⁸ Hence, awareness of the state of the damned is incompatible with the perfect bliss that is supposed to accompany salvation. However, instead of assuming, as Schleiermacher does, that the blessed necessarily know of the condition of the damned, he assumes instead that 'salvation brings not only happiness, but the kind of happiness that could survive a full disclosure of the facts'.⁹ To avoid possible misunderstanding here, it should be noted that Talbott is not saying here that the happiness of the blessed is so *calloused* that it could resist disclosure of even the most tragic truths. Rather, he is saying that the happiness of the blessed is such that the actual facts about the world are of the sort that would, if known, in no way diminish that happiness. It is, in other words, a happiness that is fitting or *appropriate* given the actual facts (even if those facts are not presently known). And *such* happiness is not compatible with the existence of the damned – even if a happiness rooted in what Talbott calls 'a kind of blissful ignorance' might be.¹⁰

We see, then, that both Schleiermacher and Talbott argue, in essentially the same way, that the following proposition is true:

- (K) Anyone who is aware that some persons are eternally damned cannot possess eternal blessedness.

And each goes on to argue, although along different lines, that this fact implies the further conclusion, namely,

- (I) If any persons are eternally damned, then no persons possess eternal blessedness.

Thus, we have here two versions of the incompatibility argument. Schleiermacher's version can be formalized as follows:

- (1) Anyone in a state of eternal blessedness possesses both perfect bliss and universal love for all persons.
- (2) Anyone who possess universal love for all persons and who is aware that some persons are eternally damned cannot possess perfect bliss.
- (3) Hence, (K).

[1, 2]

- (4S) If any persons are eternally damned, anyone who possesses eternal blessedness would be aware of this.
- (5S) Hence, (I). [3, 4S]

Talbott's version is identical to Schleiermacher's up to (3), at which point it diverges in the following way:

- (4T) A person possesses eternal blessedness at all only if, were the person to come to be aware of all facts about the world, the person would continue to possess eternal blessedness.
- (5T) If any persons are eternally damned, then anyone who comes to be aware of all the facts of the world is aware that some persons are eternally damned.
- (6T) Hence, (I). [3, 4T, 5T]

The force of both versions as arguments for universalism rests in the fact that no Christian could abandon the belief that some persons do indeed enjoy eternal blessedness without effectively abandoning Christianity altogether. If either version succeeds, then, Christians must reject the doctrine of hell. Since both are formally valid arguments, the question becomes whether either of them is sound.

Walls's critique of the case for (K)

The common part of each argument – that is, the argument up to (3), in defence of (K) – appears at first glance to be uncontroversial from the standpoint of those who accept moderately conservative theism. Given the context of moderately conservative theism, it would be hard to reject (1). That eternal blessedness includes perfect bliss – happiness that is the very best *kind* of happiness that a person can know and is untainted by any dissatisfaction – is a longstanding Christian assumption. Christians also believe that salvation involves a process of sanctification that results in the saved loving the world as God does. And the prevailing interpretation of divine love, affirmed by moderately conservative theists, is that it is unconditional: God loves every person regardless of merit, and wishes that all would come to enjoy eternal fellowship with Him. Being unconditional, this love includes even the damned. Hence, the sanctification of the blessed would seem to include this sort of unconditional love for the damned.¹¹

Premise (2) at first seems equally uncontroversial. It certainly *seems* that if we love someone, knowledge that they are in misery will diminish our happiness. Thomas Talbott drives home this point by asking us to imagine that our own child is eternally damned and hence forever miserable. Could we really believe that knowledge of this fact would not diminish our own happiness?¹²

Nevertheless, one supporter of moderately conservative theism, Jerry Walls, explicitly attacks Schleiermacher's argument, and hence both versions of the incompatibility argument, on precisely this point. Walls's strategy is to argue that

God can know perfect bliss despite the fact that those He loves are in torment, and if this is possible for God it is possible for the saved. Walls admits that God would experience 'regret' over the sufferings of the damned, but he thinks God's happiness is not diminished by this regret because His regret is 'a moral attitude'.¹³ He assumes here the truth of the doctrine of divine impassivism – that is, the doctrine that God has no emotional *responses* to the world, because if He did, He would be *dependent* on the world.¹⁴ Apparently, at least for Walls, *moral* attitudes of approval and disapproval do not threaten God's independence from the world, presumably because God's moral attitudes are simply the expression of an unchanging (and perfect) moral character. God, from all eternity and not on the basis of what creatures do, has a negative moral attitude towards certain states, including the state of eternal damnation.

Walls maintains that these considerations undermine Schleiermacher's argument because 'the blessed may share God's perspective and consequently share God's perfect happiness'.¹⁵

I find Walls's thinking here unconvincing. First, I find the doctrine of divine impassivism unconvincing.¹⁶ Second, it seems that the Christian-love ethic cannot divorce morality from emotional responses, because Christian love is emotional.¹⁷ But neither point is needed to refute Walls. Either God has emotional responses or He does not. If He does, these responses would be *part* of His moral perfection in that they would perfectly track His moral judgements – feeling joy at good states of affairs, etc. On this assumption, God's moral regret over the state of the damned would clearly diminish His happiness.

If He does not have emotional responses, then His psychology is so radically unlike our own that we could not share God's perspective without losing an essential aspect of our humanity. Our emotional responsiveness to the world – the fact that we are angered by wickedness, saddened by suffering – seems an essential part of our human nature. While it may be a flaw that we have emotional responses that are *unfitting* to the circumstances, this flaw is overcome by rendering our emotional responses more fitting, not by their elimination. If we cease to feel fear in the state of blessedness, it is because fear is not fitting to the real security that fellowship with God involves. But would we have attained the state of blessedness if we did not *feel* perfectly safe in the bosom of God, because we had stopped having feelings altogether? While this might qualify as blessedness for, say, Vulcans, it does not sound like *human* blessedness.

In short, if we accept Walls's response to Schleiermacher, the state of eternal blessedness ceases to be the *perfection* of our human nature (as Christians have historically believed), and becomes instead the *swapping* of our human nature for something else. Seen in this light, it is clear that Walls's response to the incompatibility argument falls short.

