

THE NOTION OF EVIL BEING THE ABSENCE OF THE RIGHT GOOD IS MANIPULATIVE AND HAS A BAD SIDE YOU ARE NOT TOLD ABOUT

Believers in God when confronted with evil and suffering insist that God does not make these things but only makes good and these things happen because the good is being deformed. In other words, evil only describes an abuse of good and is not a power as such.

The argument tries to make out that what evil is matters not that evil is. Its a distraction from the real point, it does not matter what evil is but it matters what God's intentions are. So for that reason it is a trick. If you see a murder taking place you have no excuse for denying it is a murder - "It was not his choice. It was necessary for the alternative would be worse." So when you need an evil argument and this argument that evil is not real is evil but only if there is a God then what do we conclude? God is an evil idea in itself.

THE ARGUMENT AND THE DIVINE PURPOSE

The teaching is that evil is useless though God may bring good out of it. Evil is the definition of waste and uselessness. God allegedly brings good out of evil but that is only trying to make the best of a situation that should not be. There should be no evil. "God judged it better to bring good out of evil than to suffer no evil to exist" (St Augustine of Hippo, Enchirid., xxvii).

This does not alter the fact that making yourself sick in order to feel superb when you get better is still wrong. It cannot be better. God cannot make you sick to help you later.

Some believers say evil is not a power but a misused good power. But if it is a misused power then it is a power. Evil must be a power for misuse exists so it must be something real. What is misused is evil.

If evil is a power, then it deserves to be used to make a greater good for it is owed no respect and there is nothing good in it. The problem then is how something useless can be used to do any good. It implies that evil people should be forced to do good but we consider that degrading and tyrannical.

What if God makes evil, as in power not a negative thing, for a good purpose that he needs it for? The good purpose won't be done without it. The Church says that this is impossible. It says the creation of evil power is never necessary. Why? Because evil is necessarily useless. If evil is so bad that God can't make it even for a good purpose that justifies it, then it follows that if it is a negation then it is still intolerable. God cannot allow it even if he needs to so that we might have free will. It is an odd argument that evil is useless if it is a force and useful if it is a lack. The lack doctrine is really seeing evil as some kind of good rather than as evil.

If evil is not a power but just an absence of good then the idea of a good purpose for evil wouldn't work. How could God have a use for the misuse of good? A misuse is necessarily useless. It is only whatever aspects of the situation that are good that produce more good.

Some say that God never has a purpose for evil but if it happens he will try to bring good out of it. But that means if it happens against his will he gives it a purpose and starts using it. This view implies that God is not the all-powerful creator when things can happen despite him.

Sometimes evil is followed by such great good that one might be glad the evil happened. If you think God brings good out of evil and can use evil so that the evil is almost worthwhile or actually worthwhile then surely as long as you wish and intend God to do this and you do harm then the result is his concern not yours? Why should you feel guilty or that you shouldn't have done the thing? You can murder with a merry charitable heart then!

The Church says that God has to encourage the increase of evil to create some good that makes the evil worthwhile - for example when he allows and creates temptation and weakness. When evil is being used to destroy evil then evil shouldn't exist in the first place. In other words, there is no purpose for it that justifies it. We know that people aren't entirely to blame for the evil they do. God could make us nicer if he tried. That is why attempts to save God's reputation which is beyond salvation are so offensive.

If evil is just a distortion of good then it is a parasite and has to go away sometime anyway so what do we want God for? We don't really think it can go on its own! So we must think it is real! As fear leads to hate are we using God to hide the

fear from ourselves? It is evil to tell yourself something is working on evil when it may not be for that empowers evil. You need to get it right about how you can expect it to fade.

GOOD THAT IS IN THE WRONG PLACE?

Believers in God say you cannot have good unless evil is possible. If evil is just a falling short of good it follows that evil is just good in the wrong place. When evil is good, how can these people say there could be good if there can be no evil? They really deny that they believe in such a thing as good at all.

I have a painful tooth that is rotting. According to the believers, the tooth is good. The rotting is just good that is in the wrong place for it is good at making teeth rot. The pain is good for it is warning that something is in the wrong place so it is being even more good the more it hurts me. If you think like that, and you know there should be a tooth there is it not worse to get it removed than to leave it in? The tooth coming out would be a worse evil than the tooth being left in to rot.

They say the knife that cuts your finger is good but just in the wrong place ie your finger. However, the knife is bad only when it cuts you.

