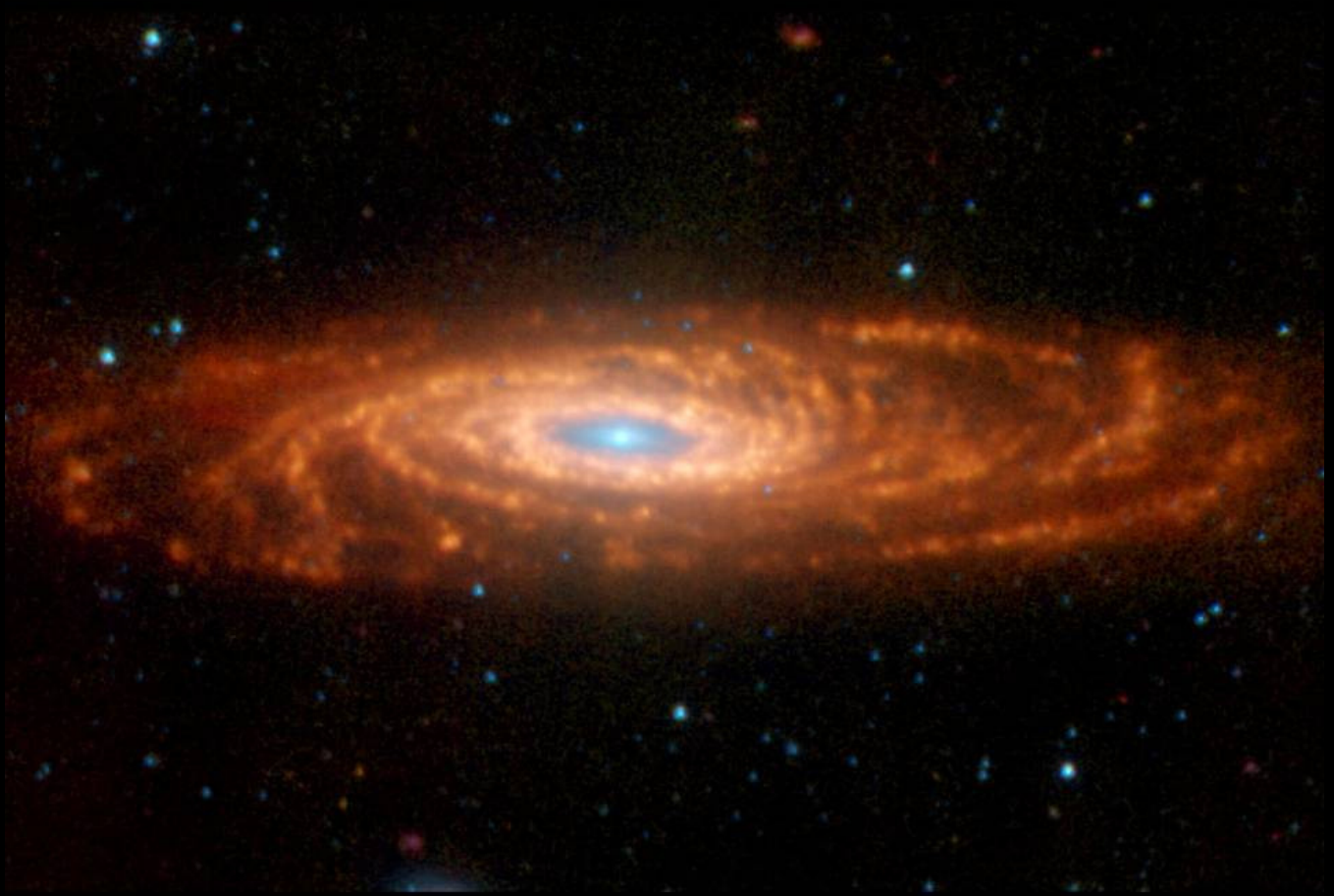


# THEODICY

THE ULTIMATE SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM OF EVIL



PERIANDER A. ESPLANA

**“... but Christ *is* all, and in all.”**  
**(Colossians 3:11)**

**“...that God may be all in all.”**  
**(1 Corinthians 15:28)**

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**THEODICY: THE ULTIMATE SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM OF EVIL**

Periander A. Esplana  
(5/5/10)

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## Introduction

Without doubt, good and evil exist. They are not beings, entities or things but they are real and not illusion. Goodness always exists but evil came into existence because of the corruption, privation and negation of that which is good [1].

