

THEODICY: A CRITIQUE AND A PROPOSAL

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Synopsis

This thesis explores possibilities that arise from regarding theodicy as the activity of descriptive understanding of Christian belief and practice as found in the classical theistic framework.

First, any theodicy as an activity is analysed in terms of the role of philosophy, the place of epistemology, the basis of theology, and the taking of an apologetic stance. It is then argued that traditional approaches to theodicy suffer from methodological weaknesses which derive from formulating theodicy in terms of unbelief, and from strictly theoretical analysis. The superiority of philosophical description is argued as better suited to understanding religious belief as held in the community of believers, with especial reference to relationships that hold between language and reality. A critical exploration follows of the approach to theodicy of a proponent of philosophical description, D.Z. Phillips, and consideration is given to the status of evaluations made by believers.

In the light of this critique, two attempts are made to describe the shape of Christian theodicy using the interperson model of theological language. The first attempt, based on a description of actual interpersonal relationships, is found eventually to be open to serious objections. A second attempt is then made, based not only on interpersonal language, but using a distinction between "surface" and "depth" in religious language, and by arguing for the presence of an epistemological "direction" in religious belief. On this basis, a Theodicy of Dependence is developed as best describing the shape of Christian belief held in a world which is frequently hostile.

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Introduction and Section One

Introduction

1. It is possible to understand the task of theodicy in narrower or broader terms. More narrowly, the interests and intentions of the theodacist may be set out by using such phrases as "to justify the ways of God", "to vindicate the goodness and justice of God", "to make God's omnipotence and omnibenevolence compatible with the existence of evil", "to defend the belief that this is the best of all possible worlds".¹ There is a common strand in narrower theodicy, however it is put, in that there is an assumption someone needs to be convinced one way or the other about God in the face of evil.

2. Recent discussion in theodicy has led S.T. Davis to propose that the word "theodicy" should be used in a broader way: that theodicy is "any response to the problem of evil from the perspective of Judeo-Christian religious belief".² He suggests this wider use because of the variety of approaches now in evidence in theodical writing - such variety being not just stylistic, but reflecting deeper methodological and substantive differences. But even so, and granting that theodicy now takes in writers from the process, existentialist, and analytical traditions of philosophy, and from a wide range of theological commitments, Davis' book Encountering Evil: Live Options in Theodicy³, which brings such various thinkers together in debate, still has the background assumption that someone needs to be convinced one way or the other about God in the face of evil.

This thesis is set within the broader conception of what might constitute a valid form of theodical writing, but it sets on one side as an interest and intention the assumption that theodicy is an argument between believers and unbelievers in

which each is seeking to defend his position or convince the other. That is not to say certain of the arguments made in this thesis could not be set within that different context, but, if they were, that would be because protagonists use whatever is to hand. My interest is in what it means for an adoring worshipper to offer his worship to God in a frequently hostile world. My intention is to lay out the discussion by seeking a descriptive understanding of the shape of such practised belief.

But in a different sense this thesis has a narrower brief. Attention is focussed on those worshippers whose beliefs are set out within the context of classical Christian theism.

3. What would constitute success within broader theodical activity? Clearly not, in this thesis, the power of the argument to convince people they should move from belief to unbelief, or from unbelief to belief. Indeed, in laying out an understanding of the shape of practised belief descriptively, it may be that the unbeliever is confirmed in his position and the believer in his at the same time. But what that result would indicate is that perhaps belief and unbelief are not based on the power of argument, but on religious judgement and commitment. Philosophical description is not intended to, nor can it, operate as that which tells anyone whether they should or should not believe. Its task is to set out what the shape of belief/unbelief is, if one believes/does not believe. The descriptive philosopher is neither protagonist, nor preacher.

4. It might be objected that what is proposed is an unacceptable modification of the notion of "theodicy". Theodicy, in that it is a word made up from the words "theos" and "dike"⁴, must be an activity concerned with the narrower, as well as the

broader, task. My reply is that if gains in understanding of the nature of belief can be attained by the methodological procedure of setting on one side the need to vindicate or defend, then those gains in themselves are sufficient reasons for exploring such an approach. It is not necessary for this thesis to go beyond this methodological stance to make the exploration worth the attempt. But, in course of argument, a rather stronger case is made - that in fact this methodology is peculiarly appropriate to understanding what it is believers are saying.

5. But, it might be objected immediately, this view of philosophy as descriptive understanding is unacceptable in principle, for philosophy has to do with the exposure of error, not its descriptive understanding - one cannot understand that which is an error. One cannot assume, therefore, ahead of determining the coherence of the beliefs of the believer, that those beliefs can be understood. Indeed, attempting to describe those beliefs may itself show they cannot be described, because they are incoherent.

The problem here concerns what the tests of coherence are this objector has in mind. Perhaps part of the descriptive task in relation to a long-standing and persistent practised belief system is to seek to understand what the internal criteria of rationality are that enable it to be long-standing and persistent? That "perhaps" is a possibility worth exploring. Ahead, then, of an accurate philosophical description of the shape of persisting belief in God held in a world that contains evil, perhaps one does not know what the criteria are by which to judge it coherent or not? Philosophical imperialism needs to be resisted here. What is possible in philosophy does not depend

on legislation on what philosophy must be, but on whether the kind of philosophy practised yields insights of a worthwhile kind regarding that examined.

6. But is it being claimed that if a coherent account of belief can be given in the terms proposed, that that belief is thereby shown to be "true" - and does not such an account come after all to the same thing as justifying the belief in question? Not at all. All that would be implied is that the belief could be "true", that is, there are no reasons internal to the structure of that belief which make it "untrue" because incoherent.⁵ Whether what is "possible" is "plausible" is not of interest in descriptive philosophy.⁶

7.a) Traditional theodicy has, of course, seen itself as concerned in varying ways with settling a question of "truth". The debate has been at bottom about not just whether it is possible that belief in God could be a true belief in the light of the fact of evil, but whether it is plausible. This debate is based on a confusion. The confusion concerns whose problem it is as to whether belief in God is plausible belief. Although the question of God's existence might well be the concern of the unbeliever, it cannot properly be the concern of the believer, for the believer is someone for whom God is the reality whom he worships, this worship being within a community and a tradition.⁷ Internal to this worshipful belief is that, for the believer, God is real quite as surely as evil is a reality. The believer's proper problem is, therefore, how God and evil relate together.⁸ This thesis is interested primarily in this problem. The unbeliever, be he atheist or agnostic, however, only has in this context the fundamental presupposition that evil is a reality. His "problem" is whether or not to accept as a further pre-

supposition the believer's claim concerning the reality of God. The unbeliever might well wish to test belief in the reality of God. That desire to "test" belief in the reality of God cannot be the interest or intention of the believer, for he is concerned to express his belief. Now in expressing his belief, in the context of worship, the believer will use certain tests for what is and what is not appropriate in his form of understanding. But these tests are internal to belief, and are a way of achieving coherence. When, therefore, the descriptive theodacist seeks to understand the shape of belief he will need to set out what the tests are through which the rationality of belief is maintained. This descriptive task is not at all the same as externally applying tests as to whether those beliefs are "plausible".

b) It might be objected that there are many believers for whom considerable doubts are raised by evil in relation to their belief in God, indeed contrary to what has just been said, that this pressure to doubt God's existence is precisely the believer's problem. To answer this point an argument is developed in section four which seeks to show why believers find force in a question that is not rightly theirs.

c) It might also be objected that in any case my argument involves a triviality, namely, that believers in God believe in God. But trivialities can express important points. The important point here is the place God has in the believer's structure of thought. My argument is that important, and not trivial, insights into theodicy become possible when it is accepted that "God", as the presiding concept in Christian belief, is unshakeable in the Christian form of life.⁹

8. The ways in which traditional writing on theodicy has approached the task of vindicating God to the unbeliever have been varied. There are those who have argued that such theodicy is:

not possible at all, as a matter of fact¹⁰

not possible at all, as a matter of logic¹¹

possible in principle, but not possible in fact¹²

possible in principle, and in fact¹³

possible in principle, and in fact, but not
desirable¹⁴

not possible in principle, but possible in fact.¹⁵

Where these approaches seek to vindicate God they usually build on a common platform, that the way things go in the world is causally related directly or indirectly to the will of God, and that it is possible to make inferences from the world to God. In opposition to these points, it is argued religious belief does not proceed from the world to God, but conversely, from God to the world - and, even then, not on the basis of inference.

9. The thesis is organised as follows:

Section One seeks to understand what factors constitute theodicy as an activity. This discussion is set out, not in terms of tasks or goals, but by considering inputs to theodicy from philosophy, theology, epistemology, and apologetic. How theodicy proceeds as an activity depends on decisions in each of these regards.

Section Two considers what are argued to be false moves in theodicy, and lessons are drawn from these false moves for the task of engaging in theodicy as the descriptive understanding of the believer's proper problem. An underlying problem

is identified in philosophical method which treats religious belief on the basis of strictly theoretical analysis.

Section Three critically examines a theodical position - that of D.Z. Phillips - which specifically aims to use a methodology designed to open up the structures of religious belief in its own terms.

Section Four attempts, in the light of previous discussion, to find in what terms a description may be made of the structures of thought held by believers when they use the interpersonal language of classical theism in worship. How do Christian believers, as worshippers, hold together as mutually compatible the realities for them of both God and evil?

Section One: Theodicy as an Activity

1. First, how does philosophy contribute to theodicy?

a) The present century has seen the rise to dominance in English philosophy of the view that philosophy is an analytical activity, not a synthetic one.¹⁶ This view has also been associated with the claim that what is to be analysed is ordinary-language, and that criteria of meaning applicable in ordinary-language have generalised significance. Clarification of concepts, exposure of category errors, dispelling the bewitchment of language, and so on, are the proper and only concerns of the philosopher. As far as theodicy is concerned, much recent writing has been of this type, with particular attention to such concepts as "Omnipotence", "Freewill", and "Evil". The centre of interest in this approach is the question of what it makes sense to say in ordinary-language terms.

A paradigm example of theodicy as a philosophical activity of this kind is M.B. Ahern's The Problem of Evil.¹⁷ Its sole interest is in the threefold theodical terms "God", "Evil", and "Goodness", and whether it makes sense, given the criteria of meaning for ordinary-language, to say them, and to say them together.

b) Other theodicists are still, however, influenced by an older view of the nature of philosophy which sees the philosophical task as not merely clarificatory, but also as being synthetic. These theodicists would claim the problem of evil only arises at the point where the logicians finish. If, as Ahern and Plantinga claim, the logical disproof of God's existence does not, or cannot, succeed, how, in the context of the given world view (Christianity), and on the basis of a

coherent epistemology, can an account be offered of God's dealings with men? Such writers see it as a proper philosophical task to attempt to construct a comprehensive theodicy. In addition to the preliminary need for clarity they look for a further coherence, that of a system of thought. To achieve this further coherence, such theodacists need a given world view and a specific epistemological theory, for the view and the theory set respectively the limits of what it is that is to be discussed, and the legitimacy of the discussion.¹⁸

Outstanding examples of such theodicies are those by J. Hick in Evil and the God of Love¹⁹, and A. Farrer in Love Almighty and Ills Unlimited.²⁰ Both of these writers have elsewhere than in these theodicies made clear their philosophical commitments and their world-views, and these theodicies are their resulting attempts at constructive writing in philosophy regarding the problem of evil.

c) Another view of the nature of philosophy is to be found in the writings of "later Wittgensteinian" philosophers. The emphasis is still on clarity, but the clarity thought to be possible is that which derives from describing the use of words in known contexts.²¹ The interest shifts to philosophical understanding, those understandings having to do with all the extra-linguistic activities that surround the use of words within life-situations. In the case of theodicy, therefore, the emphasis would be on describing what words mean as used in the given total context; for example, how the word "omnipotence" functions in the community of Christian belief. There are, on this view, no generally transferrable or normative criteria of meaning known apart from the given context of use. No one form of language-use can be exalted as the test of meaning for all

others.

The predominant application to theodicy of this understanding of philosophy is found in the writings of D.Z. Phillips, especially in The Concept of Prayer.²² But generally there has been little direct consideration of theodicy using this view of philosophy.

This thesis is written from a position not unsympathetic to this third approach, but which is nevertheless critical of some of the uses to which descriptive philosophy has been put in the philosophy of religion. The question is explored as to whether the method of descriptive understanding can be successfully detached from the kinds of epistemological theory sometimes associated with it.

2. Secondly, what is the contribution theology makes to theodicy?

a) The inescapability of the theological element in theodicy is commented on by Hick. One of the lessons he draws from his historical survey of theodical writing is that there has been continual interaction between theodicy and theology. The alternative "Augustinian" and "Irenaean" ways of thinking about God and evil are, Hick argues, connected with alternative ways of thinking about several other topics, such as the fall of man, the nature of sin, providence, redemption, predestination, heaven and hell.²³ I would prefer to phrase this somewhat differently from Hick, and say theodicy is the result of the interaction of philosophy and theology in a given area, rather than saying theodicy itself interacts with theology, but the main point stands.

b) But in what form does theology enter into theodicy? One of my complaints against much writing by analytical theodic-

ists is that the theology entertained is highly truncated,²⁴ and comprises a short set of theodical terms - omnipotence, omnibenevolence, God, evil, freewill, and a very few more. But theology cannot be truncated in this way without distortion,²⁵ for the meanings of such terms do not lie in themselves alone, but in the network of surrounding terms such as forgiveness, grace, hope, Holy Spirit, and heaven. It is striking that in much discussion the very words which link common theodical vocabulary to the believer's awareness of the love of God in Christ, and which qualify that vocabulary, are given little or no place.

c) In the light of the point just made, one is led to raise the wider consideration as to the relationship between theology and Christian experience. It seems to be assumed by many writers that the Christian faith stands, or falls, with the successful defence, or otherwise, of a few given doctrines. Now, whilst it must be the case that there is a definite relationship between Christian experience and Christian theology, and that to some extent this relationship will be dialectical in operation,²⁶ I would argue that the Christian experience is what the believer has primary reference to within the dialectic, not any particular theological doctrines. In this way Hick, for example, speaks of Christian theology as "the attempts by Christian thinkers to speak systematically about God on the basis of the data provided by Christian experience", and instances Christological theories and atonement theories as respectively relating to the "faith-experience that 'God was in Christ'", and to the "basic fact of faith that in Christ God was 'reconciling the world unto Himself'". He remarks that "The other departments of Christian doctrine stand in a similar

relationship to the primary data of Christian experience."²⁷ The call by the Christian community, then, to those who would know God, is fundamentally the call to experience salvation in Christ, not fundamentally to assent to a creed. In the context of theodicy it is important, therefore, to resist the intellectualisation of Christianity into a theoretical system of ideas.²⁸

The links between experience and theology are well spelt out also by Phillips (though it is not suggested for the same reasons as Hick):

systematic theology is a sophistication of that theology which is necessarily present in so far as religious language is present. The theological system is often constructed to answer certain questions and problems which may arise. But the foundation of a theological system is based on the non-formalised theology which is within the religious way of life carried on by the person who is constructing the theological system. In so far as this is true, theology is personal, since it is based on one's own experience of God. Where the connection between theology and experience is missing, there is a danger of theology becoming an academic game.²⁹

My interest is, therefore, in what it means in the widest sense for the Christian community to experience the all-goodness and all-powerfulness and all-lovingness of God, and to seek to talk about it.³⁰

d) It might be objected that this project involves the theodacist in a hopeless task, for everyone's experience is different and, therefore, one would need as many theodicies as there are believers. And further, does not this approach to theology amount to recognising an inability on the part of the believer to express himself and his experience clearly, and in a way open to public test? No; for there are indeed very public tests as to whether an experience is Christian. What counts as Christian experience is determined within an historic and

communal tradition. The experiences referred to are those recognised by that community of believers as significant and authentic. What counts as forgiveness, for example, is well known in the tradition, and does not depend on its being accurately defined in doctrine, or on the individual believer's ability to give an account of it.³¹

e) Theology is, thus, essential to theodicy, for it provides the community's belief in words - but the reservation needs to be made that theology is at best the attempt by the community to encapsulate an experience. The question is, of any theological term, then, what role it plays in the context of practised belief.

3. Thirdly, what contribution does epistemological theory make to theodicy? It has already been indicated that epistemological theory is one of two factors necessary to "constructive" theodicy. The extent of this importance is now assessed, but only part of the case concerning epistemology is presented here, for the place of epistemology in relation to Phillips' thought is handled in a different context.³² Comment at this point is restricted to illustrating the formative role of epistemology in two major theodicians, by way of exemplars. Firstly, Leibniz, in the rationalist tradition. Secondly Hick, in the empiricist tradition.

a) Leibniz begins Theodicy, Essays on the Goodness of God, the Freedom of Man, and the Origin of Evil³³ by first declaring his views on the correct relationship between faith and reason. He writes:

I begin with the preliminary question of the conformity of faith with reason, and the use of philosophy in theology, because it has much influence on the main subject of my treatise, and because M. Bayle introduces it everywhere.

I assume that two truths cannot contradict each other ...³⁴

And at the beginning of his first essay proper on theodicy, he writes:

Having so settled the rights of faith and of reason as rather to place reason at the service of faith than in opposition to it, we shall see how they exercise these rights to support and harmonize what the light of nature and the light of revelation teach us of God and of man in relation to evil.³⁵ (My underlining)

Leibniz had no doubt at all, then, that both in his own writing and in the writing of Bayle what determined the possibilities of the shape of their theodicies was the epistemological theory that underwrote each of them. To counter Bayle's theodical views there was, Leibniz saw, a need to change the basis of argument. But what is the effect of this frank confession? Is it not that theodicies prove, as a consequence, to be more illuminating as to their author's epistemological options than revealing as to whether God, in a simple way, can be "justified"? Does the all-goodness and all-powerfulness of God turn on the adoption of an epistemological theory? My argument is eventually that this question is too simplistic, and epistemology has a proper place in theodicy if that epistemology is internally related to the nature of worship; but this argument must be made in its own turn.³⁶ The present point is that the weapon turned on Bayle by Leibniz is a weapon that backfires. Leibniz' theodicy also, and in turn, and equally with Bayle's, is an example of epistemology "exercising its rights". Consequently, by attaching theodicy to the controversial rationalist doctrine,³⁷ the justice of God is made to turn on the success of that doctrine. That procedure does not seem to be very satisfactory, for then only the rationalist could claim to be able to defend

God's justice. Must believers become rationalists to know God is good?

There is a different point to be made also, and it concerns the temporal priority of the epistemological doctrine over the theodicy. Leibniz, linking together "truths" whereto the human mind could attain naturally without being aided by the light of faith, developed his notion of pre-established harmony, a notion which under-girds his theodicy. But, as Farrer comments,³⁸ once Leibniz had this notion he was the man of a doctrine, a man with an idea, with a philosophical nostrum, a man who carried his new torch into every corner, to illuminate dark questions. Farrer also observes that the reflective historian will suspect that the applications were in view from the start. And that is the rub. Leibniz is judge, advocate, and jury in the one court. He lays down the rules, advances the case, declares it proven - all on the basis of a nostrum whose validity needs demonstrating, not illustrating.

Leibniz' Theodicy is, thus, a very extended corollary to his epistemology. Coherence has been achieved, but at a high price. His theodicy may even be indefeasible, given his rules. But those rules he knows intuitively. Theodicy along Leibniz' road is ultimately intuition. Epistemological intuition.

b) Do the same kinds of point hold in relation to Hick's Evil and the God of Love? I think they do. Hick's epistemological thesis, Faith and Knowledge,³⁹ was a long maturing set of ideas concerning faith as interpretation, as the interpretative element in religious experience, as "experiencing-as".⁴⁰ Now, in the Preface to the 1974 edition of Faith and Knowledge Hick makes the connection between these two books clear:

This approach to the epistemology of religious faith still seems to me to be basically right; and I have built upon it in trying to grapple with the problem of evil in Evil and the God of Love.⁴¹

There is, therefore, the same kind of logical and temporal connection between epistemology and theodicy as there is in Leibniz. And with the same effects. It might be objected that this contention is not altogether fair to Hick in that his epistemology is not simply the application of a philosophical idea, but an attempt to offer an analysis of religious experience in epistemological terms. Thus, it might be said, there is a natural, unforced, and internal connection between his epistemology and theodicy. What then does one make of Hick's comment:

This analysis of religious faith as interpretation is not itself a religious, or an anti-religious, but an epistemological doctrine ... It therefore now remains to show how this view of faith might be integrated into the theistic and antitheistic world views respectively?⁴²

It seems clear from this quote that Hick's epistemology is a freestanding thesis, and that his theodicy is a corollary which stands or falls with it. Indeed, in Hick's case, the identity of theodical thesis and epistemological thesis is remarkable. His thesis is presentable thus:

"human freedom vis-à-vis God presupposes an initial separateness and a consequent degree of independence on man's part." "God must set man at a distance from Himself, from which he can then voluntarily come to God." "The kind of distance between God and man that would make room for a degree of human autonomy is epistemic distance." "The world must be to man, to some extent at least, etsi deus non daretur." "God ... must be knowable, but only by a mode of knowledge that involves a free personal response on man's part, this response consisting in an uncompelled interpretative activity." "Given this willingness (which is the volitional element in religious faith), we become able to recognise all around us the signs of a divine presence and activity."⁴³

I say "thesis", unqualified, because the above is an account equally of Hick's epistemological and theodical theses. The primacy of epistemology, and the derivativeness of the theodicy, is apparent. And one suspects that Farrer's point about a man with a doctrine is also appropriate, and can perhaps be illustrated from the historical typology that underlies Hick's theodicy and in which he identifies two major theodical strands in Christian thought, and argues in favour of the one that fits his epistemology - the test being that that epistemology is right, as the first quote above shows.

Now Hick's theodicy is meant to be explanatory as to the presence of evil in this world, and offers many keen insights into theodical problems. But can the underlying thesis actually bear the weight he puts on it? Firstly, "Epistemic distance" may necessitate finitude, but does finitude require, as a matter of logic or a matter of fact, "sin"? Thus, Hick claims that man's evolution from lower forms of life meant that man's attention was monopolised by the problems of physical survival - and that this "initial situation produces the self-centred point of view and self-regarding outlook from which human sinfulness in its many forms has arisen."⁴⁴ But is it impossible to imagine it might have been otherwise, and that adversity from the beginning led men to seek cooperation amongst themselves - and even with God? Secondly, "Freedom" is a highly complex notion, and Hick provides some account of the difficulties associated with it⁴⁵ - but when he advances as part of his theodicy his account of freedom as "limited creativity"⁴⁶ he has to admit his definition derives from the needs of his epistemological thesis. Thus:

Some such concept of freedom seems to be a necessary postulate of the Christian view of the relation between man and God. The primary point at which it is required is that at which man in his freedom is willing or unwilling to become aware of God. For it is man's cognitive freedom in relation to his Creator that must be insisted upon. And the concept of freedom as creativity would make it possible to speak of God as endowing His creatures with a genuine though limited autonomy.⁴⁷

But, thirdly, there is a deeper point, too, (one which affects all theodicies which seek a "solution" by use of the notion of freewill). Should theodicy, in any case, be attached to the success of a free-will doctrine at all? "Freewill" is itself a problematic notion in philosophy, and indeed rejected by some major thinkers in the Christian tradition. Should not theodicy be based on what is essential and irremovable from Christian belief? But moving on to Hick's other points, neither does there seem to be any need for evil as a necessary condition of our attaching religious significance to life-experiences, or indeed of our relating to God on the basis of personality. Only in the case of religious ambiguity does evil seem to be required in relation to his thesis. The world as we know it, taken as a whole, does present in its good and evil faces a genuine religious ambiguity. But as this ambiguity is susceptible of other explanations, Hick's thesis can only remain a candidate for theodicy. In assessing this candidate we are left finally, as with Leibniz, with the question whether the justice of God depends on our adopting a particular epistemological thesis. If it were replied by Hick that his intention is not to justify God actually but to seek to understand his justice, then the reply in turn might be that our understanding that God is just is an essential part of the notion of the actual justice of God, for

if he were just and we did not know it (or if we understood him to be just when he is not) what kind of situations would those be?

c) There does not appear to be any way in which constructive theodicies can escape the problems identified above, for the nature of constructive theodicy lies precisely in giving an account of evil within a world view and according to a provided epistemology. It is one understanding of theodicy that this constructive activity is what it should do, but in contrast, and in pursuit of a descriptive understanding of Christian belief, an epistemology is sought in this thesis that is internal to the shape of Christian belief.