More broadly, it seems that for those who accept that God is universally loving and merciful (as moderately conservative theists do), the case for (K) – the claim

that awareness of the sufferings of the damned would compromise eternal blessedness – is quite compelling. The question, then, is whether either Schleiermacher or Talbott offers good reason to think that, given (K), we should believe (I) – the claim that if some are damned none can experience eternal blessedness. In the case of Schleiermacher's version, this question amounts to a question about the merits of premise (4S). Why should we think that the blessed would inevitably know about the state of the damned? In the case of Talbott's version, this question amounts to one about the merits of (4T) (since (5T) is obviously true). What reason is there to think that genuine blessedness should be able to survive full disclosure of the facts without being undermined?

An overview of Craig's objections to the incompatibility argument

William Lane Craig, in two articles responding to Talbott, tries in effect to deny that (K) gives us any good reason to believe (I).¹⁸ Although explicitly directed against Talbott (there is no indication that Craig is aware of Schleiermacher's version of the argument), Craig's criticisms bear on both versions of the incompatibility argument laid out above, in that he offers reasons to deny both (4S) and (4T). Insofar as Craig is a defender of moderately conservative theism, his objections to the incompatibility argument are of particular importance to my purposes here. I turn then to a consideration of these criticisms.

In Craig's first article responding to Talbott, he raises two objections to the incompatibility argument, what I will call 'the objection from blessed ignorance' and 'the objection from overwhelming bliss'. Each of these objections is defended, in the light of Talbott's reply, in his second article. The objection from blessed ignorance, interestingly, seems mainly to target Schleiermacher's argument rather than Talbott's, in that it aims to call into question the truth of (4S). The objection from overwhelming bliss raises direct concerns about *both* (4S) and (4T). It is only in his second article that Craig raises an objection that is directed exclusively against Talbott's own argument – with the aim of showing, in effect, that Talbott's argument reduces to Schleiermacher's, and that the acceptability of the incompatibility argument therefore ultimately turns on the truth of (4S). This third objection I will call 'the objection from the nature of supremely worthwhile happiness'.

For the purposes of my own argument, it will be useful to consider each of these three objections in an order different from that in which Craig himself introduces them. In particular, since my response to the objection from the nature of supremely worthwhile happiness requires the introduction of considerations that will be useful in addressing both of the other objections, I will consider it first. And I will save my consideration of the objection from blessed ignorance for last because it is in the evaluation of it that we discover the key assumption that must be made by anyone who wishes to deny the inference from (K) to (I). The discovery of this

assumption leads directly into the final section of my paper, in which I show that the incompatibility argument can be refuted only at the expense of undermining moderately conservative theism.

The objection from the nature of supremely worthwhile happiness

In order to evaluate Craig's most explicit objection to (4T), we need to know why Talbott endorses it. Talbott holds that eternal blessedness is characterized by three conditions, laid out in what is at least a partial definition as follows:

- (D₃) God brings salvation to a sinner S only if, among other things, God brings it about (weakly) that the following conditions obtain: (a) that S is reconciled to God and in a state of supreme happiness; (b) that S is filled with love for others and therefore desires the good for all other created persons; and (c) that there is no fact F such that (i) S is ignorant of F, and (ii) were S not ignorant of F, then S would have been unable to experience supreme happiness.¹⁹

Notice that premise (1) of Talbott's argument is essentially the conjunction of (a) and (b). The addition of (c) to (1) is what justifies (4T). Given (c), there are no facts that could be revealed to someone in a state of blessedness that would 'knock them out' of that state, so to speak. If there were such facts, then even a person possessing supreme happiness and universal love would, nevertheless, not possess blessedness, and hence a fortiori could not be knocked out of the state of blessedness.

But why think that (c) is a necessary feature of the state of blessedness? For Talbott, the happiness of the blessed should not just be supreme (in the sense of being untainted by any dissatisfaction), but should also be supremely *worthwhile*. And, borrowing from Swinburne, Talbott thinks that for supreme happiness to be supremely worthwhile, it must meet two conditions: first, it does not arise from any sort of moral wickedness; second, it does not rest on false beliefs.²⁰ Put another way, the state of blessedness is not merely characterized by (a), but also by (b) and (c). In short, then, Talbott includes (c) in his account of blessedness because he believes that it is a necessary condition for the happiness of the blessed being supremely worthwhile.

But why think that? In fact, Craig denies that (c) is necessary for happiness being supremely worthwhile. It is this denial that is the crux of his objection to (4T). Craig's main reason for denying the necessity of (c) runs as follows:

- ... it seems to me dubious and even false that supremely worthwhile happiness entails the ability to survive a full disclosure of the truth. For a happiness which would, *ceteris paribus*, be diminished by the disclosure of a tragic truth about a loved one seems more worthwhile than one which would survive undiminished.²¹

Craig then concludes that the worth of happiness is determined exclusively by the

disposition of its possessor to feel happiness in a manner that is fitting or appropriate to the circumstances as they are known to the possessor. But this argument misses Talbott's point. Talbott is *not* claiming that supremely worthwhile happiness must be of a sort that is calloused against any sort of revelation, even a tragic one. On the contrary, he is quite clear that one of the characteristics of the blessed is that their happiness would be diminished by tragic news. What Talbott is claiming is that, in order for the supreme happiness of those whose happiness *would be diminished by tragic news* to nevertheless be supremely *worthwhile*, there must be no facts about the world that would qualify as tragic news were they to learn them.²²

Against this position, Craig offers nothing but his own contrary intuitions. He asserts, for example, that 'the mere possession of more information seems irrelevant to the worth of one's happiness. What is relevant is how one's happiness would be affected by the disclosure of such painful knowledge.'²³ And again: 'the mere lack of possession of information does not decrease or increase the worthwhileness of the happiness one experiences'.²⁴ Based on these assertions, Craig concludes that 'Talbott therefore needs to prove that it is logically impossible that the blessed should be unaware of the existence of the damned'.²⁵ In short, Craig thinks that (4T) is false; therefore, in order to deduce (I) from (K), (4S) is needed. But Craig's assertions here are not arguments. Ultimately, they amount to nothing but the denial of (4T) based on Craig's own intuitions.²⁶

We have, in short, two competing intuitions about the nature of supremely worthwhile happiness. Unfortunately neither Talbott nor Craig offer explicit reasons in favour of their respective intuitions. What are we to make of this impasse? Does the assessment of Talbott's version of the incompatibility argument stop at the point of irreconcilable but equally plausible intuitions?

