

Jerry Walls is probably best known for his 2004 book with Joseph Dongell titled, *Why I am not a Calvinist*. He has since written a number of other books, and if I were a continuationist exercising my prophetic prowess I might predict a future publication by Walls entitled, *Why I am not a Christian*, for it seems he has altogether departed from *the* faith once delivered to the saints (Jude 3).

Jerry Walls provides us with a perfect example of what can and often does happen when the doctrine of particular redemption is displaced in favor of a more general, potential or universal atonement (making "salvation available to every single person"). In a previous post, I noted how Arminianism (more accurately, synergism generally) necessarily lends itself toward Rome's false gospel because it introduces variables into the soteriological order that man, not God, controls. As it turns out, Jerry Walls' other recent publications set out to defend the Romish heretical doctrine of purgatory (*Purgatory: The Logic of Total Transformation* [2011]; *Heaven, Hell, and Purgatory: Rethinking the Things That Matter Most* [2015]). Strategically scheduled for release in October 2017 is, *Roman but Not Catholic: What Remains at Stake 500 Years after the Reformation* (I'm gonna go out on a limb here and make the wild speculation that "unity" will be the thing alleged to "remain at stake after 500 years"). So, to honor the Protestant Reformation, Jerry Walls will undoubtedly repudiate it.

2016 saw the release of Walls', *Does God Love Everyone?: The Heart of What's Wrong with Calvinism*. As of late, Wipf and Stock Publishing has been pumping out books by mystics, anti-Protestants, social gospellers and various other heretics faster than Benny Hinn can discharge rounds from his Holy Ghost machine gun. This book likewise fulfills the apparent publication requirement of promoting heterodoxy. From the back cover:

"Does God truly love all persons? Most Christians think the obvious answer to this question is, 'Yes, of course he does!' Indeed, many Christians would agree that the very heart of the gospel is that God so loved the whole world that he gave his Son to make salvation available for every single person. This book shows that one of the most popular and resurgent theological movements in the contemporary evangelical church—namely, Calvinism—cannot coherently and consistently affirm this vital claim about the love of God. While some Calvinists forthrightly deny that God loves everyone, more commonly Calvinists attempt to affirm the love of God for all persons in terms that are compatible with their doctrines that Christ died only for the elect—those persons God has unconditionally chosen to save. This book shows that the Calvinist attempts to affirm God's love for all persons are fraught with severe philosophical and theological difficulties. Calvinism, then, should be rejected in favor

a theology that can forthrightly and consistently affirm the love of God for all persons. Nothing less is at stake than the very heart of the gospel.”

Note the immediate and obvious Scripture twisting: “Many Christians would agree that the very heart of the gospel is that God so loved the whole world that he gave his Son to make salvation available for every single person.” Indeed, this claim is likely true. That is, that *many Christians would agree* with this erroneous statement. But note carefully what is being purported by Dr. Walls. The proposition that “God so loved the whole world that he gave his Son to make salvation available for every single person” appears to be his primary axiom, used to justify his anti-Calvinism. Indeed, according to Walls, this is “the very heart of the gospel”. Dr. Walls wants us to accept his primary axiom and subsequent accusation that Calvinists are guilty of compromise because one must somehow find a way to reconcile particular redemption with universal, general, potential salvation for all. What Walls doesn't seem to understand is that we are under no such obligation to reconcile particular redemption with universalism. His primary axiom is not found in Scripture.

Repeat: the proposition: “*God so loved the whole world that he gave his Son to make salvation available for every single person*” is not in the Bible. It is not stated explicitly or implicitly in Scripture. It is not “expressly set down or necessarily contained in the Holy Scriptures” (Second London Baptist Confession), nor is it a proposition which by “necessary consequence may be deduced from Scripture” (Westminster Confession). So much for his primary axiom. I could end my post here, but we need to see the consequences of his faulty starting point.

Perhaps he is hoping that since the beginning of his misquote sounds like John 3:16 we will be foolish enough to let his Scripture twisting slip by. When Walls is interviewed by Episcopalian host Ronald Way on Author Talk his aversion not only to Calvinism but Protestantism in general becomes all the more evident (transcript available [here](#)). The Protestant Reformation has been rightly called the greatest movement of the Holy Spirit since Pentecost by many pastors, theologians and church historians. Not surprisingly, Walls doesn't see it that way. He says:

“The protestant reformation is...in many ways unfortunate, but still I think necessary split in the western church when a number of people recognized the deep corruption that was prevalent in the Roman Catholic Church in terms of financial abuse, spiritual laxity, and so on.”