4. Fourthly, consider the world view within which any theodicy is set. In what ways does this world view affect what a theodacist seeks to do? Let us concentrate and simplify this issue by focussing attention on what might be said about the "presiding concept"⁴⁸ of the world view with which we are concerned, as everything that comes under that presiding concept must share in its characteristics. What then is the theodacist to make of "theos" in Christian theodicy?

a) First, many see theodicy as in some way interested in the existence of this God - does evil contradict it? My intention on this point is to make two moves. Discussion of what is meant by the existence of God is delayed for reasons that will become clear.⁴⁹ Also, it has already been indicated⁵⁰ that my primary interest is in a descriptive understanding of the shape of belief held by those for whom God is a reality. In this sense God's existence is a "given" for this thesis. But not quite. For it is also argued in Section Two, in discussing the unbeliever's problem, that there is no formal connection between God and evil as an ontological problem.

b) When one turns to the question of the nature of God, the theodicist is faced with making a decision, for there are on offer in Christian theology quite different notions as to the nature of God, each calling for a different kind of discussion. There is, firstly, that notion which attributes personality to God in the sense of the traditional creeds. Let us call this classical theism, albeit that it includes the views of both "finite"⁵¹ and "infinite" theists. What makes them the same, despite real disagreements over the nature of God, is that they share the same framework of thought in metaphysics: God exists as personal, and as distinct from his creation. Secondly, there is that notion which has been termed "quasi-theism".⁵² This view proposes a different metaphysical basis for theism. In one way or another "theos" is seen as being not distinct from creation, but in some intrinsic relationship with it. Of particular interest here are the theodical claims of those whose thought has its basis in the process philosophy of Whitehead, and who are sometimes called panentheists.⁵³ In "hard" panentheists, theism is specifically spelt out in terms of a di-polar nature of God, and God and creation are in dynamic relation. In "soft" versions the explicit links with Whitehead are less clear,⁵⁴ but the ideas are similar.

The result of this fundamental difference of view of the nature of God is that process theodicies,⁵⁵ whilst they may make sense within their own sphere, and have much to say about theodicy, use terms in such a different way that connections with "classical theodicy" become obscure. What is meant by "power", "freewill", "God", etc., is too different. And when panentheists claim to have "solved" the problem of evil, they may well have done so, but it is not the classical theist's problem they have solved.

c) Perhaps G.D. Kaufman can help to clarify the issue here. He argues in God the Problem⁵⁶ that at the root of these differences lie two models of theological language built on different ways in which in our own personal experience we are aware of "transcendence", these two models being self-contained. One awareness of transcendence occurs in the way other people stand over against us, as available to us only if they will. This type of transcendence he calls "interpersonal transcendence", and argues that it leads to dualistic-type language. The other awareness is of the way in which goals transcend the present. This type of transcendence he calls "teleological transcendence", and regards it as leading to monistic-type language. When such differing notions of transcendence are applied to "theos", the theological language systems that result are different through and through. One has to argue within the one or the other, but cannot move back and forth between them.

d) If Kaufman is right, and it appeals to me as a workable thesis, then theodicy will also be an activity within a language system. This thesis is confined to examining theodicy within one of these language systems - that built on interpersonal transcendence - and specific use of the language model of "interpersonal" transcendence is made in my attempt to offer a descriptive understanding of the classical theist's view of evil.⁵⁷ The nature and role of theodicy built on the other language system is not considered. This decision is not a judgement on the worth of that language system, or its theodicies, but a recognition of distinctiveness.

e) There is an important implication of accepting Kaufman's thesis. It is that language systems used in relation to God are means by which theists refer to God. This referential

role of theological language reinforces the point made earlier about the connection between theology and experience.⁵⁸ The conceptualisation of God is, by the very nature of theology as a language system based on a model, less than the believer's experience of him, though dialectically related to that experience. For this reason, I develop my description of the use by the believer of that language by reference to the point above all where Christian language and experience come together, namely in the offering of worship. A third option, that religious language is self-referring, is considered and rejected in section three.

f) It could be objected that this approach to theological language avoids all the hard questions about how we know that it is God who is experienced, and how the language connects to God, and how we know that it is the same God in all Christian experiences of worship. But such questions, though interesting, do not affect the task of description within a language system, for what is described are the internal connections between the nature of worship and the believer's view of God. As already argued, it is not the descriptive theodacist's task to pronounce on the validity of belief, but to seek to understand the shape of that belief. The problem of evil for the believer pre-supposes the reality of the one God, praised and thanked in worship, as indubitable. Given that situation, what is the believer's view of evil as also an indubitable reality?

5. Fifthly, if theodicy is an activity, it is needful to raise a quite different kind of input which has to do with the frame of mind of the theodacist. In a philosophical thesis this topic might seem to be out of place, or even impertinent,

but in theodicy it seems to me to be of great significance. Two aspects of this topic are in mind. First, optimism and pessimism. Second, forms of advocacy.

a) Optimism and pessimism enter in a substantial way into theodical writing. The point is simple to state, but its ramifications are complex. The issue concerns how a theodacist reads the evidence of the way the world is, and also the degree of seriousness with which he treats the reality of evil. Some theodacists stress the evil in the world,⁵⁹ and the content of theodicy concerns evil and God. In protest a very few theodacists talk of the problem of good for the atheist.⁶⁰ Others stress the harmony of the world, and Leibniz' notion of this world as the "best possible world" is sometimes referred to as Leibnizian optimism. J. Cowburn is so impressed by these different ways of reading the evidence that he organises Shadows and The Dark⁶¹ around this tension, and proposes as his thesis to incorporate both sides of the tension in juxtaposition, preferring to be optimistic about physical evil, and pessimistic about sin.

My position is that this factor does not enter into theodicy as the activity of descriptive understanding, for the descriptive process is neither optimistic nor pessimistic on the part of the theodacist. I therefore disregard it in relation to my understanding of the shape of belief.

A further reason for disregarding it is that goodness is a reality in the experience of the believer no less than evil - it is that fact which creates the fundamentally ambiguous situation rightly stressed by Hume and Hick.⁶² It might be objected to this point that, for the believer, goodness is a more fundamental reality than evil (witness, for example, the

"privative" view of evil⁶³), and that Christianity rejects a simple dualism. That objection, however, is not the point. In saying that neither optimism nor pessimism have a place in descriptive theodicy, one is making a methodological remark, which is that no attempt be made to deny the reality of evil (however defined) as an experience of those who talk within the language of interpersonal theism. Otherwise there would be no genuine problem, which there is. The descriptive theodicist is interested in the moves by which this fundamental tension is handled in belief, not in adopting a stance towards it. How is it, he asks, that believers, in proceeding from God to the world, take both good and evil as realities?

b) A feature of theodicy is that the issues it raises have personal implications.⁶⁴ Philosophical discussions of "causation", "free-will", "soul", "immortality", "body-mind relationship", etc., leave one relatively undisturbed in terms of one's way in the world. For example, I will not be substantially affected in particular actions whatever I make of free-will, for neither a determinist nor a libertarian can properly derive reasons for action from his philosophical theory. But what one makes of theodicy affects whether one prays,⁶⁵ and if so in what terms; for within theodicy lie the convictions about God which make demands on the believer. And insofar as Zuurdeeg is right in saying that, "We are our convictions",⁶⁶ theodicy has to do with what one is - "I am an atheist", "I am a Christian" (Contrast "I have free-will").⁶⁷ Even if these remarks are only partly true, they perhaps help explain the proneness of theodicists to be polemical - what theodicists write matters to them. They use philosophy for an end, whether it be for or against theism, for theodicy is self-involving.⁶⁸

What is in mind in making these observations? First, could a theodacist argue a disinterested case? Behind this question is a broader question - could a theist write disinterestedly on theism, that is, in terms of it not mattering to him what the discussion revealed? Could the atheist either? Could the agnostic? Would not the discussion in each case have implications for action? Second, the literature itself is full of advocacy, even in writing which purports to be purely conceptual analysis. One cannot read Madden and Hare⁶⁹ or Flew⁷⁰ without being aware that the authors are in the business of pleading a cause. Puccetti's writing⁷¹ combines advocacy with a forceable style, and talks of a war to be won. The book of Job is nothing if not polemical, and Augustine specifically says that he was arguing, in the City of God,⁷² against the pagans. Leibniz wrote Theodicy as part of his argument with Bayle, and as we have seen, Theodicy has also to do with Leibniz' particular philosophical passion for pre-established harmony. Voltaire's reply to Leibniz in Candide⁷³ is splendidly polemical, as is Barth's reductio ad absurdum of Leibnizian optimism in Church Dogmatics.⁷⁴

Even when one turns to historical works in theodicy one find a similar situation. Tsanoff's The Nature of Evil⁷⁵ has a strong underlying principle of organisation, for he aims to show, out of an historical study of pessimism, that a philosophy of value can be adduced. The purpose of Hick's historical survey is similarly to adduce a thesis,⁷⁶ and Griffin's God, Power, and Evil⁷⁷ uses historical analysis for a similar purpose.

But, it might be objected, analytical philosophy is precisely neutral in its approach, and it is possible to imagine that any topic could be analysed apart from advocacy.⁷⁸ But

could this be so in theodicy? For example, to anticipate a point to be discussed later, the techniques of analysis themselves implicitly determine the possibilities of the kinds of answer which are available. To analyse, say, "omnipotence" presupposes that such a term in its religious usage is analysable apart from that usage - thus advocating the superiority of one possibility in philosophy. What is being advocated in that case as neutral, is normative philosophy.

Is it being suggested, then, that seeing theodicy as descriptive understanding is not an advocacy? My answer is threefold. First, that description as practised by a main proponent, D.Z. Phillips, has a strong polemical element with regard to philosophical stance and epistemological theory, and what believer's must be taken to be saying.⁷⁹

Second, that if it is possible to separate epistemological advocacy from philosophical method, then descriptive understanding has as good a chance of avoiding advocacy as is likely to be possible.

Third, that descriptive theodicy still carries implications for action. Should no coherent account be possible of the shape of belief, that might have implications for the believer - though he always has the defences that the descriptions so far offered are inept, and that his right to believe is not diminished by the failure to undertake description adequately. I am not so sure that the reverse applies i.e., that a coherent account of belief puts pressure on the unbeliever to make the move to belief. I suggest it does not.

c) No comment has yet been made in this context on one large category of theodical literature - that written from within faith to within faith; in mind are such works as Journet's

The Meaning of Evil,⁸⁰ Farrer's Love Almighty and Ills Unlimited,⁸¹ Maritain's St. Thomas and the Problem of Evil,⁸² and many others. Theodical writing of this type is designed to confirm belief or provoke action, and may be seen as part of the pastoral work of the community of faith. In this sense such writing is beyond polemic, but nevertheless does not escape its influence, for it is the literature of the faith-community expressing settled faith in polemical (apologetic) terms. My interest, however, is in the structure of the settled faith in its own terms.

d) What then is my frame of mind? Insofar as possible, to see things as the believer sees them, and on this basis to seek to describe the shape of what is seen. But this intention immediately presents two problems. One arises from the present state of debate in the philosophy of religion, the other with regard to how to handle what was earlier called the "unbeliever's problem of evil". The former problem concerns what is meant by the existence of God, the latter concerns the basis on which the unbeliever's problem rests. Let us consider these problems separately.

6.a) A dilemma besets the philosophy of religion at the present time concerning the nature of the ontological claims apparently made in Christian doctrines. What one makes of this issue centrally affects what one thinks it means to see things as believers see them. At the heart of this debate is the nature of the relationship between language and reality.

Perhaps the controversy can be organised around the questions, "What is the sense of words in Christian belief?",⁸³ and "What is the reference of words in Christian belief?" Broadly, answers to these questions may be classified into three types. Firstly, there are answers which claim the sense

of religious words is carried on their surface, and that such words are to be taken in their ordinary sense. If the believer says that God exists, then that is simply what he means; the words are intended to "refer" to an ontologically factual being, and the "sense" of them is that there is actually such a reality. Some refer to those who take this approach as cognitivists.⁸⁴ Secondly, there are answers which claim religious words have sense but not empirical sense, and reference but not empirical reference. The sense they contain is (e.g. in Braithwaite)⁸⁵ "reduced"⁸⁶ to some other form of meaning, say, moral meaning, and the reference they have is taken existentially, and has to do with our attitudes. Some refer to those who make such answers as non-cognitivists. Thirdly, there are the answers of the philosophers who are sometimes called "grammarians". The reason for this designation is that they claim religious words have sense, but do not refer - at least, if they do, they are self-referring, for if asked what these words say the answer is that they "say themselves".⁸⁷

Now as far as theodicy is concerned the non-cognitivists are very little concerned. What matters to them is that religious language gives support to our moral life in the world. But the controversy between the cognitivists and the grammarians is crucial.

Hick, for example, as a cognitivist, claims "the core religious statements are true or false in a sense that is ultimately factual",⁸⁸ and argues that such statements have meaning because they will be, or will fail to be, verified eschatologically.⁸⁹ So Christianity must insist on the properly factual character of its basic affirmations. It is, of course, this understanding that creates for Hick the theodical problem.

Lose this foothold, and everything becomes arbitrary. Categories of truth and falsehood no longer apply.⁹⁰

Phillips, as a grammarian, on the other hand, operates with a different understanding of the connections between language and reality. It is not that he sees himself as a non-cognitivist as against Hick, though Hick suggests there are only two categories.⁹¹ It is rather that what the grammarians take to be the nature of cognition is different,⁹² though cognition is not a word Phillips is given to using. The favourite word is "meaning", and "To say that this meaning is true is to adopt it and to proclaim it".⁹³ To the objection that this concentration on meaning reduces Christianity's ontological claims to mere religious perspectives, Phillips replies that each mode of discourse has its own appropriate way of structuring its discourse:

The pictures of the plants refer to their objects, namely, the plants. The religious pictures give one a language in which it is possible to think about human life in a certain way. The pictures (and here one should bear in mind that 'picture' here covers related terms such as 'model' or 'map') provide the logical space within which such thoughts can have a place. When these thoughts are found in worship, the praising and the glorifying does not refer to some object called God. Rather, the expression of such praise and glory is what we call the worship of God.⁹⁴

So for Phillips the "distinction between the real and the unreal does not come to the same thing in every context".⁹⁵ For Hick this kind of claim is "Theology's central problem".⁹⁶

b) The extent of the impact of this debate on theodicy can hardly be overstated. It can be seen conspicuously in the debate between Swinburne and Phillips, with Hick in the chair, on the "Problem of Evil", recorded in Reason and Religion.⁹⁷ The debate is remarkable not for the theodical

arguments adduced, but for the lack of agreement in the light of the above as to what constitutes argument at all in theodicy. Phillips charges Swinburne with "thoroughly investigating details of a road one should not have turned into in the first place,"⁹⁸ and claims that throughout Swinburne's paper the main emphasis is on the world as a God-given setting in which human beings can exercise rational choices which determine the kind of people they are to become. Phillips remarks, "This is neither the world I know, nor the world in which Swinburne lives".⁹⁹ Swinburne-type theodicies are for Phillips "part of the rationalism which ... clouds our understanding of religious belief".¹⁰⁰ Theodicy of Swinburne's type is, for Phillips, not at all a justification of God, but an illegitimate attempt to make causal connections where none exists, and where none can exist. The nature of religious language, and the role of philosophy in relation to it, mean that the "facts" relate to the "grammar" of religious belief, not to how that language connects with other orders of "reality".

The interchange between Hick and Phillips¹⁰¹ reveals, further, the extent to which the divide is over fundamentals and not over this or that point. For Hick, it appears, language mediates, perhaps even regulates, our view of reality. For Phillips, language constitutes reality and determines it. For Hick, this claim means Phillips has given up talk of the existence of God. For Phillips, Hick fails to understand that all reality comes under the same type of critique as Phillips applies to God.

As Phillips sees it then, "the urge to construct theodicies is itself the result of a confused view of what must be the relation between the will of God and the lives of men and women",

this confused view being that God is an existent.¹⁰² As far as Swinburne is concerned, however, Phillips' case is based on assertion rather than argument,¹⁰³ and begs the whole question. What Swinburne fails to see, however, is that Phillips does not contradict him, but refuses to play his game. Phillips uses a different picture.¹⁰⁴

c) My reaction to this demand to take sides is that there is much sense in what both sides are saying. Outside intellectual circles it would come as a great surprise to the Christian believer to be told he is not making claims in religious language that in some way connect with an "objective" reality. On the other hand, the weight of argument presented by the sociologists of knowledge as to the relativism in our concepts makes one pause before rushing too quickly into supposing concepts picture the world in a simple way as it actually is.¹⁰⁵ To some extent we have to live with the idea that the symbolic "world", which is the network of ideas through which we interpret "what is", is "our work" - and a possible basis for handling this contention with respect to religious belief has already been provided in accepting Kaufman's thesis of alternative language systems by which believers may refer to God. I take seriously, therefore, on the one hand, the extent to which one has to take into account in relation to the formulation of religious belief the cultural setting of that belief - but it is also accepted that religious belief in the eyes of the believer is grounded in the experience of something that "is". What is needed in theodicy as descriptive understanding, therefore, is a mechanism by which one can offer an account which gives due attention to the nature of religious belief as having a cultural location, and yet which does not

make that belief arbitrary and agnostic with regard to reality. My argument is eventually that attention to the role of adoring worship of God in the life of the believing community provides the theodacist with criteria of religious belief that stand in judgement on culturally relative constructions of belief, and which might provide the needed mechanism for descriptive understanding.¹⁰⁶

However, the conventional debate amongst theodacists, for the most part, has been conducted within the kinds of assumption about the relationship of language and reality propounded by the cognitivists, and concerns the defence or vindication of that objectively existing God. The argument assumes one can properly connect God and the way things are in this world, in that the will of God is exercised in relation to this world. There is a difference of approach between those who treat of the logical coherence of the statements within which classical theism has expressed this relationship, and those who treat the issues empirically, but behind both there is a common view of what the argument is about, and about the role of philosophy in relation to it. The issue is about the compatibility of the existence of the God of classical theism and this world as we know it with its moral and physical evil. The role of philosophy, within this view, is to comment on that compatibility, and to resolve the issue if possible, at least from the negative side of showing what may not be known or said, but hopefully also more positively.¹⁰⁷

But when one listens to believers - or as argued later - when one "looks" at what believers say in the context of what they do - it is to notice that to be able to worship is to have

achieved in practice, and to have made the unshakeable basis of one's reality, the compatibility of God as a reality, and evil as a reality, and to find a certain use of language appropriate to that situation. There seems then to be a great difference between the shape of the problem of evil as posed by conventional theodacists and the shape of the problem of evil as faced by the practising worshipper. This difference raises the question of the shape of religious understanding as against the shape of philosophical theodicy.

Turning with this last question in mind to the writings of D.Z. Phillips, one finds a serious attempt to offer a philosophical account of religious belief that provides an account at the same time of the believer's view of evil, that is, his religious understanding of it. But this account is bound up with Phillips' rejection of cognitivist epistemology, and is built instead on the grammarians' position of the relationship between language and reality.

I remain finally unconvinced by the correctness of procedure of both the cognitivist and the grammarian approaches to theodicy. In this thesis it is proposed, therefore, to attempt to set out an understanding of the believer's view of evil, learning, on the one hand, from Phillips as to the role of descriptive understanding in philosophical thought (but without accepting his precise epistemological thesis), and conversely, learning (with modifications) from the cognitivists as to the fundamental correctness of claiming that for the believer God in some sense "is" (but without accepting their method of doing philosophy). Sections two and three set out what is meant by this programme of work, and what is involved.

It means seeking to dismantle both standard conception theodicy - which is attempted in section two - and Phillips' theodicy - which is attempted in section three. To give myself the tools for this task, this section on inputs to the activity of theodicy has been written. My intention is now to reorganise the inputs so that descriptive understanding of the religious view of evil held by the community of believers is the nature of theodical activity.

7. Before turning to that discussion, however, let me briefly make some observations on the basis on which it is being taken the unbeliever's problem of evil rests. Now this expression is not intended as an absolute phrase but a relative one. What is referred to is the problem the unbeliever finds relative to the claim made by the believer who worships God that God is a reality, and the use by the believer of such terms as "omnipotence" and "love" in relation to the nature of that God. In the Introduction the unbeliever's problem was posed in terms of whether he should make the move, or not make the move, of accepting the believer's claim that it is not incoherent to hold at the same time that God is a reality and that evil is a reality. Accepting this claim of the believer would not mean the unbeliever would thereby become a believer. That would be yet a further move. What is in mind is that the unbeliever would cease to find the believer incoherent in what he claims, not that he would believe. It might be objected that the unbeliever simply does not have the problem as stated. I would reply that unbelievers do in fact seem remarkably interested in the coherence of theism in the face of evil; and also that putting the issue this way helps to reveal, as is shown in section two, a number of false moves believers, for their part,

have made in theodicy.

But the unbeliever might still object that his position is being misrepresented. He is not wondering about making any moves. What he is saying is that the believer should wonder about making moves to give up his incoherent position. My reply is twofold. First, let the unbeliever put his position as he will; that is his position, and one must seek to see it as he sees it. But that does not affect the main point, which is that in relation to the problem of evil there are ways of framing it which depend on not, or possibly not, believing God exists. But, again, and for reasons which depend on later argument, the position is taken in this thesis that to believe is synonymous with adoring worship of the true God, as far as the practising believer is concerned. Worship is being taken, then, to be part of the internal structure of practised belief, and of taking God as a reality. There is consequently an internal problem of evil which is properly the believer's problem. To describe that problem it is necessary to proceed in theodicy sensitive to the whole context of life in the community of belief in which the beliefs are held. As to those such as Ivan Karamazov, and the devils who believe and tremble, that is, those who believe in God but rebel against him, I think that the shape of such rebellious belief can best be understood by contrast with adoring worship, and therefore attention within this thesis will focus on worshipful belief.¹⁰⁸

Section Two

Section Two: False Moves in Theodicy

This section offers explanations as to why in this thesis the traditional shape of debate in standard theodicy is being set on one side. My method is to argue separately, but with cumulative force, that three basic assumptions of traditional debate are not well-founded. Then, fourthly, there is set out the underlying problem of philosophical method in these false moves. By implication and negation, there are thus identified some aspects of the shape of theodicy based on descriptive understanding.

A. That the Problem of Evil Concerns the Existence of God

1. Nelson Pike, in his article "Hume on Evil"¹ assumes that the problem of evil inevitably raises the question of the existence of God. He expresses this understanding of the force of the problem in terms derived from Hume's presentation of it in the mouth of Philo, though I shortly query this understanding. Pike states Philo's argument as he understands it thus:

If God is to be all-powerful, all-knowing, and perfectly good (using all key terms in their ordinary sense), then to claim that God exists is to preclude the possibility of admitting that there occur instances of evil; that is, is to preclude the possibility of admitting that there occur instances of suffering, pain, superstition, wickedness, and so forth. The statements 'God exists' and 'There occur instances of suffering' are logically incompatible. Of course, no one could deny that there occur instances of suffering. Such a denial would plainly conflict with common experience. Thus it follows from obvious fact that God (having the attributes assigned to him by Cleanthes) does not exist.²

2. Let me immediately make two observations about this statement by Pike. Firstly, in this form this is precisely the

problem of the unbeliever, for Pike lists³ J.S. Mill, J.E. McTaggart, A. Flew, H.D. Aiken, J.L. Mackie, C.J. Ducasse, and H.J. McCloskey as

but a very few of the many others who have echoed Philo's finalistic dismissal of traditional theism after making reference to the logical incompatibility of 'God exists' and 'There occur instances of suffering'.⁴

Secondly, Pike wants to claim this case is quite unconvincing. His challenge is set out, however, on the terms the unbelievers have marked out. He accepts the problem they have indicated is the real problem for the believer as much as for the unbeliever, but claims the arguments used lack force. Pike's position, then, seems to be that believers are faced with answering the question as to whether the God whom they worship might not in fact exist. I argue, however, that to understand the believer's problem in this way is itself incoherent, and that the believer cannot have this as a problem, for the unbeliever himself, and on his own terms, has not in fact substantiated his claim that the problem of evil can be effectively formulated in this way. I am, therefore, here concerned with a problem within unbelief. In honour of Hume's character Philo, let us call this problem within unbelief the "received Philonic tradition".

3. Let us extend Pike's historical reference beyond Hume to the origins of Hume's argument in Epicurus, on the ground that, as Ahern claims,⁵ "all of these writers" referred to by Pike "from Epicurus to McCloskey, raise the same basic problem, the problem whether it is possible for both a totally good, omnipotent being and any evil to exist". The presentation of the unbeliever's argument can then be divided into two stages,

the first being that of attempts to find formulations of the problem of evil which make a direct formal link between God and evil. The second stage, in contrast, sees that something further is needed, and seeks to supply it. This latter attempt has, however, a surprising result.

4. Let us turn, then, to consider the first stage of the unbeliever's argument, and do this by looking at that problem as formulated by Epicurus, Augustine, Aquinas, and Hume, and attaching comments:

- a) Epicurus (341-270 B.C.) as quoted by Lactantius
(c.A.D. 260-340)

God either wishes to take away evils, and is unable;
or He is able, and is unwilling;
or He is neither willing nor able;
or He is both willing and able.
If He is willing and unable, He is feeble, which
is not in accordance with the character of God;
if He is able and unwilling He is malicious
which is equally at variance with God;
if He is neither willing nor able, He is both
malicious and feeble and therefore not God;
if He is both willing and able, which is alone
suitable to God, from what source then are
evils? or why does He not remove them?⁶

This formulation is the one lying behind Hume's and is the fountain head of the received Philonic tradition. It is built round the four possible variations of the two terms "willing" and "able". The course of much subsequent discussion⁷ turns upon the ambiguities of these terms, especially in the context of their meaning in relation to a God who is experienced as "personal". The formulation serves the negative function of detailing three notions of God incompatible with the believer's experience of the worshipworthiness of God - that is, the offering of Christian worship excludes that God is feeble, and that God is malicious, and that God is both feeble and malicious.