I think not. In fact, I believe that Talbott's intuition is clearly the more plausible of the two, at least within the context of a broadly Christian worldview. To see this, let us consider again what Talbott is maintaining. For Talbott, to be in a state of blessedness is not merely to possess a subjective mental state, one that can be described as supremely happy. Rather, it is to exist in a certain kind of environment – namely, in an environment that is so glorious that it *warrants* supreme happiness. Blessedness, in short, is being supremely happy because one exists in an environment that warrants such happiness.

Talbott's assumption here appears to be that the state of happiness has an element of judgement to it. To be happy is to adopt an attitude of approval that implies a positive evaluation of the state of affairs in which one finds oneself. This seems a plausible assumption, and has considerable support in much of the recent literature discussing the nature of emotions. Even if we do not go so far as to claim that emotions are *nothing but* a species of judgement,²⁷ it nevertheless seems clear that emotions have a cognitive dimension. It is beyond the scope of the present essay to offer a detailed study of the nature of emotions, but that

hardly seems necessary for my purposes. It is enough to note, as George Pitcher does, that to treat emotions purely as inner mental states is to lose sight of one of the most important aspects of emotions. Emotions are *about* something – they have an intentional object. And they involve an *evaluation* of their object.²⁸

The emotion of happiness is *about* the state in which persons find themselves. And happiness implies an evaluation of this object – in particular, a positive evaluation of approval. Persons who are happy *approve* of the state in which they find themselves, and they are more or less happy depending on how much they approve, or how unmixed their approval is with elements of disapproval. ‘The state in which they find themselves’ is an ambiguous phrase, and intentionally so – because different people have broader or narrower conceptions of what constitutes their ‘state’, paralleling the extent to which they include or exclude the needs and interests of others within their conception. Someone who is universally loving (as we assume the blessed to be), would identify with all persons. Hence, for such a person to be *supremely* happy is to approve of the state or condition of *all* persons. Given Christian assumptions – in particular the assumption that the condition that is supremely good for people to be in, and hence supremely worthy of approval, is the condition of being fully united with God in love – persons who are universally loving and who understand what is truly best for people would be *supremely* happy only if they thought that every person was united with God in love.

The supreme happiness of the blessed, in short, involves a judgement – in particular, the judgement that every person is indeed united with God in love. No other circumstance would warrant such supreme happiness. What Talbott is saying, in effect, is that if this judgement is *false*, the happiness is worth less than if the judgement is true. It may not be worth less *morally* (what Craig takes to be the only measure of the worth of happiness); instead, it is worth less *epistemically*, in much the way that a false belief is worth less than a true belief. If the judgement associated with the supreme happiness of the blessed is a false judgement, then the eternally blessed are, in effect, living an eternal *mistake*. But can we truly say that they are eternally *blessed* if they are *erroneously* happy – eternally living a life of bliss that *they* would judge to be entirely inappropriate to the circumstances if they knew what the circumstances really were? For the universally loving, supreme happiness is the fitting response to a universe in which all are saved, and would be entirely unfitting for a universe in which some are damned forever. The full force of this point will come out in a later section. For now, it is enough to note that supreme happiness may turn out to be unfitting to the circumstances for causes other than a distorted value system that judges as supremely good what is not. Someone may apply the right value system to a distorted conception of the *facts*. In either case, the happiness admits of an error or imperfection, and hence is less than supremely worthwhile. It may well be that in some cases a false happiness is

preferable to misery – which can explain why we sometimes think it appropriate to withhold painful truths from our friends and relatives. But that does not show that false happiness can be *supremely worthwhile* happiness. It is not. Talbott's intuition here seems far more sound than does Craig's.

Talbott's version of the incompatibility argument, then, is much stronger than Craig takes it to be. In fact, once happiness is properly understood as involving a judgement about the value of one's state – and the supreme happiness of the blessed is understood to involve a *celebration* of the (supposed) fact that all are saved – it becomes hard to sustain Craig's view that genuine blessedness can coexist with the fact that some are eternally damned. If I am joyously celebrating the fact that my child has graduated from college with honours, the truth that my child has actually *dropped out* of college – even if I am not aware of this truth – renders the joyous celebration a kind of farce. Craig, in effect, asks us to imagine God presiding over such a farce, in this case an *eternal* farce, nodding and smiling at the blessed who are joyously celebrating God's complete victory over sin – when in fact God's victory is far from complete, and sin still reigns supreme forever in the souls of the damned.

In spite of all these considerations, Craig might persist in clinging to his intuition that what one knows or fails to know can have no bearing on the worth of one's happiness. He can do this by denying that the worth of an emotion has anything to do with the veracity of its cognitive component, and insisting that its worth is entirely determined by the subjective fit of the happiness with what one *believes* (even erroneously) to be true about the world. While this move strikes me as quite implausible, it has the further difficulty of addressing *only* Talbott's version on the incompatibility argument. As we will see in the discussion of the objection from blessed ignorance, the moves that Craig must make in order to deny *both* versions of the incompatibility argument are even more problematic than the move he must make here. Before turning to the objection from blessed ignorance, however, let me consider an objection that seems to target *both* versions of the incompatibility argument, namely the objection from overwhelming bliss.

The objection from overwhelming bliss

Much of what I have already said applies with equal force against the objection from overwhelming bliss. To see this, we will need to consider Craig's development of this objection. The core of it is laid out in the following passage:

It is possible that the very experience itself of being in the immediate presence of Christ (cf. the beatific vision) will simply drive from the minds of His redeemed any awareness of the lost in hell. So overwhelming will be His presence and the love and joy which it inspires that the knowledge of the damned will be banished from the consciousness of God's people. In such a case, the redeemed will still have such knowledge, but they would never be conscious of it and so never pained by it.²⁹

This argument can be viewed as a critique of both (4T) and (4S). I will consider each possibility in turn.