So the Reformation was not a glorious awakening to the truth of the gospel which sets the captives free and led a world dominated by Romish superstition out of spiritual darkness, it was, according to Walls, unfortunate. Then he does what other ecumenists have done when describing the "necessity" of the Reformation; he pretends it was a necessary evil; a house-cleaning of sorts. In other words, it wasn't the accumulation of false doctrines and dogmas and papal perversions of gospel truth that was concerning to the Reformers, it was merely some financial and moral corruption. And once the corruption got cleaned up, "Holy Mother Church" was good to go, and the dissenters should have returned to her fold instead of creating the alleged "34000 denominations" that exist today.[1] Walls goes on in the interview:

"What I'm saying is, if this is what ... If this is the case, there's no meaningful sense in which God loves everybody. That's the heart of the problem, and if God doesn't truly love everyone, he's not a truly good being, he's not a God of perfect love, he's not a God of perfect goodness. The problem of Calvinism is the way it depicts the character of God. It makes him fall far short of the biblical view of a God whose heart is love, who desires the salvation of all of his children."

Firstly, it should be noted that God *does* in fact desire the salvation of His children. So much so that he secured their salvation at the cross of Calvary. But Walls makes the same error that unbelievers make when they regard the entire human race as "God's children". Nothing in the Scriptures would indicate that such is the case, however. The Scriptures teach that since the Fall we are "by nature children of wrath" (Ephesians 2:3), and that the designation "children of God" is reserved only for those who believe in Him:

"He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him. But as many as received Him, *to them* He gave the right to *become* children of God, to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, *nor of the will of man*, but of God" (John 1:10-13).

Secondly, Dr. Walls' presumption that God's goodness is predicated upon the extension of His redemptive love to every member of the human race, is wholly without biblical justification. God's goodness is intrinsic to His being, and He was free to secure the salvation of whomever He chose when the covenant of redemption was inaugurated in heaven.[2] God's love is satisfied within the triune godhead; He requires nothing outside of Himself to satisfy His love. To put it plainly, why did God extend salvific love to a remnant of

His fallen creation? Because He wanted to.

*God's love is not quantified by the number of people who end up in heaven.* But even if we were to grant Walls' erroneous premise for the sake of argument, one could argue thus: If it holds that God's love can indeed be quantified by the number of people He *desires* to save due to His universal love, but in reality most people reject His love and subsequently don't make it to heaven, then God is actually quantitatively *less* loving than the sovereign God of the Calvinists. But don't worry. We will soon see that Walls has a solution for this dilemma extending from his first premise.

Note firstly that He makes the same errors as Dr. David Stone regarding "freedom":

"The view that I hold is that God sincerely desires to save all persons. He enables all persons to be saved. He truly prefers them to respond to his grace, and accept his grace, but here's the point, a genuine relationship of love and trust cannot be caused by God. Not even God can do that. If he gives us genuine freedom, and genuine freedom is the necessary condition for genuine love, genuine faith, genuine worship, genuine relationship. Given that is the case, necessarily if we choose not to trust, not to love, then we separate ourselves from God, and choose not to receive the good that God offers us and gives us. God enables all persons to respond, desires all persons to respond, but by nature, given the fact that we are truly free human beings that God calls us to be in a relationship with him, we can decline that. If persons are lost, it is because they will not accept the grace and love that God sincerely, genuinely extends to them."

I will not reiterate the points I made to Dr. Stone on this topic (see [here](#) and [here](#)), but will simply add the following: If the concept of freedom as Jerry Walls is espousing here—that fallen man can reciprocate God's love uncoerced and prior to divine regeneration—is not actually taught in Scripture, then the rest of the argument falls apart. If man's alleged freewill is taken out of the equation (seeing that his will is in bondage to sin), there is apparently nothing that remains in the way of God's obtaining His desire (since for Walls man's freedom is the obstacle to Him obtaining what he desired, i.e., the salvation of all). It seems to be quite an affront to the sovereign God of the Bible to maintain that driveling, vile and putrid worms armed with our "freedom" should thwart God's eternal desire, no less His immutable decrees. If Walls' argument ended here, one would have to suppose that God must live eternally in perpetual misery, or at least in some blasé melancholy state, because His universal desire has been filibustered by His own creation. Rather, the Scriptures teach that "Our God is in heaven; He does *whatever He pleases*" (Psalm 115:3), and, "My counsel

shall stand, and I will *do all My pleasure*" (Isaiah 46:10). God does get what He desires because fallen man in all his vileness can do nothing to stop Him.

