INFORMATION TO USERS

8129404

NOWLIN, BEN GARY

THE REASONABLENESS OF FAITH AS A RESPONSE TO EVIL

The University of Oklahoma   PH.D.   1981

University
Microfilms
International 300 N. Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106

THE UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA

GRADUATE COLLEGE
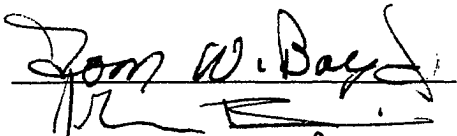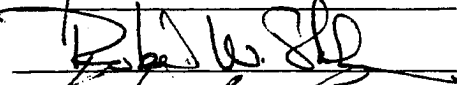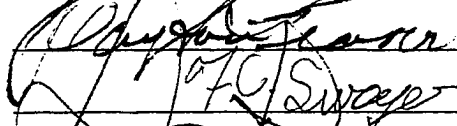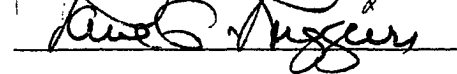
THE REASONABLENESS OF FAITH AS A RESPONSE TO EVIL

A DISSERTATION

SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the

degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

BY

BEN GARY NOWLIN

Norman, Oklahoma

1981

THE REASONABLENESS OF FAITH AS A RESPONSE TO EVIL

APPROVED BY

DISSERTATION COMMITTEE

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To Susan,

    with love and appreciation

TABLE OF CONTENTS

THE REASONABLENESS OF FAITH AS A RESPONSE TO EVIL

INTRODUCTION

There is currently more discussion of the arguments for and against the existence of God than there has been at any time since the heyday of Logical Positivism. Examples of this are recent books on the cosmological argument by William Craig[1] and William Rowe,[2] Alvin Plantinga's defense of the ontological argument,[3] and books by Basil Mitchell[4] and Richard Swinburne[5] on what Mitchell calls "the cumulative case" for theism.

The result of this renewal of interest has been some important contributions to the literature on arguments for the existence of God. This renewal of interest in natural theology has, however, produced what I would argue are less than impressive results in dealing with the problem of evil. A glaring example is the work of James Ross on the two issues. His version of the ontological argument is ingenious. His response to the problem of evil (Shakespeare has no obligation to make Hamlet happy, so by analogy, God has no obligation to make us happy) is grotesque.[6]

1

I propose to take an approach different from other contemporary writers on these topics. This different approach involves dividing the questions of God's goodness and God's existence, and treating the former as a matter of a faith, and the latter as a matter for reason alone. (In dividing the question of God's goodness and his existence, I cannot, of course, include goodness as part of the definition of "God.") One immediate advantage of dividing the questions is to dispel what I think is a widespread illusion concerning the probability of God's existence. I think that there is a stronger case for God's existence than there is for God's being good. If I am correct, then the claim that there is a God is more probable than the claim that God is good. If we fail to divide the questions, then we let lack of evidence for God's goodness appear to lessen the probability of God's existence.

My main interest in this work is with the problem of evil, but in the development of my argument, I find it necessary to discuss the topic of arguments for God's existence as well. This is because of the role that I assign faith. That role does not involve God's existence. Instead, faith is evoked in support of what William James calls "the religious hypothesis." The religious hypothesis is the belief that our lives can make a permanent contribution to a valued larger whole, in spite of the apparently transitory nature of all human accomplishments.

The religious hypothesis is, because of its generality, a more reasonable object of faith than the specific tenets of theistic religion. The religious hypothesis is in this regard like belief in life on other planets, theism like belief in maroon-colored humanoids on Mars. In the absence of arguments for either proposition, the former is more probable, simply because its generality means that more than one state of affairs would make it true. The defense of theism that I offer concludes that God is good through a combination of the religious hypothesis and arguments for God's existence.

In the first chapter of this work, I discuss the two versions of the atheologican's argument from evil, and I explain why I think that only one version deserves serious attention. In the second chapter, I discuss William James's defense of faith in the religious hypothesis. If one can provide reasons for thinking that God exists, then it would be reasonable to state the more general religious hypothesis in the more specific form of a claim that God is good. I therefore turn aside from my main theme in the third chapter to indicate why I think that reason may lead one to belief in God. In the remainder of the work, I return to more traditional topics surrounding the problem of evil.

In the course of this work, I employ as my definition of God "a cause for the existence of all beings other than himself, who is in some respects analogous to a person." It is this concept of God whose existence is supported by the

reasons that I offer in the third chapter.

This God-concept is a minimal one, common to many different versions of theism. For this reason, I use 'theism' for any view that includes the claim that a being meeting my minimal definition exists, and I refer to anyone who believes that such a being exists as a theist.

INTRODUCTION NOTES

[1]William Lane Craig, The Kalām Cosmological Argument (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1979).

[2]William Rowe, The Cosmological Argument (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1975).

[3]See Alvin Plantinga, God, Freedom, and Evil (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1975), pp. 85-111.

[4]Basil Mitchell, The Justification of Religious Belief (New York: The Seabury Press, 1973).

[5]Richard Swinburne, The Existence of God (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979), pp. 102-106.

CHAPTER ONE

THE INCONSISTENCY ARGUMENT

For the religious believer, the evil in this world
is a source of inner tension. The state of mind of one who
attempts to give more than lip-service to the creeds of the
Western monotheistic religions is described by John Hick as
follows:

> To the believer "The heavens declare the glory of God,
> and the firmament showeth his handiwork"; in the endless
> beauty of the earth he sees the smile (as it were) of
> the earth's Creator; in his neighbors he discovers fel-
> low children of the heavenly Father; in the imperatives
> of morality he feels the pressure upon him of the abso-
> lute demands of God; in life's joy and happiness he dis-
> cerns the bountiful goodness of the Lord, and in its
> frustrations and disappointments he sees, even if only
> in retrospect, God's austere but gracious discipline sav-
> ing him from too complete involvement in purely earthly
> hopes and purposes. In both joy and sorrow, success and
> failure, rejoicing and mourning, he sees, however fit-
> fully and faintly, the hand of God holding him within the
> orbit of the on-going divine purpose, whose fulfillment
> can alone secure his own final fulfillment and blessed-
> ness. Thus the believer's daily life is of a piece with
> his inner life of prayer, when he speaks to God in direct
> communication. . . . All of life is for him a dialogue
> with the divine Thou; in and through all his dealings
> with life he is having to do with God and God with him.[1]

It is difficult to always see life as "a dialogue
with the divine Thou," when that life includes seemingly

6

pointless sickness, pain, and death. In addition to the many
natural evils, from cancer to earthquakes, which men are prey
to there is a vast multitude of evils that men inflict upon
one another. Dostoevski, in an often-quoted passage from The
Brothers Karamazov, gives a powerful summary of some of the
horrors that occur in this world where the believer attempts
to discern the hand of God. In this passage, Ivan tells of
the crimes committed by Turks in Bulgaria:

> They burn villages, murder, outrage women and children,
> they nail their prisoners by their ears to the fences,
> leave them so till morning, and in the morning they hang
> them--all sorts of things you can't imagine. . . . These
> Turks took a pleasure in torturing children too; cutting
> the unborn child from the mother's womb, and tossing ba-
> bies up in the air and catching them on the points of
> their bayonets before their mother's eyes. Doing it be-
> fore the mother's eyes was what gave zest to the amuse-
> ment. Here is another scene that I thought very inter-
> esting. Imagine a trembling mother with her baby in her
> arms, a circle of invading Turks around her. They've
> planned a diversion; they pet the baby, laugh to make it
> laugh. They succeed, the baby laughs. At that moment a
> Turk points a pistol four inches from the baby's face.
> The baby laughs with glee, holds out his little hands to
> the pistol, and he pulls the trigger in the baby's face
> and blows out its brains. Artistic, wasn't it?[2]

We can imagine a better world--a world without the violence,
the starvation, the illness. If God is good, then he must be
as appalled as we are by the state of the world. Being God,
he is supposedly powerful enough to alter things which we
would alter, had we the power. Why does he not do so? No
one can seriously attempt to live a life of trust in God with-
out agonizing over why God permits the evils we encounter in
this world.

That the believer's agonized questioning produces no

satisfactory answer is not enough to show anything concern-
ing the reasonableness of his beliefs. In order to get an
argument against faith out of the mystery of evil it is nec-
essary to provide some sort of argument that it is either
impossible or improbable that God has a good reason for
creating the world in which we find ourselves. Some philos-
ophers, such as J. L. Mackie, have thought it logically im-
possible that God has a morally sufficient reason for his
permission of evil. Their argument, which I shall refer to
as the inconsistency argument, has received a great deal of
attention in the literature on the problem of evil. I think,
however, that the inconsistency argument is no serious threat
to belief.[3]

The inconsistency argument involves the claim that
there is a contradiction between the various items of theis-
tic belief. The set of beliefs that are supposedly contra-
dictory are the following:

1. God is omnipotent.

2. God is wholly good.

3. Evil exists.

There is no obvious contradiction here, as there
would be if the theist believed both that God allows no evil
and that evil exists. To derive a contradiction from 1-3
additional premises must be added. Since what is asserted
is a contradiction between the items of religious belief,
any additional premises must be either necessary truths or

items of religious tradition in question.

      J. L. Mackie suggests that the missing premises are logical truths concerning what it is to be omnipotent and what it is to be wholly good. The additional premises he offers are:

    4. A good being eliminates all evil that he can elimi-
    nate.

    5. There are no limits on what an omnipotent being can
    do.

      From 4 and 5 Mackie derives:

    6. A good omnipotent being eliminates all evil.

      From 6, in conjunction with 1 and 2 (which tell us that there is a being who is good and omnipotent) we conclude:

    7. There is no evil.

      Premise 7 is the contradiction of premise 3. Since 1-6 have yielded a contradiction, at least one of these premises must go. Mackie suggests that the most reasonable candidates for elimination are either 1 or 2, both of which are essential to theism.[4]

      The proper reply to this is that the premises the theist will eliminate are 4 and 5. Neither one is (as Mackie claims) an essential part of theism, and neither one is true.

      There are obviously many evils which a good being will not eliminate. The dentist is not less good for inflicting the pain involved in dental surgery. The parent is not less good for letting his child learn by painful experience.

that running too fast will result in a fall. Premise 4 is not a necessary truth: it is, in fact, not a truth.

Keith Yandell has drawn up a list of some conditions under which a good being is excused from eliminating evil:

1. The prevention of E (an evil) will also prevent some good, G, which is of equal value to the non-existence of E and for which E is the logically necessary condition.

2. The prevention of E will entail the existence of E', which is as evil as E.

3. The prevention of E will also prevent some good G which is of greater value that the non-existence of E and for which E is a logically necessary condition.

4. The prevention of E will entail the existence of E' which is a greater evil than E and for which the non-existence of E is a logically sufficient condition.[5]

There would be a contradiction in the Hebrew-Christian tradition only if it were an essential part of that tradition, or a logically necessary truth, that neither these excusing conditions, nor any others of which we may be unaware, are applicable to God.

Premise 5 is a definition of omnipotence that most theists would reject. To say that God is omnipotent is not to say that there are no limits on what God can do. Most theists would say that God could not make a round square. To say this is not to say that God lacks some power, which another being might have had. God cannot do a contradictory task, not because he lacks the power, but because a contradictory formula fails to specify a real task to be accomplished.

The only premises that the atheologian can add to 1-3 which come near to what he wants to say are that a good

being eliminates all evils he can eliminate and is morally
obligated to eliminate, and God can do whatever an omnipo-
tent being can do. From these premises no contradiction
can be derived.

I know no premises which will fare better in produc-
ing a contradiction between the members of 1-3 than those
Mackie suggests. The atheologian is so convinced that 1-3
cannot all be true that he thinks outright logical contra-
diction must lurk somewhere in these premises. However, it
does not. Insistence that it does makes the task of theism's
philosophical defenders far easier than it otherwise would
be. Time spent showing how wrong-headed the inconsistency
argument is is time which might otherwise have had to be
spent wrestling with the claim that evil makes God's being
good improbable. It is the probability argument I shall
henceforth address.

The probability argument has the form used in discon-
firming a scientific hypothesis. Given our theory (God is
good) we expect certain consequences (the existence of a cer-
tain sort of world). Looking around, we see a different sort
of world from that which, prima facia, we would expect from a
good God. This does not prove that God is not good, but it
does tend to make it less probable, and so, in the absence of
strong independent grounds for affirming that God is good,
the reasonable thing to do is to assume that either there is
no God, or else God is not good. The case is similar to that

of a scientist whose theory concerning the formation of the planets seems to lend itself to the expectation that certain gases would be in the atmosphere of all the planets. What evidence there is indicates that these gases do not exist in the atmosphere of Mars. This does not make the planet-formation theory in question necessarily false. However, it does tend to disconfirm it.