Recall that (4T) holds that ‘A person possesses eternal blessedness at all only if, were the person to come to be aware of all facts about the world, the person would continue to possess eternal blessedness.’ Recall, also, that Talbott’s primary defence of (4T) is based on (D₃). Craig argues, in effect, that (4T) does not follow from (D₃), because *knowledge* of the state of the damned does not imply *awareness* of their state. Essentially, Craig *grants*, for the sake of argument, condition (c) of (D₃) (the view, roughly, that the state of blessedness must be able to survive the disclosure of all the facts of the world), but then goes on to hold that this does not entail (4T). Full disclosure of all the facts of the world, Craig argues, would give the blessed knowledge of the sufferings of the damned, but not awareness of the state of the damned – since the vision of Christ is so glorious that it drives such awareness out of their minds. Hence, what follows from (D₃) is not (4T), but rather the following:

(4T*) A person possesses eternal blessedness at all only if, were the person to come to *know* all facts about the world, the person would continue to possess eternal blessedness.

But (K), (4T*), and (5T) do not imply (I). Even if it is true that, *were* the blessed to become aware of the sufferings of the damned, that *would* diminish their happiness and hence knock them out of the state of blessedness, the full disclosure of all facts that is (by hypothesis) a necessary feature of blessedness does not produce such awareness. It only produces knowledge. Hence, once the implications of (D₃) are spelled out accurately, and (4T) is replaced with (4T*), Talbott’s argument is rendered invalid.

But this whole line of argument turns, ultimately, on an uncharitable reading of (D₃). Clause (c) of (D₃) asserts that ‘there is no fact F such that (i) S is ignorant of F and (ii) were S not ignorant of F, then S would have been unable to experience supreme happiness’. Craig takes ‘ignorant’ here to mean ‘without knowledge’, and ‘not ignorant’ to mean ‘with knowledge but not necessarily awareness’. But all that Talbott needs to do to make (4T) follow from (D₃) is to offer a different interpretation of ‘ignorant’. He could, for example, define ‘ignorant’ as ‘without conscious knowledge’, or even as ‘without awareness’. Given the overall thrust of Talbott’s argument, this seems the more plausible reading.

Craig does admit as much. He notes that ‘Talbott could amend clause (c) of (D₃) by substituting for “ignorant” something like “unaware” or “unconscious”’.³⁰ But Craig dismisses such a move on the grounds that, if this is done, ‘we are surely justified in doubting that clause (c) is a necessary condition of salvation’.³¹ He can think of nothing that ‘seems to justify this condition either philosophically or biblically’.³²

It is here where Craig is far too hasty and where the objection from overwhelming bliss, as an objection to (4T), breaks down. For everything that was said in the discussion above, to the effect that Talbott's intuition that (c) is a necessary condition for blessedness is more plausible than Craig's intuition that it is not, applies to the interpretation of (c) that is required to support the inference to (4T). If one's happiness depended on a lack of *awareness* of facts that, were one *aware* of them, one would judge one's happiness to be unfitting to the circumstances, then the happiness in question seems to fall short of supremely worthy happiness. It remains a kind of false happiness.

This point can be strengthened if we consider a bit more carefully the nature of the universal love that is part of blessedness. Simone Weil has maintained, I think rightly, that it is impossible to truly love someone if one does not *attend* to that person.³³ Attention to the other is the most fundamental expression of love for the other. Luther expresses the same idea in a somewhat different way when he says that to love one's neighbour is to "put on" his neighbour, and so conduct himself toward him as if he himself were in the other's place ... A Christian man lives not in himself but in Christ and his neighbour. Otherwise, he is not a Christian'.³⁴ This seems as good an explication as any of what Christian love for neighbour requires. You cannot truly love your neighbour as yourself if you do not put yourself in your neighbour's position, and, in effect, understand what the world looks like through your neighbour's eyes. And you can hardly do this if you fail to pay attention to your neighbour's suffering, to your neighbour's needs. If Craig's account of the effects of the beatific vision is correct, then, the beatific vision has the effect of *diminishing* our capacity to love our neighbour, by driving out our ability to pay attention to our neighbour's plight. And this is surely not right.

Talbott criticizes the objection from overwhelming bliss along just these lines,³⁵ but Craig seems to miss the point entirely. Craig says in reply that someone would be less loving and more callous 'only if he fails to love all those persons of whom he is aware; but it would be fatuous to so describe someone for failing to love a person of whose existence he is completely unaware'.³⁶ But the point is that to know that someone is suffering terribly, but to remain blissfully unaware of that person's plight, is to fail to extend love to that person. If we love others, then their suffering *demand*s our attention, such that if we knew that they were suffering we could not fail to have our attention drawn to that fact. The fact that sometimes, in this life, we become so absorbed with other things that we have no conscious awareness of the sufferings of distant peoples, even if we know that they are suffering, is a clear sign of the limits of our capacity to love. But surely the beatific vision would expand our capacity to love, not limit it.

Craig's mistake, then, is in thinking that universal love for others, while it involves being pained by their suffering if we are conscious of it, does not involve our awareness being *drawn* to the suffering of others when we know about that suffering. Loving others requires caring about their condition, and one cannot

simultaneously care about their condition, know what their condition is, and yet eternally fail to pay enough attention to their condition to be consciously aware of it. This is especially true if their condition is one of misery.

Hence, the objection from overwhelming bliss fails as an objection to (4T) – and, for essentially the same reasons, it fails as an objection to (4S). Recall that as formulated, this objection does not deny that the blessed have knowledge of the damned, but only that, if they have such knowledge they will perpetually and eternally remain consciously unaware of it. But as we have seen, if the blessed know of the state of the damned, and if the blessed love the damned, then they could not help but *attend* to the fact that the damned are in misery, and hence be aware of the sufferings of the damned. Hence, if we assume that the blessed have the relevant knowledge of the damned, (4S) follows. Craig therefore cannot undermine (4S) by claiming, as he does, that the blessed’s knowledge of the damned does not culminate in awareness of them. If the blessed do have such knowledge, they will, by virtue of their loving character, also be aware of this suffering – and their blessedness will be undermined. Craig’s only hope of refuting (4S), then, involves denying that the blessed have *knowledge* of the state of the damned.