Well, fair enough. Jerry Walls rejects Calvinism. That's no surprise and that in and of itself does not put him outside the camp. But what is important to note is the logical consequence resulting from his false premises. The interview goes on:

*Ron:* "What about Christians who would say that if you seek God with an open heart, whether through Christ or not, whether you're a Buddhist, or Hindu, or Muslim, or Taoist, you find the presence of the Divine? It's my guess that you'd say that they're not Christians, and they'll all be condemned. Is that true?"

*Jerry:* "That is not in fact what I would say."

*Ron:* "Good."

*Jerry:* "Again, I've written about this in my books on hell. I believe God desires the salvation of all persons. I believe Christ died for all persons. They may not know about Christ. They may not know who he is, but he knows who they are, and they may not know that he died for them, but he did anyway. Many persons have not heard the gospel of Christ, but they're still responding to whatever light, or understanding, or grace that they have, and so the point of the matter is this, I believe that God is drawing every single person to himself, using whatever resources are available in terms of light and revelation that they have. If persons are responding to the light that they have, I think they will ultimately come to see the truth in Christ.

"What I believe is that God will give every person every opportunity, even if that includes postmortem opportunities for repentance and salvation. I don't think people are condemned for not believing a truth to which they've not had access. If people are responding to the truth that is available to them, if they're sincerely responding to the grace of God ... Again, I'm not saying this is a matter of works, but I believe God's grace is at work drawing all persons, and I believe Jesus died for all persons, again, whether they know it or not, and so grace is extended to all persons, and I think there are a lot of people who are responding to Christ, who are coming to Christ even though they may not be aware of it until maybe after their death."

Can it be any more evident that Jerry Walls has completely departed from Christian orthodoxy? He pats himself on the back for not crediting man's salvation to his own "works" all the while defending the idea of postmortem repentance and salvation, and all detached from belief in the gospel. Walls' defense of purgatory as a logical consequence of postmortem repentance is evident, and is articulated in his other books. Ron Way, in accordance with his own apostate religious tradition, closes the interview with this gem:

"I was happy to hear that Dr. Jerry Walls said that he thinks that good people of all faiths might still be saved. That's a wonderful thing, and I appreciated that. I choose to believe that this is what Jesus meant when he taught so long ago that we're all God's children, no matter our tradition or faith, when he was asked, 'What is the most important thing about his teaching?' He said, 'Love the Lord thy God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind, and secondly love your neighbor as yourself.'"

I suppose Ron Way thinks that he— as well as every fallen man from every pagan religion— has the innate ability to keep this commandment.

Dr. Jerry Walls has not descended into heresy because he rejects Calvinism. He has descended into heresy because his unbiblical primary axioms used to justify his rejection of Calvinism, when brought to their logical extension, drive him to heretical conclusions. This explains why synergists never have a truly systematic and logically coherent theology. They have to cry "paradox" before they let their axioms drive them to universalism. Dr. Jerry Walls, who has passed himself off as an evangelical Christian, has grossly perverted the Scriptures by affirming universalism, defending purgatory and postmortem salvation, and denying justification by faith *alone*. As a former professor at Notre Dame and currently a scholar in residence and professor of philosophy at Houston Baptist University, Jerry Walls must make the Jesuit pope proud.

-Nick Sabato

[1] For example, see James R. Payton Jr., *Getting the Reformation Wrong*, InterVarsity Press, Downers Grove, IL, 2010, p. 253, footnote 4. This is a bogus number often paraded by Romanists and ecumenists in order to ridicule and deride the results of the Reformation. For a refutation of this myth, see James White's article [here](#).

[2] For a simple treatment of the covenant of redemption, see Blackburn, E.M. (ed.),

To the Protestants I became as a Protestant...; Jerry Walls' Jesuitical deception and the logical consequences of unlimited atonement | 7

*Covenant Theology: A Baptist Distinctive*, Solid Ground Christian Books, Birmingham, AL, 2013, pp. 26-30.

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