The astronomer in question might respond to the apparently disconfirming evidence in several ways. He might present independent evidence for the correctness of his theory to counter-balance the contrary evidence. He might offer reasons to think that even were the gases present in the Martian atmosphere, we would be unable to detect them. Or he might argue that facts previously overlooked make the lack of gases in the Martian atmosphere compatible with his theory after all.

The case I shall make in replying to the probability argument from evil employs tactics analogous to each of these moves on the part of the astronomer. I shall offer evidence that God is good to counter-balance to some degree the evidence on the other side. I shall argue that there are grounds for doubting our ability to anticipate the sort of world that a good omnipotent God would create. I shall argue that one sort of evil, moral evil, does in fact fit the expectation we might have concerning a world created by a good God.

However, before I make any of these arguments I shall first explore a crucial disanalogy between the case of the astronomer discussed above and the case of the apologist for Western monotheism. The astronomer has no business accepting a theory unless he can show it to be more probable than rival theories. Meeting objections to it based on the absence of the Martian gases is only part of his job. By analogy, one might think that the theist must show that the existence of a good omnipotent creator is, given the world as we find it, more probable than any alternative view. However, this is not so: I shall argue that because of the nature of religious faith the apologist has accomplished all he needs to accomplish if he can make a case that God's being good is not overwhelmingly improbable.

CHAPTER ONE NOTES

[1]John Hick, <u>Faith and Knowledge</u> (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1957), pp. 189-190.

[2]Fydor Dostoevski, <u>The Brothers Karamazov</u>, quoted in Alvin Plantinga, <u>God, Freedom, and Evil</u> (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1975), p. 8.

[3]See Alvin Plantinga, <u>God, Freedom, and Evil</u>, pp. 12-14.

[4]J. L. Mackie, "Evil and Omnipotence," <u>Mind</u> 64 (April 1955): 200-201.

[5]Keith Yandell, <u>Basic Issues in the Philosophy of Religion</u> (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1981), p. 47.

CHAPTER TWO

FAITH

I have read somewhere of Scottish juries returning verdicts of "not proven" instead of declaring an accused party to be proven innocent or proven guilty. The theist, in order to defend the reasonableness of his religious commitment need not secure an "innocent" verdict in God's trial before his human accusers. A verdict of "not proven" is sufficient. That this is so is due to the nature of faith. The concept of faith that I shall defend is inspired by the writings of William James. It may or may not be a view James would endorse. It is a view suggested by some passages in his writings. My discussion is organized around those passages, but I am less concerned with whether the view is that of James than I am with its correctness.

In "The Will to Believe," as well as in several related essays, James offers a defense of our right to adopt a believing attitude towards a certain class of unproven propositions. James is particularly concerned to assert this right with regard to what he calls "the religious hypothesis."

15

James characterizes the religious hypothesis as the claim
that "the best things are the more eternal things." A phrase
that James quotes as summarizing the religious hypothesis is
"'. . . perfection is eternal.'"[1] In "Is Life Worth Living?"
James adds to this characterization as follows:

> A man's religious faith (whatever more special items of
> doctrine it may involve) means for me essentially his
> faith in the existence of an unseen order of some kind
> in which the riddles of the natural order may be found
> explained. In the more developed religions the natural
> world has always been regarded as the mere scaffolding
> or vestibule of a truer, more eternal world, and affirmed
> to be a sphere of education, trial, and redemption.[2]

The essential religious claim, according to James, is this:
human life is part of a larger drama which is, on the whole,
at least potentially good. (A good world history may, in
part, be conditional upon our own actions--hence the quali-
fication "potentially.") James is not, then, concerned to
defend our right to hold any particular version of religious
belief. The details of doctrine will have to be justified
without reference to James. James's defense of faith is a
defense of our right to believe that our lives can perma-
nently contribute to a valued larger whole, even though ap-
pearances (the evil in the world) admittedly suggest that on
the contrary, life is absurd, all victories of good are
fleeting, and the end of the universal drama is inevitably
tragic.

In claiming that we have a right to believe in the
religious hypothesis, nowhere, to my knowledge, does James
define the word 'believe'. If by 'believe', James means

'thinking a proposition is probable or certain', then there
is no right to believe what we do not think is probable or
certain. It is immoral to strive to convince oneself that a
proposition is more probable than (deep down) one knows it
is. I doubt that James is advocating self-deception in
claiming that we have a right to believe the religious hy-
pothesis.

I do not believe that James would define belief as
thinking something probable. Instead I think that he would
define belief as a psychological state characterized by a
tendency to perform certain actions. In "The Sentiment of
Rationality," James writes:

> . . . as the test of belief is willingness to act, one
> may say that faith is the readiness to act in a cause
> the prosperous issue of which is not certified to us in
> advance. It is in fact the same moral quality which we
> call courage in practical affairs.[3]

As an example of what this sort of faith amounts to, con-
sider the following sort of case:

A husband finds evidence that his wife has had an
affair. The husband, however, seizes upon the real possi-
bility that nevertheless his wife is innocent. He hopes
with all his heart that she is innocent. He knows that if
he continues to let himself entertain doubts about his wife,
he will be unable to keep those doubts from affecting his
conduct towards her: he will be reserved and suspicious.
For him to continue to dwell on the possibility of her guilt
may result in just as much pain for him as if he knew her

guilt to be a certainty--and all, perhaps, for nothing.

Therefore, he decides to focus his thoughts on the positive

possibility that his wife is innocent.

In the sense that I think James uses the word "be-

lieve," this man believes his wife to be innocent. The

man's state certainly resembles what we ordinarily judge to

be belief: he bases his thoughts and actions on an assump-

tion of his wife's innocence. In doing so, however, he is

conscious that his decision to assume her innocence involves

his taking a risk. No self-deception is involved in this

faith, but courage is involved, and that precisely because

the believer does not deceive himself about the state of the

evidence.

The right to believe is a right that James thinks we

have whenever certain conditions are met. In "The Will to

Believe," James summarizes his thesis as follows:

> Our passional nature not only lawfully may, but must de-
> cide an option between propositions, whenever it is a
> genuine option that cannot by its nature be decided on
> intellectual grounds; for to say, under such circum-
> stances, 'Do not decide, but leave the question open' is
> itself a passional decision--just like deciding yes or
> no--and is attended with the same risk of losing the
> truth.[4]

This summary is couched in a terminology which requires some

explanation. An option, for James, is a decision between

two beliefs. A genuine option is an option that is forced,

living, and momentous. To say that an option is "forced" is

to say that one view or the other must be taken. To say that

an option is "living" is to say that both are possible for

us. Finally, "momentous" is defined by contrast; an option is not momentous "when the opportunity is not unique, when the stake is insignificant, or when the decision is reversible if it later proves unwise."[5]

James gets into trouble when he becomes more specific about what it is for an option to be forced. He states that a forced option is a dilemma based on a complete logical disjunction. It is, however, a trivial truth that any belief may be put in for X in the formula "accept X or do not," thereby making it a part of a forced option. The dilemma "accept X or do not" is based on a complete logical disjunction. There is no standing place outside the alternatives--the very mark, James at one point says, of the forced option.[6] If this is what a forced option amounts to, then on this score any and all beliefs would be candidates for an exercise of faith. The condition would rule out nothing.

I suggest that James would have been better off if he had characterized forced options in a different manner. Some of his comments about agnosticism suggest another, and more defensible, concept of forced options.

Initially there would appear to be three possibilities with regard to any belief: acceptance, denial, and agnosticism. But James insists that with regard to religious belief the last is not a real possibility:

> We cannot escape the issue by remaining sceptical and
> waiting for more light, because, although we do avoid
> error in that way if religion be untrue, we lose the

good, _if it be true_, just as certainly as if we posi-
tively chose to disbelieve.[7]

This ruling out of agnosticism seems to have its

justification in the momentous character of that which will

be gained or lost through believing or failing to believe:

> Whenever the option between losing truth and gaining it
> is not momentous, we can throw the chance of gaining
> truth away, and at any rate save ourselves from any
> chance of believing falsehood by not making up our minds
> at all till objective evidence has come.[8]

These remarks suggest that what is forced is not, as

James says, the option between two beliefs, but rather gain-

ing or losing the benefits of belief. One may lose the bene-

fits of belief either by unbelief or by agnosticism, but if

religion be true one loses in both cases. This religious

case is like that of a man debating whether to propose mar-

riage. If he hesitates forever to propose, he loses her just

as much as if he decided not to marry her. Indecision and a

decision against have the same _results_.

What are the benefits involved in the religious hy-

pothesis? In answering this question, I shall ignore the

answer James gives in "The Will to Believe," where he does

his case great harm by using the language of Pascal's Wager

and by talk of "getting in on the winning side." In "Is

Life Worth Living?" James forgoes the pleasures of shocking

people and gives a more sober answer. Speaking of those at-

tracted by the religious hypothesis, but painfully aware of

the evils of this world, James writes:

> The bare assurance that this natural order is not ulti-
> mate but a mere sign or vision, the external staging of
> a many-storied universe, in which spiritual forces have
> the last word and are eternal--the bare assurance is to
> such men enough to make life seem worth living in spite
> of every contrary presumption suggested by its circum-
> stances on the natural plane. Destroy this inner assur-
> ance, however vague as it is, and all the light and ra-
> diance of existence is extinguished for these persons
> at a stroke.[9]

The blacker the atheologian paints the universe, the stronger the pragmatic case he makes for faith. The more he preaches on the manifest evils of the world, the more it begins to look like the alternative to despair, doubt, and what James calls "the nightmare view of life"[10] is faith in the religious hypothesis.

This will, of course, not convince the complacent atheist, or agnostic, whose state of mind may depend on more immediate, less cosmic, considerations. But the question that I am interested in is not whether everyone ought to have faith in the religious hypothesis, but whether it is wrong for anyone to have faith. The religious hypothesis confronts some people with a forced option: gain, or fail to gain escape from the shadow of demoralizing pessimism. No option could be more momentous, affecting as it does how one shall live his life and whether he shall have hope. If we cannot decide for or against the religious hypothesis on intellectual grounds, then the religious hypothesis may (for some people) meet the conditions for a proposition to be a proper object of faith.

In "The Will to Believe," James says little about his

judgment that the truth or falsity of the religious hypothesis cannot be decided on intellectual grounds. But in "Is Life Worth Living?" James writes ". . . we are free to trust at our own risk anything that is not impossible, and that can bring analogies to bear in its behalf."[11] He uses the religious hypothesis as an example of the sort of proposition that he has in mind. In behalf of the religious hypothesis, we can offer the following sort of analogy, which suggests the possibility that there may be a purpose behind events of which we have no idea:

> Our dogs . . . are in our human life but not of it.
> They witness hourly the outward body of events whose
> inner meaning cannot, by any possible operation, be re-
> vealed to their intelligence--events in which they them-
> selves often play the cardinal part. My terrier bites
> a teasing boy, for example, and the father demands dam-
> ages. The dog may be present at every step of the nego-
> tiations, and see the money paid, without an inkling of
> what it all means, without a suspicion that it has any-
> thing to do with him; and he never can know in his na-
> tural dog's life.[12]

By means of such analogies, James thinks that the religious hypothesis, which certainly cannot be proven true, can be shown to be a real possibility that we cannot rule out.

The passage from the writings of James that I have so far discussed suggest the following analysis of our right to faith: S has a right to have faith in p if:

(1) S desires that p be the case.

(2) P's being true is a real (not merely a logical possibility.

(3) S has the choice of acting as he would if he knew p was true, and gaining important benefits, or of acting as he would if he knew p was false, thereby failing to gain those benefits.

(4) No more evidence than S now has concerning the truth of p can be expected to come to light.

The first and second conditions I list together correspond to James's insistence that the object of faith must be a "live" hypothesis. The third condition combines the ideas that the option must be forced and momentous. The fourth condition corresponds to James's condition that the option must be one that "cannot by its nature be decided on intellectual grounds."

Where these conditions are met, there can be no objection that it is not reasonable to have faith. Under the circumstances specified, any choice one makes will be a choice dictated by one's "passional nature." When confronted with the religious hypothesis, we can let our hopes be the guide of our thoughts and actions, or we can let despair play that role, or we can let our fear of erring by either path keep us alternating between one mood or the other. (I speak only of those for whom the option in question is momentous. It is only for such people that faith may be rational.)

The last-named response has nothing to commend it where there can be no question of adopting it as a temporary stance until more and better evidence is obtained. Where no better evidence will be forthcoming, the decision to make no

decision is only another decision dictated by emotion.