Craig does deny this in his third objection to the incompatibility argument, the objection from blessed ignorance. Here, then, is Craig’s last hope for saving the doctrine of hell against the challenges raised by both Talbott and Schleiermacher. We turn to this third and final objection now.

The objection from blessed ignorance

Because the objection from blessed ignorance seems to most specifically target (4S) (and hence Schleiermacher’s version of the incompatibility argument), it may be useful to first consider some of the reasons in favour of (4S). If the objection from blessed ignorance is to be successful, it must grapple with these reasons and show that, despite them, (4S) is false.

Schleiermacher offers only two brief comments in favour of this premise: first, that ‘so high a degree of bliss is not as such compatible with entire ignorance of others’ misery’; second, that the blessed cannot be ignorant of the state of the damned ‘if the separation itself (between the saved and the damned) is the result purely of a general judgement, at which both sides were present, which means conscious of each other’.³⁷

The second consideration rests on a view held by most defenders of the doctrine of hell, namely that there is a final judgement at which both saved and damned are present. But since a resolute defender of the doctrine might deny this, and since Schleiermacher treats this consideration as merely supplemental, I will focus my attention on the first.

Here, Schleiermacher holds that ignorance of something as significant as the sufferings of the damned is *incompatible* with blessedness. This claim may appear

puzzling, but becomes less so if one recalls that blessedness is our final end as human beings. Our intellectual faculties are so central to our human nature that most philosophers since Aristotle have agreed that our happiness must involve these faculties functioning well. Hence, the supreme happiness of the blessed must involve these faculties functioning more perfectly than they ever did in this earthly life. If now we see ‘as if through a glass darkly’, in the life to come we will see the truth more perfectly. Our hunger for knowledge will be satisfied, our intellectual confusion washed away, our ignorance replaced by insight. Although, as finite humans, we cannot hope for omniscience, not even once we have attained communion with God, we *can* hope that our intellectual faculties will achieve their fullest potential.

It certainly seems to be the case that if my intellectual faculties attain their fullest potential once I attain communion with God, this implies that I would not be ignorant of the most important facts of God’s universe, at least those which it would be possible for my finite human mind to comprehend. And if some of God’s creatures are eternally damned – if in some human souls God’s plan of redemption is eternally thwarted, such that His victory over sin remains forever only a partial victory, one tempered and diminished by an eternal tragedy – this is without doubt one of the most important facts about the universe. And it is not beyond the powers of a finite human intellect to grasp this fact. Hence, if my rational nature is fully actualized once I attain eternal blessedness, we would expect me to know it if some persons were eternally damned. But it is hard to imagine that my intellectual faculties have reached their fullest potential if I remain ignorant of critically important facts that I am able to grasp – such as the fact that in some human souls God’s plan of redemption is eternally thwarted.

This is all the more true given that the state of blessedness involves a state of communion with God. Can creatures defined, at least in part, by their capacity for knowledge truly be said to have communion with God if they do not know God? And can we truly be said to know God if we remain ignorant of truths that must be of intense importance to Him, such as the state of the damned?

To these considerations in support of (4S), Talbott offers the additional argument that in order for the blessed to be ignorant of the condition of the damned, God would have to perpetrate an immoral deception on the blessed. He raises this issue while discussing the effects of eternal damnation on those who love and care about the damned (their parents, friends, etc.). Although Talbott does not lay out in any detail his reasoning here, the assumption seems to be that, first, if humanity were ultimately divided into the saved and the damned there would be some among the damned who are loved ones of some among the saved; and second, it is impossible that these among the saved should remain forever ignorant of the dire fate of their loved ones unless God subjected them to some kind of eternal deception. But, Talbott holds, ‘on the Christian view, God is incapable of such immoral deception’.³⁸

But why think that eternal ignorance of the dire fate of one's loved ones requires some sort of deceptive intervention of God? Several reasons present themselves. According to most Christian understandings, the state of blessedness involves a heavenly realm in which the blessed mingle and interact and recognize one another. If this conception is embraced, then – barring some sort of deception – the blessed would know if their loved ones were excluded from this realm. But we do not need to make such a controversial assumption about the nature of blessedness to make the point. The special love that we have for those closest to us would, it seems, involve a particular interest in their eternal fate. Unless we want to maintain that the state of blessedness involves a vitiation of some of what is best in human nature, we would therefore have to assume that the blessed would be interested in the fate of their loved ones and would seek to know, if they could, what had become of them. And, presumably, in a state of communion with the omniscient God they *could* know what had become of their loved ones unless God prevented it – either through active deception or misdirection, or through a silence in the face of their enquiries that would be suspicious unless the suspicions were allayed through something amounting to deception.

It is in the light of these considerations in favour of (4S) that we need to consider Craig's objection from blessed ignorance. The crux of this objection is Craig's view that God could actively 'shield' the blessed 'from this painful knowledge', and that this active shielding does not amount to immoral deception.³⁹ That God *has the power* to shield the blessed from knowledge of the damned seems clear enough. But for Craig's case to succeed he must make two additional claims:

- (A1) It is morally permissible for God to shield the blessed from knowledge of the damned in order to secure their blessedness;
- (A2) The resultant state of ignorance is nevertheless a state of blessedness.

Craig, in fact, holds both (A1) and (A2), but there are two problems with his doing so: first, his reasoning in support of each is unconvincing; second, and more importantly, he cannot claim *both* (A1) *and* (A2) without undermining moderately conservative theism.

We have already seen that Craig endorses (A2); and we have seen why (A2) is implausible at best. That leaves (A1). Craig offers several considerations in support of (A1): first, that shielding persons from painful knowledge can be virtuous; second, that God so shielding the blessed is an extension of the kind of love displayed on the Cross; third, that such shielding need not be viewed as *deception* at all.