The key sentence is the fourth and last possibility, with its plaintive plea for illumination as to the source of evils, or alternatively as to the purposes of the God who, though willing and able to remove evils, does not do so. Read outside the influence of the received Philonic tradition there is no necessity to see this formulation as "ontological". In fact the two questions it poses are not "ontological" at all. The end point of the formulation is a question about the intentions and purposes of God, that is to say, about his character - why does he not remove evils? It is almost a text for Hick's Irenaean thesis, and has to do with the purposes of God.

But the unbeliever's problem also appears in the writings of Christian believers. Let us turn, therefore, to :

b) Augustine (A.D. 354-430)

Either God cannot abolish evil or He will not:
if He cannot then He is not all-powerful;
if He will not then He is not all-good⁸

This formulation is subtly different from Epicurus', but is again built around the notions of "willing" and "able". It is specifically stated in Christian vocabulary, and uses the key notions of omnipotence and omnibenevolence. It also supposes that if God "cannot" do certain things this contradicts his omnipotence. On these "Christian" points comment is made later when looking at a similar statement of the problem by Hick.⁹

Augustine's formulation relates to only the first two of Epicurus' four positions by a stipulative first word "either". But Epicurus has shown neither of these options is adequate as a description of the God of the believer, either as they are, or in combination - Epicurus states only his fourth position is

suitable. Further, in the context of a personal God, lines two and three of Augustine's formulation amount to no more than assertions, and different insights into the nature of God as personal would not accept that these deductions inevitably follow. In fact the theist would deny their cogency. Epicurus' fourth position is in fact the one Augustine accepts in his writings, and is the basis of "Augustinian-type" theodicies.¹⁰

This formulation, therefore, can serve the negative function of warning one not to accept too readily simplistic formulations of the alleged believer's problem. The received Philonic tradition apart, the formulation does not actually pose the question of the non-existence of God, but the problem of the nature of the God that there is; it gives the finite theist the option of believing either in a God who is not all-powerful or one who is not all-good. Traditional theism, along with Epicurus and Augustine, however, does not face the problem of the finite theist, as it would not accept that the first line of the formulation as stated is representative of an acceptable notion of God. It is a mis-formulation.

A rather different way of seeking to state the unbeliever's problem is set out by Aquinas:

c) Aquinas (A.D. 1226-74)

If one of two contraries is infinite, the other is excluded absolutely. But the idea of God is that of an infinite good. Therefore if God should exist, there could be no evil. But evil exists. Consequently God does not.¹¹

i) Stated in this manner it looks as though we have in this formulation support for the essence of the received Philonic tradition, and a clear case of the problem of evil being an "ontological" one for the believer - i.e., that the

non-existence of God is a logical necessity. There are reasons for suggesting, however, that Aquinas did not actually see this as the form in which the problem of evil is significant for the believer.

E. Sillem, in Ways of Thinking About God: Thomas Aquinas and Some Recent Problems,¹² argues generally in relation to Thomas' handling of questions relating to God's existence that the plan of Thomas' work, especially in the Summa Theologica, is crucial for understanding the significance of what he writes. He says,

Thus, for St Thomas the question of establishing the existence of God is a part of the vaster question about the essence of God, and it is planned to be treated not for its own sake, but for the sake of showing what the divine essence is. There are, in other words, three major theological questions for St Thomas about God, and they concern the divine essence, the Trinity of Persons in God and God the creator. There is no separate theological question about God's existence: the question about God's existence is only raised at all in connexion with the study of what God is.¹³

He further argues that, although the modern natural theologian may indeed from the point of view of modern philosophy start with a separate question of God's existence,

St Thomas is clearly not planning his Summa Theologica in the way that a philosopher nowadays needs to plan his natural theology.¹⁴

Sillem claims that modern Thomists who

treat Quaestio 2 of the Summa as corresponding with their discussion of the proofs for God's existence and Quaestio 3 onwards as corresponding with this treatment of the divine essence ... are twisting St Thomas's clearly stated plan to suit their own ... he provides no separate question an Deus sit to be treated on its own before he comes to the second question of the divine essence ... St Thomas has more than assured us of his certainty of God's existence, and that he knows full well that all his readers share his certainty, from

the very beginning of the Summa ...¹⁵

From this argument Sillem draws an important conclusion:

In other words, the question of the existence of God, and equally that of how God does not exist (which is necessary to show how different God is from all created things) is regarded by him, not as a separate question to be treated on its own philosophically, as though it had nothing to do with the revelation of God, before treating the divine essence, but as involved in the theological study of God's essence ...

The whole of Quaestio 2, De Deo: an Deus sit, is therefore put into the Summa for the sake of unravelling in the following Quaestiones the theological problem of God's essence, or of expounding by reason what God has revealed of Himself.¹⁶

If Sillem is right, and I find it a convincing argument, then this formulation which looks on first reading to be an "ontological" question for the believer as to whether God exists, must be seen, within Aquinas' plan of work, as an "attributational" question - not one of whether God exists, but one of how God exists and how he does not exist.

ii) It might be objected that, however Aquinas intended it, taken as it stands we still have here a perfectly good formulation of the problem of evil in terms of making a formal connection between God and evil. My reaction to this contention is to point out that it is easy to be misled by the double use of the word "exist" in this formulation. But no theist supposes that "evil exists" has a parallel meaning to "God exists". The difficulties here can be illustrated from McCloskey's God and Evil,¹⁷ where he is offering a critique of the privative view of evil (which is the basis of Aquinas' solution) i.e. the view that evil has no real existence, but is a lack, a privation of a "good". McCloskey raises in reply for discussion the way in which evil exists, and what kind of reality it has. He writes:

Further, one can no more have pure goodness, good existing alone, than one can have evil existing alone. What one finds are good things, good men, good actions; as with evil, evil things, evil men, evil actions, evil states of affairs. This does not imply that good and evil are not real phenomena. We think of colours, hardness, and other properties of physical objects as real features of things, yet they cannot be self-subsistent. So, too, with the lack of self-subsistence of good and evil ... That the theist is committed to the reality of good, and, in the context of the acknowledgement of the problem of evil as a real problem, to the reality of evil, is evident from the insistence on God as an object of worship in the full sense of worship ... Some positive reference to goodness as real is required to render the concept of God a genuinely religious concept. And, as argued in this Chapter, unless evil is real, there is not even an apparent contradiction between God's goodness as an all-powerful creator, and the evil in this world.¹⁸

And he adds a little later:

The object of this Chapter has been to show that good and evil must be attributed objective reality of some kind if the problem of evil is to arise as a serious problem for the theist. Difficulties in the way of attempts to deny the objective goodness of a worshipworthy God, and the objective reality of evils such as pain, suffering, and moral evil have also been noted.¹⁹

Now, what are McCloskey's moves here? First, he denies that good and evil exist in the sense of being "things". Second, he sets up a meaning to "real phenomena" and "real features of things" which at one and the same time denies and affirms certain relationships between the meanings of the words "exist" and "real" or "reality". Third, he denies that the theist can make use of the kinds of meaning of "real" that he adopts, and asserts that the theist is committed to giving evil "objective reality", for otherwise God as an objectively good reality cannot be said to have objective existence either. Fourthly, he admits that unless this argument succeeds the theist has no real problem of evil. His whole argument there-

fore hinges on making "God exists" and "evil exists" exactly parallel phrases in terms of the meaning of existence.

But what is the force of this argument? Firstly, it never seems to me to be a good basis for argument to insist one's opponent must commit himself to putting things in a way he consistently says he does not mean. Quite apart from whether the privative view of evil is or is not successful, theists have always rejected the notion that evil exists in the same way as goodness does - that is what distinguishes the modified dualism of Christian theism from the unmodified dualism of Manicheanism.²⁰ It is possible to argue here similarly to Phillips in his attack, in "Faith and Philosophy",²¹ on those who confuse the ability to give a philosophical account of something, and the ability to believe it. Section three below says more about the distinction Phillips is making here between surface and depth grammar in belief, but to anticipate it a little, he comments on the difference that might be found between belief in immortality and confused accounts that might be given of that belief. What one must pay attention to, he says, is the role that a belief plays in a person's life, the difference it makes to his life, if one is best to discover what that belief means.²² Now does the "existence" of evil play the same kind of role in the life of the believer as does the "existence" of God? Clearly not in Christian theism. On that ground alone I would reject McCloskey's attempt to make these two phrases parallel.

But there is a different argument, again bringing forward a point from later discussion.²³ For McCloskey's argument to hold, he needs to show that what he says about theism must

necessarily be true, and be the only truth in this regard. But, against the thrust of his argument, there are indeed reasons for understanding "good" and "evil" as being evaluative, not descriptive, words in theism. What he has to say about the real phenomena of evil as adjectival may be not so far distant from what the theist says if listened to carefully. Can the theist not be understood to mean the following - and this only has to be a possibility for McCloskey's argument to fail:

Just as objects do not possess "redness" in themselves but are spoken of in terms of "redness", in that in certain contexts of experience and language, and with certain physiological characteristics in the perceiving agent, they are "seen" as "red", so also with "good". God, as an object of worship, does not possess "goodness" in himself, but is seen as "good" by those who worship him in the context of a normative tradition grounded in foundational revelational event and expressed in a given language model, and through the spiritual processes of religious experience. Therefore, just as what is meant by "red" is determined by the physical experience of human beings as language-users in community, so what is meant by calling God good is determined by the community of believers through their spiritual experience.

And this kind of reasoning is of course compatible with seeing theological language as being that by which we refer to God, as argued earlier.²⁴ When one looks at believers in the light

of what they do, it is clear that for the believer God exists, that is, God is a reality in his experience. The believer would also with McCloskey, talk of the reality of evil. But to confuse the absolute nature of the former as the presiding concept in belief with the non-absolute nature of the latter is not to talk of theism.²⁵

d) So, now to Hume and the question as to what he did exactly say when he handled the problem of evil. My argument is that Hume in fact offers a correct description of the relationship between God and the world, insofar as he was concerned to argue that it is a non-inferential one, and that when understood thus, Hume's argument cannot be used in the way the unbelievers instanced by Pike claim - namely, as having a negative bearing on the existence of God. My contention is that Hume's arguments are basically neutral in this regard.

Hume

Is [God] willing to prevent evil, but not able?
 then he is impotent.
 Is he able, but not willing? then he is malevolent.
 Is he both able and willing? whence then is evil?²⁶

i) Hume, through Philo, is claiming to represent the dilemma posed by Epicurus. It is the basis of what was called above the received Philonic tradition. We have seen that Pike regards this dilemma as a logical problem of "ontological" significance. Ahern uses this formulation to head up his introductory chapter to The Problem of Evil,²⁷ a chapter which focusses on the "ontological" issue, in a book whose main interest is the logical issue. I dispute this interpretation of Hume's position, and argue that for Hume also the dilemma of Epicurus is primarily the "attributional" one. Let us set out the argument by reference and response to J.C.A. Gaskin's thesis

in Hume's Philosophy of Religion.²⁸

ii) Gaskin argues that Hume's position on theism was not atheistic, but what he terms "attenuated deism",²⁹ and he speaks of "Hume's fundamental assent to the existence of a god".³⁰ He thus sides with those who oppose the group of interpreters who claim Hume was an essentially irreligious man who does not believe in a god at all.³¹ Gaskin argues in the following way. Hume, on many occasions, in private and published work, gives explicit or implicit assent to the proposition that there is a god on the grounds that the order to be found in nature could be the work of an ordering agent.³² In the particular case of the Dialogues, Pamphilius prefaces the whole discussion with the comment,

What truth so obvious, so certain, as the being of a God ... what obscure questions occur, concerning the nature of that divine Being ...³³

and this observation is agreed to by Cleanthes, Demea, and by Philo:

the question can never be concerning the being, but only the nature of the Deity.³⁴

But through the course of discussion that ensues Philo seems to say what he does not in fact quite say - that the deity is unknowable and therefore has no attributes. Gaskin, therefore, thinks that although Hume's belief is not crudely atheistic it is "atheism as far as the Christian God is concerned just as belief in the Christian God was atheism as far as the classical Roman religion was concerned".³⁵ On this basis Gaskin distinguishes two different problems of evil in Hume's writings. Firstly, the "Inference Problem".³⁶ Secondly, the "Consistency Problem".³⁷ The Inference Problem concerns what can and what cannot be inferred from the world as to the

nature of the God who exists. This problem assumes the existence of such a God and does not doubt this "truth so obvious".

However, Gaskin thinks that,

as so often in Hume's critical discussion of sensitive religious positions his overt discussion of a 'philosophical' problem lightly conceals his real discussion of a crucial religious issue. In the present case his discussion of the inference problem of evil barely conceals what he has to say about the much more vexing aspect of evil which simply is the traditional problem of evil: the problem of showing that the evil appearances of the world are consistent with the existence of a god whom we already believe, from a mistaken estimation of the design argument or on other grounds, to be limitlessly powerful and good.³⁸

It would seem, therefore, that perhaps the received Philonic tradition is confirmed in its interpretation of the force of Hume's position? The "ontological" problem is Hume's real problem, and one should sit lightly on his overt presentation of his views? But it does not seem that Gaskin wishes to be as definite as that. Indeed, the reverse. For he says,

Philo concedes that the problem of evil might be solvable: that the facts of the world might be shown to be consistent with the presumption of divine benevolence and omnipotence (especially if talk about infinite attributes is dropped).³⁹

And even more explicitly,

Hume does not argue that there is a logical incompatibility between the belief in an omnipotent and perfectly good god and the facts of evil in the world.⁴⁰

Hume's position is, rather, that the facts of the world cannot be used as evidence from which to infer the divine goodness.⁴¹

I would suggest that, in the light of the above factors, Gaskin makes a false move when he tries to identify a covert "real" problem of an "ontological" nature, for it is fundamental to Gaskin's analysis that Hume assented to the existence of a god. Hume, pace Gaskin,⁴² is not arguing even that the facts of

the world make the existence of a god "highly improbable", for this argument would involve Hume in the very inferential process which he is concerned to reject. Hume's point is that the world is totally ambiguous on the question of good and evil, and that therefore no inferences can be made at all from the way things are in nature - from "the present mixed and confused phenomena", as Philo describes the situation.⁴³ But, again, the interest of Hume's discussion of the role of inference is not whether the existence (being) of God can be inferred, but whether the attributes of God can be. So Gaskin again,

... the Dialogues can be understood as a discussion of the nature of god, what can be known about him, not a discussion of the question whether a god exists.⁴⁴

Does Hume's case argued through Philo, and as formulated above, formally connect God and evil ontologically? I cannot see that it does. Yet Pike and Ahern both seem convinced that the modern logical problem is there. There must be something that I have missed. Now others, too, have sensed something is missing in these early formulations. What exactly is missing has become the subject of recent debate. Let us now turn, therefore, to the second stage of the unbeliever's argument, and give attention to some recent formulations which seek to sharpen the issue so that the ontological problem is made to arise.

5. It was a major advance in clarifying the nature of the unbeliever's problem when attention was turned to how the unbeliever could make formulations of the ontological problem of evil work as intended. This advance consisted of the realisation that some extra form of words was required to make the logical connection between God and evil if ontological

implications were to be entailed. It was realised that it is not sufficient to set out, as Görmán does, a "problematic set of sentences"⁴⁵ and to hope the problem can be seen by inspection. There is nothing immediately inconsistent in saying:

- i) God exists
- ii) God is omnipotent
- iii) God is omniscient
- iv) God is wholly good
- v) There is evil in the world

This set of sentences could simply be the groundwork for the attributional problem - what in the purposes of an all-good, all-wise, all-powerful God is the place of evil? But just what terms can be made to connect them ontologically? Let us review several attempts.

a) J.L. Mackie

J.L. Mackie has attempted to identify what is missing, thus. Noting that, "In its simplest form the problem [of evil] is this: God is omnipotent; God is wholly good; and yet evil exists",⁴⁶ Mackie nevertheless goes on, the

contradiction does not arise immediately; to show it we need some additional premises, or perhaps some quasi-logical rules connecting the terms 'good,' 'evil,' and 'omnipotent.' These additional principles are that good is opposed to evil, in such a way that a good thing always eliminates evil as far as it can, and that there are no limits to what an omnipotent thing can do. From these it follows that a good omnipotent thing eliminates evil completely, and then the propositions that a good omnipotent thing exists, and that evil exists, are incompatible.⁴⁷

My response to this argument is both positive and negative. Positive, in that Mackie is right in saying that for the "ontological" problem to exist some connecting principles between the terms of the problematic set are necessary. Negative, in that, if such principles are to act as quasi-logical rules, they need to be analytically true - but those he suggests do not

measure up to this requirement. To develop this last point reference can be had to the work done on such principles by M.B. Ahern.⁴⁸

Ahern argues it is not possible to supply such principles which show a logically necessary connection between the statement that there is evil in the world and statements concerning the all-goodness of God.⁴⁹ He first examines the following principles about goodness:

Epicurus: A being which is able to take away evil and unwilling to do so is malicious.

Augustine: A being which will not abolish evil when it can is not all good.

Hume: A being which is able but not willing to prevent evil is malevolent.

From these he selects Hume's for examination, on the ground that as it concerns the prevention of evil and not just its elimination it is more fundamental. He comments that in view of the possibility of "proportionate goods" arising from these evils (goods which could not arise in any other way)

It does not seem possible to make out even a prima facie case that Hume's principle is analytically true ... there are several kinds of case in which a being which does not will to prevent the evil it can prevent is nevertheless a morally good being.⁵⁰

Ahern therefore tries to re-express Hume's principle to take account of such cases. It then reads:

A being which is able but not willing to prevent evil is malevolent, unless it is justified in not preventing the evil.

This principle is both analytical and true, but fails to connect evil and God's non-existence logically. He therefore comes next to examine Mackie's proposed principles. The one relating to goodness is:

Mackie: Good is opposed to evil in such a way that a good thing always eliminates evil as far as it can.

Adjusting this principle to refer to the prevention rather than to the elimination of evil, Ahern comments, again with proportionate goods in mind, "all of the points raised against Hume's principle apply to Mackie's ... the principle is simply false".⁵¹ Restating the principle so that it is analytically true also yields the same result as before - it fails to make the necessary connection. Similar analysis is applied to other proposed principles and Ahern finds them equally wanting.⁵² He concludes,

No doubt other similar principles could be suggested. It seems likely, however, that they would all fail in the same ways.⁵³

Furthermore, Ahern claims other arguments in his book⁵⁴ show it is in fact "not possible"⁵⁵ to find satisfactory principles, as he argues yet again that it is possible to show that a wholly good God who is omnipotent could exist if some evil exists - because that evil may be the occasion of proportionate good that could not arise in any other way. With this defence, Ahern's claim seems indefeasable.

Let us turn, therefore, to a more thorough attempt than Mackie's to set out all the connections that are necessary.

b) D.R. Griffin

Griffin claims in God, Power, and Evil⁵⁶ that a more complex set of statements is necessary than Görmann or Mackie suppose. He proposes a set of eight terms:

1. God is a perfect reality. (Definition)
2. A perfect reality is an omnipotent being. (By definition)
3. An omnipotent being could unilaterally bring about an actual world without any genuine evil. (By definition)

4. A perfect reality is a morally perfect being. (By definition)
5. A morally perfect being would want to bring about an actual world without any genuine evil. (By definition)
6. If there is genuine evil in the world, then there is no God. (Logical conclusion from 1 through 5)
7. There is genuine evil in the world. (Factual statement)
8. Therefore, there is no God. (Logical conclusion from 6 and 7)⁵⁷

Griffin accepts the validity of this argument i.e. that its logical form is correct, and therefore sees it as having "ontological" significance on those grounds. But he denies that the argument is sound, i.e. that the premises are acceptable. He objects, of course, because, as a process theodist, term 3 is unacceptable. It has already been indicated that this thesis is not arguing within that language system. Nevertheless, classical theism would not accept term 3 as one of its premises either so far as any actual world with persons was concerned,⁵⁸ so Griffin's point about unsoundness still stands. But it is possible to go further. The "success" of Griffin's form of the unbeliever's argument depends on the factual statement in term 7, a term which connects his two logical conclusions, that is, actually connects evil and the existence of God. Griffin has of course deliberately talked of "genuine evil" to raise the possibility of there being evil for which there is no reason of any kind. This talk of "genuine evil" would, therefore, seem to undercut Ahern's notion of the possibility of "proportionate goods". Perhaps then a synthetic principle could be introduced which will serve to make the ontological connection?

c) This latter kind of argument is found in

McCloskey's God and Evil,⁵⁹ where he claims to identify a non-logical problem of evil with ontological implications, a problem he claims to have been frequently confused with the logical one. He sets this problem up in terms of a moral inconsistency that he argues can be found between the claimed nature of God and the existence of God. The factual case in this instance, then, is within God, whereas Griffin's was in the world.

McCloskey presents his case thus:

The assertion 'A wholly good person or being always does what he ought' is analytic, whereas 'A wholly good being always lessens the general happiness, or always breaks his promises, or always lies' are synthetic (and false). To assert that 'A always does what he ought' and also 'A always lessens the general happiness when he can, or always breaks his promises, or always lies' is not to contradict oneself. However I wish to argue that the latter are incompatible assertions which can be shown to be such by reference to non-analytic ethical principles. This kind of incompatibility is as serious as logical incompatibility.⁶⁰

He then gives as examples designed to raise the theodical problem:

X inflicts excruciating pain and suffering on his children daily

and

X is wholly good⁶¹

There is no logical incompatibility here, says McCloskey, because the principle

A wholly good man would not cause his children excruciating pain and suffering⁶²

is not analytic, and its truth is a matter of dispute. Yet we feel that there is a prima facie incompatibility - on moral grounds. So McCloskey claims:

This point rests on the fact that the good man is he who acts on the true principles of morality (analytic), whilst the true principles are synthetic, not analytic truths. They are, as I have argued elsewhere, synthetic a priori truths.⁶³

By way of reply let us refer to Ahern again, as the kind of reply I would make follows out of the points Ahern made in the context of the logical argument about the search for principles that are analytically true. At the close of his book Ahern comments, in terms that seem to have McCloskey's contentions at his disposal,⁶⁴ that the principles he has criticised might instead be thought to be synthetic a priori principles and necessarily true. He comments:

But since in the chapter on the general problem no fewer than eight principles about goodness which could be proposed as likely synthetic a priori principles were held to be false it seems reasonable to believe that satisfactory principles will probably not be found.⁶⁵

Certainly, it is possible to imagine circumstances that would falsify the principle posed above by McCloskey, and which may be stated in general terms as:

A wholly good man would not cause his children excruciating pain and suffering daily unless a proportionate good that could not be achieved by any other means ensued.

d) But perhaps Griffin's "genuine evil" need not be located in a principle of any sort but just be a brute fact? However, this possibility raises a different point argued by Ahern which also seems to me to be indefeasible and which can be applied here. To show that there is in fact an instance of "genuine evil", then

it would be necessary to have an exhaustive knowledge of possible good and its logical connection, if any, with actual evil. We lack this knowledge. Accordingly, it seems impossible to show, with logical necessity, that actual evil could not be

justified with respect to God.⁶⁶

This being the case it is not possible to determine whether the proposed item 7 connects with this world or not, and therefore conclusion 8 cannot be drawn. The most that can be shown is that we do not know whether there is a God or not as we do not know whether there is genuine evil or not. That is, Griffin's formulation is ontologically neutral.

However, turning to Griffin's claim that in any case the set of eight terms is not a sound theistic formulation, I am in complete agreement. What Griffin says in this connection is of great importance in assessing why it is the unbeliever's problem does not seem to disturb the persistence of belief. He writes:

Those who say that the problem of evil is not primarily a logical problem are right in the sense that the crux of the problem is constituted by a set of definitions that are not matters of logic or illogic at all, but are essentially matters of valuation, and these are matters that are at least in part historically contingent ...⁶⁷

He also remarks importantly, that one should "emphasize the extent to which the problem of evil is constituted by definitions".⁶⁸ If this emphasis is made, then the surprising result of the unbeliever seeking to pose what he sees as the believer's central problem is that what is at stake is the nature of his own commitments, that is, the nature of the evaluations he commits himself to in framing the definitions that underly his problem.

