

Editorial preface

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This volume gathers some excellent discussions of the perennial problem of evil. Most agree that this problem has inflicted a deep wound in the side of theistic belief. And even though this wound resists healing, inveterate theists insist that there is a balm in Gilead.

In the first article “The Normatively Relativized Logical Problem of Evil,” John Bishop and Ken Perszyk concede that the usual version of the logical argument from evil (the argument that the existence of evil is inconsistent with the existence of an Omni-God) is bankrupt. It was skeptical theists who dealt this death blow to the logical argument and made way for the current prominence of the evidential problem of evil. However, Bishop and Perszyk argue that an amended version of the logical argument, what they call the right relationship version, can be resurrected and be effective against a conception of a personal God without entailing atheism.

Supposing however that the problem of evil, however it is formulated, does imply atheism, Jason Megill proposes to defend theistic belief against such atheistic arguments with his version of what is called “the many universe response.” He claims that if there is a multiuniverse, and Megill thinks this might be the case, then we cannot know that God was not justified in creating ours. So we cannot know that the argument from evil is sound. Because we do not know this, it is rational to refuse to accept that such atheistic arguments from evil defeat theism.

The arguments from evil suggest that God could have created a better universe than ours, namely, one without evil, or at least one with less evil than exists in ours. But could God have created a better universe than the one he did create? In our third article, Dan Dennis argues that an affirmative answer here may not be obvious. Given the fine tuning that is required for life to emerge, and given the intention of the creator

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to make a universe fit for life to emerge, evolve and be sustained, God's options were limited to alternate kinds of universe that could have differed from ours only minutely. Given this, there is no good reason to think that God could have made a better one than ours.

One important reason that the theist is challenged by arguments from evil is that such arguments call into question whether or not the God of theism is worthy of our worship. Although our last article does not address the problem of evil directly, Wesley Cray tackles the problem of whether the God of theism is worthy of worship. This issue is raised by focusing on omniscience, one of those Omi- properties that have mired theism in the problem of evil. This is important and relevant to our discussions of evil, since the "free-will" defense, depends on the plausibility of the claim that God is at once omniscient and that human beings are free. If God does not grant us freedom then is this God worthy of our worship? Cray looks at some responses the theist may make to the question of whether an omniscient God could also be worthy of our worship.

A number of books reviewed address the issue of the problem of evil.