With regard to the first point, Craig notes that 'we can all think of cases in which we shield persons from knowledge which would be painful for them and which they do not need to have', and that we regard such shielding as virtuous.⁴⁰ But while it may be appropriate to withhold painful information from someone *in this*

imperfect earthly life – where we must decide which imperfection is worse, ignorance or the pain of knowing – the state of blessedness is supposed to be a *perfected* state.⁴¹ If God must choose which imperfection to subject us to, our state falls short of blessedness.⁴²

Craig's second point is even weaker. He imagines God keeping the 'terrible secret' about the damned buried forever in his breast 'in order that He might bring free creatures into the supreme and unalloyed joy of fellowship with Himself'. Craig takes this to be 'a beautiful extension of Christ's suffering on the Cross'.⁴³

But Craig unwittingly reveals here a key problem with denying (4S). He wants to say that, to facilitate 'the supreme and unalloyed joy of fellowship with Himself', God eternally withholds from the blessed what must be a very central aspect of Himself: His grief over the fate of the damned. In order to preserve the joy of the blessed, God erects a partial wall between Himself and them, rendering their fellowship with him something less than full communion. But surely it is contrary to Christian assumptions to say that the blessed are rendered more blessed by limits being placed on their communion with God.

This is perhaps the core intuition that underlies Schleiermacher's insistence that blessedness 'is not as such compatible with entire ignorance of others' misery'. The bliss of the blessed hinges upon their communion with God; it is hard to imagine how they could be truly blessed if God were withholding an important piece of Himself from them.⁴⁴ The emerging picture is not of a universe in which there are the blessed, who enjoy communion with God, and the damned, who are separated from Him. Instead, there are only *degrees of separation*. And this is what it means to say that if some are damned, none can be *truly* saved.

This takes us to Craig's final point: his claim that divine shielding of the saved should not be viewed as *deception* at all. Craig argues that while it '*would* be deceptive of God to make the blessed believe that the lost were saved when in fact they are not', it is not similarly deceptive for God to erase from their minds all memory of the lost, since the latter does not cause them to hold false beliefs.⁴⁵

There are two problems here. First, to ensure their supreme happiness, it seems God *must* bring it about that the blessed have false beliefs. Second, even if Craig is right that in a narrow sense God is not deceiving the blessed, He would nevertheless be involved in something morally akin to deception.

With respect to the first point, it is clear that the blessed can't be merely left *agnostic* concerning the possibility that some are damned. As noted above, the *supreme* happiness of those who are universally loving involves the judgement that *everyone* is enjoying communion with God. Supreme happiness is, for the blessed, a fitting response only to such a state. Thus, God's act of purging the minds of the blessed must bring them to believe that all are indeed saved. Otherwise, the celebratory joy that is only fitting such a state would not ensue.

And this leads to the second point. Even if God has not explicitly deceived the blessed in stripping them of knowledge of the damned, He has even so brought it

about that they adopt an attitude of supreme happiness that they would not have adopted had they known the real state of things. And this is wrong for the very same reasons that deception is wrong: it interferes with rational autonomy. If I am deceived, I might choose an action that I think is of type (C) when in fact it is of type (C*). The result is that I perform an act of a type that I did not autonomously choose to perform. What is true of actions is also true of emotional responses.⁴⁶ The blessed are adopting an emotional attitude of supreme happiness based on the judgement that the universe is so ordered that supreme happiness is fitting. But under Craig's assumptions, the blessed are wrong about this. Their attitude is one they would never adopt if they knew the truth.

And *God* is responsible for their error. At a very minimum He could have disavowed them of their false judgement but chose not to do so; but His responsibility seems more active than this, insofar as God presumably must take positive steps to ensure that the blessed remain ignorant of the state of the damned. In short, under the assumption that some are eternally damned, God must violate the autonomy of the blessed to secure their blessedness.

And this leads to my final point. It turns out that accepting (A₁) amounts to accepting the following:

(A₁*) It is morally legitimate, at least sometimes, for God to violate the autonomy of the blessed in order to secure their blessedness.

If respect for autonomy were an inviolable moral rule for God, He would not intrude upon the autonomy of the blessed by imposing the ignorance that would secure their eternal bliss.

Furthermore, it is clear that assuming (A₂) amounts to assuming that the state resulting from this sort of ignorance-inducing violation of autonomy nevertheless constitutes a state of genuine blessedness. The following proposition follows immediately:

(A₂*) A state of eternal blessedness can be attained in ways that violate the autonomy of creatures.

But if (A₁*) and (A₂*) are accepted, it follows that it is both possible and morally permissible for God to secure the blessedness of creatures in ways that violate their autonomy. Hence, it becomes hard for defenders of moderately conservative theism to sustain their view that some are damned because they autonomously choose to forever reject God.

Implication for the coherence of moderately conservative theism

Those who, like Craig, support moderately conservative theism, deny the Thomistic notion that the sufferings of the damned are a matter to celebrate. They agree with the universalist that God continues to love even the unregenerate and would save them if He could. Hell exists, for them, because some persons eternally

reject God through their own autonomous choice. But if that is the reason why some are damned, we could well ask why God couldn't just interfere with the autonomy of the unregenerate to secure their salvation. Two answers are possible:

- (B1) It is morally objectionable for God to violate the autonomy of His creatures, even when that is the only way to secure their blessedness
- (B2) A state of eternal blessedness cannot be attained in ways that violate the autonomy of creatures.

In short, moderately conservative theism must suppose that it would be either *immoral* or *impossible* for God to secure blessedness through autonomy violations. But (B1) and (B2) contradict (A1) and (A2). The assumptions that are needed to make the autonomy-based argument for the doctrine of hell succeed, and hence for moderately conservative theism to be a plausible version of theism, contradict those needed to refute the incompatibility argument. Whatever they do, defenders of moderately conservative theism are left in a bind.

There seems to be only one way out of this bind, and that would be for defenders of moderately conservative theism to show that there are different kinds of autonomy violations, with the kind involved in securing blessed ignorance (what we might call 'Craigian autonomy violations') being either morally permissible or logically compatible with blessedness in a way that the kinds needed to secure the blessedness of all are not. In other words, defenders of moderately conservative theism would need to modify either (B1) or (B2) so as not to extend to Craigian autonomy violations. But this way out does not appear to be particularly promising.