Does it make any sense to say that the knife that cuts you by accident is good but is just in the wrong place and that that shows that evil is just a negation? No for the wrong place bit shows that evil exists and is real. That's where the evil is. It is madness to hold that evil is not real by considering it to be good that is just in the wrong place for the wrongness is still there is real. To distract people from evil in this way by saying it is not real and ignoring the wrongness is simply a conjuring trick and one that depends on a degree of callousness at that rate. $2+2=5$ is as real an equation as $2+2=4$. It is more than just a falling short of correctness. It is real but wrong. We know it is real in the sense that it communicates information.

If the sharpness of a blade is only bad when it is in the wrong place at the wrong time and cuts you what is it when nobody is using it or nobody needs it or even sees it? Is it good, is it evil or is it neither? Cutting a carrot with the blade is evil in a way. It causes damage to the carrot and destruction to a living thing for the carrot is alive. The blade is evil even when it is just lying there because it is meant to be used and is not being used. The same could be said about anything. The argument implies that creation is nearly wholly evil unless you want to believe that things disappear and cease to exist when nobody is looking at them. The whole point of the argument is to explain how God allows evil that has a purpose for it presupposes that God cannot fall short of his own perfection and that is why evil needs explaining. He would fall short if he did needless evil.

They say that existence is always good for it is better to be real than unreal. They say the evil thing that cuts or hurts you is not evil for existing but for being in the wrong place at the wrong time. Evil by definition should not exist. Then evil should not exist in that place and time so its existence there in that time and place is evil at least when it hurts you. Existence then is not always good. The argument says that evil is not just a falling short of good but a form of good. It condones evil.

The existence of things then is a part of goodness. Yet if something could exist but does not you do not say that is evil for it not to exist for there is nothing there to get a raw deal by not being created. There is a sense in which it is evil but we are on about the sense in which it is not.

The argument is nonsense. To say God can let evil happen for evil is merely good that is in the wrong place and not real, forgets that wrong has still happened and it is real wrong. It is insulting and cruel. It implies that God is evil and we should be blind to that evil and welcome it.

EVIL IS TRYING TO MAKE EVIL POWER

They say evil is a negative. If I desire to create evil for its own sake that desire is a power and it is real. It is not just the absence of goodness. Even if I cannot create evil for its own sake, I am succeeding in the sense that I am going as far as I can though perhaps not successfully in creating it.

Is not using good defectively far worse than creating what is evil in itself? Open evil is better than evil that looks good and distorts good. It cannot attract people or hide its true nature to do more harm in the long-term than crafty hidden evil would.

We know a person can have a totally evil intention. The power to intend may be good but the direction the intention is put in is a separate thing. It is not the same as the power to intend. You can use a good thing such as knife to do harm. But using a good thing does not mean that the harming is totally vile and totally evil. When you can't make something evil enough the fact remains that trying to is totally evil. That is because it is not your fault that you are unable to make it evil enough. It is not your fault that you are unable to make a good thing such as a knife totally evil. The evil is a negation thing definitely implies that evil people are not so bad!

The intention subject brings us back to God. If God has bad intentions or may do so, we have no right to use evil as being a distorted good for distracting from that. If God asks us to then he clearly does have bad intentions.

THE RISK

The argument that evil is not truly evil but a distortion is evil for it is about a person, God, who might not even exist. It is very seriously wrong to present such a serious claim that evil is our fault and not God's for there is a sense in which evil is not real and thus not created without being able to put the existence of God beyond any serious doubt. Belief in God is not enough to justify this. Belief is a necessary evil itself. It is something we have to make do with when we have no proof. Belief in God is an example of something that shouldn't be based on faith but on proof. It is odd to use something that is evil, such as belief, in order to excuse evil! It is hypocritical and hypocritical in the face of great evil and suffering is criminal. The argument that God makes no evil for evil is a lack, is evil for it doesn't care about how evil affects us. It may agree with Jesus who said we must be willing to give up everything even health and our very existence for God. But it is proof that those who link God and true humanitarianism are lying, mistaken or stupid.

OPPOSITE OF GOOD?

Fair implies the existence of unfair and vice versa. They are not opposites if one is unreal and the other is real. Religion wants you to say that unfair implies there is such a thing as fairness. That is because they want to say that evil implies there is a God who makes good good. But one depends on the other period. It cannot be that evil implies good but good does not imply evil.

OPPOSITE OF MORALITY

For Christians good is absolute which mean that evil is absolute as well. Why? Because if good is absolutely good then evil must be absolutely bad. Grey surely must be absolute too!

Evil is not a thing but a lack. It is nothing or less than nothing. It does not need anybody or anything to make it or create it. As it does not know what it is doing, only creatures that know what they are doing can direct and use it. So to define evil as a lack is to blame creatures for being behind it. It is to make that judgement without looking for proof or evidence. Thus it is inherently misanthropic and judgemental. It contradicts innocent until proven guilty which really means, "Get the damn evidence first!" It is proof that this theory of evil actually shows that God and morality oppose each other. Only the atheist has hope of being a good person in her or his core principle, in how she or he sees evil. Law and lawgiver - ie moral law and God the lawmaker - do not go together. They exclude each other.