6. There is no doubt in my mind that the unbeliever's "ontological" problem has been accepted in standard conception theodicy as in need of an answer. There is also no doubt in my mind that in so far as theodacists seek to answer this

question a subtle shift occurs to the "attributional" question. I would like to illustrate from Hick's writing the kind of shift that occurs when it is supposed there is force in the unbeliever's problem for the believer also. This charge is in fact laid against Hick by McCloskey:

For Hick the problem of evil becomes that of questioning the competence of an all-powerful creator in achieving his purposes ... God, in terms of the theological senses of good and evil laid down by Hick, can be neither good nor evil, only competent or incompetent ...⁶⁹

Now, apart from the charge made here by McCloskey to do with Hick's commitments to certain evaluations, McCloskey is right in claiming that Hick moves the question. On the opening page of his theodicy Hick shares Pike's view that the issue raised by the fact of evil for theism is the existence of God:

- i) The problem dealt with in this book is thus a theological one: Can the presence of evil in the world be reconciled with the existence of a God who is unlimited both in goodness and in power?⁷⁰

This question leads Hick to pose his problem as a believer in terms of the received Philonic tradition:

- ii) If God is perfectly good, He must want to abolish all evil; if He is unlimitedly powerful, He must be able to abolish all evil: but evil exists; therefore either God is not perfectly good or He is not unlimitedly powerful.⁷¹

But it has been demonstrated above that this way of expressing the problem in the received Philonic tradition does not raise the question of the existence of God. Inspection of (ii) shows it to be very close to the form examined above in relation to Augustine, and the points made there refer. But there are further things to be said. First, as noted before, this version is really a debate internal to theism as to whether God is infinite or not - and it is significant that Hick makes it one

of his first tasks in Evil and the God of Love to reject theodicies based on finite theism⁷² on the ground that "one of the most fundamental items of Christian belief" is "belief in the reality of the infinite and eternal God".⁷³ In the context of theodicy in classical theism therefore the "finite theism option" represents an evasion rather than an answer.⁷⁴ Second, what Hick's theodicy amounts to, however, is an understanding of how the Christian terms "all-good" and "all-powerful" should be taken in relation to such an infinite God. But that again is the evaluative question.

What Hick does in rejecting finite theism, and then showing how terms should be taken in infinite theism, is to offer a defence of the worshipworthiness⁷⁵ of God in relation to Epicurus' question "if He is both willing and able, which is alone suitable for God, from what source then are evils, and why does He not remove them?" In this regard, Hick rightly senses here the essence of the believer's proper problem, but makes the mistaken move of not starting from the believer as a worshipper, and seeking to understand the place of theodicy in relation to that, but rather starting from the ground marked out by the unbeliever. In that sense he starts out apart from the believer's evaluations and commitments. I seek to avoid this mistake in theodicy.⁷⁶

In contrast to Hick, Dostoievski in The Brothers Karamazov, is more obviously concerned with the believer's problem, and poses that problem in terms of the tension he sets up between the rebellion⁷⁷ of Ivan against God and the continuing belief of Alyosha. The believer is truly faced with the question as to why he does not "return the ticket" - but that is not an

ontological question, but one of relationship. In fact Hick elsewhere in his book shows the force of this tension when he writes:

Even if no one had ever suggested that the facts of wickedness and suffering generate a logical disproof of God's existence, the problem of evil would still present its full challenge to theistic faith.⁷⁸

But he then immediately turns in the wrong direction when he says:

For, granting that the divine existence is logically possible, the question is whether it is reasonably believable in face of the appalling reality and extent of evil in its many forms.

Belief based on a calculation of the possibilities and probabilities of God's existence, on the weighing of goods and evils,⁷⁹ on giving the benefit of the doubt, on arguments in relation to evidence is, I suggest, lacking in the characteristics of religious belief which has as its hallmark "though he slay me, yet will I trust him".⁸⁰ It might be objected that I am here confusing two different sorts of religious belief - one being the process by which an individual comes to faith, and perhaps works through the unbeliever's problem and finds an answer, the other being the tension created by evil in the world for the worshipping believer. The parallel in mind in this objection would be the distinction drawn by Rawls between justifying a rule, and justifying in the light of a rule.⁸¹ But this suggestion seems to me to reduce religious belief to a form of rationalism, for the believer would first believe in God for clear and distinct reasons and then live in the light of those reasons. But there is a qualitative difference between the God of reasoners and the worshipworthy God,⁸² for the former is a

concept within our mental furniture, the latter constitutes for the believer his form of life.⁸³ The proper question raised by the believer, therefore, is not whether, in the face of evil, the God whom he worships as real is real, but how to do the will of God.

I agree with Hick, then, in taking the theistic logicians such as Plantinga and Pike to task⁸⁴ for mistaking the importance of the logical question. I disagree with what he proposes to do at that point. The believer has a substantial problem, but it is not that of the unbeliever, and therefore he should resist the influence of the received Philonic tradition to express it that way in ontological terms. Nor is Pike to be followed when he says that where "the existence of God is taken as an item of faith or embraced on the basis of an a priori argument", that "the fact of evil in the world presents no special problem for theology", and that "the traditional problem of evil reduces to a noncrucial perplexity of relatively minor importance".⁸⁵ Has he never read the book of Job? Or the crucifixion narratives? The problem of evil only becomes acute in the context of belief because it forces on the believer, as Abraham, Job, Jeremiah, Jesus, Paul, and a host of others would testify, the need to understand the nature of God, the shape of his dependence on God, and the meaning of the language through which he expresses his experience of dependence on that God in a frequently hostile world - but that is to jump ahead to my final arguments.⁸⁶

7. Let us now turn to a separate, but connected argument concerned with the methodological assumptions of standard theodicy. I have just tried to show that theodicy should not be concerned with defending to the believer the existence of the

God in whom he believes as a reality. The reason advanced has been that it has not proved possible to connect God and evil ontologically in a way which calls for an answer, and further, that should it prove possible, then what is up for discussion are the commitments and evaluations implicit in the proposed formulation. A whole area of theodical discussion by believers is therefore redundant, or if not redundant, misdirected. But as such a conclusion is so much against the grain let us now explore further, but separately, what reasons there are for declining to engage in theodicy on the basis of analytical philosophy.

B. Second False Move: That Theodicy Should Start With Definitions As the Basis for Clear Argument

1. "Facts", it is often claimed, are susceptible of clear definitions. Those definitions may come in different types according to the nature of the object, and may be ostensive or intensive in kind. But, whatever the variations, there is a weight of opinion and practice in line with the "Gradgrind" tradition that knowledge is intrinsically bound up with definitional clarity. Ahead of precise definitions, clear thought cannot be achieved. Such an attitude informs the approach to concepts taken by analytical philosophy.

2. There is, however, reason to query whether "facts" can be known in this way. Phillips, for example, argues that theodicy is essentially a description of the view taken of evil within the religious form of life.⁸⁷ This idea of description rather than definition has its roots in Wittgenstein's later thought, for example when he says, "How words are understood is not told by words alone (Theology)".⁸⁸ Whether it be chess pieces, paper money, or understanding in music, poetry, or whatever, meaning and significance of words depends on the surroundings and uses of the words in life. So Wittgenstein again, "Only in the stream of thought and life do words have meaning".⁸⁹

This second approach to meaning is a dominant influence on followers of Wittgenstein. So, Winch argues that, say, prayer can only be understood by those who have some awareness of its use in the praying community - for to understand prayer we need to grasp the rules which govern the practice of prayer.⁹⁰ Perhaps the claim is made clear by arguing the reverse, as

underlies Holmer's approach - that a loss of religious interest and practice is accompanied by a lack of understanding of religious concepts. "Learning-how" is part and parcel of learning-what.⁹¹ Being faithful is, it is argued, essential in order to get into the position of being able to understand the language that is spoken by those who live the faith. This second approach to meaning is conspicuously applied to religious "facts" in the thought of D.M. High and D.Z. Phillips who particularly argue that religious understanding is intrinsically bound up with the context within which religious beliefs are held, for such understanding is gained by participation in the religious form of life. I wish here, however, in a preliminary way, and detached from the particular case of the "Wittgensteinians", to argue that in the existing debate considerable confusion has resulted from starting with definitions. The aim here is to prepare ground which will be further tilled later with reference to High and Phillips. My starting point is the position arrived at earlier⁹² that the unbeliever's problem of evil is constituted by definitions. Let us therefore try to be clear as to what is involved in this definitional approach.

3. First, with regard to "God" there is a unique problem, for the believer would want to say that God cannot be contained within any conceivable definition.⁹³ The point here is that "infinity" cannot be contained in finite language. Barthian theology, for example, incorporates this idea centrally.⁹⁴ Traditional uses of the via negativa and via analogia also witness to the same claim. Classical theism has never thought that human definitions are straightforwardly cognitive on the model of ordinary language. At this point traditional theodicy

has taken two lines of approach. One is to accept this claim forcibly, and to argue against the possibility of theodicy.⁹⁵ The other is to retreat to the formulations of the doctrines of Christianity, and to test the extent to which, as stated, theodicy is possible. This latter approach is precisely where difficulties in traditional theodicy start, however, for the discussion from hence forward assumes that those doctrines are true as stated. But that was never the case. Seen in this light, the function of theodicy would be at most to refine those definitions, as there could be no methodological device in analytical philosophy for penetrating beyond the form of words to the connection they have with the claimed experience of God. To understand the internal connection between doctrine and form of life, however, is to abandon this "definitional" approach. But standard theodicy is interested in "facts" - the "fact" of evil and the "fact" of God. So:-

4. Let us turn to consider some examples of confusions that arise in practice when one starts with definitions in theodicy. Three have been chosen which relate firstly, to problems with making definitions work; secondly, to problems over defining evil; and thirdly, problems over defining God.

a) The first example is taken from Hick in Evil and the God of Love. Hick clearly accepts that in order to start into theodicy there is a need for some definitional hardness, some delimitation of concept. One must of necessity start with definitions. Thus, he says, "It is important to bear in mind what this Christian understanding of God is".⁹⁶ He then provides a definition as follows: God is

the unique infinite, uncreated, eternal, personal Spirit, absolute in goodness and power.⁹⁷

Given this definition, he observes, "the accompanying problem of evil, in its general form, is readily stated".⁹⁸

Now it has already been argued that in his formulation of the problem Hick is accepting that the commitments and evaluations of the unbeliever as expressed in their formulation of the problem are relevant to the believer. But here we see that he also thinks that this formulation is part and parcel of the definition of the believer's God as believed by the believer, in that it is the believer's definition of God which gives rise to the problem. But is Hick right to link his "problem" with his "definition" in the way he does?

In order to see what is at stake here let us introduce into discussion Miles'⁹⁹ account of the role of the "definitional joker" in debates in philosophy and theology. Miles examines the way definitions are "played" in academic discussion and likens the situation to the playing of "jokers" in card games. In the course of an imagined debate between a philosopher and a theologian Miles represents the theologian as accusing the philosopher of simply taking tricks by means of a definitional joker. The theologian alleges that all the philosopher is saying is, "God cannot exist, because I am not going to use the word 'exist' in that way". (And I have already shown something of the difficulty of definitions in relation to the word "exist").¹⁰⁰ Later the theologian repeats his charge, "What I suspected you were doing was to rule out God by definition, and then speak as though this was sufficient to show that religious belief was discredited".

Applying this discussion to Hick's opening moves in theodicy perhaps one can ask whether, in his attempts to under-

stand the intellectual problem of evil, he has not been sufficiently aware of the extent to which the problem he presents has the nature of a definitional joker. Now, paying attention to Hick's definition of the Christian "God" shows Hick includes that this God is "absolute in goodness and power". To this phrase my response is, firstly, that what is meant by being "absolute" in goodness and power is exactly the kind of thing that the Wittgensteinians are protesting is not possible to capture in a form of words alone.¹⁰¹ Secondly, and building on this point, Hick accompanies the phrase "absolute in goodness and power" with the claim that the Christian God is also a personal Spirit. Now it is not at all clear to me that it is compatible to attribute in a simple way both personality and absolute power to God. But, leaving that apart at this point, it is noticeable that when Hick formulates the problem of evil in relation to his definition, this crucial element of his theodicy, namely, what is possible in relationships between persons, is missing. That this omission was not simply an oversight can be seen by looking also at the following:

the problem of evil does not attach itself as a threat to any and every concept of deity. It arises only for a religion which insists that the object of its worship is at once perfectly good and unlimitedly powerful. The challenge is thus inescapable for Christianity, which has always steadfastly adhered to the pure monotheism of its Judaic source in attributing both omnipotence and infinite goodness to God.¹⁰²

What makes Hick spell out his view of the problem in this way, a way that omits the very element crucial to Christian theism, and to his own thesis? What makes him restrict his shared set of terms between the problem and his concept of God, so that "personal" disappears? Is it too hard to suggest that

Hick has accepted the definitional joker that lies within the "unbeliever's problem" (though, as noted before, Hick's actual discussion shifts to tackle a different problem - one precisely in accord with the notion of personality in God)? But this suggestion makes me comment also on Hick's use, in the last quote above, of the idea that worship also has something to do with theodicy, for the worship of God in Christianity has more to do with what it means to speak of God as "personal Spirit" than it has to do with omnipotence and omnibenevolence - though there is of course a relationship. Suffice it to mention here, in the context of Hick's problems with his definition, that when Christians say God has "absolute power", and talk of "omnipotence", they clearly do not believe God can do that which is illogical,¹⁰³ nor that God can break his promises,¹⁰⁴ and so on. The biblical use of the word omnipotence is of interest in this regard. Outside of the book of Revelation, where it occurs nine times, the word "pantokrator" is absent from the New Testament, except for 2 Corinthians 6:18 - but there it is precisely in the personal context of Fatherhood. It is also in the context of Fatherhood that this notion typically appears in the creeds where the word "almighty" qualifies God as Father, with his creatorship standing independently - thus, "I believe in God the Father-Almighty / Maker of heaven and earth", and not "I believe in God the Father / Almighty-Maker of heaven and earth". The idea seems to be that of the all-sufficiency of God, God as Shaddai. However, rather more needs to be said about this love-omnipotent than is apposite at this point, and later a different understanding of what the believer means by "omnipotence", rather than the unlimited power of an infinite despot, be he ever so benevolent,

will be suggested.¹⁰⁵

My conclusion, then, is that Hick's procedure regarding definitions is faulty at two levels. Firstly, and less importantly, there are technical difficulties over the relationship of the definitions he supplies, and whether he actually uses the definitions as stated. Secondly, and more importantly, given his definitions, one still has to ascertain what they mean - I suggest, however, that it is not possible to ascertain meaning apart from a description of the rules for use of the concepts in a form of life, that is to say, outside of a consideration of crucial terms within their use by the believing community. But what Hick does here is typical of traditional theodicy. Yet, if one is going to start with definitions, it is essential, it seems to me, that both these points be met. I do not think they can be met in standard theodicy because it depends on definitions apart from use. No doubt this methodology is useful in other fields, say mathematics, but I would argue there has been too ready an acceptance of the appropriateness of this model for correct procedure in theodicy, where there is a need to look, and listen, and describe. Theodicy can never be an activity which is conducted apart from the practice of the believing community - for if theodicy has to do with understanding how it is the believer accepts as realities both the experience of God and the experience of evil, then theoretical definitions do not constitute an adequate basis for understanding. Interestingly, Hick himself argues this point in another place. Writing on how the believer understands what the Christian community means by salvation, he argues that the starting point must be experienced reality:

... we do not, as Christians, need to ask whether salvation through Christ can be a reality, for we start from the fact that it is a reality! Through their responses to the person of Jesus countless people have been opened to the divine presence; changed in the direction of their lives; reconciled to themselves, to their neighbours and to God; have become conscious of the reality of their loving heavenly Father who has forgiven and accepted them.¹⁰⁶

That approach seems as specific a rejection of starting with abstract definitions as perhaps one could hope to meet. There is within it an important implication that is taken up later into this thesis - that is, that to understand the shape of the belief of the Christian one needs not only to start with, but to make central, the experiences he or she claims of forgiveness, acceptance, and salvation in Christ - without those, how can one say in a definition what a Christian believer means by God's love and goodness?

Now it might be objected that these criticisms of definitional approaches to theodicy are a covert attempt to play my own perverse notion of a definitional joker. I do not think this is the case, as it is not part of my concern to argue at all on behalf of the believer. The argument is simply that the believer must be listened to in a total context. What he wants to say must not be trumped at the start.

b) The second example, of the confusions which arise from starting with definitions, refers to definitions of "evil", and has reference to some observations of Madden and Hare. Sharing my view of the inadequacies of the definitional approach, they comment that though such a starting point seems like a promising move at first it turns out that the definitional approach is inappropriate because the notion of evil is irrelevant to the problem of evil. The reason for this, they say, is

because the problem remains the same for whatever definition is accepted,¹⁰⁷ and they cite as an example Augustine's definition of evil as the privation of good.¹⁰⁸

Let us take up their point, and illustrate it from the complete dependence by Journet on this "privative" definition in The Meaning of Evil.¹⁰⁹ Journet quotes with approval Plotinus' claim that those who wish to know where evils come from and whether they affect beings in general or a particular category of beings, would do well to start their enquiry by asking first what evil is and what is its nature.¹¹⁰ Proceeding on this advice, Journet concludes from a survey of a whole range of Church Fathers, Eastern and Western, that the definition of evil as privation represents the human mind's most delicate and penetrating intellectual handling of evil. He sees this definition, therefore, as the key to unlock the problems of theodicy. Unfortunately, as Madden and Hare point out, Augustine's (and I am saying, by extension, Journet's) definition of evil as the privation of good simply leaves the main problem untouched - "why, in the present world, there is so much prima facie gratuitous absence of good, so much apparently needless privation".¹¹¹ Madden and Hare, drawing a cautionary lesson from this, say, therefore, "we shall not embark upon our own analysis of this term".¹¹² Let us concur wholeheartedly. There is apparent in this matter of making a definition the lynch-pin of one's argument the same structural difficulty of argument as was noted earlier regarding epistemology,¹¹³ namely, that the provision of a philosophical content to the definition of evil has the methodological effect of controlling the shape of consequent discussion. In Journet's case, he has made his defence of God's goodness depend on his

definition of "evil". I am arguing that that is not a sensible procedure. Indeed, it is even less desirable than Hick's attempting first to define "God". For, if definitions are to be used at all, it is logical for the theist to proceed from his understanding of his presiding concept "God" towards his understanding of evil, rather than vice-versa.¹¹⁴ I am, however, as noted with regard to Madden and Hare, not concerned to offer such definitions at all.

On the other hand, also in agreement with Madden and Hare, there is the need for the theodacist, for purposes of discussion, to specify what he means by evil. They suggest that "ordinary and common-sensical" experiences of evil, rather than "philosophical criteria" of evil should be the benchmark, and focus on apparently gratuitous events which we would, "minus our philosophical views", prefer to avoid, as being the specification of evil they intend to work with.¹¹⁵ I have already indicated a similar intention to stress the reality of evil as an experience, and will therefore at this juncture only specify evil as that in reality which we would actually prefer to be otherwise. This kind of specification has certain difficulties of its own, such as the balance of objectivity and subjectivity,¹¹⁶ but these do not interfere with the usefulness of limiting oneself to the specification of evil - it is its reality that is the emphatic issue, not its definition.

c) The kind of argument presented in this section is also to be found worked out in an illuminating way by M. Novak in his Belief and Unbelief; A Philosophy of Self-Knowledge, and the third example comes from this book.¹¹⁷ Novak, also, objects to definitional procedures which set up the argument so as to

determine beforehand the parameters of discussion. Entering into debate with H.D. Aiken about his essay "God and Evil",¹¹⁸ Novak claims Aiken is typical of the "Anglo-American non-believer",¹¹⁹ in what has been called above the received Philonic tradition. This tradition Novak finds evident in the following quotation from Aiken:

By hypothesis, an almighty and omniscient being can do whatever it wills. But any perfectly good person, so far as he can, will do good and prevent evil. Now, if there is a being that is at once almighty, omniscient, and perfectly good, it will be both able and willing to prevent evil. On the other hand, if something is evil, it must be concluded that there is no such being, since a perfectly good person would prevent it if he could, and an almighty and omniscient being could prevent it if he would. Either, then, there is no such being or nothing is evil. But since, by hypothesis, only such a being is God, we are forced to conclude either that there is no God or else that there is nothing which is evil.¹²⁰

Novak points out that the definition of God used here by Aiken is a special anthropomorphic definition - even if it does coincide with the way many people think of God. Novak sees Aiken as posing the issue in terms of (to use Miles' terminology) definitional jokers - and points out that the terms "Omniscience", "Omnipotence", "Person", and "Good" are all being set up in a particular way. Novak sees as the key to Aiken's procedure his notion of moral agency, with both God and man on the same footing in this regard. If this concept of moral agency does apply equally to God and man, then Novak agrees that manifestly God does not measure up to human standards; he is cruel, sadistic, or simply nonexistent.¹²¹ But Novak is not prepared to concede this "if". Now it is not the intention at this point to resolve whether Aiken or Novak is right,¹²² though it is of interest that Brian Davies has recently argued that classical theism does not conceive

of God as a moral agent (God is not a being; he has no duties or obligations; he is not capable of succeeding or failing).¹²³ The point is that the mere possibility of Aiken not being correct prevents him from being able to carry his position definitionally. Whatever the difficulties, Novak wishes to argue it is a genuine possibility moral agency does not apply identically to God and man. He argues that, in the search for an adequate conception of God, one is seeking to discover what God must be like to do as he does.¹²⁴ This search means, he says, that one must do justice both to the facts of evil and to the nature of God.¹²⁵ So, claims Novak, "the crucial question is, What kind of agent is God? What is his relation to human history"?¹²⁶

For Novak, Aiken's "God" is quite inadequate as an answer to this last question, and he agrees with Aiken that such a "God" is not worthy of belief, though for very different reasons to Aiken. Aiken's "God" is altogether too human for Novak. He is supposed to be good as man is good. He is subject to the blame to which man as moral agent is subject. Novak reacts:

Kierkegaard might reply that Mr. Aiken is still viewing the world on the plane of the ethical, and has not yet begun to understand religion. Kierkegaard, in short, might turn Mr. Aiken's standards upside-down and judge man by God's standards, not God by man's. Mr. Aiken's argument might in this light represent the quintessential attitudes of the nonbeliever: God is measured to man's cloth.¹²⁷

Novak's disavowal of such a God is total. Aiken's God is, he asserts, a concept of God developed within the framework of classical rationalism, and is one which accords with the conventional beliefs of middle-class morality. As such, it represents a God of "order and design", a God content in his heaven and rewarding his own on earth, even a God of liberal progress.¹²⁸

In contrast, Novak believes:

In reaction against this God, the truly religious will flee to the transcendent, mysterious God who makes his own suffer and proves those he loves by ways men do not fathom.¹²⁹

Here in this debate is the heart of the problem of starting with a definitional approach to theodicy. Any shift in the way the definition is proposed entails a shift in the way we conceive the problem of evil and the theodical task to be achieved. On the other hand, as in the case of "evil", it is needful for discussion to specify what one means when speaking of "God". And it is at this point that the religious dimension in theodicy enters as a critical factor. The Christian does not, we have argued,¹³⁰ have to ask whether God is a reality, for he starts from the fact that he is a reality. He has by entering the Christian community become conscious of and worships a loving heavenly Father who has forgiven and accepted him. That consciousness is a given that stands in judgement on all proposed definitions, and exists in a different dimension from all of them. "God" will therefore here be specified as that which is constitutive of Christian worship.¹³¹ In the light of this religious dimension to theodicy there is a point in the general tenor of Novak's claim made on the behalf of believers (though I have reservations as to the way in which he puts it in that he seems to argue from evil to God) that:

We are not trying to justify God. We are trying to understand more clearly, from the fact of evil, what he must be like in order still to be called good. We are seeking a more profound understanding of who God is. We seek it, not for his sake, but to assure ourselves that it is no monster we worship.

The dialectical significance of the problem of evil, seen in this light, is that it makes men seek the true God and no counterfeit ... Evil is the school in which we are made to put away the God of childhood.¹³²

5. This dispute between Aiken and Novak brings us back to the argument that it should be emphasised that if the problem of evil is set up in terms of definitions, then those definitions will reveal the nature of the evaluations and commitments of the person advancing those definitions. This argument is the main thesis in U. Gorman's A Good God? He writes:

The main problem, then, concerns a moral or evaluative question. I propose the following formulation of the problem in this interpretation:

- Is it reasonable to consider a God as good in evaluative sense, given the criteria of goodness considered to explain evil in the world?¹³³

Although the translation English is poor here the intentions of Gorman are plain in that he appends a list of traits of the problem which he intends this formulation to raise:

- *Any explanation of evil presupposes a certain concept of God.
- *The problem arises differently for any particular explanation of evil.
- *If such a God is considered to be good, the explanation implies certain criteria of goodness.
- *The problem concerns the acceptance or non-acceptance of these criteria when ascribing goodness in evaluative sense.
- *This acceptance or non-acceptance can consist either in a choice of a moral standard or in a comparison to a given standard.
- *Such an acceptance or non-acceptance involves an evaluative commitment.¹³⁴

Gorman, in fact, does not challenge, as I have, that such definitions provide an adequate basis for theodicy, but makes the different, but compatible, case that connects with the previous discussion, namely, that when it is understood that traditional formulations of the problem of evil have this definitional character, it is also understood there can be no ontological implications of any kind drawn from those definitions. He writes:

The resolution of the problem of evil is mainly a moral decision, consisting in the making of an evaluative commitment or a judgement based on a previous commitment. And from a moral decision it is not possible to draw any factual inferences. Now Christianity claims to contain metaphysical statements describing a purported transcendental reality. Hence the impossibility of drawing factual inferences from moral decisions will apply also to Christian truth-claims.¹³⁵

Gorman is right on this point. The definitional approach to theodicy builds into its methodology the impossibility of ever achieving the task which it sees itself as setting out to complete - that is, to comment on the ontological question of whether it is possible to believe in the existence of God and evil at once. But, further, and in agreement with Hume neither theist, nor atheist, can make the moral evaluations contained in their definitions the ground for statements about God as he is either. Theodicy, along this road, cannot be an attempt to justify God, nor an attempt to understand that God is just. It can, at most, be a comment on the nature of the commitments involved in the claim that God is x and y and z, and that events p, and q, and r are regarded as "evil" and stand in definitional contradiction of x,y,z. The end result would therefore seem to be agnosticism regarding what God is, if he is.