According to James, there are two rules that we may apply to our intellectual life. These two rules are "Shun error," and "Know truth." One who makes "Know truth" his motto will, when confronted with an option of the sort in question make a choice for one side or the other. One who gives first place to the rule "Shun error," will refuse to make a decision, even though realizing the momentous, forced character of the option. Which rule one makes paramount is a matter of one's "passional decision." Speaking of W. K. Clifford, James says:

> Believe nothing, he tells us, keep your mind in suspense forever, rather than by closing it on insufficient evidence incur the awful risk of believing lies. You, on the other hand, may think that the risk of being in error is a very small matter when compared with the blessings of real knowledge, and be ready to be duped many times . . . rather than postpone indefinitely your chance of guessing true. I myself find it impossible to go with Clifford. We must remember that these feelings of duty about either truth or error are in any case only expressions of our passional life . . . he who says, "Better go without belief forever than believe a lie!" merely shows his own preponderant private horror of becoming a dupe. . . .
> It is like a general informing his soldiers that it is better to keep out of battle forever than to risk a single wound.[13]

Suppose one decides to choose: shall it be a choice dictated by one's hopes or by one's fears? James does not deny that one may choose to follow one's fears, but he concludes "The Will to Believe" with a quote from Fitz James Stephens exhorting us to decide for hope: ". . . In all important transactions of life we have to take a leap in the

dark. . . . Be strong and of a good courage. Act for the
best, hope for the best, and take what comes. . ... If death
ends all, we cannot meet death better."[14]

The importance of the religious hypothesis for the
problem of evil is that in conjunction with the belief that
God exists, it can lead us to faith that God is good. If
God exists, then his being good explains how the religious
hypothesis can be true. A world with a good God in it is a
world with a power in it that may be sufficient to bring good
out of what seems to be pointless tragedy. It is a world
where all defeats of good can, at worst, be no more than par-
tial. On the other hand, if God exists, but is not good,
then it is very difficult to see how the religious hypothesis
could be true.

Given the obvious difficulty of combining faith in
the religious hypothesis and belief in a God who is not good,
the theist will ask himself, "Is God good?" not "Is the re-
ligious hypothesis true or false?" For the theist, the ques-
tion of whether God is good may take on the same characteris-
tics that makes it reasonable to have faith in the religious
hypothesis. The same hopes and fears that surround the reli-
gious hypothesis will surround the question of God's goodness.
The same benefits will be involved in a positive faith-answer.
The same conditions will apply in deciding whether we have a
right to our faith. Of these conditions, the one that is
crucial is that the option cannot be decided on intellectual

grounds. If it is reasonable to think that there is a God, and not overwhelmingly improbable that he is good, then the right to faith that James defends applies (for the theist) to belief that God is good.

CHAPTER TWO NOTES

[1]William James, "The Will to Believe," in _The Will to Believe_ (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1956), p. 25 (hereafter referred to as "WB").

[2]William James, "Is Life Worth Living?" in _The Will to Believe_ (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1956), pp. 51-52 (hereafter referred to as "ILWL").

[3]William James, "The Sentiment of Rationality," in _The Will to Believe_ (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1956), p. 90.

[4]"WB," p. 11.

[5]"WB," p. 4.

[6]"WB," p. 3.

[7]"WB," p. 26.

[8]"WB," pp. 19-20.

[9]"ILWL," pp. 56-57.

[10]"ILWL," p. 39.

[11]"ILWL," p. 57.

[12]"ILWL," p. 58.

[13]"WB," p. 18.

[14]"WB," p. 31.

CHAPTER THREE

ARGUMENTS FOR THE EXISTENCE OF GOD

If there are good reasons for thinking that God exists, then there are good reasons for stating the more general religious hypothesis in theistic terms, as faith in the goodness of God. Can a case be made for the existence of God?

Giving evidence for the existence of God was once a common philosophical occupation. The standard for a successful proof which philosophers attempted to meet was to produce arguments employing as premises obvious facts and necessary truths and having as their conclusions that God exists. That such an enterprise would not succeed is probable on a priori grounds. Highly controversial truths are only rarely deduced from a combination of the obvious with necessary truths.

That an argument for God's existence meeting such stringent requirements is unlikely to be found is further evidenced by a study of those arguments for the existence of God which have received the most intense philosophical scrutiny. The three arguments which, judging by the attention

28

they have received, are the most impressive of the traditional arguments, are the ontological, cosmological, and teleological arguments.

The ontological argument is an attempt to deduce the existence of God (defined by the ontological arguer as a logically necessary being) from the logical possibility of his existence. The problem with the argument is the difficulty of justifying the claim that God's existence is logically possible. Defenders of the argument tend to confuse epistemic possibility (what is possible for all we may know) with logical possibility. But that a logically necessary being is an epistemic possibility is no indication that one is logical possibility. The non-existence of everything also is an epistemic possibility. However, if a logically necessary being is possible (and therefore exists) then the non-existence of everything must be a logical impossibility. It is impossible that a logically necessary being is existing and nothing at all existing both be logically possible states of affairs—but both are equally epistemic possibilities. No ontological arguer I know of has provided good reasons to single out the former, rather than the latter, as the only one logically possible. I might as well argue that either it is mathematically impossible for 62 x 7 to equal 424 or else 62 x 7 does equal 424; it is not impossible for all I know (I haven't done the multiplication) and therefore 62 x 7 = 424.

By the cosmological argument I mean the argument which

proceeds from the existence of the world to the existence of God via the Principle of Sufficient Reason. (A number of arguments, whose common feature is sometimes hard to discern, are sometimes referred to as versions of the cosmological argument.) The argument in question claims that every state of affairs must have an explanation (a sufficient reason). The totality of what exists cannot (by definition) be explained in terms of something external to it. It can be explained in terms of something internal to it only if one or all its constitutents are logically necessary. Therefore something is logically necessary. The universe is not logically necessary. Therefore, that something is other than the universe, i.e., God. Whatever other objections the argument is open to, it is open to the objection of a fatal dependence on the logical possibility of a logically necessary being. We _expect_ things in general to have an explanation, but the expectation would not apply to something whose having an explanation is a logical impossibility. An explanation for the totality of what exists would be logically impossible unless a logically necessary being is a logical possibility. To induce us to expect an explanation for the totality of what exists, the cosmological arguer would first have to do what ontological arguers have failed to do, that is, show the logical possibility of a logically necessary being.

The teleological argument is the argument which proceeds from the orderliness of the universe to the existence of

God as universe-designer. The problem with the argument is
that teleological arguers do not show that order in the uni-
verse <u>requires</u> explanation. One may answer the question "Why
is there so much order in the universe?" by the reply "That's
just the way things are." The theist whose God is not a log-
ically necessary being must answer the question "Why is there
a God?" with the reply "That's just the way things are."
There is no automatic theoretical advantage in explaining or-
der by means of a God whose existence is "just the way things
are" when one could simply say of the order itself that it is
"just the way things are."

A <u>priori</u>, the attempt to find arguments for the exis-
tence of God employing only necessary or obvious truths is
unlikely to succeed. In fact, we find that the most impres-
sive attempts to do so fail. Widespread realization of the
failure of the arguments has been accompanied by a rejection
of the need for arguments by theologians, and by an assump-
tion on the part of many unbelievers that there is no possi-
bility of rational support for religious belief. "You can't
argue for the existence of God" was, until recently, almost
proverbial.

A less extreme reaction would be to question the stan-
dard that a successful argument for the existence of God has
been expected to meet. Why expect the theist to provide a
stronger case than proponents of other philosophical posi-
tions are expected to provide?

Basil Mitchell, in his book The Justification of Re-
ligious Belief, explores the logic of the type of debate
that most commonly occurs in philosophy. Mitchell quotes
with approval the characterization of philosophical discus-
sion offered by F. Waismann in "How I see Philosophy":

> Arguments are used in such a discussion, not as proofs,
> though, but rather as means to make him see things he
> had not noticed before: e.g. to dispel wrong analogies,
> to stress similarities with other cases and in this way
> to bring about something like a shift in perspective.
> However, there is no way of proving him wrong or bully-
> ing him into mental acceptance of the proposal: when
> all is said and done the decision is his.[1]

To this characterization of philosophical debate,
Mitchell adds two other points. First, he suggests that
philosophical arguments often have the form of cumulative
cases: a series of items, each of which provides some
slight support for a position, when taken together may make
a convincing case. An argument having the form of this sort
of cumulative case is one in which, as John Wisdom said "The
process of argument is not a chain of demonstrative reason-
ing. It is a presenting and representing of those features
of the case which severally co-operate in favor of the
case."[2]

A second point that Mitchell makes is that arguments
in philosophy very often depend for their persuasiveness on
securing an agreement that a position has an advantage over
others in such respects as simplicity and explanatory power.
Mitchell adds that we must, if we would escape relativism,
acknowledge a human capacity for judgment that does not

consist in following deductive or inductive rules, but con-
sists rather in the highly controversial but rational pro-
cess of judging world-views according to such "values" as
consistency, coherence, simplicity, and explanatory power.

Naturalists hold the views that they do because they
believe it provides them with a comparatively simple theory
by which they can account for a wide range of facts. Why
should stronger sorts of reasons be required for being a the-
ist than the naturalist has for being a naturalist?

I, of course, think that the theist need only provide
similar sorts of arguments for the belief that God exists.
Furthermore, I think that such arguments can be provided. To
support this last claim, however, without departing too far
from my announced subject, poses a problem.

It would be inadequate for me to do no more at this
point than assert that a case of the sort Mitchell discusses
can be made for theism. On the other hand, my subject is the
problem of evil, not the making of a case for the existence
of God. To fully construct such a case would require a work
of equal or greater length than this one. I shall therefore
limit my effort to providing some evidence that a cumulative
case for God's existence can be constructed. I will provide
such evidence by sketching two arguments which might be a
part of such a case. Presentation of these arguments is in-
tended to show that it is at least reasonable to think that
God exists. If it is reasonable to think that God exists,

then it is reasonable to state the religious hypothesis in terms of God's being good. Since the problem of evil, which is my real concern, is a challenge to the reasonableness of faith that God is good, it is the reasonableness, not the truth, of the claim that God exists that is my concern.

Before I present the arguments that I wish to discuss, I need to say more concerning what I mean to assert when I claim that there is a God. By the claim that there is a God, I mean to assert that there exists a non-embodied person who makes or permits the existence of all things other than himself. This is, of course, not the only possible God-concept, but only the one that I choose to defend and employ.

God, on this conception, is a terminus of explanation. God's choices are not to be explained, save in terms of other choices of his. (For example, one might explain the holding of a particular natural law in terms of God's will, and then explain that will in terms of his decision to create an orderly cosmos.) Therefore, with the will of God a chain of explanations comes to a stop. (I shall treat other aspects of God, such as the extent of his power, separately, in discussing the problem of evil.)

By 'teleological explanation', I mean an explanation of a thing as a result of will. Normally, teleological explanations are mixed with scientific explanations. But in the case of God, nothing but the teleological explanation is involved. My bare will has the power to _initiate_ the series

of physical events that result in the writing of this sentence, but a complete explanation of the writing of the sentence must include a scientific explanation of the physical events involved, as well as reference to my will. God's bare will has the power to bring objects into existence. In explaining the existence of the universe as a result of God's will, nothing is involved other than the teleological explanation. God's creation of the world is therefore one case of a pure teleological explanation. Furthermore, if theism is true, then all explanation can be reduced to pure teleological explanation. Whether by reference to God's will, or by reference to finite wills, all phenomena can be given a teleological explanation. All phenomena are ultimately to be explained either as a result of the power inherent in finite wills, in conjunction with natural laws willed by God.[3]

According to theism, then, all explanation is reducible to teleological explanation. A consideration of alternative views necessitates a brief discussion of scientific explanation. A scientific explanation is (roughly) an explanation of an event by recounting prior conditions and a natural law that under those conditions an event of that type will occur. More generally, scientific explanation is explanation derived from our observation of things in the world, as opposed to teleological explanation, which we understand as a result of our experience of what it is to be agents ourselves. Personal explanation explains why some-

thing occurred in terms of will; scientific explanation explains what occurred as representative of a class of similar occurrences under similar initial conditions.

According to theism, scientific explanation is reducible to teleological explanation. What are the other possible views of their relationship? Well, teleological explanation might be reducible to scientific explanation, or the two each might be irreducible. There might be two sort of explanation, neither of which could be understood in terms of the other. This last alternative is, however, "messy." Both theism and naturalism can offer a simpler theory than is involved in an ultimate duality of explanation. Simplicity is one reason for preferring one theory to another.

My first argument for the reasonableness of theism is an argument that for the libertarian, theism is the simplest available world-view. If libertarianism is true, then teleological explanation is not reducible to scientific explanation. If one is a libertarian, then one has ruled out all but one way of avoiding an ultimate duality of types of explanation.

Free will is, according to the libertarian, neither random, nor determined by antecedent causal factors. The notion of free will has positive content only from our experience of what it is to be agents whose actions seem to fit neither category. An event that is neither random nor determined, that is understandable from a subjective viewpoint but

is, from an exterior standpoint inexplicable, is not a reasonable candidate for scientific explanation.