BOTH BAD?

Is it bad to say evil is a power and also bad if you decide to say it is a lack of good instead? Believers say you are dangerous if you say it is a power. Those who say it could be a power say you are evil if you say it is not. We cannot say which side is bad. Only evil can say that! Only the truth can say it. So our role is to be undecided. It is definitely evil though the way religion does not help us see the choice and wants us to think the one way, that evil is not a force.

There are solid reasons for thinking you do not win either way. But that means we should know that and not be given only one option.

FINALLY

Evil is not just the absence of good. To say that it is, is just an attempt to minimise how bad evil is in our experience and to desensitise those who are horrified by it and cannot see how God could be involved in it even indirectly for it is so horrendously vile.

The argument supposes that from God's vantage point, the evil is really just inappropriate good and that is what matters. It does not matter that for us it is experienced as the opposite of good not its mere absence. When you are in terminal agony, telling yourself the suffering is good in the wrong place and time will only make you feel even worse and add guilt to your problems for you are blaspheming God.

Putting the experience of God before the experience of suffering that refutes the love of God is just a form of arrogant denial. It isn't logical.

The argument that evil is nothing but the absence of good does not help at all. It only worsens the problem of evil and the almighty God who can stop it but won't. It puts the problem beyond even the faintest hope of a solution. The problem then becomes not a problem but a catastrophe.

WORKS CONSULTED

- A HISTORY OF GOD, Karen Armstrong, Mandarin, London, 1994
A HISTORY OF PHILOSOPHY, VOL 6, PART II, KANT, Frederick Copleston SJ, Doubleday/Image, New York, 1964
A PATH FROM ROME, Anthony Kenny Sidgwick & Jackson, London, 1985
A SHATTERED VISAGE THE REAL FACE OF ATHEISM, Ravi Zacharias, Wolgemuth & Hyatt, Tennessee, 1990
A SUMMARY OF CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE, Louis Berkhof, The Banner of Truth Trust, London, 1971
AN INTELLIGENT PERSONS GUIDE TO CATHOLICISM, Alban McCoy, Continuum, London and New York, 1997
AN INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHICAL ANALYSIS, John Hospers, Routledge, London, 1992
APOLOGETICS AND CATHOLIC DOCTRINE, Part 1, Most Rev M Sheehan DD, MH Gill, & Son, Dublin, 1954
APOLOGETICS FOR THE PULPIT, Aloysius Roche, Burns Oates & Washbourne LTD, London, 1950
AQUINAS, FC Copleston, Penguin Books, London, 1991
ARGUING WITH GOD, Hugh Sylvester, IVP, London, 1971
ASKING THEM QUESTIONS, Various, Oxford University Press, London, 1936
BELIEVING IN GOD, PJ McGrath, Wolfhound Press, Dublin, 1995
BEYOND GOOD AND EVIL, Friedrich Nietzsche, Penguin, London, 1990
CITY OF GOD, St Augustine, Penguin Books, Middlesex, 1986
CONTROVERSY: THE HUMANIST CHRISTIAN ENCOUNTER, Hector Hawton, Pemberton Books, London, 1971
CRITIQUES OF GOD, Edited by Peter A Angeles, Prometheus Books, New York, 1995
DIALOGUES CONCERNING NATURAL RELIGION, David Hume, William Blackwood and Sons, Edinburgh and London, 1907
DOES GOD EXIST? Brian Davies OP, Catholic Truth Society, London, 1982
DOES GOD EXIST? Herbert W Armstrong, Worldwide Church of God, Pasadena, California, 1972
DOING AWAY WITH GOD? Russell Stannard, Marshall Pickering, London, 1993
EVIL AND THE GOD OF LOVE, John Hicks, Fontana, 1977
GOD AND EVIL, Brian Davies OP, Catholic Truth Society, London, 1984
GOD AND PHILOSOPHY, Antony Flew, Hutchinson, London, 1966
GOD AND THE HUMAN CONDITION, F J Sheed, Sheed & Ward, London 1967
GOD AND THE NEW PHYSICS, Paul Davies, Penguin Books, London, 1990
GOD AND THE PROBLEM OF SUFFERING, Philip St Romain, Liguori Publications, Illinois, 1986
GOD THE PROBLEM, Gordon D Kaufman, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1973
HANDBOOK OF CHRISTIAN APOLOGETICS, Peter Kreeft and Ronald Tacelli, Monarch, East Sussex, 1995
HISTORY OF PHILOSOPHY, VOL 2, Frederick Copleston SJ Westminster, Maryland, Newman, 1962
HONEST TO GOD, John AT Robinson, SCM Press, London, 1963
HUMAN NATURE DID GOD CREATE IT? Herbert W Armstrong, Worldwide Church of God, Pasadena, California, 1976
IN DEFENCE OF THE FAITH, Dave Hunt, Harvest House, Eugene Oregon, 1996
IN SEARCH OF CERTAINTY, John Guest Regal Books, Ventura, California, 1983
JESUS HYPOTHESES, V. Messori, St Paul Publications, Slough, 1977
NEW CATHOLIC ENCYCLOPEDIA, The Catholic University of America and the McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., Washington, District of Columbia, 1967
OCR Philosophy of Religion for AS and A2, Matthew Taylor, Editor Jon Mayled, Routledge, Oxon, New York, 2007
ON THE TRUTH OF THE CATHOLIC FAITH, BOOK ONE, GOD, St Thomas Aquinas, Image Doubleday and Co, New York, 1961
OXFORD DICTIONARY OF PHILOSOPHY, Simon Blackburn, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1996
PHILOSOPHY AND THE CHRISTIAN FAITH, Colin Brown, IVP, London, 1973
Philosophy of Religion for A Level, Anne Jordan, Neil Lockyer and Edwin Tate, Nelson Throne Ltd, Cheltenham, 2004
RADIO REPLIES, Vol 1, Frs Rumble and Carty, Radio Replies Press, St Paul, Minnesota, 1938
RADIO REPLIES, Vol 2, Frs Rumble and Carty, Radio Replies Press, St Paul, Minnesota, 1940
RADIO REPLIES, Vol 3, Frs Rumble and Carty, Radio Replies Press, St Paul, Minnesota, 1942
REASON AND RELIGION, Anthony Kenny, Basil Blackwell Ltd, Oxford, 1987
SALVIFICI DOLORIS, Pope John Paul II, Catholic Truth Society, London, 1984
SEX AND MARRIAGE – A CATHOLIC PERSPECTIVE, John M Hamroque CSSR, Liguori, Illinois, 1987
TAKING LEAVE OF GOD, Don Cupitt, SCM Press, London, 1980
THE CASE AGAINST GOD, Gerald Priestland, Collins, Fount Paperbacks, London, 1984
THE CASE FOR FAITH, Lee Strobel, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 2000