Modifying (B2) in the needed way is clearly problematic. Craigian autonomy violations are *constitutive* of the state of blessedness, in that the condition of being deceived about the truth is an ongoing requirement for the saved to remain secure in bliss. If all are saved, then no creature will need to be secured eternally in a false belief in order to enjoy supreme happiness. Thus, *that* kind of autonomy violation (*constitutive* of the eternal state of blessedness) will not be necessary in order to secure universal salvation. Instead, what would be required (if anything) would be some kind of autonomy violation that is *causally* related to *achieving* the state of blessedness (such as an act of overmastering the creature's will through a full revelation of God so as to bring about a transformation in the creature's character, desires, etc.). Since the *means* of achieving the state of blessedness are not constitutive of that state, it is hard to see why these means would be logically incompatible with being in that state. Craigian autonomy violations, however, *could* be incompatible with being in the state of eternal blessedness, since they are by definition an ongoing feature of that state. And the considerations raised in this paper offer formidable reasons for thinking that Craigian autonomy violations really are incompatible with the state of eternal blessedness. Hence, to modify (B2)

in the needed way would require defenders of the doctrine of hell to show that the sorts of autonomy violations that appear to be compatible with the state of blessedness are really incompatible, whereas those that appear to be incompatible are really compatible.

With respect to modifying (B1), defenders of the doctrine of hell face several formidable challenges. First, there is considerable reason to think that all that is needed in order to secure the salvation of any creature would be to have that creature be presented with the full and unalloyed vision of God. If the unregenerate were forced not only to see but to *experience* (in an unmediated way) the truth about God and their own relation to Him, they would no longer be capable of rejecting Him. Even if we make the (contestable) assumption that such a full revelation of God violates the autonomy of the creature (either because they're *forced* to see the truth, or because the truth, once seen, makes them *unable* to reject God), it turns out that defenders of the doctrine of hell find themselves in the unenviable position of explaining why an autonomy violation that involves *revealing* the truth is morally objectionable, whereas an autonomy violation that involves *concealing* the truth is not.

Second, there clearly *is* something *prima facie* wrong about Craigian autonomy violations. Presumably, Craig and other defenders of the doctrine of hell would have to hold that Craigian autonomy violations are nevertheless morally justified because the end of perfecting the happiness of those in communion with God by eliminating their sadness about the damned outweighs whatever *prima facie* case there is against these sorts of violations. Now this claim has some plausibility. But if it is plausible to say this, is it not also plausible to say that God's act of revealing Himself to His creature so forcefully as to secure repentance would be justified because the end of lifting creatures out of a state of utter misery into a state of supreme bliss outweighs whatever *prima facie* case there is against this kind of overwhelming revelation? If the former kind of autonomy violation can be justified on the basis of an improvement in the state of those violated, it becomes very hard to see how or why the latter kind *cannot* be justified, even though the improvement in the state of those violated is *incalculably greater*. And if we want to say that a deontological moral constraint renders the latter sort of autonomy violation impermissible regardless of how good the consequences might be, it becomes hard to see why the same moral constraint would not apply to the former sort.

In short, there does not appear to be any plausible way to modify (B1) or (B2) so as to reconcile them with (A1) and (A2). Hence, those who, like supporters of moderately conservative theism, wish to defend the doctrine of hell by appeal either to the immorality or impossibility of violating creaturely autonomy have no defence against the full force of the incompatibility argument. Of course, rabid defenders of moderately conservative theism could preserve their case for the doctrine of hell by weakening their understanding of blessedness. They could hold that the state of blessedness does not include supreme happiness, and that the

promise of Christianity is the promise of an *imperfect* final end, marred forever by dissatisfaction with the state of the world. Or they could hold that the state of blessedness does not include perfect sanctification – maintaining that the blessed, despite being in communion with God, remain out of harmony with God’s love for the damned. But neither of these alternatives is especially appealing. Both seem to involve some kind of adulteration of the spirit of Christian theism. As such, the incompatibility argument turns out to pose a devastating challenge to moderately conservative theism. And if one believes, as I do, that moderately conservative theism is the best attempt to reconcile the doctrine of hell with other central Christian teachings (such as the teaching that God is perfectly loving, and the teaching that Jesus fully atoned for human sin), the incompatibility argument turns out to offer compelling grounds for abandoning the doctrine of hell altogether.

Notes

1. Friedrich Schleiermacher *The Christian Faith (Die Glaubenslehre)*, H. R. Mackintosh and J. S. Stewart (eds) (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1928), 721–722. The classic T & T Clark translation has multiple translators. The relevant section is translated by H. R. Mackintosh.
2. Thomas Talbot ‘Providence, freedom, and human destiny’, *Religious Studies*, 26 (1990), 227–245; see especially 239–241. Talbot further develops the argument in ‘Craig on the possibility of eternal damnation’, *Religious Studies*, 28 (1992), 495–510.
3. Thomas Talbot ‘The Doctrine of Everlasting Punishment’, *Faith and Philosophy*, 7 (1990), 19–42. Contemporary Christian philosophers who endorse some variant of moderately conservative theism include Richard Swinburne, Eleonore Stump, Jonathan L. Kvanvig, William Lane Craig, and Jerry L. Walls, to name a few. See Richard Swinburne ‘A theodicy of heaven and hell’, in Alfred J. Freddoso (ed.) *The Existence and Nature of God* (Notre Dame IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1983), 37–54; Eleonore Stump ‘Dante’s hell, Aquinas’s moral theory, and the love of God’, *Canadian Journal of Philosophy*, 16 (1986), 181–198; Jonathan L. Kvanvig *The Problem of Hell* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993); William Lane Craig ‘“No other name”: a middle knowledge perspective on the exclusivity of salvation through Christ’, *Faith and Philosophy*, 6 (1989), 172–178; Jerry L. Walls *Hell: The Logic of Damnation* (Notre Dame IN: The University of Notre Dame Press, 1992).
4. Schleiermacher *Christian Faith*, 721.
5. *Ibid.*
6. *Ibid.* Schleiermacher adds to this the following point: ‘In the divine government of the world everything is inseparably conditioned by everything else; hence we cannot ignore the fact that the circumstance of our having enjoyed dispensations was due to the very same disposition of things as insured that such help should not reach them. Thus our sympathy cannot fail to be attended by the bitter feeling always present when we see a real connection between our own gain and another’s loss.’
7. *Ibid.*
8. Talbot ‘Providence, freedom and human destiny’, 240. Interestingly, Talbot reinforces this view with considerations almost completely analogous to those offered by Schleiermacher when he asks, ‘If the redeemed ... could never be happy knowing that some of their own loved ones were lost forever, would not the knowledge that ... these loved ones were in effect sacrifices on behalf of the redeemed, be even more crushing still?’; *Ibid.*, 239.
9. *Ibid.*, 239–240.
10. *Ibid.*, 238.
11. Of course, there are those in the history of Christian thought who seem to deny that the blessed love the damned. Aquinas, for example, claims that they ‘rejoice’ over the sufferings of those in hell. See *ST III* supp., Q 94, art. 3. But to say this would require one to say that God does not love the damned – a