Libertarianism is a position that is within the orbit of reasonable philosophical debate. It is reasonable to be a libertarian, and if one is a libertarian, then one has a reason to be a theist.

A second argument I offer for the reasonableness of theism is that if one adopts certain reasonable philosophical positions, then theism is the most adequate available world view. Given certain other views, one must either explain the emergence of minds in the course of evolution in theistic terms, or deny that it has an explanation.

The coming into existence of conscious beings is the sort of event that we would expect to have an explanation. The question of why consciousness exists is not one whose meaningfulness is in doubt. There is a way to avoid the question, and that is by denying that consciousness is something that has come into existence in the course of time. According to the process philosophers, some level of consciousness is present in every existing thing. But the arguments for process philosophy are not coercive.

If one is not a process philosopher then one must face the question of how consciousness has come to exist. A view which answers this question is a view with greater explanatory adequacy than one that does not answer this question and does not explain anything else not explained by the first view.

The emergence of minds may be given a teleological explanation, as a result of the creative will of God, or it may be given a scientific explanation. But given a certain view of cause and effect, a libertarian cannot give consciousness a scientific explanation. The view of cause and effect that I have in mind is the view that given adequate knowledge of the cause, the effect can be deduced, so that there can be no more in the effect than there is in the cause.

A conscious process which is free in the libertarian sense cannot be deduced from the existence of the sorts of process with which science deals. Therefore, given the view of causality referred to above, it cannot be the result of such processes. This leaves consciousness either unexplained, or explained in teleological terms.

Given three reasonable philosophical positions--a rejection of process philosophy, a certain view of causality, and libertarianism--one has a reason to be a theist, that theism explains what, given one's other views, would otherwise lack explanation.

Were the construction of a cumulative case for theism my main subject, I would have to defend much of what I have said against potential criticisms I am not addressing. In particular, it would be crucial for me to address the issue of the meaningfulness of using person-talk of a transcendent being.[4] My present aim, however, is only the limited one of showing that there is something to be said on the side of the

theist, even after the acknowledged failure of the traditional arguments. Reason may lead one to the view that God exists, and one who is so led may substitute for James's religious hypothesis the decision to regard God as good.

CHAPTER THREE NOTES

[1]F. Waismann, "How I See Philosophy," quoted in
Basil Mitchell, The Justification of Religious Belief (New
York: Seabury Press, 1973), p. 71.

[2]John Wisdom, "Gods," quoted in Mitchell, The Justi-
fication of Religious Belief, p. 45.

[3]This argument is developed in detail in Richard
Swinburne, The Existence of God (Oxford: Clarendon Press,
1979), pp. 102-106.

CHAPTER FOUR

MORAL EVIL

Evil may be divided into two types: moral evil and natural evil. I define moral evil as the evil involved in wrong human desires and choices. I define natural evil as the evil for whose existence the natural laws of this cosmos are a <u>necessary</u> condition. By these definitions, I exclude from the category of moral evil the accomplishment of evil goals. I consider the desire of the would-be murderer a part of the problem of moral evil, but I consider the natural laws that make murder a possible act under the heading of natural evil. I prefer this division of evils to the standard division in which moral evil is defined so as to include both wrong desires and choices and natural laws enabling wrong desires and choices to have evil effects.

The solution to the problem of moral evil is to be found in the free will theodicy. The free will theodicy involves reference to human freedom in explaining why God, if he is good, has created a world containing creatures who sometimes choose to do what is evil. The version of the free

41

will theodicy that I shall employ claims that a world in which there are free creatures, some of whom make wrong choices, is better than a world in which there are no free creatures. Free creatures have the choice to love God or to reject him. The choice that the non-religious man calls a choice between good and evil is in reality a choice for or against God. It is good that creatures choose to freely love God; but that good can exist only if there is also a possibility that the creatures will choose to misuse their freedom. God has taken the risk involved in the creation of free creatures, and the creatures he has produced have in fact misused their freedom. The free will theodicist concludes that the resulting moral evil is the responsibility of the creatures, and not evidence against the goodness of God.

The free will theodicy involves assumptions that not everyone will accept. In saying that man is free, the theodicist assumes that with respect to at least some of his actions, man makes choices that are not determined by antecedent conditions. The theodicist assumes that the good of having free creatures is worth risking the moral evil that freedom makes possible. The theodicist assumes that the sort of freedom that puts man beyond God's absolute control is necessary if man's choices are to have value. All these assumptions are controversial.

I shall not defend any of these assumptions. Because

the problem of evil is a problem for the reasonableness of
theism, I think that the theodicist is entitled to employ in
his defense any propositions that he thinks are true and
that are widely acknowledged to be reasonable. The assump-
tions that are made in the free will theodicy are within the
orbit of reasonable and responsible philosophical debate.
Therefore, in an argument to show that moral evil does not
make belief in God's goodness unreasonable, the theodicist
has no extra burden of proof with regard to the reasonable-
ness of his assumptions.

There are, however, three counter-arguments to the
free will theodicy that must be met. These are as follows:

> I. If God were good, he would have made man so that he
> was not tempted to do evil. He has not done so; there-
> fore he is not good.

> II. If God were good, then he would have made man so
> that, though he was tempted, he never gave in to temp-
> tation. He has not done so; therefore, he is not good.

> III. If God were good, then he would have created just
> those people whom he foresaw would freely choose what is
> good. He has not created just those people; therefore,
> he is not good.

I shall discuss each of these arguments in turn.

I. The Argument From the Existence of Temptations

The first argument reminds me of an old Bugs Bunny
cartoon. In that cartoon, Daffy Duck, after betraying Bugs,
says, "I had to do it. It was a simple matter of logic. It
was either him or me. And it obviously couldn't be me. Af-
ter all, I'm different from other people. I feel _my_ pain."

For God to create free creatures who were not tempted would mean creating creatures who, because of inner structure or outward circumstances, could never be in a position to understand that sort of "logic." Creatures who could not reason in that way, or who never were in circumstances where such reasoning was possible, would not be morally good. Such creatures might perform no act that was morally evil. They might perform acts that in our world, where temptation is present, would be counted morally good. But if they were never tempted, these creatures would not be morally good. To build men so that they were never tempted, or to place them in a world where no temptations arose means building them so that the gift of free will is useless. God might as well build robots, as to make free creatures who are never tempted to misuse their freedom.

In his article, "Omnipotence, Evil, and Supermen," Ninian Smart makes this same point by sketching an imaginary world, Utopia.[1] In Utopia, there are creatures (we could hardly call them humans) who are immune from temptation. These creatures have no important desires that can come into conflict with the desires of others. For example, each somehow arrives in the world with an automatic supply of goods, and an innate aversion to the belongings of others. Each is capable of desiring only one mate, and that one is the first unattached person of the opposite sex encountered. When danger threatens, the creatures of Utopia are so constructed

that they respond with no emotion, and this allows them to always act cooly and rationally. Similar provisions may be imagined to cover other situations where temptations exist for humans.

Does anyone want to call the creatures of Utopia good? Why? Are they courageous? No, for they cannot fear. Are they generous? No, for generosity would have no meaning where no one desires what he does not have. Are these creatures self-sacrificing for others? No, for where self-interest is not valued, there is no question of whether to put the interests of others above the interests of oneself. Smart concludes his sketch of Utopia with the claim that the creatures of Utopia are no more to be counted as good for failing to harm one another than are the inhabitants of Alpha Centuri for not harming Earthlings. Distance renders the Alpha Centurians (if there are any) incapable of harming Earthlings. More complex barriers prevent the inhabitants of Utopia from even conceiving of immoral actions. But it is irrelevant whether the restraint shown is due to distance, or to more complex barriers. In neither case is the behavior to be counted as morally good.

An interesting objection to Smart's argument questions what, on Smart's view, it would mean to say that God is good.[2] If Smart is correct, then the concept of moral goodness can only have application to beings who undergo temptation. Traditionally, God has not been conceived of as

resisting his desire to lie, or struggling to master his selfishness. If the theist is not willing to revise his concept of God along lines that would allow for God's being tempted, then he must deny that God is morally good.

I think that Smart is correct; I also think that if Smart is correct, then God is not morally good. The matter is not as serious for the theist as it sounds, however. It has never been the idea of the theist, in claiming that God was good, that God, like us, struggles with temptation. "God is good," can only mean that God's acts always conform to the standard of moral goodness. God's acts may be in conformity to the moral law, even though God is not a morally good being for doing them. In a religious context, "God is good," may also indicate that God is the supremely good (valuable) being. To achieve the vision of God is man's chief good, his supreme blessedness. God is not morally good, like a good man: but God is the good. As the good, God is praiseworthy, but not morally praiseworthy.

An objection that I anticipate is that on this view, man has a desirable quality (moral goodness) that God lacks. The testimony of all theistic religions is that God is in every way superior to his creation. Therefore, this view requires a major modification of traditional religious beliefs.

To this objection, I reply that given a certain view of ethics, the theodicist has no problem with the claim that man is morally good, and God is not. I shall call the view

of ethics that I have in mind theological eudemonism.[3]

Theological eudemonism is teleological ethics in a theistic context. Teleological ethical theories hold that the moral good consists in what will promote the intrinsically good. Such ethical theories presuppose that there are deep universal needs which morally good behavior tends to satisfy. In many teleological ethical theories, there is one good which is identified as the summun bonum--man's highest good. Other things are considered good insofar as they contribute to the achievement of this intrinsic good.

Theological eudemonism holds that the meaning of 'a person is morally good' is that that person, faced with temptation to do otherwise, tends to make choices that aid in the achievement of the summun bonum. The reference of 'moral good' is to that which tends to bring man into a relationship of harmony with God.

The distinction between the meaning and the reference of moral terms is important. In making this distinction, theological eudemonism differs from the divine command theory. According to the divine command theory, to say that something is good is to say that God approves it, and to say that something is obligatory is to say that God commands it. Such a theory is open to the objection that it entails that if God commanded men to torture one another, then to do so would be morally good. Theological eudemonism does not entail this, because it connects the will of God with the

reference of moral terms, not with their meaning. Theological eudemonism assumes that God is loving, and that man is made, in the words of the Scottish Shorter Catechism, "to glorify God and to enjoy him forever." Therefore, (given its teleological theory of the meaning of 'good') the referent of 'good' is to what will enable one to achieve harmony with the will of God. If God is not good, or if there is no God, then what follows is that while theological eudemonism may be correct about the meaning of ethical terms, it is mistaken about their referent. If God commands men to torture one another, then what follows is not that his command makes torture morally good, but rather that "moral good" does not refer to that which will enable a man to achieve a harmonious relationship with God.[4]

Theological eudemonism has the advantages of making ethical facts objective and non-natural. I suspect that most people's first intuitions are that ethical claims are true or false (they are objective) and ethical truths cannot be described in the language of science (they are non-natural). Theological eudemonism gives an intelligible account of how ethical facts can be both objective and non-natural. It is arguably the best such account. Given that the theist already thinks that there is a loving God, it seems to me that he has good reason to accept theological eudemonism. If one accepts theological eudemonism, then there is no problem attached to the claim that God is not morally good. It would

be absurd to say that God, in the face of temptation, freely chooses that which will bring him into a harmonious relationship with God. A relationship of harmony with God is presumably not a problem for God. It has to be a problem for us, in order that a human offering of love and obedience can be more than a puppet's response to the puppet-master. Moral goodness is the goodness appropriate to man, but not to God. Therefore, to say that man is capable of moral goodness and God is not is not to ascribe to man a characteristic in which he is superior to God.

The counter-argument to the free-will theodicy which was the starting point of this discussion has as its key premise that if God were good, he would have made man so that he was not tempted to do evil. To this objection I replied that the concept of moral goodness makes sense only in connection with that of temptation. That God desires a universe in which there is moral good is sufficient reason for him to create man in a situation where temptations exist. This reply gave rise to the problem of whether moral goodness should be ascribed to God. I answered that it should not, but that to say this was not to ascribe a deficiency to God. Defense of this claim involved consideration of the nature of ethical terms. The result of that consideration was the conclusion that the theist has good reason to adopt the theory of theological eudemonism. From the perspective of theological eudemonism, God is not morally good, but God is

the good. I shall continue to refer to God as good, but that claim is to be understood in conformity with theological eudemonism, as indicating that God is he who is supremely valuable. This in no way lessens the severity of the problem of evil. God could not needlessly inflict suffering on his creatures, and play the role that theological eudemonism assigns him. Theological eudemonism does not reduce the need to defend the ways of God with man.