Moral evil originated from the violation of goodness by created beings who have moral free choice. Physical evil originated from the curse on the physical world which is a natural consequence of moral evil.

All sin is evil but not all evil is sin. Calamities, adversities, misfortunes, and disasters are some of the physical or natural evils (troubles, suffering and death) inflicted as judgment for or because of man's spiritual or moral evils (sins, unrighteousness and iniquities).

In the following Theodic exploration [2], we will see that the problem of evil does not necessarily and inevitably lead to atheism but to a solidly Christian conclusion.

## Analogical Volition

In the beginning, the all-good God choose to create free-willed beings who can believe, love, worship, enjoy, and praise Him. He did not create them as cloned robots that will just automatically obey Him without any appreciation of His supreme perfection. Love, intimate worship and willful obedience are impossible to arise from animated neural automaton. The Lord has no pleasure in revealing Himself as the only all-good, all-powerful, all-knowing, all-encouraging, all-sovereign, all-present, all-loving, all-righteous, all-merciful, all-gracious, all-just, and all beautiful God to a machine-like entity with artificial intelligence and mechanical emotion.

God will not reveal Himself to and make personal relationship with creatures that cannot love and respond to love. He did not created them like puppets with no choice or desire. He chose to create them with the ability to obey, believe, worship, praise, and glorify Him in a very personal way. God created them with real freedom of choice to make real expression of love possible. The creation of such conscious relative freedom made possible the occurrence of true worship, real love, and wholehearted praise but it also made possible, if they so choose, willful insubordination. He created them with a capacity to communicate and have fellowship with Him but this capacity gave them also capability to disobey Him [3].

## Anti-dysteleological Cosmos

God knows all things. He is prepared enough to take the apparent risk of such bold expectation. He knows that at the end He will be justified and vindicated in all that He has done through His decretive and permissive will. All will give Him their humble adoration and heartfelt gratitude for His majestic, amazing, astonishing, magnificent, incredible, breathtaking, and astounding wisdom and power. From the infinite possibilities in front of Him, God always choose the best. He created *ex nihilo* all things outside of Himself and He created man in His image. This is the best of all possible means to achieve the best of all possible worlds in the end.

The world in God's eyes found its significance because of man who lives in it. Without man in view, the created earth would remain without form and void forever. Because of God's intention to create man, He has spoken and the world took its form and content from the harmonious interaction of goodness, truth and beauty. The created heaven and all its hosts will never be the same again because man was created as the crown of creation. The stars began to sing and the flowers began to dance in the melody of the music of the spheres because the most awaited of all creation had finally set his footprints on the red soil of the Garden of Eden. God created a woman of utmost beauty from one of his ribs to complete the cycle in a perfect triangular balance in which God is at the pinnacle. He blessed them with His glorious brightness as a natural covering of their nakedness in the sacred bond of matrimony.

He created man and woman to love, believe, worship, and praise Him. He want them to desire and enjoy His sublime presence. He designed the anthropic universe for their pleasure, comfort, happiness, and satisfaction. He blessed them with all His creation for all their needs. All these blessings will be always on them as long as they devote allegiance to His revelation of truth. There is a perfect harmony in heaven and on earth. God's law of love rules them all. Both the animate and inanimate creatures are one in serving God [4].

## Cherubimic Taxonomy

The animate creation can be divided into five different realms according to the faces of five cherubim. The face of lion symbolized the realm of forest creatures. The face of ox symbolized the realm of domesticated creatures. The face of eagle symbolized the realm of flying creatures. The face of serpent symbolized the realm of swarming, creeping and swimming creatures. And the face of man symbolized the realm of humanity that will take care of, subdue and govern all other four categories or divisions of creatures.