6. But the believer, in his worship of God, it seems to me, is claiming something rather different, and rather more. That is, that he experiences the reality of this all-sufficient love and goodness of God in a frequently hostile world. Some other approach to these claims of the believer appears therefore to be required if one is to offer a description of the shape of the believer's thought. Section four seeks to identify how it is the believer commits himself to a set of absolute statements about God - but clearly this cannot be done within the limits set by the type of discussion just considered.

C. Third False Move: That the Distinction between Physical and Moral Evil is One to be Relied on

It has just been argued that it is a false move to structure theodicy around definitions of evil. I now extend that consideration by denying that theodicy is well served by the classification of evil, however defined, into the two classes of "physical" (or "natural") evil and "moral" evil, in the traditional manner.

1. Some theodacists have posed their questions about evil in terms of one notion of "evil" that is common to all those occurrences, states, and dispositions that we would prefer to be otherwise.¹³⁶ The most influential of these notions in Western thought has been that of the privative view of evil.¹³⁷ This view of evil is seen by its exponents as not only providing the required universality of application, but also as a means of distancing evil from the active will of God. All evil is a negation, a privation, a lack, a dissatisfaction. It lacks self-subsistence. It is a cosmic parasitism, everywhere the same, particularised by the nature of that on which it is parasitic, not by any distinctions within itself.

Another approach to evil sees it as having a uniform character of unreality throughout its manifestations, and this unreality, or illusion, can be dispelled by right-thinking.¹³⁸ The uniformity in this case is gained by locating evil in the misperceptions of the agent; it is his erroneous view of the cosmic order that leads him to misperceive the true nature of things, and thereby to suffer.

2. Both of these views depend for their cogency on the acceptance of an underlying metaphysic. The privative theory of

evil depends on the universal doctrine of "goods" in terms of "ends" present in Aristotelian-type metaphysics. The other theory depends on a radical metaphysical account of the relation between appearance and reality. Both are given life by the sort of platonic theory that identifies goodness and being.¹³⁹ In each case the totality of the theory of evil runs parallel to the totality of the metaphysical scheme. The implication of both theories is that as all particular evils are explicable in the same terms, there is no need or pressure to seek for categories of different types of evil as the fundamental basis for theodical discussion.

3. For thinkers for whom, however, the above visions of reality lack attraction, and for whom there is no acceptable totally-unifying vision of reality linking all the parts in one great chain of understanding, what divides is as interesting as what unites. There is open to them the possibility that there may, indeed, be quite different categories of evil which the lack of the above types of metaphysical scheme enables one to see. This kind of proposal is stated quite clearly in much modern theodical writing, and I choose but one writer, H.J. McCloskey, who most acutely raises the argument for distinguishing between differently grounded evils, each of which represents the opportunity for a theodical discussion constructed in different terms. The distinction he makes, indeed insists on, as an unbeliever, is also shared by many believers who think in terms of standard theodicy. Examining what he says indicates, however, that here again the problem of evil internal to belief may not best be clarified by using this distinction.

H.J. McCloskey: "The facts which give rise to the problem [of evil] are of two general kinds, and

give rise to two distinct types of problem. These two general kinds of evil are usually referred to as 'physical' and as 'moral' evil."¹⁴⁰

Now although McCloskey says that the terms thus used "are by no means apt"¹⁴¹ he nevertheless thinks "this terminology is too widely accepted, and too convenient to be dispensed with here".¹⁴² He continues:

Physical evil and moral evil then are the two general forms of evil which independently and jointly constitute conclusive grounds for denying the existence of God in the sense defined, namely as an all-powerful, perfect Being.¹⁴³

And a little before he had said:

physical evils create a number of distinct problems which are not reducible to the problem of moral evil.¹⁴⁴

So definite is McCloskey on this point that he regards attempts by proponents of the free-will defence (i.e. that evil such as we know it is properly explicable and justifiable in terms of the kind of world which is a necessary condition for the possession and exercise of free will by responsible persons) to link physical evil and moral good together in a pattern of argument as "completely untenable",¹⁴⁵ and reproaches his fellow opponent of theism, J.L. Mackie, for having conceded far too much to the theist¹⁴⁶ in that:

He implicitly allows that while physical evil creates a problem, this problem is reducible to the problem of moral evil and that therefore the satisfactoriness of solutions of the problem of evil turns on the compatibility of free will and absolute goodness.¹⁴⁷

Not so, says McCloskey, for

Moral evil can be shown to remain a problem whether or not free will is compatible with absolute goodness.¹⁴⁸

The apologetic value of McCloskey's structured contentions is obvious - they are an attempt to cut off from the theist the popular subordination of physical evil to moral evil with the subsequent argument that God is not culpable in respect of moral

evil either in principle or fact. Physical evil on this theistic argument is the accompanying state of affairs that is necessary to the possibility of there being moral beings; unfortunate, yes; dispensable, no. Now if McCloskey can drive a wedge between these two widely accepted types of evil he can, for example, relate physical evil directly to the will of God without any complicating side-considerations.

My question is not simply, however, whether McCloskey is right in this theodical manoeuvre, but whether any of the participants in standard theodicy are right in supposing that the notions of moral and physical evil are themselves coherent, and if coherent, useful, in theodicy. In other words I pick up McCloskey's ignored comment as to whether these terms are apt.

4. Let us start by noting in what ways these distinctions might be thought useful. Writers who make these distinctions do so in the hope of giving some structural clarity to their discussions, and it must be admitted that the differences between evils that derive from the conscious and free acts of persons and those that derive from the action of impersonal forces do seem so obvious that to notice them is to affirm them. It does also seem that there is evidence that the differences thus noted do have explanatory power, for "solutions" have been generated by theodacists taking note of them. Also, it is perhaps not without significance that in other fields of study of high repute such as science and technology the technique of the resolution of general problems by the isolation of distinct sub-problems does prove to be a fruitful procedure. It may be thought then not to be unreasonable to apply the same problem-solving format in theodicy. If the treatment of more easily thought-through sub-problems can yield separate solutions, then

it may be possible to add them together to make a complete answer to the general problem, or, if only some parts yield, at least a partial solution to the problem. This procedure might still be useful even if the individual solutions were not each on their own entirely satisfactory, for one could use the power of the cumulative case.¹⁴⁹ Alternatively, it might be shown by the "ten leaky buckets technique"¹⁵⁰ that, as none of the parts yielded a solution, there is no comprehensive answer either.

5. So, let us suppose that it is possible to divide evil into these two quite distinct kinds, which by their different characteristics give rise to two quite different problems, which in turn might generate two quite different answers. And let us note down considerations that come to mind as one presses for some degree of "hardness" to the terms "moral evil" and "physical evil", so that not only are the precise differentiating characteristics brought out, but all participants in the debate are referring to the same distinctions when using these terms. And let us note as a means of starting to think this point through that McCloskey himself records the following three difficulties:

i) Suffering is physical evil but not strictly physical evil.¹⁵¹

ii) Within physical evil as a distinct type there are further distinct types of evil which raise distinct problems and have their own solutions which are not applicable throughout the general class.¹⁵²

iii) Conversely, some proposed solutions "relate to both kinds and all sub-kinds of evil".¹⁵³

One might then be provoked into the following arguments, each of

which indicates that one needs to think twice before tying theodicy too closely to the distinction some draw between "moral evil" and "physical evil".

iv)(a) First, with regard to the habit in theodicy of dealing with all aspects of evil that have a personal orientation in terms of "moral evil", and the accompanying habit of identifying moral evil with the notion of "sins" in Christian language, I would argue that the shape of Christian belief is not adequately accounted for. Amidst the wide range of meanings of "sins" in Christian language, there is a fundamental difference to be drawn between the conduct of men amongst themselves and the conduct of men in relation to God. Now, whilst Christian belief connects the two, the question is as to exactly how the former ("moral evil", "sins") relates to the latter ("spiritual evil", "sin"). This issue is clarified by first describing in what sense "sin" as a distinct "spiritual" evil differs from "sins". This description can be made by noting that for the adoring worshipper the fundamental evil would be that of rejecting God's person, for that is the essence of blasphemy. But, when one turns to the literature, there is immediately apparent an ambiguity as to whether such sin is included in moral evil. I argue that it should not be, but should be set over against all other negative experience. This ambiguity is present in the writings of McCloskey in a way not untypical of general discussion. He writes, on the one hand, in an article:

Moral evil is simply immorality - evils such as selfishness, envy, greed, deceit, cruelty, callousness, cowardice and the larger scale evils such as wars and the atrocities they involve.¹⁵⁴

and on the other, in his book, going further:

the theist must interpret moral evil not simply as moral fault but as being or involving a breach of God's law, and a rejection of God himself.¹⁵⁵

McCloskey sets up, then, three possible meanings of "moral" evil. Firstly, moral fault = immorality; secondly, = breach of God's law - which in the article he terms (quoting Joyce¹⁵⁶) something which "offends" God;¹⁵⁷ and thirdly, = rejection of God himself.

Now, in his book, McCloskey confuses these distinctions by saying that beings who "infringe" God's law,¹⁵⁸

reject him by engaging in such evil actions as lying, cheating, being unkind to others, being callous, cruel, injuring their fellow men and killing and torturing them, showing spite, exhibiting jealousy, feeling envy, and manifesting all the unpleasant traits ...¹⁵⁹

He thus runs together the three types of moral evil that he himself notices - infringement of God's law is the rejection of God's person which is the practice of indulging in the moral faults commonly called immorality. Interestingly, in the book, McCloskey goes on to quote the prayer for forgiveness:

Almighty and most merciful Father, we have erred and strayed from thy ways like lost sheep. We have followed too much the devices and desires of our own hearts. We have offended against thy holy laws.

I say interestingly, because this prayer relates to only two of McCloskey's categories in the way he intends and actually excludes the third. Moral faults are, in this prayer, identified with breaches of God's law. But, the worshipper, by the very fact that he is praying to his "Almighty and most merciful Father", reveals that these "sins" are not a rejection of God's person but are a lapse, a fault, a weakness, a sin; but not a rejection.

iv)(b) Coming to the same point from a different angle, it is possible to suppose that (logically) man could have chosen to reject God's person whilst not committing any of the

evil acts McCloskey so assiduously itemises, or any others actual or conceivable. Man could have chosen, by exercise of his free-will, to live out of communion with God, whilst at the same time living perfectly at harmony with one another, i.e. without "sins" but in a state of "sin". Against this supposition Hick, in his generally sensitive discussion of "The Shape of Sin",¹⁶⁰ claims the nature of man's relationship with God determines the nature of his relationships with his fellow men. I suggest, however, that this claim of Hick's is a factual comment made with the benefit of hindsight rather than a comment on what must necessarily be the case. On this point I am also against Maritain, who building on Aquinas' assertion that if it is in the nature of things that an event can happen, this event actually will happen sometimes,¹⁶¹ argues:

God, therefore cannot make any creature who is naturally impeccable, any more than He can make a squared circle; these are not necessities independent of God which are forced upon Him from without ...; these necessities themselves depend on His very essence as His intelligence sees it, seeing at the same time all those ways in which that very essence can be participated in. To annihilate these necessities one would have to annihilate first the very essence of God, and thus we must admit that God can no more create a being by nature impeccable, than He can cease to exist and to be what He is. It is the same sort of necessity.¹⁶²

But McCloskey has the rejoinder here when he says that Maritain,

is not obviously saying the necessity is analytic in the usual sense, yet the parallels he draws are on the one hand with analytic necessity as ordinarily understood - and this parallel seems only too evidently inapt - and on the other with the necessity attributed to God as a necessarily existing being.¹⁶³

McCloskey rejects both these parallels - the former as clearly inappropriate; the latter as a faulty notion of "necessity".¹⁶⁴

But, even if one accepts that the theist is not being perverse in

claiming factual necessity for the nature of God's existence, it remains the case that Maritain's point is only comprehensible within the framework of a metaphysics which incorporates the idea of the necessity of the plenitude of being.¹⁶⁵ Outside of that theory, "Failure is not a logical necessity, simply an empirical fact".¹⁶⁶

It is not an idle supposition, then, that man need not, in rejecting communion with God, also of necessity breach God's law, that is, commit immoralities. What I am saying is that moral evil, pace McCloskey, cannot be equated with the fundamental evil in Christian theism of rejecting God. For this we need the word "sin" - that is an essential and unique category of evil in the shape of Christian belief. But in terms of theodicy, could there be any conceivable explanation or accounting for such a fundamental irrationality?¹⁶⁷ The situation is that the believer could not account for this. And the unbeliever would not need to do so, for to him there could not be such sin. It might be objected that many Christians see an internal relationship between honouring God and keeping his law, between rejecting God and rejecting his law. But this is to confuse what it is to express one's love of God, or one's rebellion against God, in certain ways, with the different issue of simply rejecting God. Rebellion is a way of living before God; rejection is ceasing to live before God.

Now, let us consider the rebel and suppose that men can continue to accept God but become involved in breaches of his law. But this may be solely breaches of ritualistic law. It is a further item to claim, as McCloskey does, that acts of, say, selfishness and cowardice are immoralities and therefore evils

and therefore breaches of God's law. Of course, there may be a great deal of confused thinking on all sides on the relationship between "sin" and "sins" in Christian theism owing to its desire to give expression to its commitment to hold all life before God, but that does not mean the shape of its belief at depth¹⁶⁸ is confused. What is spoken of as God's law may be precisely human law held before God. I contend that it is.¹⁶⁹ Men may fail in regard to such law held before God, but that does not equate with failing God. Paul's doctrine of the co-existence of the old and the new man in Christ seems to me to be just such a distinction, for it allows a perfect status for the believer before God whilst his actual state is that of a worshipping sinner, that is, one who lives before God, but inauspiciously. Paul's letters to the Corinthian Church should be sufficient to indicate that those who are the sons of God by redemption, and thereby reconciled to God, continue to breach both ritualistic¹⁷⁰ and moral law - whilst worshipping. Conversely, the moral integrity of the unbeliever is also a possibility, for he may hold to human law, though not before God.

iv)(c) Let us pursue this matter a little further, and give the point an application. It seems to me it is the running together of "moral" and "spiritual" evil which enables Hick to construct his Irenaean-type thesis. But if that is the case, then therein lies its Achilles' heel. The notion of man being placed at an original epistemic "distance" from God so that man could freely develop as a moral being who finally comes into eschatological fulfilment and full fellowship with God,¹⁷¹ makes man's spiritual life a moral pilgrimage - with the spiritual being the dependent factor. Is it the case that there is a

correspondence between man's moral and spiritual condition, so that as he progresses in the former so he progresses in the latter? Is it the case that it is man's moral state that fits him for the presence of God? It may be, but it would be hard to represent this as the content of the New Testament evangel. The emphasis in the soteriology of the New Testament is the other way around¹⁷² - it is man who sets himself at a "distance" from God. Insofar as Christian belief equates knowing God and loving him¹⁷³ this might, in terms of the rebel, be termed "agapeistic" distance, for rebellion is one way of expressing a relationship. But for the unbeliever, the one who has ceased to live before God, the notion of "distance" is perhaps inappropriate, for his form of life has no epistemological structures in relation to God at all. Stating things in this way does justice to the moral life of the unbeliever in a way that Hick's account does not - for although Hick sees his epistemological thesis as compatible with both belief and unbelief,¹⁷⁴ is it not implicit in his Vale of Soul-Making thesis that the unbeliever who is moral is willy-nilly implicated in progress in the way towards God too?¹⁷⁵ But how can that be the case? I would contend that one thing which constitutes an "unbeliever" is that his moral life is not lived before God. No amount of moral progress can make a difference there. But to hate God is another matter. That is a way of living before him.¹⁷⁶

v)(a) But in the literature "moral evil" is set over against "physical evil" rather than "spiritual". Now, in regard to this distinction there is a remarkable lack of agreement among theodical writers as to where the boundary lies despite the claims noted earlier that we have here two quite different types

of evil. Some writers include both the act and the effect(s) of the act in moral evil - thus, they designate as "moral evil" all physical sufferings caused by moral agents acting evilly. Others limit the class to the acts of the moral agent alone, and put all resulting suffering under "physical evil".¹⁷⁷ There is, therefore, a considerable degree of uncertainty regarding a whole range of actual evils as to the type of "solution" which might be appropriate to them, if, that is, the contention is accepted that there are different solutions to the two classes. But it might be objected that even if there is a combined or overlapping set in the middle, there are still the distinct classes on either side. But on the "physical" side there is the added difficulty of stating exactly what is meant by terming a physical event "evil" - for example, in what sense is pain necessarily evil? And if the further notion of "metaphysical evil"¹⁷⁸ is admitted (which is really a way of saying that "physical evil" is a problematic concept) then the difficulties are increased, for a pincer movement occurs which, when persisted in, eliminates "physical evil" as a class. And on the "moral" side there is the difficulty of determining the relationship between actual, but culturally relative, moral evils, and the concept of "moral evil" itself - for if moral evil is to be of significance as a basis for theodical argument, then it would be needful to show that the alleged case is intrinsically a moral evil. But as argued before,¹⁷⁹ to show that it is an intrinsic evil would be to show that it is a genuine evil, and we lack the knowledge to make this judgement. In the case of both physical and moral evils therefore, one is back again to the question of evaluations according to criteria.¹⁸⁰

v)(b) There is the further question in relation to moral evil as to whether intention is a relevant factor; if one causes suffering unintentionally, does that lack of intention remove this act from the class of moral evils? If so, to what class do such evils deriving from unintended personal action belong? Similarly with ignorance. I take it that knowledge is relevant to moral activity,¹⁸¹ and that culpable ignorance would be a moral evil. But what of non-culpable ignorance? And the question of negligence also refers. Is all negligence clearly of moral significance?

The point here is that there are types of personal act which can cause, or be contributory to, suffering but which escape the categories proposed by McCloskey and others for discussing evil in the world. In general terms the issue here is one of the relationship between the moral acts and the social acts¹⁸² of free, rational, personal beings.

So, for example, if a dentist inflicts pain in the course of his freely chosen professional duties it is a free act of a rational personal agent who intentionally causes suffering, albeit he would it were otherwise. It might be replied that it is not his intention to cause suffering, but that the suffering is there apart from his willing. His intention is to reduce suffering. This would be to suggest the by-products of our activities are not our responsibility. But let us suppose the social acts of a dentist are in no way "moral" evils. Are the pains then simply "physical" evils? If so, one is saying that physical evils deriving from social acts are distinguishable (un-blameworthy) from physical evils deriving from moral acts (blameworthy). But can one so easily distinguish all along the line between moral and social acts as has just been done in the

case of the dentist? Moral behaviour and social behaviour are so closely intertwined it is unlikely such a distinction could be made with any degree of security. It somewhat blunts the contention, however, that moral evil is a "distinct" class of evils if it proves, on the one hand, that it is open to the inclusion of "physical" evils committed by moral agents, and on the other, that the activities of moral agents in their social acts are such that the physical suffering they cause is not "moral evil" but "physical".

v)(c) And suffering, as McCloskey hints, would seem in any case to transcend the impositions of classification imposed in claiming there are two "distinct" classes of moral and physical evil; it can be physical, social, psychological, mental, moral. Yet suffering is perhaps the major part of the problem of evil. And even then, as Irenaean-type theodicies show, suffering is not to be taken as "evil" in a simplistic way.

vi)(a) The distinction between moral and physical evil is based on giving importance to the activity or passivity of moral agents¹⁸³ in relation to states of affairs adjudged to be evil. Earthquakes naturally occurring would be instances of physical evil; caused by men they might be moral evil. But, picking up a point from above, and by way of example, is a naturally occurring earthquake in and of itself an evil? I suggest that it is only relatively an evil - relative, that is, to there being an agent to judge it is an evil, and that things would have been better without it. Austin Farrer is right when he says that,

Nothing is called bad but by reference to the spoiling of a nature, the inhibition of an activity, the frustration of an aim, or the saddening of an existence which we take to be good.¹⁸⁴

But there is also the need for a judgement that there is a "spoiling", an "inhibition", a "frustration", a "saddening" - that it is an evil.¹⁸⁵

vi)(b) Further, again following Farrer, it is often the interaction between natural "goods" that is judged to be "evil", rather than things being evil in themselves. Writing of a "weed" he comments humorously, but cogently, "when we call it bad, we mean it's bad for us, or for the plants we are trying to grow. It's a fine, flourishing thing in itself".¹⁸⁶

vi)(c) It would seem, therefore, that it is impossible to escape with regard to physical evils from the element of evaluation incorporated in the notion of physical "evil", and that this evaluation is with reference to a moral scale of values - what counts as "suffering" and as physical "evil" depends on the evaluative system to which one is committed. Approval or disapproval of the destruction of bacteria; vegetarianism; use of pesticides; vivisection; use of human guinea pigs; all involve differing evaluative criteria as to whether the suffering involved is an evil, and if so at what level of sentience it becomes so, and so on. The notion, therefore, of a "distinct" class of physical evils which can be listed apart from the criteria involved in moral evaluation begins to look too simplistic an understanding of what is involved in calling anything that is physical, "evil". But what, it might be objected, of cancer? Is that not clearly an evil, nature gone wrong? Again, one needs to ask from what viewpoint the question is asked. Applying Farrer's point, and difficult though it is to say it, "it is a fine flourishing thing in itself" - by calling it "evil" we reveal our judgement that it is

"bad for us", not that it is evil in itself.

vii) On a different plane there is in any case the widespread use in theodical argument of the idea that physical evil in its entirety is the responsibility of a free personal rational agent - God.¹⁸⁷ All physical evil is in this sense moral evil if one follows those who say that physical effects of moral actions are to be included in the class of moral evil. It is the heart of the critic's case that physical evil shows directly that God is morally reprehensible. As the creator of the way things are, God cannot escape moral responsibility. But in addition, human moral evil is also, indirectly at least, a feature of the universe by the "permission" of God. In relation to God, therefore, - and it is in relation to God that the problem of evil arises - all evil is moral evil. The classification of a distinct category of physical evil would it seems, after all, be superfluous as far as theodicy is concerned. The only question which matters is that disputed by the theist and atheist as to whether God may be thought to be morally desirable or not. The atheist would argue the burden of proof lies with the theist, and that the criteria are straightforwardly the same as are applicable to a human moral agent,¹⁸⁸ the difference being the totality of God's responsibility. It seems to me that the atheist has no need to search for different types of evil, and that in fact his case is strengthened if he doesn't. Any evil of any type at any level of analysis constitutes the problem because, as the "cosmic moral agent", God is morally responsible for all of it. This realisation is in fact, as Hick points out, one of the items of agreement between the "Augustinian" and "Irenaean" traditions in Christian thought on

the problem,¹⁸⁹ and it is an emphasis in danger of being lost by discussions that locate distinct evils which are apparently not "moral". As Kane has argued, theodical argument becomes self-defeating if it seeks to mitigate the problem of evil by attempting to show by means of the free-will defence that God is absolved of complicity in human moral evil, and also that physical evil is, after all, not evil at all (in that it serves an ultimately good purpose) - self-defeating because when added together these responses deny that as far as God is concerned there ever was a problem, because in relation to God it turns out there is no responsibility at all for evil.¹⁹⁰ The problem has been resolved at the expense of one of the things that the believer knows most truly - that the experience of evil is a genuine experience that must be treated in those terms and not dissolved away. There is evil and there is God. Setting up categories of evil that reduce that double experience is to avoid the full force of the problem as it is known by the believer and to fall for the magic of words. When Austin Farrer points out that evil must always be given a personal reference, by asking of physical evil, "Evil, yes, perhaps, but whose evil?"¹⁹¹ then he is indicating physical evil has a moral dimension. That is where we should, perhaps, leave the business of categorising evil for the moment. Further categorisation only obscures this fundamental point.

viii) This interpenetration of the "physical" and "moral" aspects of analysis is witnessed to by those theodacists who, having divided them, seek to show a close relationship between them.

viii)(a) Some claim there is an ascending parallelism

between orders of good and orders of evil such that physical and moral goods and evils are reciprocal. So, for example, pain and fortitude are two aspects of the same state of affairs.¹⁹²

viii)(b) Some claim one solution is sufficient to account for both moral and physical evil. For example Swinburne argues on the one side that the free-will defence is a solution to both.¹⁹³ McCloskey suggests, however, that for "utilitarian theists" everything comes down to a problem of physical evil,¹⁹⁴ and conversely criticises Mackie for implying that the problem of physical evil is reducible to the problem of moral evil.¹⁹⁵ As noted earlier the privative and illusory views of evil see them as manifestations of the same universal phenomenon.

It would seem the common emphasis in such suggestions as these is that, although separable at a superficial level, physical and moral evil are not in terms of theodicy ultimately distinct. One cannot treat one without what is said having some bearing on the other. It would also seem that the various and competing arguments as to what to do with these distinctions once they are made brings their usefulness into question for, taking the debate as a whole, any position appears to be possible depending on the intentions and interests of the writer. In view of such being the case, my own proposal will seek to use an approach to evil which relieves the theodacist of such difficulties.¹⁹⁶

6. However, supposing for the moment there is merit in distinguishing types of evil, I would like to develop a reductio ad absurdum argument, using the refinements of analysis employed by theodacists as they try to make sense of moral as against physical evil. My method is to see if this first level of

distinction would need to be followed by increasingly refined distinctions, each naturally arising from the preceding, until the process breaks down under its own weight. It should be noted that each of these refinements has been advocated by theodacists in the interests of useful and accurate classification.