II. The Argument from the Possibility
of Sinless People

The second counter argument to the free-will theodicy that I listed has as its key premise the claim that if God were good, then he would have made man so that, though he was tempted, he never gave in to temptation. J. L. Mackie elaborates on this argument as follows:

> If God has made men such that in their free choices they sometimes prefer what is good and sometimes what is evil, why could he not have made men such that they always freely choose the good? If there is no logical impossibility in a man's freely choosing the good on one, or on several occasions, there can be no logical impossibility in his freely choosing the good on every occasion. God was not, then, faced with the choice between making innocent automata and making beings who, in acting freely, would sometimes go wrong: there was open to him the obviously better possibility of making beings who would act freely but always go right. Clearly, his failure to avail himself of this possibility is inconsistent with his being both omnipotent and wholly good.[5]

It is logically possible that man, though tempted, always does what is right. A common explanation of God's omnipotence is that God has the power to bring about whatever

is logically possible. If omnipotence means power to bring about whatever is logically possible, then God could have had the advantage of free creatures whose choices had value without any risk of moral evil.

This would be a fatal objection to the free-will theodicy only if the theodicist was bound to the understanding of omnipotence that this objection employs. But he is not bound to this understanding of omnipotence. The proper response for the free-will theodicist is to deny that God can bring about all state of affairs that are logically possible.

Alvin Plantinga defends this response by arguing that while it is logically possible that no one ever succumbs to temptation, whether or not this possibility is realized is up to us, not to God.

Plantinga provides the following example of why he thinks it is we, not God, who decide whether some possibilities are realized: Curley Smith, the mayor of Boston, is offered a bribe. Take the entire course of the world up to the moment that Curley decides to accept or to reject the bribe; call it S. Then one of the following obtains:

1. S, and Curley accepts the bribe.

2. S, and Curley rejects the bribe.

Both 1 and 2 involve logically possible worlds. But which world exists is up to Curley, and not up to God. If God is to create Curley, and not someone else, and to make him free with respect to accepting or rejecting the bribe,

then Curley decides which possible world shall exist, the
one where he accepts the bribe, or the one where he rejects
it. Curley is, in a sense, co-creator of the world. He is
not co-creator of heaven and earth, and the natural laws
that govern them. But he is co-creator in the sense that he
has the power to determine a part of the world's history.
He, and not God, determines whether that history shall in-
clude his taking the bribe. A world in which Curley existed,
S obtained, and Curley made a choice different from his ac-
tual choice is a logically possible world, but not a world
that God can insure will exist. This is not a response with
which all theists could assent. It means that humans can
make the world turn out differently from what God intends.
Aquinas is one of many notable theists whose God-concept
would not allow this. However, for the theists who can ac-
cept it, I believe this argument does provide a satisfactory
response to the second counter-argument to the free-will the-
odicy.[6]

III. The Argument from God's Foreknowledge

The third counter-argument has as its key premise
that if God were good, then he would have created just those
people whom he foresaw would freely choose what is good.

Plantinga also offers an answer to this question, but
in this case I think his answer less satisfactory. Plantinga
suggests that perhaps everyone that God could create suffers
from what Plantinga calls transworld depravity. A creature

suffers from transworld depravity, according to Plantinga, just in case there is no possible world in which God could place that creature, in which it is free, undergoes temptations, and never performs a wrong action. A world in which Curley is morally perfect is a possible world, but not a world that God can create if it is the case that in every world in which God could place him, Curley would choose at least one wrong action. Plantinga adds that it is possible that Curley suffers from transworld depravity. It is possible that in any world in which Curley existed and had choices to make between good and evil, Curley would at some point choose evil. If it is possible that Curley suffers from transworld depravity, then it is possible that we all suffer from it. If it is possible that all actual people suffer from it, then it is also possible that everyone that God might have created suffers from it. Though sinless people are a logical possibility, it may be a contingent truth that anyone God created would at some point freely choose to do wrong. It may be that anyone whom God could create would in fact make wrong choices, though there is nothing that makes it necessary that all do so. If this is the case, then it is beyond the power of omnipotence to create a world in which free creatures subject to temptation produce no moral evil.[7]

What Plantinga asserts concerning transworld depravity may be correct. My only quarrel with what he says is that he pictures God as knowing whether his creatures suffer

from transworld depravity or not. He pictures God as being in a position to weigh the amount of moral evil that would be produced by a particular person against the good that might result from his creation. I think that such a picture is necessarily false. I hold that either God cannot know the truth value of propositions that refer to free future human decisions, or else he does know them, but in a manner that makes it impossible for his knowledge to affect the decision to create the persons involved.

If I am correct about this matter, then there is a more direct answer to the third counter-argument than Plantinga's speculation concerning transworld depravity. That more direct answer is that God did not create just those people whom he foresaw would always freely choose the good because his doing so is impossible.

The free will theodicy assumes the truth of the libertarian view of free will. According to the Libertarian, it is impossible in principle to predict with certainty another's free decision. "In principle" means that the inability to predict is not due to any lack of knowledge or intelligence. It is not, then due to any of those attributes in which God excels us. This "in principle" must include God.

If man's decisions are free, and God is in time, then God's predictions concerning future free human decisions are fallible. There is no way to give any sort of account of how his predictions could be otherwise. Certainty concerning

future events, for a being in time, can come about in only
two ways. I can be certain of a future event because I have
decided to cause it, and it is an event that I alone have
the power to bring about. I can be certain of a future event
because I know that sufficient conditions exist in the pres-
ent to necessitate its occurrence. Neither of these methods
of obtaining certainty concerning the future can apply to
free decisions. If I am the sole cause of my decision, then
God cannot decree that I shall decide a certain way. If I
am free, then there is no set of antecedent conditions which
necessitates a certain decision.

However, some theists have held that God is outside
all time, and beholds what is to us past, present, and future
in his one eternal present. In this case, God does know what
future free human decisions will be. He knows them because
he sees them being made. Our making them is therefore the
necessary condition of his knowing them. God cannot behold,
in his eternal present, a future event unless that event is
in fact what will come to pass. This means that God cannot
intervene at time T1 to prevent what would otherwise be your
decision at T2; for the only reason that God can be certain
of your decision at T2 is that it is the decision that will
in fact be made. This rules out God's interfering with that
decision on the basis of his knowledge of it.

From the point of view of an atemporal God, the uni-
verse for which he provides ontological support is, from the

first moment to the last, a single accomplished fact. An atemporal God is the Eternal Spectator. His single act is the eternal willing of the existence of the spatio-temporal order. What exists, and what laws govern things are "built-in" in that eternal willing of the world, and cannot take into account the specific actions of free creatures such as he has willed that the world produce. Such a God might answer prayer, but only by creating a world where praying in a certain way, under certain circumstances, would cause certain events to always follow. Such a God might build into the world the possibility of miracles, but only by eternally willing that certain circumstances, if they arose, would result in the failure of certain natural laws. An atemporal God might inspire sacred writings, but only by willing from eternity that certain truths be available to anyone who made certain decisions, or was in certain circumstances.

Either God is in time or outside time. If God is in time, then he does not know with certainty future free human decisions. If God is outside time, then God does know future free human decisions, but his knowledge is dependent on the future event's being, from his point of view, already accomplished fact. On neither hypothesis can God be imagined as deciding before creation whether to create certain individuals, based on knowledge of exactly what would happen if he did so. Therefore, whether God is in time, or outside time, he does not have the choice of creating people he knows will only do good.

The free-will theodicy can give reasonable answers to the counter-arguments that can be mustered against it. It therefore succeeds in showing that it is reasonable to think that a good God might create a world containing creatures who make evil choices. There is, therefore, for theists willing to accept the free-will theodicy, no significant problem of moral evil for belief in the goodness of God.

Faith in the goodness of God is rational unless God's being good is overwhelmingly improbable. The existence of moral evil does nothing to show that God's being good is improbable. The more significant problem of evil is the problem of natural evil.

CHAPTER FOUR NOTES

[1]Ninian Smart, "Omnipotence, Evil, and Supermen," Philosophy 36 (April-July 1961): 188-195.

[2]J. E. Barnhart brings up this problem in "Omnipotence and Moral Goodness," Personalist 52 (Winter 1971): 107-110.

[3]I use 'eudemonism' because of its association with Aristotle's ethics, which also involves the idea of a highest good.

[4]I take the use of the meaning-reference distinction in theological ethics from Robert Merihew Adams' "Moral Argument for Theistic Belief," ed. C. F. Delaney, University of Notre Dame Studies in the Philosophy of Religion, no. 1 (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1979), pp. 116-123. The suggestion concerning what the meaning of 'good' is, is my contribution.

[5]J. L. Mackie, "Evil and Omnipotence," Mind 64 (April 1955): 209.

[6]Alvin Plantinga, God, Freedom, and Evil (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1975), pp. 45-47.

[7]Ibid., pp. 47-49.

CHAPTER FIVE

NATURAL EVIL

If, as I argued in chapter four, God's permission of
moral evil can be explained, then any significant problem of
evil must be based on the presence in our universe of various
natural evils. I define "natural evils" as the evils for
which natural laws are a <u>necessary</u> condition. Natural evils
include both things like earthquakes and disease, and events
like murder in which natural laws make it possible for people
to carry out those evil decisions that constitute moral evil.

I attempted to explain why God has created a world
in which there is moral evil. I shall not try to explain why
God has created a world in which there is natural evil. In-
stead, I shall argue that we do not have sufficient knowledge
to judge from the presence of natural evil in the world that
God's being good is overwhelmingly improbable. My argument
for this conclusion is as follows:

    1. Given that there are many natural evils, to eliminate
    a significant number of them would require that God pro-
    duce a radically different world from the one that we
    know.

2. To know that it is overwhelmingly probable that God, if he were good, would produce a radically different world from the one that we know, we would have to know:

    I.   that it is overwhelmingly probable that a radically different world would have less evil in it than the world that we know.

    II.   that it is overwhelmingly probable that a radically different world with less evil in it is one that could be produced by God.

    III.   that it is overwhelmingly probable that a radically different world, with less evil in it, which God could produce, would be a world that a good God would produce.

3. We do not know what we would need to know to judge that it is overwhelmingly probable that a good God would produce a radically different world from the one that we know.

4. Therefore, we cannot judge, from God's not producing a world without significantly fewer natural evils, that God's being good is overwhelmingly improbable.

The crucial claim in this argument is the claim that we do not have the knowledge to judge that it is overwhelmingly probable that a good God would produce a radically different world. The lack of knowledge that the argument refers to is of three types. We are said to not have a sufficient grasp of the comparative balance of good and evil in a radically different world; we are said to not have a sufficient grasp of what worlds God is capable of creating; and we are said to not have a sufficient grasp of what sort of world a good God would be obligated to create. I shall devote separate sub-sections of this chapter to each of these points.

I. Good and Evil in a Radically Different World

To compare the balance of good and evil in a world

radically different from our own, we need to know two things: the balance of good and evil in our own world, and the balance of good and evil in the world in question. There are problems on both counts.

There are possible scientific discoveries that would upset our present estimates of the proportion of good and evil in our world. For example, suppose that it were discovered that in cases of massive injury, where there is no hope of recovery, the brain produced an opium derivative to mask the pain. It seems to me that this would make some difference in our view of how much evil our world contains.

Another possible discovery is that certain diseases are self-inflicted in the sense that at some level we control our bodies' defense mechanisms against disease, and sometimes "decide" to become ill. I, for one, am inclined to judge God far more harshly for creating a world containing evils that strike at random than I am for its containing the possibility of self-inflicted evils. A discovery that some instances of disease were self-inflicted would change, to some degree at least, my own estimate of this world's balance of good and evil. The possibility of such discoveries should reduce our confidence in our ability to estimate our world's balance of good and evil.

Another problem with confidently asserting that a radically different world would have less evil in it than our world is our ignorance of how much weight to give animal

pain in weighing our world against various alternatives.

The pain suffered in the animal world seems on the face of it, to present a special problem to the theodicist. Animal reactions to pain are very much like our own. This makes it difficult to dispose of the problem of animal pain by denying that their experience is necessarily as painful as our own would be in similar circumstances. On the other hand, animals seem to lack the characteristics that would make a "character training," theodicy applicable to them.

It seems to me that the difficulty of this problem is at least reduced by the reflection that animals either have a level of conscious complexity comparable to our own, or they do not. If they do, then they may be like us in having free will and in being presented with some version, however primitive, of the choice between living for self or surrender of their wills to God. If they do not, then the similarity of their outward reaction may not be an indication of an identical subjective experience. If the latter alternative is correct, then we cannot be certain how radically animal experience of pain differs from our own. (It still seems probable, however, that animals suffer a great deal. Animal pain is one of the most perplexing parts of the problem of evil.)

Another problem with judging our world's balance of good and evil is our uncertainty concerning the correctness of our own value judgments. Growing up is in part an experience of revising one's values. It is an experience that

leaves one open to the possibility that the future will
·teach new lessons and revise some judgements that seem at
present unshakeable. A confident statement that a radically
different world from our own would exhibit a better balance
of good over evil encounters the problem of whether we have
yet reached a standpoint from which such a value-judgment
could confidently be made.

I can supply a personal example of how a change in
my value-judgments made a difference for me in my judgments
of how much evil the world contains.