THE CONCEPT OF GOD, Ronald H Nash, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1983
THE HONEST TO GOD DEBATE Edited by David L Edwards, Westminster Press, Philadelphia, 1963
THE KINDNESS OF GOD, EJ Cuskelly MSC, Mercier Press, Cork, 1965
THE PROBLEM OF EVIL, CTS EXPLANATIONS, Fr M C D'Arcy SJ, Catholic Truth Society, London, 2008
THE PROBLEM OF PAIN, CS Lewis, Fontana, London, 1972
THE PROBLEM OF SUFFERING, Alan Hayward, Christadelphian ALS, Birmingham, undated
THE PUZZLE OF GOD, Peter Vardy, Collins, London, 1990
THE REALITY OF GOD AND THE PROBLEM OF EVIL, Brian Davies, Continuum, London-New York, 2006
THE RECONSTRUCTION OF BELIEF, Charles Gore DD, John Murray, London, 1930
THE TRUTH OF CHRISTIANITY, WH Turton, Wells Gardner, Darton & Co Ltd, London, 1905
UNBLIND FAITH, Michael J Langford, SCM, London, 1982
WHAT IS FAITH? Anthony Kenny, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1992
WHY DOES GOD ALLOW SUFFERING? LG Sargent, Christadelphian Publishing Office, Birmingham, undated
WHY DOES GOD ALLOW SUFFERING? Misc, Worldwide Church of God, Pasadena, California, 1985
WHY DOES GOD? Domenico Grasso, St Paul, Bucks, 1970
WHY WOULD A GOOD GOD ALLOW SUFFERING? Radio Bible Class, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1990

THE WEB

THE ARGUMENT FROM EVIL AND THE EXISTENCE OF GOD by Michael Tooley.
www.colorado.edu/philosophy/wes/Tooley2.html

FINITISM AND THE PROBLEM OF EVIL, R Dennis Potter,
<http://www.nd.edu/~rpotter/courses/finitism.htm>

THE FREE WILL ARGUMENT FOR THE NON-EXISTENCE OF GOD by Dan Barker
www.ffrf.org/fttoday/august97/barker.html

AUGUSTINE AND THE IMPOSSIBILITY OF MORAL ACTION
<http://www.minerva.mic.ul.ie/vol6/augustine.html>