The first step in the process is McCloskey's claim that moral and physical evil are radically distinct types of evil.¹⁹⁷

The second step also comes from McCloskey. He notes within these categories further distinct sub-problems. Referring to physical evils he says,

I shall be arguing that no one 'solution' covers all these evils, so we shall have to conclude that physical evils create not one problem but a number of distinct problems for the theist.¹⁹⁸

And regarding moral evil he says, "Three types of moral evil need to be distinguished".¹⁹⁹ These are, in summary, moral evils of omission, moral evils of commission where the instigator knows he is doing wrong, and moral evils of commission where the instigator mistakenly thinks he is doing right. Let us call these respectively, acts of omission; acts of intentional-commission; and acts of commission-in-error.

The third step also depends on McCloskey. It concerns the distinction already in mind between moral evil as breach of God's law, rejection of God's person, and neutral moral evil. Let us simplify these a little and call them neutral moral evil, and theistic moral evil.

Fourthly, in both McCloskey and Ahern we find a distinction is made between actual evil as specific and actual evil as abstract.²⁰⁰

Fifthly, from general discussion, there is a difference proposed between intrinsic evils and instrumental evils (= goods).

Finally, for my purposes, though not necessarily absolutely,²⁰¹ there is a distinction found in the literature between "prima facie" evil (which can be sub-divided in terms of context and perspective), and "genuine" evil.

Now let us suppose the plot in which Bonhoeffer was involved, to murder Hitler, had in fact been "successful". Would Hitler's premature death count as a case of a moral evil?

Prima facie, this is a moral evil, because it is a murder, or if that is thought to be a question-begging word, because it is an intentional death brought about by unauthorised people. Some would see the latter as intrinsically evil, and would therefore say it is a case of a genuine moral evil, albeit they might feel some sympathy with the deed. This would, therefore, be the case even if God did not exist and so it would be an "intrinsic neutral genuine moral evil". Now in the case imagined the death was brought about intentionally in full knowledge of the moral principles involved, and so it is an "intrinsic neutral genuine moral evil of intentional-commission". And as the analysis concerns a specific actual instance, it is an "intrinsic neutral genuine specific actual moral evil of intentional-commission". But what does this add to saying that it is an evil?

But, conversely, suppose one accepts Mackie's quasi-logical rule that "good is opposed to evil, in such a way that a good thing always eliminates evil as far as it can",²⁰² and suppose in the judgement of the plotters there was no other way to eliminate this evil without eliminating the evil-doer. Then one finds that the "murder" is not a genuine evil, but an only-apparent evil, because it is instrumental to the achievement of one's quasi-logical principle, a principle one regards as

fundamental to one's ethical conduct. Now, if the plotters are right in their understanding of the principle, they are doing "good by intention"; if wrong they have done "evil in error". Spelling this out, this means one or other of the following is the case rather than the "accurate" designation detailed above:

Either: Hitler's "murder" is in fact an example of an "intentional genuine good", i.e. "an intentional-commission of an actual neutral specific instrumental (only-apparent) moral evil, from the perspective of the plotters". But, again, one is left with a question in one's mind - this time, whether such classification only leads one into equivocation: what moral evil cannot be designated good by such a process? - and the modern world affords many examples of aggrieved groups who justify their actions in just this way.

Or: an "erroneous commission of a genuine actual intrinsic specific neutral moral evil". Such might be the case as pleaded by the defence lawyers. Perhaps the plotters would hope that at least God would take this view. Or perhaps hope that in the moral sphere there is room for the notion that evils are justified if a countervailing and proportionate good arises that could not have been achieved by any other means.

But there is the further complication that the "death" may not be a "neutral" evil at all, but a "breach of God's law", or perhaps a "justifiable breach of God's law", or perhaps a "fulfilment of the justice of God's law", or perhaps "permissible within God's law". It would therefore be a "theistic evil" of varying types depending which of these is so, and one would need to add a suitable list of alternatives to those given above. And there is the further consideration, within the theistic context,

of whether it would count as a "rejection of God's person" - especially if it was done in his name and for "Christian" motives.²⁰³

The permutations begin to multiply rapidly and it is not necessary to track one's way through their increasing complexity as explanatory power seems to decrease with each step, and therefore it is a path it is not proposed to tread. It has been engaged in only to expose the difficulties that arise as theodacists seek to bring clarity to the broad categories of moral and physical evil they themselves propose.

7. What general points may be seen as coming usefully out of this discussion? Firstly, that the proposal of many in theodicy to proceed by way of the separate routes of moral and physical evil looks decidedly more problematic than appeared at first sight, and that McCloskey's initial reservations were fully justified. The classifications proposed lack the requisite definitional hardness, and are at the same time too broad, too narrow, too interpenetrating, and too elusive to give one confidence. It might be objected that I have been critical of the need for definitional hardness as a pre-requisite of discussion, but that I am now insisting on it. Such is not the case - what is being said is that those who wish to follow the classification trail need such hardness; but it is not available. That is the same point as before. It might be replied that I am altogether overstating the complexities here, and that my first comment on the obviousness of the categories of moral and physical evil outweighs all complicating argument. My reply is that, of course, those who have built their theodicies, or their anti-theodicies, on these distinctions will be reluctant to give them

up. But it is incumbent on them to show precisely what it is they mean by moral and physical evil and precisely how a more rigorous approach to these categories affects their arguments.

My own lack of confidence in these distinctions leads me to propose, secondly, that the theodacist is better served by seeking to understand on a fresh basis how it is that the believer comes to terms with all those experiences in life which stand over against him and which he would actually prefer to be otherwise. The word "negativity" will be used to act as shorthand for such an all-embracing specification. That specification then leaves one free to approach the central question of the nature of the judgement involved in judging negativity to be "evil". From where does the Christian believer derive his evaluative criteria?

D. The Underlying Problem: Strictly Theoretical Analysis

I have tried to show why it is that when standard conception theodacists discuss the problem of evil progress does not seem to be in proportion to the effort expended. Such theodicy is wrongly formulated in that it is assumed (i) that believers have as a problem what unbelievers say they have; (ii) that believers have been prone to the temptation that if they can get their definitions of "God" and "evil", etc. right, they will be in a position to try to answer the problem of evil; and (iii) that believers have tried to erect defences of the existence of God in terms of "moral" and "physical" evil. Lying behind each of these is, however, a single assumption - that philosophy can tell us what we can know, and that the tool by which it does this is strictly theoretical analysis. I now argue against the use of this tool in elucidating the believer's problem of evil.

1. D.Z. Phillips contends that to ask whether God exists is not to ask a theoretical question. If it is to mean anything at all it is to wonder about praising and praying; it is to wonder whether there is anything in all that.²⁰⁴ Or again, that as to know God is to love Him, there is no theoretical understanding of the reality of God.²⁰⁵ The man, Phillips says, who construes religious belief as a theoretical affair, distorts it.²⁰⁶

2. In contrast, U. Gorman claims his interest is in the intellectual problem constituted by the fact of evil within the context of Christian faith.²⁰⁷ He says he is not interested in the practical problem about the management of evil, but rather a question of rationality.²⁰⁸

3. Matters are not quite so simple as such claims at first reading imply. Phillips is contrasting the narrower activity of analytical philosophy with his broader agenda that takes in the practice of the community within which the language of belief finds its role. Görmán, however, has in mind the contrast between armchair discussion and the fight against evil. But there remains the point of contact that what Görmán speaks of as rationality is what Phillips rejects - for Görmán rationality is an intellectual matter; for Phillips rationality is the "grammar" of a form of life.

4. The intention in this item is to move from Görmán's approach towards Phillips'. The critique relates to the use in theodicy of strictly theoretical analysis. My contention is that religious belief is distorted if a separation is made between the synthetic and experiential practice of the community of believers, and the forms of words in which its beliefs are expressed. A case is made for descriptive understanding of that unified experience as the proper activity as far as the philosophical input to the activity of theodicy is concerned.

5. First, let us note the breadth of support for Görmán's claim. Thus, from constructive theodicy:

A. Farrer: "... if we are to start with the sufferer, there are two problems, the first practical, the second theoretical ... The practical problem is pastoral, medical, or psychological ... We are concerned with the theoretical problem only."²⁰⁹

And from process theodicy:

D.R. Griffin: "Some writers argue that the problem of evil is an existential, practical problem, so that it is wrong to attempt to give any theoretical answers...

I reject this line of reasoning ...
...the theoretical side of the problem of evil is a significant aspect of the

existential problem to be met, and a theoretical problem can only be met with a theoretical solution."²¹⁰

And from analytic theodicy:

M.B. Ahern: "There are many problems concerning evil, some of them practical and others speculative. How to prevent a specific evil is a practical problem of evil. Since such problems are not philosophical, they will not be discussed at all."²¹¹

All such approaches will be called strictly theoretical analysis.

6. How should one react to the dichotomy which these authors insist divides the practical and the theoretical aspects of our experience of evil?

a) The first section quoted a number of authors who agree with this dichotomy, but who come down firmly on the practical side.²¹² They argue the Christian religion concerns what one does with evil, not what one thinks about it. But that is to fall into the converse error to that about to be shown in strictly theoretical analysis.

b) B. Hebblethwaite in Evil, Suffering and Religion²¹³ admits the dichotomy, but recognises the importance of both aspects. He sees there is (i) the distinction that can be drawn between suffering and wickedness, and (ii) the distinction between the practical and the theoretical. These distinctions can be brought together by treating the problems of pain (suffering) and wickedness (moral evil) on the one hand as a matter of religious practice, but also as an intellectual problem.²¹⁴ Each problem can then be considered separately. He first puts on one side the question of explanation and concentrates on the problem of coping with suffering and evil, and surveys the religions of the world for the practical resources they offer men. He then turns to the theoretical problem, and offers a discussion.²¹⁵

But finally his interest in life and experience leads him to reduce the value of that theoretical discussion, for he writes that the practical problem of coping with suffering and evil will never be solved by reading books and thinking. One has actually to meet religious people, Buddhists, Hindus, Christians, Muslims, Jews, and see how they confront the world's evils if one is going to grasp something of the resources of religion for coping with suffering and wrong.²¹⁶ In order to understand properly, he says, one must put oneself in the shoes of believers of many traditions as they pose their "why?" questions,²¹⁷ and try to see how reality appears to them.²¹⁸ Eventually, therefore, he is unable to keep apart the problems of coping and explaining, of theory and practice, for they are interdependent.²¹⁹ Writing of the resurrection and the afterlife, he observes that such beliefs help men both to cope with suffering and evil, and also to explain, if not their presence in the world, then at least the worthwhileness of creation despite the world's ills.²²⁰ What Hebblethwaite interestingly shows here is that, even granting the distinction of theoretical and practical, there is an inter-relationship between them in that what men do is a function of what they believe; and conversely. His initial insistence on theory and practice being distinct problems in belief, and his claim that these distinctions need to be clearly drawn,²²¹ is modified in the end to being a tool of analysis rather than a representation of how the problem of evil is "felt" by the believer.²²²

c) But is it necessary to work with this dichotomy at all? A writer who is successful in incorporating into his basic analytical structure an inescapable interpenetration of the theoretical and the practical is J. Hick in his "Irenaean" thesis.

Hick does not deny or affirm the importance of either dimension because each is the counterpart of the other. The "vale of soul-making" thesis is at one and the same time a theoretical and a practical insight into the significance of evil for the believer.²²³ To accept the thesis is also to take up a practical stance. How man understands evil and what he does in the face of it are inseparable philosophical aspects of Hick's theodicy - the theory has empirical fit. From many possible examples of this interpenetration, the following is typical:

in a world that is to be the scene of compassionate love and self-giving for others, suffering must fall upon mankind with something of the haphazardness and inequity that we now experience. It must be apparently unmerited, pointless, and incapable of being morally rationalised. For it is precisely this feature of our common human lot that creates sympathy between man and man and evokes the unselfish kindness and goodwill which are among the highest values of personal life.²²⁴

This position is both theoretically creative and practically significant. It encourages one to look further into the relationship between the theoretical and practical in theodicy, and to query the rejection of either in the way advocated by writers mentioned before.

7.a) How should one respond to the contention that theodicy is a philosophical task that is strictly theoretical? My response is to grant that theodicy as an activity must not be less than philosophical in character, but to contend it is not just philosophical. Thus, whilst rejecting the claim that there is a normative conception of philosophy as theoretical analysis, I would nevertheless argue that a descriptive theodicist should have a view of the reasonableness and defensibility and applicability of that way of doing philosophy which he or she espouses. Theodicists should, therefore, aim for internal coherence of

methodology, and fruitfulness of outcome. But they should also bear in mind that there is a further requirement in the context of religious belief. Theodical activity should be such as to reveal, if possible, the shape of the rationality of belief in its own terms, and not bend the shape of belief to fit that of the philosophical methodology in use. That approach to theodicy means of course the theodicist must give some account of how he sees his methodology as appropriate to the purpose in hand, and that he is not engaging in a form of philosophical imperialism. Now in this regard, it would be an advantage if the discussion were to be recognisable by the believer as referring to belief as he knows it to be a factor in his way of life. Religious believers hold their beliefs to be not strictly theoretical - indeed, such an understanding is rejected in Christian theism which gives specific attention to the interpenetration of belief and life. As has just been seen in Hebblethwaite and Hick, religious belief is not just a set of ideas, but motivating thought. Theodicy needs must reflect that fact. My interest is to see if philosophy as descriptive understanding is adequate to the theodical task thus understood.

b) Developing this point, let us attend to theodicy as deriving its character jointly from theology and philosophy.²²⁵ Can theodicy be a task of strictly theoretical analysis if it must have regard to theology as a separate and distinctive input to its activity?

Now, not the least of the factors that make theology a separate discipline are the notions of "revelation" and "normative event". These notions occupy a central place in any Christian theology. Theodicy cannot, therefore, proceed without regard to

those features of theology which make it Christian and not something else. Whatever the links with philosophy, theodicy must remain internal to Christian theism.

But what is involved in saying that Christian theism derives its life from particular claims about certain events which are taken to be normative and revelational? Crucially, that the Christian community also claims, by virtue of the fact that it is a living religious tradition, to enter still into the revelational experience, for it is by entering existentially through worship into the historical elements of its faith that the community experiences the God who is normatively revealed in the foundational events and in their experience. The continuing focus of this revelational experience being the practice of worship, it becomes clear that the theodacist must have reference to the practice of worship as the context in which utterances of belief have their significance for the believer, if, that is, he is to follow how those words are used within the lived experience out of which they have arisen. This existential experience of God through worship is manifested in the daily practice of the believer as he lives out his life on the basis of that experience. The believer is what he believes. His thought and action cannot be separated.

A proposal, therefore, that theodicy should be strictly theoretical is a proposal to cut theodicy off from the living roots of continuing Christian experience, and to place it in the alien environment of "neutrality" or of disbelief. To the contrary it is the day-to-day lived experience of the community, as it expresses its self-understanding in the context of the tradition, that gives meaning and significance to the words within which

the tradition has been encapsulated.²²⁶ The meanings of these theological encapsulations would thus be determined by the role they play in the life of the on-going, worshipping, practising body of believers.²²⁷

If theodicy, then, should proceed apart from the "religious" context in which Christian theism is embedded, it would be proceeding on the basis of an inadequate methodology. It is only to be expected that attempts to engage in strictly philosophical, that is theoretical, activity in theodicy will run into difficulties, and will fail to satisfy believers as to the relevance of standard theodicy to their concerns, for theodicy is only "at home" in the context of a living, worshipping, community of belief.²²⁸

c) It is worth emphasising that what has just been said is also true about theology itself. Insofar as theology is an abstraction, an encapsulation, a set of summary statements, in a form of life, it is not what the believer is certain of. This is the point of I.T. Ramsey's On Being Sure In Religion.²²⁹ When he argues that the believer can be sure of God, yet tentative about theology,²³⁰ and exhorts Christians frankly to acknowledge theological uncertainties, and not to conceal them from congregations or audiences, and to acknowledge points where they are doctrinally unsure,²³¹ he is recognising that it is not inconsistent for believers to claim at the same time that they are sure of God. He puts it in the form that all the believer's language, all his discursive theology, all his pictures, are at best temporal projections.²³² There is thus a need for theology, and thereby theodicy, to be constantly brought to the believing community for it to say whether that is what it is "sure" about.

The believer's certainty is to be found in the unformalised language of psalms as well as in systematic theologies, in the hymnbooks as well as in the creeds. As Görmann points out, the believer doesn't typically talk "theodical" language, but in terms of grace and love, and of God as king and father.²³³ Such words have contexts in life, and it behoves the theodacist to be very sure about how they translate into "omnipotence", "omniscience", and "perfect being".

d) When, contrary to these points, the theodacist takes key "theological" terms on their own, neat, and uninterpreted by informal networks of understanding and religious practices, he is invariably committed to giving such terms abstract definitions which are indebted to etymological factors and to cognate uses - thus, for example, "omnipotence" is taken to mean "all" and "power", and the meanings of all and power are determined by the theoretical theodacist by reference to cognate uses. But as I.T. Ramsey argues in Religious Language,²³⁴ a "qualifier" such as "all", in the logic of theological statements, is a special operator the purpose of which is to disclose a meaning to the "model" qualified (here "power") which is unique to God and which lies outside of the cognate uses. But that is an argument precisely to control the meaning of the word, not by an ordinary-language analysis, but by its use by believers. And, in any case, as noted, the concentration by theodacists on a limited range of theological terms selected from the whole network of terms used by the believer is itself a distorting factor - and the importance of not omitting or diminishing the notion of God as personal when discussing omnipotence has already been mentioned.²³⁵

e) It is also arguable that at a deeper level strictly

theoretical analysis of religious belief is, despite its intended aims, dubiously neutral, for there will be incorporated into the analytical process working criteria and presuppositions that set the framework of discussion. The problem is well-known in the social sciences, where even empirical research is recognised as having methodological problems in that the interpretive model chosen enters into what counts as evidence, as well as into how the evidence is organised into a pattern. The way in which interpretive models distort what they seek to explain is a main thesis of D.Z. Phillips' Religion Without Explanation. He argues that Tylor, for example, works in his investigation of religion with a heuristic model of religion as a natural phenomenon.²³⁶ Phillips asks in turn the philosophical question as to whether, if one understands religious beliefs in that way, one is illuminating or obscuring possibilities of meaning.²³⁷

But, it might be objected, strictly theoretical analysis is not empirically based, and is intended to avoid just such problems. But, there again, a second thesis of Phillips is of interest, for he argues that it is the philosopher Hume's influence that pervades attempts to account for religious belief.²³⁸ Phillips' contention is that if one sets attempts to account for religious belief against the use which religious language actually has in practice, then the methodological confusions of so doing quickly become apparent.²³⁹ There is, of course, the philosophical task of giving an account of religious belief, but were one to do so on the basis that ordinary-language analysis is the appropriate model, one needs to ask again whether such an approach illuminates or obscures possibilities of meaning.²⁴⁰ The philosophical route to reaching a clearer understanding of

what it means to believe, or not believe, in God would, with this in mind, be better directed towards understanding the kind of language that religious believers, or unbelievers, use. Phillips' argument is that to be clear about the kind of language expressed in religious beliefs it is essential to have an understanding of affirmation and denial in relation to religion. There are, he maintains, important "grammatical" differences of which the philosopher must be aware between such affirmations and denials and those in other contexts. He expresses the matter thus:

The task facing the philosopher is that of giving an account of the questioning of religious beliefs in a way that does not distort the kind of necessity associated with them, but also that of giving an account of this necessity in such a way that the possibility of questioning religious belief together with its possible rejection is not diminished.²⁴¹

As Phillips goes on to comment, this careful approach to religious belief brings one to face the odd position of the philosophy of religion as commonly understood in relation to the object of its investigation, for it is uniquely expected first to establish the truth or falsity of the object of its study, to show God exists - but his argument is that, however the proposition concerning God's reality is formulated, God's reality does not get its unshakeable character from its inherent nature, or from the kind of abstraction which philosophy tries to make of it so often, but from its surroundings, from all the activities that hold it fast - above all from the activities involving the language of praise and worship.²⁴² As much of this thesis revolves around such a claim, it is left for the moment there. The point is that descriptive understanding of religious belief needs to be sensitive to the inter-relationships of religious language and the form of life

in which it is embedded.

f) There are reasons, then, of a general nature that lead one to question the adequacy of strictly theoretical analysis as the contribution of philosophy to the activity of theodicy. Rather, my argument is that it is only when theodicy is "at home", that is, when it follows the moves made in actual Christian experience by practising believers, that it can discern the features of religious belief, and so be in a position to describe the shape of the belief that holds together God and evil as realities. The importance of the "practical" element in theodicy thus becomes apparent, for it is the practice of belief in a community of belief that carries with it the actual weight that words have for the believer. Words such as "omnipotence" and "all-goodness" in themselves are no more than tokens, which can be encashed in their full value only by those who know how to trade; but that is a skill learned through membership of the community and participation in its form of life. If the enquirer seeks the meaning of such terms, he will find it in the way they are used, in the role they play in the believing community, rather than in dictionaries, for "know-how" (rules of use) is critically important in giving appropriate "weight" to words. This is not to say that only the insider can make sense of religious belief - though to some extent that is the case, however offensive that fact may be to the strictly theoretical analyst - but it is to say that the outsider must be very careful to follow the use of words in context, and not be tempted to say from outside what words must mean. The outsider needs to remain responsive to the community if it consistently says that his or her understanding of its language is not what is meant.

There is a difficulty on the other side, too, for one can become so accustomed to using words that one fails to be aware of the real significance of the way they are used. Here the outsider might have a useful function in bringing the believer himself to understand more clearly the shape of his belief.²⁴³

Descriptive understanding of religious belief may, therefore, enter into dialogue with users of religious language, for it is concerned with how to describe accurately the structures of meaning in religious language. Such description is a philosophical task, but one that takes into account the "weight" of words in a way that theoretical analysis cannot, that is it is sensitive to the nuances of practice that crucially determine meaning in a context.²⁴⁴ This location of meaning in a context is such a commonplace idea that it is extra-ordinary that so few theodacists start from how words function rather than from definitions. What is appropriate, and what is not, in the use of words cannot be deduced from the words themselves - Wittgenstein's example of the dangers of analysing, outside its religious context, "God's eye sees everything", stands as a permanent warning.²⁴⁵

8. Why, then, do some theodacists handle religious belief in a strictly theoretical manner? To see what is fundamentally at issue here reference needs to be had to the larger debate in philosophy concerning the way language functions. Let us, therefore, tackle this question by, first, a specific discussion of the word "evil", and then a general account of the "religious use" of language.

Suppose that the theodacist is concerned specifically to discuss the assertion "evil exists". What is involved in tackling this basic point in theodical discussion? What can be

said about the word "evil"? Let us resist the temptation to provide a definition, or to discuss the origin of evil, and all such common responses of standard theodacists. Rather, let us ask the "language" question as to what kind of word "evil" is. Take, for example John Wilson's discussion in Language and the Pursuit of Truth.²⁴⁶ Starting with the place of words in language, Wilson argues that we use words with one general purpose in view - so that other people shall understand us. Words enable us to achieve this purpose for one all important reason. They act as signs, and as such convey meaning and can be interpreted. What is common to signs is the fact that people have agreed to use them in certain recognised ways, and it is our agreement about use, and not the signs themselves, which enables us to communicate. From this argument Wilson claims a very important conclusion arises: signs do not have meaning in themselves, but only in relation to agreement about their use. It is thus misleading to talk of words "standing for things", or "having" meanings. They only have uses, and those uses are largely determined by the rules of language.²⁴⁷

It follows from this discussion, of course, that ontological claims apparently present in "evil exists" need to be viewed with some caution, for, as Wilson goes on, in considering whether a word does have ontological significance we must ask the right sort of questions. As he says, a question like "What does so-and-so stand for?" or "What is such-and-such a sign of?" is likely to mislead us, for such questions take it for granted that for each sign or word there is a "thing" in the world outside to which the sign or word corresponds. It is, he comments, not as easy as this. It is not the case that we find the world

parcelled up for us into "things". It is we who do the parcelling. And many words do not "stand" for anything at all - for example, "symmetry", "liberty", "humanity", and "squareness". Nor "equal", "unfortunate", "good", "evil".²⁴⁸

Now, argues Wilson, the strong, and almost inescapable, prejudice in favour of naming the various experiences that we have from childhood onwards, and the strong bias we have in favour of treating all nouns and adjectives as if they were proper names, as if there were objects to which they could be attached, should not be underestimated. But strictly, all we can say of such words as "justice" and "humanity" is that they can be used in certain circumstances, are nouns, and that they have to be used in accordance with grammatical and syntactical rules.²⁴⁹

But, given this discussion, what follows for theodicy? It is that the theodicist is largely concerned with just such nouns which are open to the "naming" temptation. But such words, as signs, do not "have" meanings, but uses. They are not things that can be detached from their context of use. The relation between language and reality is such that words such as "evil" depend for their meaning on agreement in a form of life as to the weight that they carry.²⁵⁰ This agreement is not a neutral and antiseptic process of theoretical definition, nor one of attaching "names" to realities which are "things". Specifically, the context of worship, being the context within which theological and thereby theodical language belongs, provides the matrix for the use by the believer of that language, and is an inescapable factor in determining the meaning of language used in the Christian community. The total behaviour of the worshipping

community in the application of its agreed signs, that is agreed uses of words, cannot be filtered out. The question is, therefore, what role, what use, the believer has for such a word as "evil", that use being within the speech-act of which it is a part.²⁵¹ It is quite clear, when approached thus, that "evil" cannot have a meaning in theism as a practised belief apart from its relation to "God" as the presiding concept. Whatever that use is, it is a use that is conceptually subservient to the presiding concept. Attempts to give it any other status fail to take account of the way language functions in a form of life. "God exists" and "evil exists" cannot be given equal conceptual weight, or contradictory use, within a form of life which takes both with utmost seriousness.²⁵²

Let us pursue this a stage further. Wilson notes that the type of question one chooses to ask about a given topic carries within it certain implications as to what constitutes an acceptable answer.²⁵³ This point has of course been recognised in the structure of this thesis in that the unbeliever's and believer's questions have been taken to imply the propriety of different discussions. But the point applies at the detailed level, also. For example, in relation to "evil" typical questions in theodicy are, "What is evil?", "Whence come evils?", "What is the purpose of evil?", "Can evil overcome good?", as though there were an inevitable implication that the reification of evil implied in such questions is appropriate. But is it? Is it not possible, in fact, to eliminate entirely from talk of "evil" all notions of substance and ontology? This could be done by talking in the adjectival and/or adverbial modes. Thus:

not: Evil exists

but: Evil men exist

or: Men exist who act evilly.