The four cherubim have each four faces of lion, ox, man, and eagle. There is only one cherub which have the face of a serpent (leviathan or dragon).

He was more subtil than any beast of the field because of his beauty and wisdom. God set him as the anointed covering cherub upon His holy mountain. The name of this artful cherub was Lucifer, son of the morning. He was perfect in his ways since he was created until iniquity arose from his heart of self-exaltation. His pride corrupted his wisdom and defiled his sanctuaries. He conspired rebellion with the third part of angelic beings. He became Satan [5].

### Transworld Depravity

In the Garden of Eden, Satan the old serpent put his blasphemous desire to become like the Most High into the heart of our first parents by tempting them to eat the forbidden fruit [6]. He deceived the woman to choose autonomy in the matter of good and evil. Because of dilemma, Adam self-consciously joined his wife in the dark labyrinth of disobedience. Both of them chose to deny God the honor as the only perfect source, absolute criterion, reference point, and ultimate standard of their knowledge. They consciously reject God's word as the final authority and cosmology in all their decision-making [7].

In spite of that tragic transition, God sought man where he was even though he and his wife were now hiding from God. God still loves them. On their admissions God based His righteous judgment. He cursed the serpent and was cast as a profane to the ground. Adam and his wife Eve were drove out of the edenic paradise. God did not cursed man himself but the ground for his sake. He clothed their nakedness, which was once enshrouded with light, by skin from a sacrificial lamb. He also promised a Saviour from the seed of the woman that would destroy the tempter, Satan the dragon, who is the father of lies. This proto-evangelium marked the all-out war between the Seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent.

### Theodic Vivification

Satan has tried to hinder the incarnation of God the Saviour with all his forces and devices but he failed. The Old Testament is the historical record of that cosmic war. In the New Testament, the death of the Anointed Saviour and Lord on the cross which Satan thought at first to be his ultimate victory was in fact the beginning of his ultimate defeat because Christ redeemed the sin of the world and resurrected in glory. All the redeemed sinners will be resurrected as saints with glorified body that goes beyond the bound of space-mass-time continuum. The consummation will come when Satan and his angels will be cast into the place which God had prepared for them: the lake of fire. In the end, Christ who is the way, the truth and the life will destroy the last enemy, the death itself, by swallowing it up in victory by Divine life toward the reconciliation of all things. An imperfect, immoral and temporal world was justly used by the sovereign God to achieve the perfect, sinless and deathless world [8].

In the final analysis, we can see that God actively decreed the existence of evil to be used for His eternal plan toward His glory. Since nothing can happen apart from God's will, wisdom and power, it is clear that He has the total control in the existence of evil from its entrance to its termination. His absolute sovereignty is our absolute certainty that evil, sin and death will be ultimately annihilated so that pure goodness, righteousness and life will exist only throughout eternity in the perfect new universe. Rebellion and the occurrence of evil, sin and death will never happen again because God will be all in all [9].

### Presuppositional Attestation

The so-called problem of evil as conceived by infidels is not an unsolvable problem at all when seen in the light of the above truth. Of course, this is a big problem only for ignorant infidels. They contend that because of the present existence of evil, either God want to destroy evil but He cannot destroy it or God can destroy evil but He do not want to destroy it. In either case, according to them, God cannot be both omnibenevolent (all-good) and omnipotent (all-powerful). Thus, they conclude, there is no God who is both all-good and all-powerful as the Bible described Him to be.

But as we have clearly seen, the infidels in this argument merely presupposed three false premises. First, they assumed that God's perfection disallowed the existence of evil. Second, they assumed that evil could be totally destroyed today without destroying the relative free will of man and the regularity of natural laws [10]. Third, they assumed that evil has not yet began to be defeated and will never be annihilated. These three false premises of infidels are rooted respectively in three basic errors. First, they wrongly conceive information about the origin of evil and sin. Second, they foolishly ignore the causal connection between evil and the freedom of man and the law of nature. Third, they blindly predict the ultimate phenomenon of evil in the future. Upon these three fundamental errors the infidels based their denial of God's existence.