I have always been fascinated and horrified by ac-
counts of Nazi Germany, and by the concentration camps. I
once put this evil in a special category. That Hitler was
allowed to exist and to murder so many people struck me as
an evil in the face of which theodicy was impossible.

Now the interesting thing is that I did not consider
it an evil beyond possible justification that God allows
moral evil. Nor did I consider it totally impossible to jus-
tify God's governing the world by means of natural laws that
would sometimes have the result that moral evil could be ex-
pressed in terms of evil acts. I had not analyzed why the
existence of the concentration camps seemed to me to be so
impossible to reconcile with the existence of a good God.
Eventually, as I grew up, I discovered why I had this reac-
tion. It was because I had never accepted the universality
of death.

Put into words, the idea is ridiculous, but I <u>felt</u> about death, not that it was something that occurs to all, but that it was some sort of terrible exception to the general rule. The pain inflicted in the concentration camps did not strike me as nearly as great an evil as the sheer numbers of people who died.

But of course every one of the millions killed by Hitler would have died anyway. All were under a death sentence whether Hitler ever came to power or not. The evil about murder is not that someone is dead, but that someone else is a murderer. The evil of the concentration camps is the evil of the pain suffered there, and the staggering amount of moral evil involved in their construction and operation. The terrible thing is not that six million Jews <u>died</u>, but that six million people were, after great suffering, murdered.

In order to judge whether a radically different world from the one that we know would be a superior world, we would have to have at least a rough idea of the balance of good and evil in our world. I have argued that there are difficulties in ascertaining our world's balance of good and evil. However, the difficulties are slight compared with the difficulty of judging the balance of good and evil in a radically different world. The difficulty of this latter task provides the strongest reason for doubting that we can confidently judge the benefits of various possible worlds.

Bruce Reichenbach writes of the difficulty of imagining an orderly cosmos radically different from our own as follows:

> . . . it is not enough for the sceptic merely to say concerning a particular natural . . . event that he can conceive how it could have turned out better than it did. . . . An entire set of natural laws and all the events affected by them will have to be altered for an effect different from that which did occur to result. . . . If the sceptic is to conceive of a better world what he must do, first, is develop other possible world-systems of natural law and/or different components, and secondly show that a given system (not an event, or class of events, but the system) would result in less evil than the present world-system. . . . To do this would necessitate knowing all the implications of both natural systems, a task suited only for an omniscient mind.[1]

The alternative to trying to imagine a world with radically different natural laws is trying to imagine a world like our own, but in which God is constantly intervening to prevent natural evils. In such a world, one could swim in water, but not drown in water; the knife that remained hard when cutting butter would turn to rubber when picked up in anger; vocal cords would not respond when one attempted to shape hateful, malicious words.

It is difficult to imagine life in a world so different. Certainly, such a world would lack many of the features that we wish were eliminated from our world. Certainly, too, it would lack some good features of our world. It would lack the search for truth. To eliminate a significant number of natural evils would necessitate turning the world into what F. R. Tennant called "a chaos of incalcuable

miracle,"[2] in which science would not be possible. It would be a world in which men had no real responsibilities for one another. One would not have the decision of whether to hurt or help one's fellows. All would depend on miracle; no man would depend on others. There would be no abandoned babies in such a world; but neither would there by any cared-for babies, since a human's failing to change or feed a baby would have no bad effects. To the degree that we can imagine it, this would be a universe resembling a womb.

The difficulty of deciding whether such a world would be preferable is based on the problem of what we would be in such a world. Of attempts to imagine such a world, J. A. Baker writes:

> The way in which we react to events is just as much a part of our experience of them as the events themselves. When, therefore, we are asked to compare a system under which we have never lived with one that is our permanent environment--in this case, a pain-free universe with one such as we now have--we do not have the basis on which to make the evaluation . . . our guess about the effects of such a change become highly tentative.[3]

For all the reasons that I have listed, I do not think it overwhelmingly probable that a radically different world would have a better balance of good over evil than the one that we know. Suppose, however, that it is overwhelmingly probable. The question still remains as to whether it is overwhelmingly probable that a radically different world with less evil in it would be a world that God would be capable of creating. To decide this question requires a discussion of the notion of omnipotence.

II. What God Can Do

What does it mean to say, as theologians commonly
do, that God is omnipotent? A quick definition of omnipo-
tence is that it is the power, attributed to God, of being
able to do anything. Some take "anything" literally, as any-
thing at all, including the logically impossible. Others
concede that there have to be some logical restrictions on
the scope of "anything." Three explanations of omnipotence
that one can find in the literature on the subject are as
follows:

> 1. God can do anything, including that which implies a
> contradiction.
>
> 2. God can do task X, if X can be given a logically
> consistent description.
>
> 3. God can do X if the sentence "God does X" is logi-
> cally consistent.

This first understanding of omnipotence is one of
those troublesome philosophical positions whose absurdity is
combined with complete security from refutation. It cannot
be refuted by showing that it has absurd or contradictory
consequences, since what the doctrine asserts is precisely
that the contradictory may be the case, if God so wills it.
Peter Geach writes that, whenever anyone tells him that God
can do anything, he reminds them of the Biblical passage that
God cannot lie. So far, he reports, none has had the wit to
reply that since God can do anything, he can both lie, and be
unable to lie.[4] Such a reply is always open to the defender
of this understanding of omnipotence. Suppose one presented

a proponent of this doctrine with a valid argument that had
premises he agreed were true, and the conclusion that God was
not omnipotent. He could always reply that God could make
the premises true and the conclusion false.

The position in question is therefore logically in-
vulnerable. The only thing that one can do with it is to try
to remove the motivation for assenting to it. That motiva-
tion was, I think, correctly described by Whitehead: "Among
medieval and modern philosophers, anxious to establish the
religious significance of God, an unfortunate habit has per-
sisted of paying to Him metaphysical compliments."[5] The "ref-
utation" of the first definition of omnipotence is an explana-
tion that it is no lack of power in God that keeps him from
performing a task whose description implies a contradiction.
It is not because God lacks power, but because the speaker
has not succeeded in specifying a real task to be done or not
done that a contradictory task does not fall under the heading
of things that God can do.

The second characterization of omnipotence is ini-
tially more plausible. It is one of the most common under-
standings of omnipotence, as shown by people's willingness to
draw the conclusion that God can perform a task from the mere
premise that the task is not in itself logically impossible.
Peter Geach summarizes the problem with this understanding of
omnipotence as follows:

> there are well-known logical arguments to show that . . .
> there must be some logically possible feats that are

> beyond God's power. One good example suffices: making
> a thing which its maker cannot afterwards destroy. This
> is certainly a possible feat, a feat that some human be-
> ings have performed. Can God perform the feat or not?
> If he cannot there is already some logically possible
> feat which God cannot perform. If God can perform the
> feat, then let us suppose that he does. . . . Then we
> are supposing God to have brought about a situation in
> which he has made something he cannot destroy; and in
> this situation destroying this thing is a logically pos-
> sible feat that God cannot accomplish. . . .[6]

The third definition of omnipotence is designed to

avoid precisely this sort of objection. Its defenders recog-

nize that "God does X" may be inconsistent, even though X is,

in itself, logically possible. This definition states that

God can do whatever it is logically consistent to say that

God does. This definition avoids the sort of counter example

that disposed of the second definition. While it is consis-

tent to say that something can be made that its maker cannot

destroy, there is an inconsistency in saying that God makes

something that God cannot destroy. It is equivalent to say-

ing that he who can destroy anything makes that which he can-

not destroy.

However, this formula still ascribes to God power

that he may have. If libertarianism is true, then what a

free being does is up to that being, and not to God. "God

creates sinless people with free wills" is logically consis-

tent, but it is a sad truth of logic that if people are free

it is up to them and not to God, whether there are sinless

people. "God creates sinless people with free wills" is log-

ically consistent, but if everyone God creates in fact

chooses to sin, then God cannot create sinless people. God cannot create sinless persons unless the persons that God create choose not to sin; and whether or not they do so is beyond God's control, since he has given them free wills.

We might seek to amend this definition of omnipotence, so as to evade this counter-example. We then might consider what counter-examples, if any, the new definition was subject to. But what has been said so far is sufficient to show that defining omnipotence is no easy matter. The question arises as to why we should try to capture in a definition what God can and cannot do.

One answer might be that God's omnipotence must be defined in a way that gives God sufficient power to make him worthy of human worship. We must look for a formula that will define the limits of the tasks that God can perform, in order to see if our God-concept is the concept of a deity that is worthy of being worshiped by us. This seems near to what C. A. Campbell intends when he writes:

> the religious attitudes of worship and adoration are difficult to sustain in conjunction with an explicit recognition that the Being to whom they are directed is defective or imperfect in any way whatever. And we can hardly pretend to ourselves that limitation of power is not an imperfection.[7]

This seems to me to be mistaken. There is no moral principle that says that one ought to offer worship to a being only if that being is one who has X amount of power. That people are psychologically capable of worshiping what is limited is indicated by the worshipful or near-worshipful

attitudes that many people evidence towards actors, politicians, and famous musicians. Furthermore, even if one assumed that a certain degree of power was a necessary condition for one to be worthy of worship, there does not seem to be any obvious way to go from the premise that God is worship-worthy only if he has X amount of power to the conclusion that God has that amount of power.

I can think of no possible justification for ascribing to God more power than is entailed by the role that God plays in our metaphysical scheme. The God-concept that I have been employing, and on behalf of which I have offered a partial argument, is the concept of a will that is the explanation for the existence of all other things that exist. This means that God is either a necessary or a sufficient condition for whatever is the case. He is the sufficient condition for all states of affairs that do not involve the decisions of free creatures. He is a necessary condition for all states of affairs that also have as a cause the free decision of a creature. It follows that no power can be superior to that of God. The existence of any power other than that of God is dependent upon God's will. God's role as ultimate explanatory terminus also gives us a reason to ascribe a great deal of knowledge to God: knowledge of all that he wills, which is to say all that exists.

God's role as the place where explanation stops indicates a degree of power that we can be justified in ascribing

to him, but it does not provide a formula like those we began by considering. That is, it does not provide us with a formula of the form "God can do any task X that has characteristic Y." I shall not provide such a formula. The concept of God that I employ is that of a power that cannot be successfully opposed by any competing power. This tells us what is the minimum of God's power, but gives us no justification to make dogmatic judgments about what God can or cannot do.

In the chapter on moral evil, I give an example of a limitation on God's powers. I argue that God either does not know future free human decision, or else knows them in a manner which makes impossible his interference based on that knowledge. This limitation on God's knowledge, or on his power (depending on which horn of the dilemma one chooses) is by no means obvious. That it is arguably the case suggests that a healthy skepticism is in order concerning generalizations about God's powers.

Another reason for not being dogmatic about what God can and cannot do is that the power that one can justifiably ascribe to God does not rule out the existence of metaphysical truths that may limit God. One candidate for such a truth is the claim that the whole is always greater than its parts. It is not logically impossible for a part to be equivalent to the whole. Two sets are equivalent if their members can be put into one to one correspondence with one another. A part

of a set with an infinite number of members (say the odd-numbered elements) can be put into one-to-one correspondence with the whole. Therefore, in an infinite set, a part can be equivalent to the whole.

This is logically possible: but can it be true of any real thing? There are counter-intuitive results from answering "yes." God might have existed for an infinite amount of time, and God might, like Tristram Shandy, record the events of a single day in his infinite life every year. Recording events at this pace, God would always have an up-to-date record, since the set of years God has existed and the set of days that God has existed would be equivalent. Both are infinite.

This is counter-intuitive, but not contradictory. One may simply conclude that this is a strange but real possibility for a God who has always existed. However, another response is to conclude that there must be a form of absolute necessity other than the logical that is binding even on God, and that one truth having such necessity is that in whatever is real, the whole is greater than the part.[8]

If the principle that the whole is greater than its parts is a necessary metaphysical truth, then no real thing can be infinite. Anything that is infinite would violate this principle. God cannot, therefore, create an infinite number of things. God cannot know all possible worlds, since these are infinite in number. There is the possible world

with one thing in it, the possible world with two things in it, the possible world with three things in it, and so on. There is the infinite number of worlds that have life in them, the infinite number of worlds in which the same natural laws operate as in ours, the infinite number of worlds in which moral virtue is possible, and the infinite number of worlds that share the same past as ours up to a certain point in its history. If the part cannot be greater than the whole then God knows only some finite number of these worlds. It follows that Leibniz is wrong: God does not know whether ours is the best world he might have created. We can accept the paradoxical consequences of affirming that real things may be infinite, or assert that there is a necessity other than the logical which rules out a real infinite. The correct choice here is not obvious. Therefore, what God can do is also not obvious.