Now the first of these examples is cast in "objective" form. But the others are cast in evaluative form. But why, it might be objected, should it be supposed that it is not correct to allow the substantive "evil" to give rise to an associated range of questions probing the nature of "evil"? Reply? Because "evil" is not a name that conveys its meaning in itself.²⁵⁴ But if it is more appropriate to treat "evil" as an evaluative word, it is also to be borne in mind that the believer reveals his own place in this language in providing the evaluative criteria in use in evaluation.

In such ways we place our mark on what we take to be reality; it is we who do the parcelling, and it is often we who fall into error in not spotting the implications of the parcelling that we do. Forgetting that the way we use language often makes use of shorthand devices, especially the one of naming, we take the grammatical form of the questions we ask as true signs of the status of that signified, and about which we wish to know. So likewise, for example, important questions in theodicy about the "goodness of God", the "will of God", and the "purposes of God", need to be approached with care - their grammatical form may contain traps for the unwary. I am, therefore, taking Wilson's comments as successfully identifying a basic weakness in strictly theoretical analysis - it fails to take into account central features of the way in which words and questions function in language as it is embedded in life. There is more to such a question as "Does evil exist?" than simply seeking to define "evil", and so on.

9. Turning now to a general discussion of the "religious use" of language, let us for purposes of clarification object to the run of argument above, based as it is on the suggestion that theology is a summary statement of Christian experience, and that it is only in a context of experience that words have weight. Is there not, it might be objected, a danger here of retreat into a quagmire of shifting meanings? Let us reply by dealing with three issues involved, and let us put them as questions. First, who, if anyone, is likely to be misled by the use of words in a context? Second, isn't "religious-language-in-use" far too blunt a tool for useful philosophical work to be done? Thirdly, what is meant by saying that in the use of language it is "we who do the parcelling"?

a) Ryle in his article "Systematically Misleading Expressions"²⁵⁵ asks the question whether anyone is really misled by the misuse of nouns in the "naming" way Wilson describes. Ryle's thesis is that when philosophers indicate such features in language, they do not imply that the naive users of such expressions are in any doubt or confusion about what their expressions mean or are in any need of the results of philosophical analysis for them to continue to use intelligently and intelligibly their ordinary modes of expression.²⁵⁶ It is true, he says, that for philosophical purposes such expressions need to be reformulated into expressions of which the syntactical form is proper to the facts recorded.²⁵⁷ But in saying this, Ryle is not denying that there is a logic in the mode of discourse of the common user. He is claiming that the mode of expression is "misleading" because it couches the facts recorded in a syntactical form that really belongs to facts of another logical order. Such

is the case, he says, with "quasi-ontological statements".

Anyone, he argues:

the philosopher included, who abstracts and generalises and so tries to consider what different facts of the same type (i.e. facts of the same type about different things) have in common, is compelled to use the common grammatical form of the statements of those facts as handles with which to grasp the common logical form of the facts themselves. For ... as the way in which a fact ought to be recorded in expressions would be a clue to the form of that fact, we jump to the assumption that the way in which a fact is recorded is such a clue. And very often the clue is misleading and suggests that the fact is of a different form from what really is its form.²⁵⁸

Now, previous discussion has indicated that Ryle's contention applies also to the language of the believer. Is the believer, one asks, making evaluative claims in a form that leads systematically to them being misunderstood by the philosopher, who thinks, because of their grammatical form, that they are descriptive in intention? If so, then "evil" and "good" naturally become for the philosopher quasi-ontological expressions which are the "names" of "things". Such phrases as "evil is to be shunned" and "evil exists" are taken to indicate, on the basis of their grammatical form, that there is a quasi-ontological reality "evil". But, if one looks on "evil" and "good" as the believer stating in descriptive form the evaluative judgements he would make, on the basis of his religious commitment, about the way things are, one sees that such evaluative judgements, not being descriptive, do not have straightforward ontological implications. But why would the believer want to put in one grammatical form facts of another type? Again, Ryle is of help here when he turns his attention to what he calls quasi-platonic statements, universals. Arguing, similarly to Wilson, that these are not objects, he claims that their use is to enable people to

speak concisely, emphatically, and elegantly, and that this is what the language-user is interested in doing. For the language-user there is no philosophical mistake. The mistake occurs when the philosopher is misled into asking the wrong questions in relation to them.²⁵⁹

Again, strictly theoretical theodical discussion forces itself to mind. To speak concisely, emphatically, and elegantly, the believer might well pray to be delivered from evil, may well confess to the evil he has done, and so on. But just as personification can be a concise, emphatic, and elegant mode of communication (e.g. "wisdom" as a woman²⁶⁰), so reification of evil can be for the believer. But one can no more draw simplistic conclusions from one than from the other. To make comments on the nature of the essence of evil is no more appropriate than to ask the colour of wisdom's eyes.

But, it might be objected, if the philosopher is so easily misled, is not the believer, too? Now, is this objection not the point of emphasising the location of language in a form of life, where speech and context belong together? To be misled is not to feel the weight. But in the practice of worship the believer feels the weight. He learns "at home" the role that words have, appropriately used.²⁶¹

b) It might be objected that this discussion implies that believers are more sophisticated than they in fact are - for it implies that when believers state beliefs in the "naming" grammatical form they are well aware that the weight is evaluative. But, it might be insisted, believers often take the beliefs as literally as the philosopher. Their words are thought by them to point to "things" - the language-in-use approach is, therefore,

too blunt a tool for effective description.

Now, the possibilities here are either that such believers are to be understood straightforwardly, and they are indeed as mistaken as the philosopher; that would be to reject the whole form of life as a blunder. Or, they speak in a manner that needs reducing to some other form of meaning - say a moral or existential meaning; and believers are in fact confused on this point. Or, that what believers say is in order as it stands, but its meaning is to be ascertained by placing the words in context, and it is the demand that believers give an account apart from that context of what they are doing which needs to be challenged, on the ground that an ability to give an account of what one is doing is not the same thing as the ability to do properly what one does.

Is it possible to set out an account of the last of these alternatives, and to show how literalistic language functions in the religious use of language? Here, two suggestions can be made which indicate that words are in order as they are in a form of life. The first suggestion is that one keeps to the forefront that meanings arise from the role words (as they are) play in a life-situation. The second suggestion is that a possible account of what believers are doing in their use of language can be outlined by reference to "form" and "function" in the way parables make their impact on those who understand their point. To understand a parable, to feel its weight, for it to have a role in one's life, is at the same time to pay attention to the story as stated, and to place it in a life-context within which the parable "works". What is essential to the parabolic use of language is that the point of the parable is exactly what it is

in the story, and exactly not that at all! The word of judgement, the word of warning, or whatever, depends on taking the story literally; but also on allowing that word to have a role in life, a function, which lies outside the terms of the story as told. Parables cannot (as Jeremias showed pace Jülicher²⁶²) be reduced to a generality, nor do they necessarily state facts in a form which has a simple, one-for-one, correspondence with the form of the facts to which they refer. To understand a parable is to take it as being in order as it is, but also to know how to feel its weight, to know how to give it a role.

Now, when Farrer says that statements about God cannot be anything but parables; that the art of balancing parables is acquired in use by believers; that it is impossible to study the art except from within the serious personal use of it; that the believer has the art but that to the unbeliever it is all nonsense because he lacks the criteria of use; and that "sympathy" is not enough,²⁶³ he is pointing us in a useful direction for descriptive understanding of religious belief. If it is protested that one needs an objective point of reference to control parables, then Farrer suggests that the Christian "parable" (story) has reference to the historical Christ, and must be compatible with what is revealed there.²⁶⁴ But Crombie makes a further important point in saying that it is better to attend, not just to what religious people feel or say about the world, but to how they dispose themselves towards God - that is, to learn what worship is.²⁶⁵ To describe religious belief, then, may be to leave everything in order as it is in the Christian story, but to have reference to the use of that story in the existential worship of Christ by the community as the context of

what is said. This is the line of enquiry which is developed later.

One is, therefore, distinguishing usage from use, not in the form in which Ryle proposed this distinction, but in the form M.B. Foster argues it.²⁶⁶ Linguistic mastery in knowing how to "use" words (Ryle) is not enough; for example with "moral" words we need to be initiated into the basic moral attitudes by which the use of the language is determined. Proper "use" is relative to the basic attitudes which speakers and hearers assume - "we"-sentences, as Foster argues, reveal this commitment. Literalistic "usage" may, therefore, not be the best test of what believers mean in what they say and do, even if some believers give an account of their religious use of language in those terms. What matters is how the Christian "parable" works (functions) in the believing community. What is the basic rationality into which the literalistic language of those believers fits? This literalistic language is the story-form of the parable; what needs to be understood is the weight that the parable has. The attention of the theodacist needs, thus, to be given not only to the "literal" words in the parable/story, but, more importantly, to the use of the story as the community enters into relationship with its God. There is the question therefore of meaning as it is attained in the community.

c) Finally, in this section, let us develop this last point in the broadest terms by looking at what is meant by saying it is we who do the "parcelling".

i) Dallas M. High in Language, Persons and Belief²⁶⁷ offers an important discussion of the relationship between language and reality, a discussion which not only brings together emphases made above, but identifies what comprises "meaning"

in a form of life. High questions whether words and statements can be analysed in the abstract, as theoretical analysis implies, for such a procedure makes arguable assumptions about the nature of both language and meaning. Such assumptions can be variously expressed - not only in "naming" theory, as above, but also in terms of words standing for ideas or thoughts in the mind, or in claims that language asserts or denies "facts", or that language can be studied much as a specimen may be by the scientist, or that the roots of language lie in ostensive definition, etc. But the difficulties of all such theories about language and meaning are not hard to see. Understanding language and meaning in these ways covers at most a primitive level of language development, and does not represent the complexity of our human form of life, which does many more things with language than such theories allow - making commands, offering praise, pronouncing people dead or married, uttering exclamations. Language does not simply correspond piecemeal with the world of objects, and meaning is not another thing in the world which can be independently categorised. This model of "meaning-itself" as a "thing" has, High suggests, more to do with a general view of the world as impersonal and mechanical than is sometimes allowed.

High's contention is, then, that any theory of meaning leads us astray if language is seen as a theoretical abstraction from persons as speaking men. The problem of meaning, he thinks, may be better approached by seeing it as less a problem of language than of understanding. To support this argument he rejects the three assumptions he finds in common to the seemingly diverse doctrines about language and meaning mentioned above. First

the assumption that language is a detached, abstract, and theoretical object suitable for critical investigation. Second, the assumption that meaning is detachable from the words uttered and from the understanding carried on between speakers and hearers in the linguistic act, such meaning being thought to reside in an intelligent universe of ideas, or in the predictable and quantitative world of bodily responses examined by behaviourists, or in the external world of objects and informative facts, or in conventional sets of logical, semantical and taxonomical rules or formulas. Third, and lying behind the previous two, the assumption that there is a radical dualism between speakers and hearers of language.²⁶⁸

High, as noted, contends instead that a more adequate approach to language-in-life is to be found by paying attention to the notion of "understanding", and he develops this argument from Wittgenstein's Philosophical Investigations. Words and sentences in themselves are neither meaningful nor meaningless; they attain these characteristics insofar as they have something done with them, and insofar as more than one person "understands" what is said. But what is it to understand? It is to engage in a public use of language such that both the speaker(s) and the hearer(s) relate to the circumstances in such a way that they are "able-to-go-on".²⁶⁹ In part this "being-able-to-go-on" (this "understanding", "meaning", "language-using") has to do with coming to know how to "follow-the-rule" which is relevant to the circumstance. But such "knowing" is not to be equated with private mental processes which are privileged to the individual, for following-the-rule, or understanding, requires at least one

other person to grasp and be satisfied with what I do.²⁷⁰

"Understanding" is, then, not a question of mental processes, nor of behavioural responses, but has to do with personal activity and speaking in community. Nor is it a matter of simply knowing the criteria or rules of use, but has to do with being able to speak in the first person, "I can go on". In this approach to "understanding" one is not referring to rote learning, or a technique, but with the actual using of a language, that is, with what I do in and with my speech as I express the rule. The contrast here with the naming (word-object) theory of meaning is sharp - naming an object does not tell one how-to-go-on, what to do next; being able to express (use) the rule does. Indeed a "name" (definition) only has point insofar as one already knows how to do something significantly with it. Words, therefore, are given meaning by being used by those who understand how-to-go-on in a social context of speech - there is no extra-logical order available to man higher than the human order of meaning and speaking, and there is no further clarity to be found in breaking language into parts (words/sentences), for the meaning (understanding) does not lie in the parts but in knowing what-to-do-next in the circumstances, context, employment, and application of speech in life. The clearest essence of meaning does not lie in the most reducible elements of language, nor in theories of meaning known in advance, but in the use of the language in social understanding.

ii) Lying within this discussion of High's is the notion that language is a form of action. To be "understood", the person acting in speech must act within a social matrix, or form of life, wherein the language-in-use has a history and a

literature and a grammar. The speech-act, to be meaningful, needs to be "felicitous" or "happy".²⁷¹ Such an environment does not necessarily lead to a fixity of use (as is displayed in dead languages), but it does have fixedness - that is, there are rules of appropriate and inappropriate use, but also rules for appropriate development, expansion, change, and decay of present use. Fixedness of use therefore has two aspects - firstly, fixedness is essential if more than one person is to know how-to-go-on, but secondly, fixedness is not so rigid as not to allow more than one person to agree on a modified or new happy use of words. But such fixedness is one way of saying what constitutes a form of life, for a form of life is that community of use of speech and language where there is a shared practice as to what constitutes a happy use of words. Such an account of "form of life" allows for the flexibility needed to recognise variety within a community of use, but is not so flexible as to allow anything to be entertained.

There is, then, no world of objective meanings to which human language corresponds, but patterns of language-use where the language-users know how-to-go-on. Whether one understands depends on whether one can say "I-can-go-on", and be able to say it happily. Language is intimately connected with its users, and consequently meanings are not reducible either to rules of grammar, dictionaries, logical environments, behavioural factors, ostentation or anything else (though all of these have their place); language has life in being used happily, and this is the context in which questions of language and reality should be approached. Words, symbols, sentences, actions, belong together in human life as expressed in its social, cultural and inter-

personal forms. What we understand and count as reality (our "world") is closely connected with the interpenetration of language and human life. In claiming man as a language-user does something with words in a social context, and that it is impossible properly to consider words used apart from the user(s) of those words (they are only instruments for man's action), one is also saying that man's intellectual beliefs and linguistic performances are (to use High's expression) "indwelt" by man,²⁷² that is, man lives in and through his beliefs and uses language to live in a community of shared beliefs. His thought forms, attitudes, categorical commitments, analogies, and presuppositions, can thus be seen to be his efforts to understand (know-how-to-go-on) in a particular "world" or reality, that world or reality being inseparably bound up with both the language-user and the language-used.

iii) What are the implications for theodicy of refusing to separate man, language, and reality, and of suggesting that personal understanding in a social matrix is the proper focus for the study of theodical language? First, that it is proper to look at what believers say (formal and informal theology) in the context of what they do (worship) if one wishes to offer a descriptive understanding of theodicy. Second, that the "religious use" of language, as instanced in theodical language, is not to be explained in terms other than would be appropriate for all language. Of course, religious language has distinctive characteristics, for religious users of language are constructing a distinctive reality in which God is real - they are putting their personal signature, their "I-can-go-on", to a construction of reality of a certain kind. It is this commitment

to act, to use language in a certain way, with certain understandings, that creates the living and concrete speech of the community sharing that form of life. The same however, in principle, is, as High points out, the case generally. Poetry, mythology, logic, mathematics, creeds - all require personal commitment, attachment, signature, indwelling, to be meaningful modes of comprehension. Each and all are rooted, for their status and legitimation, in the "I-can-and-will-go-on" of men in community.

Third, that as an activity, language is grounded, not in fixed entities beyond itself, nor in the language itself, nor in logic, nor in anything other than ourselves in this world in interpersonal relationships.²⁷³ There are no higher courts of appeal for meaning, for those which might be proposed are themselves underwritten by man in his putting his personal signature to particular ways of constructing reality - models, disclosures, metaphors, myths, facts, analogies, thought-forms, etc., are ways men and women act in the world as language-users; and insofar as these acts are man's "indwelling" in language, they are self-affirmations. As High argues, linguistic modes are neither without foundation, nor are they self-evident principles detachable from the world and history, but are concrete activities of speaking man - and that is their status, meaning, justification, and legitimacy. To ask whether a construction of reality as expressed in language has meaning, is justified, has legitimacy, is in fact to ask whether the sorts of beings who are committed to those forms of life should be the sorts of beings they are. To seek to answer that kind of question is, however, to seek to evaluate not just language but language-users, not just

definitions but definition-holders, not just beliefs but believers. But, one asks, who is sufficient for such a task?

Theodicy cannot, then, proceed without reference to describing how it is that Christian believers are "able-to-go-on" as they tell their story, that is, without seeking to describe the moves by which the believer holds together in his experience as mutually compatible the realities of both God and evil. This section has shown that traditional theodicy cannot succeed in this task because it makes demands of the believer which are outside his intentions and interests - in each case the demand is incompatible with the living and concrete experience of adoring worship by the believer as a language-user. He cannot, and should not, allow that his experience should become an abstract item for debate, his language judged by definitional analysis. To understand the believer's holding together of both God and evil it is necessary to seek to describe how-he-goes-on, and how his use of language works, that is, wherein its happiness and felicity lie.

Section Three

Section Three: Theodicy and Grammar

A Introduction

1. Thus far, I have set on one side investigating theodicy as found in process thought on the ground that process theology belongs in an alternative model of theological language to that of classical theism,¹ and the procedure in constructive theodicies of providing a predetermined epistemology was found to be a serious weakness.² Some of the assumptions of standard conception theodicy have been examined and it has been found that when such discussion is understood as an attempt to engage in theodicy on the unbeliever's terms, it becomes clear that what is at stake are the criteria of evaluation written into both believer's and unbeliever's use of theodical terms. Let us, therefore, now turn to examining the nature of the evaluations that believers make as they "go on", and the implications of this for descriptive theodicy.

2. How is it possible for the believer to provide justifications or reasons for his or her basic evaluative assumptions? Whence do these criteria of evaluation derive? Specifically, what is the ground for saying what it means for the believer to call God "all-good"? As already said, it is intended to argue with Hume that no inferences as to the nature or existence of God can be made from how the world is,³ and therefore no use can be made of natural theology or even of analogy for help in establishing criteria. It has also been accepted that the way things are in the world is ambiguous between good and evil. This ambiguity would seem to cut off any appeal to natural law or naturalistic ethics. And I do not wish at this point to take the shortcut of appealing to supramundane criteria, whether they

be in the form of supernaturalistic ethics or objective ethics, as this would beg the question as to the relationship of language and reality. Rather, the question is posed now as to whether theodicy depends on commitments by the believer (or the unbeliever) which are in some way arbitrary. Perhaps there are no criteria for deciding between these rival claims?

3. The nature of the impasse here can be illustrated from the difficulties Wilson gets into when he tries to push through his account of language to its final position. Wilson claims that evaluative words, that is, those we use to praise, blame, commend, or criticise, have evaluative character because they give or deny value to people or things.⁴ If one concentrates, he says, on almost purely evaluative words such as "good", "ought", and "right",⁵ one sees that what underlies their use is that a commendation is in mind - for example, to talk of a "good" horse does not really tell one anything about the horse, but makes a judgement relative to some criteria that are in mind, and in reference to which we wish to commend it. But we are not logically compelled to have any particular set of criteria in mind - "The word can be applied to anything on any criteria, provided we have some criteria: it is like a blank cheque which we can fill in with anybody's name, provided we have reason for paying him money".⁶ It follows from this contention, of course, for Wilson, that different people can come to diverse and even opposite evaluations - according to the criteria they are applying. What to one person is "courageous" is to another "foolhardy".⁷

This factor of diversity of evaluative criteria is perhaps the point Novak and Aiken had arrived at in their dispute over

the kind of "goodness" theists ascribe to God,⁸ for each is commending a different set of criteria for what the theist means when he calls God all-good. Aiken, Novak alleged, had a human model of goodness in mind. But what, it might be asked, is meant in any case by such a notion as human goodness? Aiken seems to presuppose moral agency - but what then are the tests for describing human activity as moral, and if moral, good? Wilson hazards a suggestion:

... for most people today the 'criteria of goodness' for men ... include such tests as whether he is kind, whether he is honest, brave, straightforward, good-tempered, and so forth. These criteria are really the method of verifying our value statements.⁹

But simply to quote this highlights immediately the difficulty, for not everyone would agree this is an adequate account of human goodness. But such disagreement would hold for all other proposals too, including Aiken's. Aiken is thus faced with first providing criteria for human goodness, and then the criteria for ascribing this particular model to God. But meanwhile, Novak will have none of this talk of human criteria with regard to God's goodness. However, he is left with the problem of where to find another set of criteria; but all he can propose, in turn, is a rather rhetorical position more clear in what it rejects than in what it affirms.

Wilson, similarly, has to face the difficulties of how one can ground or verify value judgements. Arguing that value statements (Joe is a good man) are distinguishable from attitude statements (Good old Joe!) in that the former are verifiable in the way he has suggested above,¹⁰ and in that they involve assigning value on the basis of these criteria, he is faced with the problem of explaining differences in the

criteria adopted by different people - for example, Humanists and Christians. Clearly some set of higher criteria would be useful, not to say necessary, for resolving such disputes - just such a dispute as, it has been argued, underlies the definitional approach of standard theodicy, in that its definitions have an evaluative basis.¹¹

Now, Wilson concludes, and I think correctly, that no such higher criteria are available.¹² This is because the identification of such an agreed set of higher criteria would be on the basis of reasons for agreeing they are the higher criteria. But that could not be the way such disagreements could be resolved, for what counts as a reason depends on the higher criteria. Whatever was agreed on as ultimate must be unverifiable: must, because an (infinite) regress of reasons for reasons removes the very basis of reason - compare the "third man" problem in Plato's theory of forms; unverifiable, because verification is the application of criteria, not the provision.¹³

However, Wilson's suggestion at this point is disappointing. He proposes the way out of the impasse is to admit there are psychological reasons why people should seek to agree on evaluative criteria, even though there are no logical reasons - a move reminiscent of Hume's concerning the entrenched position of causality in our thinking. This proposal is disappointing because the envisaged resolution of this dilemma amounts to a quantitative basis for morality. Wilson suggests¹⁴ it is possible that in fact all men will come in the future to agree on the ultimate criteria, and

Then we shall be in a position to say what is true and what is not true in ethics with certainty ... for all that is necessary for discovering truth is that we should all be agreed about what method is appropriate.¹⁵

But how then could one distinguish the enforced unanimity of the Brave New World from the voluntary unanimity of Utopia? Some other factor than total agreement appears to be required if one is to be able to decide between different possible unanimously-held sets of criteria. And, in any case, the religious believer typically claims that his criteria of evaluation have an absolute character that belies this whole analysis. His criteria do not derive from this earth at all, and are neither enforced on the one hand, nor dependent on his agreement or approval on the other. Wilson in fact shows some awareness of this feature of belief, for in his chapter on "Freedom and Evil" he writes:

there are two things which must surely fix the criteria of goodness for Christian believers. 'Good' must have some reference to what God is like, and to the state of affairs which we may crudely call 'being in Heaven'. These, in Christian belief, are the ultimate facts: God and Heaven exist permanently, and our world is but a short sojourn. It seems somewhat inconsistent with Christianity, therefore, to derive criteria of goodness from this world, and not primarily from God's nature or from the heavenly state.¹⁶

4.a) It would be possible in standard conception theodicy to put forward at this point an outline thesis picking up many of the points that have surfaced. It might run something like this. The Christian and the unbeliever do not disagree that there are in experience events they would prefer to be otherwise. They disagree, however, as to whether, and in what sense, these experiences are to be described or evaluated as "evil". They disagree on this issue because they are committed to different sets of fundamental criteria of good and evil. Specifically, the Christian identifies his criteria with the nature of God and Heaven which, he claims, provide him with absolute criteria. The

application of these criteria is his method of verifying his value statements. The Christian can, therefore, within these basic commitments to God and Heaven, argue variously that "All was well, and all shall be well",¹⁷ or that "All is well, and all things shall be well",¹⁸ or even perhaps, "All's well that ends well".¹⁹ These theodical arguments are all simply moves within the same basic commitment to the absolute nature and source of criteria as located in "God" or in "Heaven", and have to do with differing applications of these criteria.