Unknowingly, through this argument, they want to reject God by pretending themselves to be "God." First, by assuming that God's perfection disallowed the existence of evil, they posed themselves to be omnipresent. Why they believed that God was the direct cause of evil and sin? Were they in the garden of Eden where Lucifer and our first parents sinned? Can they see God in heaven and all men on earth in all that they do at all time in all places? Who commits evil and sin? Second, by assuming that evil can be totally destroyed today without destroying the relative free will of man and the law of nature, they posed themselves to be omnipotent. Why they believed that God could destroy any chance for moral and physical evils without destroying free choice and natural law? Are they more powerful than God Himself? Can they do things which are not doable even by an omnipotent being? Can they do things which



are logically contradictory and existentially impossible? Third, by assuming that evil has not yet begun to be defeated and that He will never annihilate it, they posed themselves to be omniscient. Why they believed that evil is undefeatable? Do they know what is in God's plan and what will happen in the future with absolute certainty? Do they know what is in the eternal purpose of God in Christ? In other words, those unbelieving ignoramuses by trying to disprove God they are posing themselves to be God! It would take God's absolute attributes to absolutely deny God's absolute existence. Ironically, atheistic arguments prove God's necessary existence.

### Chaotic Multiverses

Evil itself is not a problem at all if the Biblical God does not exist. It only became a problem to infidels because they assumed the Bible truth. If God does not exist, infidels have no adequate reason to consider pain, suffering, oppression, disasters, mischief, iniquities, terrorism, abominations, etc. as problems that needed to be solved. In fact, if the Bible is not true, they must have no problems at all. Abnormality is their only viable option.

If sovereign chance or karmic law governed all things, then Parmenides is right that "whatever is, is" and Heraclitus is right that "whatever is, is changing." Infidels' dream world is chaotic multiverses in parallel absurdity. But infidels still live because they inconsistently lived against their belief-system in the borrowed capital from Judeo-Christian system.

Infidels must not cry out for justice because they have no ultimate basis for any personal, rational or moral complaint. If there is no absolute standard of what is good and evil, then all infidels has no reason for preference of goodness and for his anger or outrage at evil. In the infidels' worldview: evil is an illusion, life is a dream, love is a game, reality is absurd, man is an animal, and truth does not exist. In other words, in the unbelieving viewpoint, infidels are mere irrational puppets directed by karmic chance in the hedonistic stage of life in which the plot is nihilistic determinism and the theme is schizophrenic anarchy. This is the problem of evil for infidels [11].

### Benevolent Supremacy

The problem of evil is indeed a big problem for infidels but there is still a big problem left for them to be solved. It is the problem of the good. Christians can account for the existence of good and evil but infidels can account neither. Christians have no problem in explaining good and evil but infidels have both the problem of explaining the good and the evil. Christians knows what is the origin and destiny of good and evil but infidels have no plausible idea at all. Christians know how to distinguish between good and evil but infidels are ignorant of their



nature. In short, the problem of evil is not the only problem for infidels; the problem of the good is also their real problem. They cannot make sense of the existence of good and evil. They have no solution beyond the arrogant stupidity supplied by their opinionated opinions.

This is Theodicy in a nutshell: the existence of the all-knowing, all-good and all-powerful God can be demonstrated by the existence of evil. God is just. He has a good purpose for evil and He will eventually annihilate it. God knows how to destroy evil because He is all-wise (omniscient). God can destroy evil because He is all-powerful (omnipotent). God will destroy evil because He is all-good and all-loving (omnibenevolent).

The perfect balance and symmetry of His goodness and holiness, wisdom and power, mercy and judgment, and grace and righteousness have temporally permitted the present existence of evil. All His divine activity is governed by His very essence: love. He will not just punish men into hell without giving them sufficient time to consider His gospel of love. He will not just destroy the world back into nothing without giving it sufficient demonstration of His love. The right to life of man and existence of the world is forfeited by sin and evil. All things deserved God's justice and wrath because of sin and evil but God continually showed us His mercy and grace [12].