A third reason to be agnostic concerning the power of God is our inability to detect which features of our universe are logically necessary. In saying this, I am assuming that at least some features of the world are as they are because of metaphysical truths. Now there are metaphysical theories that would determine what is logically possible. For example, if minds are essentially complex configurations of matter, then dualism is not only false, but necessarily false. If dualism is true, then minds are essentially non-material, and mind-body identity theories make the necessarily

false claim that what is essentially non-material is material.

A metaphysical theory with very obvious and direct implications for the power of God is that of Whitehead and Hartshorne. According to these thinkers, to exist _means_ to have some degree of power to determine one's own nature and to influence others. These thinkers deny that a powerless entity is conceivable. The limit their doctrine imposes is, they claim, a logical limit.[9] If to be is to have power, then the idea of a powerless entity is the logically contradictory idea of power without power. If this is correct, then it is _logically_ _impossible_ for God to create and also to have complete control over the subsequent history of his creation. Writing on this subject, Hartshorne says that omnipotence:

> is sometimes viewed as a monopolistic concentration of power--the wielding, by one agent, of all the power there is or could be. This implies that all other beings are powerless. But if 'being is power' (Plato), then power over being is power over power, and the ideal or perfect agent will enjoy the optimal concentration of efficacy which is compatible with there being other efficacious agents.[10]

I am not a follower of Whitehead. I do not employ this Whiteheadian idea to resolve the problem of evil. Reference to Whitehead's metaphysics is intended only to illustrate that without a complete metaphysics, we cannot assume that what _seems_ logically possible _is_ logically possible. If we cannot decide with certainty what is logically possible, then we cannot afford to be dogmatic about what things, which seem to us to be imaginable, could actually have been done by

God. We cannot know that it is overwhelmingly improbable
that the _apparently_ consistent world of our imagination, in
which there is no natural evil and a better balance of good
over evil than our own world, is a world that could actually
have been created by God.

Let us assume, however, that there is some logically
possible world, lacking natural evil, and having a better
balance of good over evil than our world. Let us assume,
too, that this is a world that God could create. Is it ob-
viously the case that a good God would create that world?
This question brings us to the topic of what sort of world a
good God would be obligated to create.

III. Must God Create the Best?

I have used as the title of this section the same
title as an article by Robert Merrihew Adams. In his arti-
cle, Adams answers the question asked by the title in the
negative. Adams asks us to suppose that God created a world
with the following characteristics:

> 1. None of the individual creatures in it would exist
> in the best of all possible worlds.
>
> 2. None of the creatures in it has a life which is so
> miserable on the whole that it would be better for that
> creature if it had never existed.
>
> 3. Every individual creature in the world is at least
> as happy on the whole as it would have been in any pos-
> sible world in which it could have existed.[11]

Adams suggests that a good God might choose to create
such a world, even though it was not the best world that he

could have created. In creating such a world, God would not be wronging any of the creatures in it. After all, their lives are worth living, and they would not exist if God insisted on not creating an inferior world. Neither does God wrong any superior beings whom he might have created by creating such a world. One cannot injure a creature who never exists. Therefore, a good God could create an inferior world without wronging any creature. I would want to make some changes in Adam's characterization of an inferior world that a good God could create. The first point on the list would have to be revised to read "a better world," rather than the best of all possible worlds; I agree with those who think that the notion of a best of all possible worlds, like the notion of the largest possible number, is nonsense. Also, since a creature's happiness is in part a result of his own free choices, I think the third point on the list should be modified to read that every individual creature in that world has at least as much <u>opportunity</u> for happiness as he would have had in any possible world in which he would have existed. Given these modifications, I think Adams has succeeded in specifying an inferior world that God <u>could</u> create without having wronged any creature.

Adam's argument brings up a number of fascinating issues. For example, should we count Helen Keller as enough of the same person, in a world where she always retains all her senses, for us to judge that God wronged <u>her</u> by creating her

in this world rather than that one? Though in both she would have the same bare metaphysical identity, it is tempting to say that even though the Helen Keller who retained her senses would be a happier person, she is not enough the same person that failure to create the physically whole Helen Keller can be counted as wronging the actual Helen Keller.[12]

But to return to the main issue: could a good God create a world inferior to one that he might have created? The only reason I can see for denying it would be if the only motivation for doing so was evil. If, for example, the only possible reason that God could have for creating an inferior world was that he was envious, and wanted nothing else in existence to be too good, then we would have to conclude that a good God would not create an inferior world.

Adams answers the question of God's motivation by bringing into the discussion the theological notion of grace.[13] Grace is God's forgiveness of those who do not deserve forgiveness. In this context, it apparently indicates a willingness to create creatures who are less worthy than those God might have created. However, whereas forgiveness of the undeserving is a virtue, creation of the inferior is not. Talk of grace in this context can appear to provide a reason for the creation of an inferior world only because of equivocation.

I do think, though, that perhaps there is justification

for God to create a world inferior to one that he might have created.

In making this claim, I presuppose three things: first, that there is a finite number of kinds of goods; second, that God could create any number of instances of a particular good; and third, that some goods are mixed goods, that is, goods whose existence is logically dependent upon the existence of some evil. An example of a mixed good would be courage, which could not exist without danger.

Given that God could create any number of things, there can be no such thing as a best of all possible worlds. For any world containing X number of goods, there is a world with X + 1 goods. It follows that the number of goods in a world of a particular type is arbitrary.

The decision that God has that is not arbitrary is whether to create some instances of each kind of good thing, or to create only those goods which are not mixed goods, such as pure beauty. A world without any mixed goods would be a world with a better balance of good over evil than our world: it would be a world with some good, and no evil. But it seems to me at least possible that a good God might give up the best possible balance of good and evil because he loved each type of good, and wanted there to be some instances of each, including mixed goods. Something like the principle of plenitude might be valid after all. It seems false that God has created every possible species, as that principle has it.

However, it might be true that God desired some instances of
all types of good. In another article on the problem of evil,
Adams writes: ". . . the existence of creatures such as we
are, with the characteristic, subtle, and sometimes bitter-
sweet values and beauties of human life may also be a good
. . . that is loved by God."[14] Even if God could have cre-
ated a better world by creating only unmixed goods, I would
not judge that God was not good for creating the mixed goods
of human life as well.

　　　We are uncertain of what God <u>has</u> done; we are uncer-
tain of how our world might compare with other possible
worlds. We are uncertain of what God <u>can</u> do; there may be
possible worlds that God cannot create. We are uncertain
what a good God <u>would</u> do; we are uncertain of what sort of
world a good God would be limited to creating. Given these
uncertainties, I conclude that God's being good is not made
overwhelmingly improbable by the presence of natural evils
in the world.

CHAPTER FIVE NOTES

[1] Bruce Reichenbach, "Natural Evils and Natural Laws: A Theodicy for Natural Evils," International Philosophical Quarterly 16 (June 1976): 194-195.

[2] F. R. Tennant, Philosophical Theology, 2 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1930), 2: 202.

[3] J. A. Baker, The Foolishness of God (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1975), p. 64.

[4] Peter Geach, Providence and Evil (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), p. 7.

[5] Alfred North Whitehead, Science and the Modern World (New York: Free Press, 1967), p. 179.

[6] Geach, Providence and Evil, pp. 15-16.

[7] C. A. Campbell, On Selfhood and Godhood, quoted in David Ray Griffin, God, Power, and Evil: A Process Theodicy (Philadelphia: Westminister Press, 1976), p. 256.

[8] William Lane Craig, The Kalām Cosmological Argument (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1979), pp. 64-140.

[9] See Griffin, God, Power, and Evil, pp. 269-274.

[10] Charles Hartshorne, "Omnipotence," quoted in Griffin, God, Power, and Evil, p. 256.

[11] Robert M. Adams, "Must God Create the Best?" Philosophical Review 81 (July 1972): 320.

[12] See Robert M. Adams, "Existence, Self-Interest, and the Problem of Evil," Nous 13 (March 1979): 53-65.

[13] Adams, "Must God Create the Best," pp. 323-325.

[14]Adams, "Existence, Self-Interest and the Problem of Evil," p. 63.

CHAPTER SIX

THE PROBLEM OF GOOD

The approach to the problem of evil that I have taken involves a separation of the questions of God's existence and his goodness. I have already written at length of one advantage of this approach: it allows us to assign acceptance of God's _existence_ to reason and acceptance of his being good to faith. Another advantage is that on this approach the question raised by the presence of evil in the world is the question of whether God is good or evil. To this question, the good things that exist are as relevant as are the evil things. If God is good, then there is a problem of evil; but if God is evil, then there is a problem of good. Other ways of approaching the problem of evil make it difficult to recognize the evidential value of the good things in deciding whether it is rational to have faith that God is good.

John Hick's influential book, _Evil_ _and_ _the_ _God_ _of_ _Love_, illustrates how failure to divide the questions of God's existence and his goodness leads to a denial that there is a problem of good. Hick denies that it is relevant to the

83

problem of evil to make a list of the many goods in the uni-
verse.[1] Hick denies that such a list is relevant to the
problem because the question that he has set out to answer
is "Is there a good God, or no God?" In dealing with this
question, it is true that there is no problem of good to re-
lax somewhat the tension of the mystery of evil. If our op-
tions are a God who is by definition good, or no God at all,
then evil is evidence against the existence of God, but the
good things are not evidence _for_ God. One who thinks that
God is good must give some account of how his belief squares
with the evils around us. The one who thinks that there is
no God need not explain the presence of good. For the athe-
ist, this mixture of good and evil are simply what the roll
of the dice has produced.

If, however, belief in the existence of a personal
creator can be defended, then the situation is transformed.
Those who believe that there is such a being will regard both
the good and the evil as potential clues to his nature.
Therefore, both the good and the evil in our world must be
taken into account in making a decision about whether faith
in God's goodness is a rational faith.

Basil Mitchell tells a parable which exhibits the
logic of the problem of evil. Mitchell asks us to imagine a
member of a resistance movement in an occupied country meet-
ing a mysterious stranger. The stranger tells him that he is
on the side of the resistance movement, and that whatever

happens, the partisan should trust him. Later the stranger
reappears at various times. Sometimes he is actively helping
the partisans. Sometimes he is in the uniform of the enemy,
and is seen turning resistance fighters over to the occupying
power. When the stranger helps the resistance movement, the
partisan tells his fellows, "See, I told you he was on our
side." When he is seen apparently aiding the enemy, the par-
tisan insists that the stranger must have some good reason
for his actions.[2]

The point that Mitchell is making in the parable is
that there is no crucial incident after which we can say that
the partisan's faith in the stranger has becom irrational.
Given a certain number of incidents that seemed to show that
the stranger was an enemy, it should eventually become irra-
tional to have faith in the stranger. But no one can say a
priori when that point would come, and reasonable men might
disagree about the matter. Mitchell thinks the same can be
said in the case of faith that God is good. We can all
agree that there is a ratio of evil over good that would
make faith irrational. But reasonable men can and do dis-
agree about whether the balance of good and evil in this world
does or does not exhibit that proportion.

There are several aspects of Mitchell's parable that
do not accord with traditional presentations of the problem
of evil. These aspects do fit with an approach like that
which I have taken. In the parable, the existence of the

stranger is not in doubt. It is his intentions that are in doubt. The stranger sometimes seems to act to harm the cause of the resistance forces, and this is evidence that his intentions are bad. But he is also sometimes seen helping them, and this provides evidence too, only the other way. If the stranger was never seen helping the partisans, or if there was some reason to rule out these cases as evidence of his intentions, then to have faith in the friendliness of the stranger would be irrational. It is crucial, in the stranger parable, that there is evidence for, as well as against, the stranger's being on the partisan's side. It is also crucial for the rationality of faith that there is evidence for, as well as against, God's being good.

To what degree does the evil around us make it probable that God is not good? To answer this question, we must look at both the good and the evil that exists. In doing so, we must be sure that we allow to the theodicist the use of the same sort of argument as we do his opponents.

The arguments on both sides of the question employ a special concept of probability. This sort of probability is not statistical probability. We cannot decide that God's being good is overwhelmingly improbable in the same way in which we would decide that the rolling of snake eyes a hundred times in a row is overwhelmingly improbable. The sort of probability that is involved here is harder to character-ize. We might call this non-statistical probability "common-

sense" or "intuitive probability."

Having a theory of what this sort of probability judgment involves is not necessary before one may make the judgment. We can know that certain evidence makes a claim overwhelmingly probable without ever giving a thought to what, in the abstract, is the correct analysis of the nature of such judgments. I intend to leave alone the philosophical issues surrounding those probability judgments which cannot be understood in terms of frequency. What is important for my case is that there _is_ a type of probability that cannot be analyzed in terms of statistical frequency, and this type of probability is what is involved in the claim that God's being good is overwhelmingly improbable.

