

[1971. Evil Argument. Christianity Today 21 May.]

Evil Argument

"The Problem of Evil" by Hupert P. Black (April 23) attacks a subject that should receive much more attention than it does ... Dr. Black is to be commended for writing on a subject many short-sighted Christians prefer to avoid. Nevertheless ... [his argument] is unacceptable because it contradicts Scripture.

The author tries to defend divine omnipotence. God can do anything but he limits himself by giving man freedom. Whatever small value this may have relative to omnipotence, it has no bearing on God's goodness. Can God be good if he grants man freedom, knowing ahead of time what terrible evils man will commit? If God were good, he would not have made such a man ...

Further, the appeal to freedom completely ignores the tragedies of earthquakes in California and Peru, tidal waves in East Pakistan, and the Black Death in medieval Europe. God can control nature, can't he? ... [But] the author contradicts the doctrine of creation ex nihilo in his statement, "God's power is not limited by natural events that thwart his will but is relative to actual occasions in the sense that they provide the conditions for the exercise of his creative power." This sentence not only makes God's acts of creation dependent on a prior existing nature, but also asserts that nature thwarts God's will. Apparently God cannot prevent tidal waves and earthquakes. The sentence quoted begins by saying that God's power is not limited, but it ends by nature thwarting God's power.

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