Because God is all-good and all-wise, He gave us enough time and opportunity for repentance and faith. Because God is all-powerful, He preserved the world from its total destruction by man and by its self-annihilation. Thus, the present life of man and the existence of this world are clear expressions of God's absolute goodness, absolute wisdom and absolute power. When seen from this vantage viewpoint, the present existence of evil and of sin is a clear exhibition of God's love. Those who unrighteously blamed God for the existence of evil and sin have not thought and meditated deep enough to see this wonderful and amazing truth [13].

## Conclusion

As we have seen, God has a perfect plan in allowing evil to exist for a time before absolutely annihilating it. One thing is for sure, our awesome God will destroy all evil, sin and death. All will give thanks, praise and worship Him for all the things that He has done throughout eternity in heavenly bliss [14].

God's grace will free us all from the bondage of evil, sin and death. It is only because of the finished work of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ on the cross. He is the ultimate solution to the problem of evil. He is the Truth that set us all free. He alone is the Truth of truths that solves all our problems, answers all our questions and explains all our mysteries as expressed by the Bible formula [15].

## NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. “The point is that evil cannot exist in and of itself. It depends on the corruption of that which is good for its existence and power.” – R. C. Sproul, *Reason to Believe*, Grand Rapids: Lamplighter Books, 1981, pp. 127 – 128.

2. Epicurus, David Hume, Voltaire, John Stuart Mill, etc. have expressed the problem of evil in different ways. Many believed that the problem of evil is the toughest argument against the existence of a Christian God. Infidels believed that this is the weakest point of Christianity.

Alluding Epicurus, Hume concisely wrote: “Is God willing to prevent evil, but not able? Then is he impotent? Is he able, but not willing? Then is he malevolent? Is he both able and willing; whence then is evil?” (David Hume, *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*, ed. Henry D. Aiken, New York: Hafner, 1948, p. 66).

Theodicy is an apologetic attempt to answer this argument and to defend God as just with respect to evil. Theodicy came from two Greek words: “theos” which means God and “dikē” which means justice. It seek to justify or vindicate God against the present existence of evil. A book with this title was written by philosopher, mathematician and theologian Gottfried Leibniz.

3. Genesis chapters 1 – 3. Psalms chapters 8 and 104. Romans chapters 1 – 3.

4. “The biblical view is that when God originally created the cosmos it was a just system, good and perfect. We have innate moral feelings which demand that a child should not have to suffer unjustly, precisely because the universe is a moral system. But man’s free will means that he can break both natural laws as well as moral laws. When instead of choosing to love God, man and woman choose to disobey, their sin brought about an alienation between man and God, man and woman, man and nature, as well as self-alienation. After the fall, we came to live not in a normal universe, but an abnormal universe. It is still a moral cosmos, but the earth now grows ‘thorns and thistles.’ There is sorrow, sickness and death. The ‘inexplicable sufferings’ are part of the present and temporary abnormality of the cosmos which God will set right after the final judgment. This view implies that we have to accept neither the nihilist’s view that we live in an amoral universe of chance nor the determinist’s view that there is, despite all the evidence, a ‘just system’ of strict cause and effect.” – Vishal Mangalwadi, *When the New Age Gets Old: Looking for a Greater Spirituality*, Downer Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1992, pp. 193-194.

5. Ezekiel chapters 1, 10 and 28. Isaiah chapter 14. Revelation chapters 4 and 12.

6. Genesis chapter 3. Romans chapter 5. 2 Corinthians chapters 4 and 11. 1 Timothy chapters 2 and 3.

7. “Since God is the ultimate cause of everything in creation, each event has its particular meaning and purpose because God, the root of all truth, has established it within His overarching plan; consequently, there is no ultimate contingency. This foundational theology revealed in Genesis is, of course, in stark contrast to the pagan philosophies which contain a plurality of equally ultimate gods, men, and things, ruled over by ‘reified’ Chance.