- position Talbott refers to as 'hard-hearted theism'. Such a position is hard to reconcile with what divine love is typically understood to involve: a love that extends the most complete kind of sympathy and mercy to *all*, even the most undeserving. To my knowledge, none have come forward to defend 'hard-hearted theism' against Talbott's scathing attacks. In any event, the version of theism that interests me here – namely MCT – holds God to be universally loving.
12. Talbott 'Providence, freedom and human destiny', 237–238. In response to Peter Geach's claim that 'someone confronted with the damned would find it impossible to wish that things so evil (the damned) could be happy' (in *Providence and Evil* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 139), Talbott notes that this only shows that 'I could not wish to see my daughter *both* morally corrupt *and* happy', but 'it simply does not follow that I would not wish to see her happy'. In fact, that one's own child is both miserable and morally corrupt is a double reason to be distressed. *Ibid.*, n. 13.
 13. Walls *Hell*, 109.
 14. Walls thinks that this sort of dependence would render God susceptible to becoming what he calls 'an emotional hostage', and that such a state of affairs is unfitting for God. See *ibid.*, 106.
 15. *Ibid.*, 110.
 16. My reason are similar to those expressed by John Kronen in 'Can God feel?: a critique of theological impassivism', *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly*, 71 (1997), 101–111.
 17. For a wonderfully succinct treatment of the emotional dimension of Christian love, see Frances Howard-Snyder 'Christianity and ethics', in *idem* (ed.) *Reason for the Hope Within* (Grand Rapids MI: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1999), 375–398. See especially 386–390.
 18. William Lane Craig 'Talbott's universalism', *Religious Studies*, 27 (1991), 297–308; and *idem* 'Talbott's universalism once more', *Religious Studies*, 29 (1993), 497–518. The second of these articles responds to Thomas Talbott's reply to the first. See Talbott's 'Craig on the possibility of eternal damnation'.
 19. Talbott 'Providence, freedom and human destiny', 239.
 20. *Ibid.*, n. 14.
 21. Craig 'Universalism once more', 508.
 22. Based on his misunderstanding of Talbott, Craig proceeds to accuse him of conflating supreme happiness with supremely worthwhile happiness, and tries to show this by attributing to Talbott a fallacious argument that Talbott does not, in fact, endorse. *Ibid.*, 508–509.
 23. *Ibid.*, 509.
 24. *Ibid.*
 25. *Ibid.*
 26. Intuitions, it might be noted, that stands in sharp contrast to those of Aquinas, who holds that 'Were it truly final the attraction of delight would be based on itself. But this is not the case. What matters is the object that gives delight. Consequently delight has its goodness and attraction from elsewhere, and is not the ultimate end but its attendant.' *SCG*, III, 26, transl. Thomas Gilby *Saint Thomas Aquinas: Philosophical Texts* (New York NY: Oxford University Press, 1951, repr. 1967), 271. The implication here is that the value of delight derives from the object that gives delight – but if the object of delight is illusory, then the value of the delight would also be illusory. This point is even more strongly evident in a passage from the *Summa Theologica*: 'So, therefore, the essence of happiness consists in an act of the intellect: but the delight that results from happiness pertains to the will. In this sense Augustine says (*Confess.* x, 23) that happiness is "joy in truth"', *ST*, I-II, Q 3, art. 4.
 27. For an articulation of this view, see Robert C. Solomon 'On emotions as judgments', *American Philosophical Quarterly*, 25 (1988), 183–191.
 28. See George Pitcher 'Emotion', *Mind*, 74 (1965), 326–346.
 29. Craig 'Talbott's universalism', 307.
 30. *Ibid.*
 31. *Ibid.*
 32. *Ibid.*
 33. See Simone Weil 'Forms of the implicit love of God', in *idem Waiting for God* (New York NY: Harper and Row, 1951), 149. See also her comments on love in *Gravity and Grace* (Lincoln NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1997), especially 112–113.
 34. Martin Luther 'The freedom of a Christian', in John Dillenberger (ed.) *Martin Luther: Selections from His Writings* (New York NY: Anchor Press, 1961), 79–80.

35. Talbott holds that 'It is possible that the beatific vision will drive all knowledge of the lost from the consciousness of the redeemed (without obliterating it altogether) only if it is possible that the beatific vision will make the redeemed less loving and thus more calloused.' See his 'Craig on the possibility of eternal damnation', 510.
36. Craig 'Universalism once more', 510.
37. Schleiermacher *Christian Faith*, 721.
38. Talbott 'Providence, freedom and human destiny', 237-238.
39. Craig, 'Talbot's universalism', 306.
40. *Ibid.*
41. By which I mean, of course, that our state is as perfect as is possible for a finite human nature.
42. Talbott makes essentially this point in 'Craig on the possibility of eternal damnation', 508-509, but Craig seems to miss the point.
43. Craig 'Talbot's universalism', 306-307.
44. Unless, of course, God were to subject them to a further deception, convincing them that they were enjoying as full a communion with Him as is possible for human nature, when in fact they were not.
45. Craig 'Universalism once more', 510.
46. A fact that may be lost on those who fail to acknowledge the cognitive content that emotions possess.