Arguments employing common-sense probability do not have the neat form of arguments like "Nine of ten swans examined have been white, so swan number eleven will probably be white." Sometimes, the arguments employed seem less like arguments than attempts to weave a spell of words in order to induce a sudden shift in perspective. In many cases, the arguer can do no more than point out certain aspects of an issue which suggest certain things to him, in the hope that they will be similarly suggestive to the reader. There may be no logical road down which the reader may be coerced from the factors cited to conclusions identical with those of the arguer.

The important point to note is that the case against

God and the case for him are both of this nature. Statistical probability cannot be applied to universes. With the failure of the inconsistency argument from evil, one who wishes to argue that faith in God's goodness is irrational must employ an appeal to intuitive probability. Given that the case against faith is of this nature, there can be no objection to making a similar case for faith. The problem of good, which I offer as evidence for faith, cannot be objected to on the grounds that it is not a standard deductive or inductive argument. The counter-evidence I offer is of exactly the same nature as the evidence on the other side.

Our question is whether God, whose existence we are assuming, is good or evil. Given God's existence, it is as legitimate to argue from the character of his creation to his nature as it would be to argue from the appearance of a bit of pottery to the nature of the culture that produced it. This point must be kept in mind because many of the features of the universe which comprise the problem of good are features which are commonly employed in teleological arguments for the exsitence of God. Objections against the teleological argument are not relevant where the character and not the existence of God is what is in question, but the similarity of the considerations being appealed to may make it difficult to keep the difference between the logic of the two cases separate.

One reason to think that God is good is the evidence

that he has intended the existence of conscious, free, moral
beings. Life itself does not appear to be a by-product of
some process having a different end. Instead, the conspir-
acy of numerous causes in the inorganic world to produce the
organic seems a clue that the aim was life. The evolution
of life that produced a conscious, free, moral being is a
strong indication of the creator's intention. It is diffi-
cult to see how a creature free in the libertarian sense
could be a by-product of natural laws instituted by God for
other ends. There are no plausible candidates for such laws
or such ends. It is therefore plausible to suppose that at
least one aim of creation was the production of free, con-
scious beings. The existence of such beings is a good, and
therefore evidence of goodness in the creator.

The cosmos in which man has been placed is one in
which order prevails. This regularity is necessary for man
to be able to calculate the effects of his actions, pursue
ends, form habits, and develop his intellect. Together with
the presence of temptations, and the possession of free will,
the regularity of nature gives man an opportunity to have
real responsibility. It is good that the universe is not "a
chaos of incalculable miracle,"[3] but instead an orderly cos-
mos in which man has real responsibilities, and potential
for doing both good and evil.

Paradoxically, the presence of a certain amount of
evil is a part of the problem of good. This is because there

are certain good things that are logically dependent for
their existence on the presence of some evil. These are
such things as courage, sympathy, and self-sacrifice. Here,
I make a value judgment with which I know that many would
disagree. Though some evil is a logical precondition for
these goods, I think that a world with these goods is better
than a world without them.

The true degree to which we value those virtues
which consist in the overcoming of hardships is, I think,
revealed by the invention of what amounts to a pleasure ma-
chine. Scientists have placed wires in the pleasure centers
of the brains of rats, and rigged a device that sent an elec-
tric current through these wires when a bar was pushed. The
animals responded by pressing the bar without stopping for
food or rest until they fell dead of hunger and exhaustion.

What would one think of a person who, after making
provision for the care of his body, spent the remainder of
his days hooked to such a machine? If we recoil from the
idea, it is not because there is more pleasure to be gained
in a normal life. We recoil because we value too much those
goods which are bound up with the problems of ordinary life.

The beauty of nature is another evidence of the good-
ness of the creator. It is not probable that it is an acci-
dental by-product of the order of the universe. Man's own
productions, when he is unconcerned with beauty, show how
easy it is to produce order without beauty. (Most factories

are good examples of this.) When man is indifferent to beauty, he almost never produces it; if, by hypothesis, we assume that God is indifferent to beauty, then we have the mystery of why he nevertheless has almost never failed to achieve it.[4]

We cannot see beauty at will. The object which we say is beautiful is something that has evoked a response from us. For that to occur, it must have a certain character, and we must have an ability to appreciate that character. Biologically, a sense of beauty is superfluous. It is not the case that we have it because without it we would not have survived. In a utilitarian cosmos, beauty is a marvelous "extra."[5]

If I were God, and I wanted to create a good universe, I would want it to have life in it. I would want that life to include creatures who were free, conscious, beings capable of exploring their world. I would want that world to be one where courage, sympathy, and self-sacrifice were possible. I would want the free creatures in that world to have real responsibilities, and real adventures. That ours is such a world is some reason for me to judge that God is good. (I am assuming that my values are the true values. This is unobjectionable, since the problem of evil involves making the same assumption.) A God who was either indifferent to man or actively desiring his suffering would explain some aspects of the universe; but it should not be ignored that a

good God would account for:

> Sunsets and symphonies, mothers, music, and the laughter
> of children at play, great books, great art, great sci-
> ence, great personalities, victories of goodness over
> evil, the long hard-won ascent from the Stone Age up,
> and all the friendly spirits that are to other souls a
> 'cup of strength in some great agony'. . . .[6]

If one is convinced that there is a significant prob-
lem of good, then this conviction should reduce one's diffi-
culty in having faith in God's goodness. If, on the other
hand, one remains unconvinced, one might reply as follows:

"You are impressed with those aspects of the world
that fit best with God's being good. I am far more impressed
with those aspects of the world that fit with God's being
evil. I am so impressed, in fact, that your faith strikes me
as unreasonable. In any case, your arguments do nothing to
convince me. Your arguments have controversial premises. I
do not agree with your views on beauty, or libertarianism, or
your contention that a world with such goods in it as courage
would be superior to any world lacking such goods. But even
if I granted you every single controversial premise, I would
still not be impressed by the problem of good. What you of-
fer is another one of those 'cumulative cases'. Such argu-
ments depend on what amounts to 'hunches' or 'intuitions'
about what is probable. There is no problem with that, ex-
cept where people's intuitive senses of what is probable are
in conflict. When one juror thinks the accumulation of cir-
cumstantial evidence clearly justifies a guilty verdict, and
the other is convinced that reasonable doubt remains, there

is not necessarily a way to prove either party wrong. Both may understand and agree on all the facts; and if so, their disagreement lies beyond argument, in the realm of 'hunches' or 'feelings'. We have different hunches, and you cannot show that your judgment on this issue is superior to mine."

I would not argue with these points. The objector is correct in saying that the premises I offer are controversial, and the case is cumulative in nature. The same points can be made about the problem of evil. The argument that evil makes faith in God's goodness unreasonable involves controversial claims and "hunches" about what is probable that not everyone shares. I suspect that these weaknesses are easier for the unbeliever to spot in the problem of good than they are in the problem of evil. If this is so, then a consideration of the problem of good and its weaknesses as an argument for God's goodness should aid in the appreciation of similar weaknesses in the atheological argument from evil. Therefore, a consideration of the problem of good may aid the case for faith in God's goodness whether or not one finds it convincing.

Conclusion

There is, as I argued in the first chapter, no contradiction in combining belief that there is a good God, and belief that there is evil. However, it is plausible to claim that the existence of evil makes the existence of a good God less probable than it would otherwise be. There is no obvious

reason why a good God should create a world in which small children suffer from crippling arthritis. Sometimes, we can offer an ad hoc hypothesis to cover such events. Sometimes, we cannot even provide a very plausible ad hoc hypothesis to explain God's failure to prevent the numerous evils around us.

The question with which this dissertation deals is whether, under these circumstances, faith in God's goodness is reasonable. In order to defend a positive answer to that question, I first discussed William James and his "religious hypothesis." The religious hypothesis is that our lives can make a lasting contribution to a valued larger whole. Given that the religious hypothesis is not overwhelmingly improbable, it is reasonable for at least some people to have faith in the religious hypothesis.

I next looked at arguments for the existence of God. I concluded that belief in the existence of God (with 'God' defined in value-neutral terms) is reasonable. One who accepts the existence of God will state the issues involved in the religious hypothesis in terms of God's being good. A good God would explain how the religious hypothesis could be true. On the other hand, an evil God would make it difficult, if not impossible, for the religious hypothesis to be true. Therefore, for one convinced that God exists, the same issues and the same motivations discussed with regard to the religious hypothesis will surround the question of God's goodness.

The reasonableness of faith's answer to this question depends on the same condition made of the religious hypothesis as an object of faith: it must not be overwhelmingly improbable.

I therefore turned to the question of whether the amount of evil in the world made God's existence overwhelmingly improbable. Evils may be divided into two classes: moral evil and natural evil. I argued that God's permission of moral evil can be given an adequate explanation. Therefore, the more significant problem of evil is the problem of natural evil.

To judge the degree to which natural evil makes God's being good improbable, we would need to know three things. We would need to know how the balance of evil in our world compares with that in other possible worlds. We would need to know what worlds God might have created. We would also need to know what sort of world a good God would be obligated to create. I argue that there are difficulties with each of these requirements, and therefore reasons to doubt the conclusive nature of the problem of evil.

In this final chapter, I have argued that the goods of this world are as relevant as the evil in judging the moral character of a God whose existence is already assumed. A cumulative case can be made for God's being good, employing the sort of factors sometimes cited in teleological arguments for God's existence. Such a case has its problems. These

are mirror-images of difficulties which afflict an attempt to get a conclusive argument from evil. One who thinks these difficulties are significant will be skeptical about both the problem of good and the problem of evil. One who makes light of these problems will have to acknowledge that the tension of the problem of evil is in some degree reduced by acknowledgement of a balancing problem of good.

I conclude that God's being good is not overwhelmingly improbable. In arguing from the existence of evil to the non-existence of a good God, one becomes involved in controversial issues. One has to rest a great deal on what amounts to intuition. A particular person may be convinced that if there is a God, he cannot be good, but he cannot reasonably insist that everyone agree with the hunches, the value-judgments, and the metaphysical views that led him to that conclusion.

There is, then, for the version of theism that I have discussed in these pages, no pressing, near-intolerable intellectual problem in basing one's life on faith in God's goodness. There are some personal difficulties involved in basing one's life on faith in God's goodness. One tends to get mad at God at times. But that is a problem to discuss with a priest, not with a philosopher.

CHAPTER SIX NOTES

[1]John Hick, Evil and the God of Love (New York: Harper and Row, 1978), p. 11.

[2]Basil Mitchell and others, "Theology and Falsification," in John Hick, Classical and Contemporary Readings in the Philosophy of Religion (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice Hall, 1964), pp. 445-446.

[3]F. R. Tennant, Philosophical Theology, 2 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1930), 2: 202.

[4]Ibid., pp. 91-93.

[5]Ibid., pp. 89-93.

[6]Harry Emerson Fosdick quoted in Hick, Evil and the God of Love, p. 11.

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Adams, Robert M. "Existence, Self-Interest, and The Problem of Evil." Nous 13 (March 1979): 116-123.

Adams, Robert M. "Moral Arguments for Theistic Belief." In Rationality and Religious Belief, University of Notre Dame Studies in the Philosophy of Religion, no. 1, pp. 116-140. Edited by C. F. Delaney. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1979.

Adams, Robert M. "Must God Create the Best?" Philosophical Review 81 (July 1972): 317-332.

Baker, John Austin. The Foolishness of God. Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1975.

Barnhart, J. E. "Omnipotence and Moral Goodness." Personalist 52 (Winter 1971): 107-110.

Craig, William Lane. The Kalām Cosmological Argument. New York: Barnes & Noble, 1974.

Geach, Peter. Providence and Evil. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967.

Griffin, David Ray. God, Power, and Evil: A Process Theodicy. Philadelphia: Westminister Press, 1976.

Hick, John. Evil and the God of Love. New York: Harper and Row, 1978.

Hick, John. Faith and Knowledge. Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1957.

James, William. Pragmatism: A New Name for Some Old Ways of Thinking. New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1907.

James, William. The Will to Believe. New York: Dover Publications, 1956.

Mackie, J. L. "Evil and Omnipotence." Mind 64 (April 1955):
     201-212.

Mitchell, Basil. The Justification of Religious Belief. New
     York: Seabury Press, 1973.

Plantinga, Alvin. God, Freedom, and Evil. London: George
     Allen & Unwin, 1975.

Reichenbach, Bruce. "Natural Evils and Natural Laws: A The-
     odicy for Natural Evils." International Philosophical
     Quarterly 16 (June 1976): 179-196.

Schilling, S. Paul. God and Human Anguish. Nashville:
     Abingdon, 1977.

Smart, Ninian. "Omnipotence, Evil, and Supermen." Philosophy
     36 (April-June 1961): 188-195.

Swinburne, Richard. The Existence of God. Oxford: Clarendon
     Press, 1979.

Tennant, F. R. Philosophical Theology. 2 vols. Cambridge:
     Cambridge University Press, 1930.

Whitehead, Alfred North. Science and the Modern World. New
     York: Free Press, 1967.