Also, the Scripture speaks of God having created man ‘in His image,’ which includes an immaterial spiritual component; and that man was endowed with a rationality *derivative from and analogical to* God’s rationality. It is in this sense that man is the *imago Dei*; man’s rationality is a finite replica of God’s rationality.” - Dr. Phillip W. Dennis, “Probability and Quantum Mechanics: A Christian Theistic Interpretation,” in *Proceeding of the Fourth International Conference on Creationism (ICC), Technical Symposium Sessions*, ed. Robert E. Walsh, Pittsburg: Creation Science Fellowship, Inc., 1998, p. 168.

“Now the knowledge of good and evil, though forbidden to Adam, is not wrong itself. Without it however, Adam is in a sense limited in that he cannot decide for himself on moral issues. Judgment of right and wrong resides not in him but in God, and Adam’s only course when faced with any question is to refer it to Jehovah God. Thus you have a life in the garden which is totally dependent on God.” – Watchman Nee, *The Normal Christian Life*, Eastbourne: Kingsway Publications, 1961, p. 77.

“The ultimate question and the first question (Gen.3) is Who is the authority – God and His word or man and his ideas?” – G. A. Riplinger, *Blind Guides*, Ararat: A.V. Publications, p. 49.

8. Isaiah chapters 65 and 66. Romans chapter 8. 1 Corinthians chapter 15. Philippians chapter 2. Revelation chapters 19 – 21. Colossians chapter 1.

“A sinless heaven is better than an evil earth, but there was no way for God to achieve a sinless heaven unless He created beings who would sin and did sin in order that out of their sin He could produce the best world where beings could sin but would not sin. An imperfect moral world is the necessary precondition for achieving the morally perfect world.” – Norman Geisler, *Philosophy of Religion*, Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1974, p.326.

9. “I believe with all my heart that the biblical teaching of God’s sovereignty over Satan is the greatest answer in the world when the very meaning of life is threatened by the horrors and tragedies of death and disease. It is the answer of Scripture and it is true and full of hope.” – John Piper, *The Pleasure of God*, Oregon: Multnomah Press, 1991, p. 63.

10. "Picture what would happen to the poor atheist if God took away free will. What, for example, would atheist Madalyn O'Hair say if, when she opened her atheistic mouth to speak against God, He would fill it with cotton? Or, if everytime she even started to think an atheistic thought, God would give her an Excedrin headache? Certainly, she would protest (if only she could) that these were unjust invasions of her right to free thought and free speech!" – Norman Geisler, *False Gods of Our Time*, Eugene: Harvest House Publishers, 1985, p. 57.

11. "In a godless universe, what one 'animal' does to another 'animal' is ethically irrelevant, and there is no moral basis for anger or outrage against anything. Whatever happens happens, and that is all there is to it." – John Blanchard, *Does God Believe in Atheist?*, p. 521.

12. "God is neither responsible nor sinful, even though He is the only ultimate cause of everything. He is not sinful because in the first place whatever God does is just and right. It is just and right simply in virtue of the fact that He does it. Justice or righteousness is not a standard external to God to which God is obligated to submit. Righteousness is what God does." – Gordon H. Clark, *God and Evil*, Hobbs: The Trinity Foundation, 1996, p. 53.

"All else may change, but He changes not. God's throne and rule over all things is thoroughly opposed to what men call chance or blind fate. Everything may fluctuate, men and times may grow harder and more difficult, but God still remains in charge of the situation." – Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., *A Biblical Approach to Personal Suffering*, Chicago: Moody Press, 1982, p.112.

13 One example of this skeptical revolt was made by Voltaire when in 1755 at Lisbon 30,000 people had been killed under church buildings and houses because of a great earthquake. He asked why God allowed such disaster. He blamed God for that evil. This merely proved that he never read the Bible. The same event and question had already been recorded in the Bible. Read Luke 13:1-5. The simple answer of Jesus to such question is: "...except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." Commenting on these passages, R.C. Sproul brilliantly wrote: "What an answer! What is Jesus saying here? I think that what He is saying is that these people were asking the wrong question. The question they should have asked is not 'Why did God allow these innocent people to die by having a tower fall on their heads?' Rather, the question they should have asked is: 'Jesus why didn't the tower fall on me?' We are puzzled and bewildered whenever we see suffering in this world because we have become accustomed to the mercy and the long-suffering of God. Amazing grace is no longer amazing to us. So our astonishment is in the wrong place. The real question is: Why has God not destroyed us all since we got out of our beds this morning? Why does

He tolerate us as we do our work of sin and destruction upon His planet?” (R. C. Sproul, Reason to Believe, Grand Rapids: Lamplighter Books, 1981, p. )

Ultimately speaking, there is no man who was born “innocent” in this world. Everytime all men violated God’s two greatest commandments (Matt.22:36-40), thus all men are always committing two greatest sins. Even a newborn baby has an inherent sin and corruption dwelling in his heart, the mortogenic factor, ready to be uncovered and exploded as he grows old (Psa. 51:5; Eph.2:1-3; Rom.5:12). Only Jesus is the true innocent who walked on this earth (1 Pet. 1:19; 2:22; 1 Jn.3:5; 2 Cor. 5:2; Heb. 4:15; 7:26; 9:14; Lk.23:4, 14, 22, 41, 47; Matt. 27:4, 41) and every man who believed in Him (Rom.4:23-25; 5:1-2; 6:23; 8:1; Eph.1:7; Tit.2:13-14; 3:4, 7; 1 Jn.2:12). But God allowed the suffering and death of Jesus in order to save us and to impute His righteousness upon us (Rom.10). For Christians, evil and suffering can be used by God for good (Rom.8:28) to bring about positive result to an individual like in the life of Richard Wurmbrand as William Kilpatrick concluded: “The real test of a theory or way of life, however, is not whether it can relieve pain but what it says about the pain it cannot relieve. And this is where, I believe, psychology let us down and Christianity supports us, for in psychology suffering has no meaning, while in Christianity it has great meaning.” (William Kirk Kilpatrick, Psychological Seduction, Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1983, p. 181). Evil and suffering are not illusions, they are real, and the God who is all-good and all-powerful can turn both evil and suffering into the goodness and benefit of mankind and of the universe. God must not be blamed for the existence of evil and suffering because He is doing everything to defeat, destroy, terminate, and annihilate them for all of us.

14. “This is the soul’s end – blessing beyond which no better can be imagined or conceived: an infinite, eternal, mutual, holy energy of love and pleasure between God the Father and God the Son flowing out in the Person of God the Spirit, and filling the souls of the redeemed with immeasurable and everlasting joy.” – John Piper, The Pleasure of God, Oregon: Multnomah Press, 1991, pp. 277-278.

15. “Christ endured a suffering beyond all understanding: he bore the punishment for the sins of the whole world. None of us can comprehend that suffering. Though He was innocent, He voluntarily underwent incomprehensible suffering for us. And why? - Because He loves us so much. How can we reject him who gave up everything for us? When we comprehend his sacrifice and his love for us, this puts the problem of evil in an entirely different perspective. For now we see clearly that the true problem of evil is the problem of *our* evil. Filled with sin and morally guilty before God, the question we face is not how God can justify Himself to us, but how we can be justified before Him. When God asks us to undergo suffering that seems unmerited, pointless, and unnecessary, meditation upon the cross of Christ can help to give us the moral strength and courage needed to bear the cross that we are asked to carry. So, paradoxically, even though the problem of evil is the greatest objection to the existence of God,

at the end of the day God is the only solution to the problem of evil. If God does not exist, then we are locked without hope in a world filled with gratuitous and unredeemed suffering. God is the final answer to the problem of evil, for He redeems us from evil and takes us into the everlasting joy of an incommensurable good, fellowship with Himself.” - Dr. William Lane Craig  
Source: <http://www.bethinking.org/resources/the-problem-of-evil.htm>

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