There are, however, substantial difficulties in such a thesis. The first is that no means is provided for knowing what the nature of either God or Heaven is, that is, no means is provided of showing such criteria to be objectively "true". Typically, of course, information on these points has been derived from Revelation and from Natural Theology. The basis of both of these has, however, traditionally been to attach the will of God to the way things go (or should go) in the world. The nature of God, that is the will of God - for we only know of God's nature as expressed through his will - is seen in terms of God's active love towards us in the world. But therein precisely lies the problem of evil, for the problem of evil concerns how to reconcile the nature of God, as all-good, with the state of affairs in the world which provides prima facie evidence of either a defective or a malevolent will of God. What purports to be an answer is, then, a restatement of the problem. And as far as "Heaven" is concerned, how does this amount to more than yet another "two world" theory that seeks to solve the problem in world-one by positing a supposed (but unknown) world-two, the chief feature of which is that it

absolutely lacks the problem we find in world-one? That procedure does nothing to mitigate the problem in world-one. Indeed, in one sense the procedure makes the problem worse, for if the problem can be absent in world-two, it is logically and actually possible for moral and spiritual beings including men to exist apart from evil. The implications of this outline thesis are then, either, that in world-two men are no longer men, or, if they are men, the world as we know it is not a necessary condition for being a man. It might be replied that the world as we know it is necessary for becoming a man; but that suggestion raises a whole host of problems, concerning the integrity of man as he now is, at least as difficult as the problem to which it is offered as a solution.

But if taking "Heaven" straightforwardly proves to be problematic in understanding religious belief, what then is the point of talk in the Christian community about "Heaven"? Now, we have already seen when considering the Christian story as parable that a possible way of understanding the religious use of language is to distinguish the "form" of what is said from the "function" it has in the life of the believing community. With "God" as the presiding concept, the absolute qualities attaching to the notion of "Heaven" can in this way possibly be seen to have the function of giving absolute status in the story to the life lived by the believer in the presence of God. There is thus a possibility that if one is sensitive, in a way sometimes not considered, to how language is used in the worshipping community, and one does not depend too simplistically on the form of what is said, that a different approach might be needed to describe the function of such absolute notions as

"Heaven" in the Christian use of language. There is a need to clarify, therefore, as argument proceeds in this section, the role of "absolute" elements in the religious use of language.²⁰

b) But, it might be replied, both Wilson's approach, and the one just suggested, in any case miss the main point, which is to do with the commitment of an absolute kind to a set of criteria. It is the absolute character of the commitment that is represented by the notions of God and Heaven. Further, it may be argued, this same point lies behind the ascription to God of all goodness and all power. For example, Görmán argues, in the light of his argument that the problem of evil is a question concerning the commitment made by the Christian when he ascribes goodness to God in the face of evil in the world,²¹ that it is the nature of this commitment which is made absolute:

When claiming the goodness of a person, this can be done more or less definitely. The commitment or commendation can be made more or less unconditionally, and the criteria for goodness can be considered as more or less fulfilled. The Christian says sometimes, not only that God is good, but also that he is all-good or wholly good. I think this is adequately interpreted as implying, both that the commitment is made unconditionally, without tacit reservations, and that God is considered to fulfil the criteria of goodness to the utmost degree.²²

The flaw in this approach, as Görmán states it, is that it can be transferred at will to any supposed entity to which unconditional commitment as a psychological phenomenon is a theoretical possibility. Also, it locates the nature of God in the strength of the individual's commitment. Against this needs to be set the argument that the shape of religious belief can only be understood in the context of its location in the community of belief. But when one spells out what it means to talk of "commitment" to belief in terms of a community, then one

is talking about the way in which words have a role within the practised belief of that community and of the requirement for the members of the community to use the words with those meanings if they are to be understood. The qualifier "all" would then be seen not to refer to the psychological condition of individual members of the community, nor to that of the community itself, but to the fixedness of the use of words, that is the fixedness of meanings, in that community.²³ "God is all-good" would, for example, refer to the fact that in the pattern of meanings that constitute the form of life of Christian believers, there is a fixedness of relationship between the use of the word "Good" and the word "God" such that only God can be used as the ultimate criterion of goodness in the community; there is an internal connection of meaning between the words "God" and "Goodness" which is made absolute in "happy" and "felicitous" understanding.

But am I saying, then, that Christians are committed to a language, and not to God? Not at all. What they are committed to is the use in the Christian community of a language with reference to God. But, it might be objected, which language? Are there not many Christian languages in use? What of the apophatic, the mystic, the evangelical, the liberal? And further, do not different experiences connect with these different languages? Of course. But let us remember that insofar as all these variations locate themselves within the Christian tradition, there is a limit to the differences that can be tolerated. For example, "God" cannot in Christianity be the criterion of evil; and the experience of God must be compatible with the revelation of God in Christ. This objection reinforces in fact my earlier point that, with regard to any particular theological formulation,

the "form" of words propounded (the story) must always be seen as not being what the Christian is fundamentally sure of - what he is sure of is the experience of the forgiveness of God.²⁴ Now, as said before, the place where language and experience meet crucially in religious belief is in the worship of God, for therein lies both the believer's experience of the judgemental grace of God - that is, the all-sufficiency of God's power to impart love in forgiveness to the repentant sinner - and what the words "God" and "goodness" mean. What is in mind here is not, again, any specific form of worship, which is highly variable within the Christian tradition,²⁵ but all that is involved in the language of praise. Perhaps Temple's account of the nature of worship fills this out, though what he says needs to be given a community dimension. He thought of worship as the submission of the whole nature to God; the quickening of conscience by his holiness; the nourishment of mind with his truth; the purifying of imagination by his beauty; the opening of the heart to his love; the surrender of will to his purpose - all gathered up in adoration as the most selfless emotion of which man is capable. Clearly, if one is to attempt to place theodicy in the context of Christian life, it must be a key task to locate the shape of the believer's belief concerning the all-goodness and all-powerfulness of God in the nature of his worship of that God, that is, in all that is involved in the language of praise.

5. But has this discussion broken at all the impasse of the status of the believer's criteria? Not yet; but certain things have become clearer for the descriptive theodictist. Firstly, that in considering the nature of the believer's

criteria it is necessary for the theodacist to have regard to the absolute (unshakeable) nature of the believer's claimed experience in worship. Secondly, that the theodacist have regard to there being an interrelation between the language of belief and the specific experience of the community - and that he note that religious belief is not merely a "set of ideas" which is claimed to be superior to alternative and competing "sets of ideas". Thirdly, that when he seeks to ascertain the meaning of words used by the community, he has regard to the role words play in the practices of that community. But to pay attention to such factors is to give attention to the shape of religious belief - that is, to the structure of meanings in that form of life. It is to take account of the rules in a community for the correct applications of words, that is, to the "grammar" of belief.²⁶ To ascertain the nature of the believer's criteria would thus be to ascertain the standards of intelligibility implicit in the language and activities of the Christian tradition. It would be to understand what can, and what cannot, be said when one knows-how-to-go-on as a believer.²⁷

On the other hand, what has not become clear is the issue posed in the wider debate in the philosophy of religion as to the ontological status of the God worshipped in the Christian faith, so the question becomes urgent as to what kind of reality such criteria as "God" and "Heaven" have for the believer. This question brings us to face the claim of such as D.Z. Phillips that it is sufficient to clarify the points just itemised, for therein lies the reality of belief. "God" and "Heaven" (and the various other notions that operate in an absolute way in the life of the believing community) are, for Phillips, "absolute"

because they constitute the picture with which the believer lives, and which is the reality of the believer, and is his "world". To be human, Phillips contends, is to live with some "picture" that determines how we act, and determines what counts as reasons for actions. The old questions of an ontological kind do not arise because they are based on a confusion as to the nature of objectivity - a confusion based on a separation of objectivity from subjectivity, and one which ignores the extent to which the "world" in which we live is a theory-laden world, a "world" which is our work.²⁸ The old questions also reveal a commitment to the notion that one way of relating to the world, using one set of criteria of "reality", can be normative of what is to count as reality - so the physical world and the criteria for physicality are mistakenly thought to be applicable to the religious "picture". On this "old" view, only the criteria for physical "facts" are allowable as a test of "what is". Religious "facts" (such as God and Heaven) either "are" or "are not" in the way physical things "are" or "are not". And, further, the role of philosophy is to tell us what we can know.²⁹ Not so, say such as Phillips, for what "is" depends on the "criteria of logic",³⁰ or rationality, that lie within a way of "picturing" the world. Physicality is only one such "picture". Its view of reality is not, and cannot be, normative. Nor, therefore, can philosophy tell us what we can know. It can only describe what can be known within a "picture" - that is, it can describe the structure of thought in that area, describe its shape, describe its "grammar". What is clarified is not what can be known, but what can be said within a "picture" coherently. The existence of God is, therefore, to be

understood in terms of the role that the existence of God has within the religious "picture" where he is a fundamental reality. To ask the old ontological questions in religion is to betray a basic confusion as to how we live as human beings, and as to the nature of thought, and rationality.³¹ Let us now turn to examine this position.

B. Phillips and the Religious View of Evil

1. It is not possible to understand what Phillips has to say specifically about the religious view of evil³² without locating his comments in the whole structure of his thought about the relationship between God and the world. In thus engaging with Phillips' thought, the intention is to identify points to carry forward, and these will be of two types. Firstly, points well made and which are adopted, though sometimes on a revised basis. Secondly, points where his position is found to be inadequate, and where there is a need for development.

2. Let us start by raising Phillips' rejection of the kind of discussion that Wilson favours, which first divides words into descriptive and evaluative categories, and then has difficulties finding a basis on which it is possible to make absolute statements in morality. In "God and Ought",³³ Phillips argues against A.I. Melden³⁴ in relation to the role of the father in a family, and charges Melden with failing to distinguish who a father is from what he does. The importance for Phillips is in relation to God as Father, and the widespread claim that, as one cannot derive evaluations from descriptions,³⁵ so one cannot argue from a descriptive statement about God as Father to

an assertion of an obligation to God.

But consider human fathers, says Phillips. Pace Melden, it is the case that who the father is, namely the father of his children, is an important factor in determining what ought to be the relationship between them:

So many of the obligations I have to my father do not depend on whether he has done things for me or even on whether he loves me ... the child who loves his father only as long as he is a good father has an imperfect love of his father.³⁶

But what is the basis of this judgement? Surely, says Phillips, it refers to the fact that this is the man who begat you, the man to whom you owe your existence. There is only one such man. And therein lies a lesson concerning God's fatherhood. Now, to the charge that this argument confuses description and evaluation, Phillips replies that my obligations to my father are independent of any decisions that I make, and are internal to my membership of a family - within the family the fact that this man is my father gives a different moral significance to the fact. To understand what is meant by calling someone your father, argues Phillips, is to understand that one has certain obligations towards him. The status of "father" entails certain rights, and these rights bring obligatory duties which are the case whether or not I meet them. And so also with God. Phillips' points can be put together thus:

"To understand what it means to believe in God is to understand why God must be obeyed." "The fact that the will of God is questioned does not destroy the internal connection between the will of God and what one ought to do." "The religious concept of duty cannot be understood if it is treated as a moral concept. When the believer talks of doing his duty, what he refers to is doing the will of God."³⁷

The absoluteness of this duty to God can stand in tension

with moral duty, and Phillips instances Kierkegaard's discussion of the religious man who finds a tension between what he knows to be the will of God and his moral obligations to his family.³⁸ But, on the other hand, there cannot for the believer be a total distinction between the realms of religious and moral discourse, because religion is a way of life,³⁹ and the importance of its doctrines and worship and ritual are that they connect with life as a whole - for example, forgiveness is worthless if not given social expression.

So, by understanding the nature of human fatherhood within the family as an institution, one can understand something of the type of obligations that a believer has towards God - obligations that are simply because he is and is the source of our existence;⁴⁰ and one also understands that such obligations mean nothing unless they lead to internally consistent actions in life, in all its contexts.

But, at this point there occurs a move so fundamental to Phillips' thought that it is impossible to understand how he describes the nature of religious belief without recognising it as a standard technique. Let us call this his method of contrast - precisely what it is that a religious belief means is to be identified by what is involved in the use of that word, by believers, in its religious role, and in contrast to its standard use in an every day context.

Thus, Phillips maintains⁴¹ that religious duties in the family of God are distinguishable by contrasting them with moral duties, in that religious duties should be meditated on day and night; are entirely general in nature; can never be completely fulfilled; comprise an attitude to existence as a whole; and

exhibit acceptance of God's will. To understand the nature of religious duties is to understand what it means to believe in God. Against this and in contrast, moral duties have temporal limitation; are specific; can be fulfilled; need not "be"; and do not lead necessarily to a knowledge of God. Religious duty can thus be understood by setting it over against what we mean by moral duty. Both types of duty, however, are to be understood by reference to practice, for moral practices and religious practices express the respective meanings of those modes of discourse. The importance of the method of contrast becomes apparent when it is realised that it forms part of the basis of Phillips' rejection of natural theology, and prevents any traditional use of analogy.⁴² In this particular instance of the "father", Phillips makes the move thus:

Unlike morality, which recognises that sometimes it is not wrong to decide against one's obligations to one's father, religion recognises no circumstances in which one is justified in deciding against one's obligations to God. This is because in rejecting God's will one is not rejecting one claim among many within an institution such as the family; one is rejecting the foundation of an institution. To reject God's claim ... is to reject a way of life as such.⁴³

3. This raising of the method of contrast leads one on to note the extent of the division Phillips places between the nature of religious beliefs as absolute and other realms of discourse. I refer for the basis of this point to his "Subjectivity and Religious Truth in Kierkegaard",⁴⁴ where it becomes clearer why we should love God regardless, and simply because he is. The point that Phillips picks up from Kierkegaard is the qualitative difference (contrast) between the temporal and the eternal - by which terms Phillips refers respectively to that which is contingent, dependent on how things go, "world-

historical" (so Kierkegaard), on the one hand, and that which is absolute on the other. The word "eternal" here, for Phillips, does not stand as a way of giving infinite temporality to an objective God, as though God were to be spoken of, like us, in terms of time, though uniquely; for "eternity" is not an epistemological notion,⁴⁵ but one which stands in contrast to temporality - so as to deny its use in any form in relation to God. So, in speaking of religion as turning away from the temporal towards the eternal, Phillips is referring not to an everlasting existence but to the way in which the concept of the eternal plays a role in very many human relationships.⁴⁶ For example, marriage vows are eternal in the sense that they play an absolute evaluative role in marriage, not in the sense that they are everlasting - for a married couple, "the prospects which come their way are judged by what they have vowed to be. This is one reason for saying that the prospects are temporal, but the vows are eternal."⁴⁷ The chief mark of the eternal, therefore, is that it is not part of the way things go, but determines how we respond to the way things go. And this difference between the temporal and the eternal is absolute. There is no method of infinite approximation⁴⁸ by which one passes from one to the other - no amassing of facts or arguments will bridge the gap, it is an infinite qualitative difference. For the believer, therefore, - that is, for the person who has made the transition to the level of the eternal - faith is cast in absolute terms. This absoluteness faces in two directions. Firstly, towards God, for God is the one who is entirely possessed of the eternal - his love, his will, his forgiveness, are fixed in that they are eternal. But the believer faces the

world also, and, in the light of the eternal, meets the world, and assesses the way things go. The judgements he makes will thus be very different from those of the world-historical perspective, and Phillips instances what the believer makes of the Cross of Christ as an example. He quotes Kierkegaard on this:

nothing in the world has ever been so completely lost as was Christianity at the time that Christ was crucified...

And yet, eternally understood, the crucified one had in the same moment accomplished all!⁴⁹

The chief implications of Phillips' line of argument for theodicy, and especially for the status of the criteria by which the believer evaluates the way things go, are clearly immediate and far-reaching. Firstly, as eternal, the love of God is not based on the facts of the way things go, but is itself the measure by which the Christian assesses the facts.⁵⁰ Secondly, to know this love of God is to know God, to have eternal life, to become subjective, that is, to walk with God.⁵¹ Thirdly, the marks of this understanding of the love of God are shown in the way the believer gives thanks to God. These thanks will not be based on the way things go, for "the possibility of thanking God in all things, a possibility St Paul speaks of, is, Kierkegaard says, part of the eternity which God has put in men's hearts".⁵² Fourthly, it is only when a man has "died" to the world-historical and temporal view that he has the ability to love God and to thank him in this way. And this ability to thank God in all things is the goodness of God. The goodness of God is a given mode of response to both the good and evil in the world: it is agape.⁵³ Fifthly, these ideas do not dispense with the problem of evil, but "On the contrary, it is

placed on a new level of seriousness".⁵⁴

But to such a thesis some objections are obvious. Clearly, it might be protested, such a religious faith is meaningless for it is compatible with whatever is the case, and therefore, as it makes no difference, it has no meaning.⁵⁵ But Phillips is not disturbed by such an objection. Yes, there is a difference, he replies, but not of the kind that Hick and Flew have in mind. "The kind of difference the love of God makes is no more and no less than the difference involved in dying to what Kierkegaard calls the objective world-historical view of things".⁵⁶ This reply, however, put like that, sounds rather circular, and perhaps suggests the duck/rabbit "seeing-as" model of interpretation. But Phillips' use of "dying" suggests something more serious, and perhaps the difference may have been better illustrated and defended by appealing again to the role of vows in marriage. The "difference" in being married is by no means the kind of difference found in "now-you-see-it-now-you-don't", or even of experiencing a life-situation "as" marriage. It is to "die" to one world (mode of existence) and to become "alive" in another. It is to allow one's life to come under the eternity of the marriage vows against which no circumstances of life, nothing in the way things go, be they for better or worse, can count as evidence - even if the marriage is a necessary condition for those events coming to pass.⁵⁷

A second objection is that the "truth" of this position is entirely internal to the religious view, and no arguments have been adduced to show why the unbeliever should abandon his world-historical view for the eternal and religious view. However this demand to provide reasons cuts many ways - it is a quite

different thing when one asks for reasons within a system of thought, as against seeking reasons for it. For example, Hick's notion of the voluntary cognitive basis of the theistic and atheistic "experiencings-as" provides no external grounds for those voluntary cognitive acts. Nor do notions such as "on-looks", "blik", etc. There is thus a tension in claiming on the one hand that religious belief has a non-cognitive ground (that is, that the ground is an option, or a perspective, etc. from which cognition arises), and then insisting that external cognitive reasons be advanced for that non-cognitive ground. Phillips frankly recognises this, and makes it a virtue - for it becomes the essence of religious belief that it is a form of life, not a form within life. Perhaps it is necessary for Phillips' critics to show that, at bottom, they do not assume the same? Phillips' argument is that by the very nature of religious belief, they cannot.

C. Phillips and Theodicy as an Activity

1. The Input of Polemic

Underlying the approach Phillips takes to theodicy as description of the religious view of evil is a distinctive view of the various inputs to the activity of theodicy identified in section one - as to the nature of philosophy, the shape of epistemology, the shape of theology, the use of polemic.

Firstly, some comments on polemic. Phillips would no doubt deny there is polemic involved in his philosophy, and insofar as he intends to elucidate the shape of religious belief in terms of its internal structures, its "grammar", his denial would be properly made. He consciously argues in several places⁵⁸

that philosophy, as he practices it, is not in favour of or against religious belief, and indeed that, in describing it accurately, some people might find religious belief objectionable.⁵⁹ Also, he claims what he says applies equally to unbelief as to belief.⁶⁰ But Phillips' position is more complicated than this simple denial allows, for Phillips is a committed advocate of his view of philosophy⁶¹ perhaps necessarily so, for in many regards he has been pioneering a new style of philosophy of religion. There is a constant tendency, therefore, for Phillips to intertwine his descriptive understanding of the shape of religious belief with his defence of descriptive understanding as the genuinely philosophical input to theodicy. Indeed, as will shortly be indicated, much of his positive case for descriptive philosophy is made by his argumentative method of contrast and denial in relation to analytical philosophy.

Secondly in regard to polemic, we have seen the importance in theodicy of the frame of mind of the theodacist. Here also, Phillips should be exempt from polemic, in that description should be apart from such factors. However, there is one aspect of Phillips' work which may be thought to come down on the side of optimism. This is his contention that believers can only properly praise God, thank God, for that is their duty as children of God, as has been seen above. However, later argument will show that Phillips has not fully described the nature of religious belief here.⁶² This stance of optimism needs to be tempered with an account of how protest is also possible for the believer.

Thirdly, Phillips draws a sharp distinction between "true" religion and "superstition", the latter being religious belief

which includes causal notions.⁶³ Now, where Phillips allows his own views to surface, he can be read to be defending "true" religious belief, for at the end of the Concept of Prayer he talks of Weil's discussion of the criterion for religious truth as being "profoundly right".⁶⁴ It is true he also there comments that philosophy alone is not able to bring the blind to see, but the implication is that philosophy with help can. And, as will be seen, this attitude can enter into his description of particular believers.⁶⁵ And all this despite protestations to the contrary. Certainly, Phillips makes clear that what he thinks "true" is based on his religious and moral judgement,⁶⁶ but that being the case, his philosophical descriptions ought to have described without prejudice differences in understandings of religious belief. The tension here is that whilst philosophical description can show a belief that lacks internal coherence, and conclusions can be drawn from this, it cannot show that a belief found to be coherent is "true". It can also show that beliefs previously thought to be incoherent may have been thought to be so owing to a lack of descriptive adequacy in the approaches used, but again that has no implications for action. Phillips is right, then, when he separates religious and moral judgement from philosophy, but perhaps not always successful in making the distinction work in his arguments, which give the impression that his religious judgements are not unaffected by his philosophical descriptions.

There appears, then, to be an element of polemic in Phillips' work - in favour of a particular view of philosophy, and of a particular view of "true" religion. My position here is that descriptive philosophy should be content to describe the

shape of belief. To this end it has been argued that descriptive philosophy is the appropriate tool in this case, as one is dealing with an "indwelling" of language by a community. But the use of that tool does not indicate whether what that community says is "true", or even whether some of its members know the truth. It concerns the shape of the internal coherence of that belief. To make the move into that community, to become a believer, is to make a quite different and evaluative move. Description and evaluation within the family may be inextricably linked in the way Phillips shows - but philosophical description of how the community makes its moves does not have that kind of implication.

2. Epistemology and Theodicy

a) Let us now concentrate on the issue of how Phillips' epistemological ideas enter as an input into his religious view of evil. In earlier discussion arguments were mounted against the use of predetermined epistemological frameworks in theodicy,⁶⁷ that is, against epistemologies used to systematise religious beliefs. My question now is, does Phillips' epistemology act in the same way as Leibniz' and Hick's? Or does his attempt to set out the nature of belief in terms of its internal structure give rise to the epistemology used?

Phillips comments on what his epistemological thesis is, and is not, in a response to charges of fideism.⁶⁸

An opponent of religion might claim that far from leaving the question of religious truth unanswered, I have guaranteed that any possible answer is favourable to religion by insisting that the criteria of intelligibility in religious matters are to be found within religion. The objection confuses my epistemological thesis with an absurd religious doctrine. To say that the criteria of truth and falsity in religion are to be found within a religious tradition is to say nothing of the truth

or falsity of the religion in question. On the contrary, my thesis is as necessary in explaining unbelief as it is in explaining belief.⁶⁹

Let us take it from this quote that the essence of Phillips' epistemology has to do with the location of "criteria of intelligibility" and "criteria of truth and falsity". We have already seen to some extent the way in which this works - the criteria of religious duty are to be found within the institution of the family of God, and these criteria are qualitatively different from those in non-religious realms of discourse, they are characterised by eternity. There is an internal fixedness, unshakeability, absoluteness, grammar, within religious beliefs because they all say themselves and each other - God is his nature, which is his will, which is his goodness, which is his love, which is his grace, which is his forgiveness, which is to have the spirit of God, which is to walk with God, which is to give thanks to God for all that there is. To understand one is to understand all. The network of religious beliefs is, therefore, rational because internally coherent, and the beliefs are true for those who affirm them and false for those who deny them, for religious beliefs are not in the indicative mood but in the affirmative.⁷⁰ To affirm this set of ideas, to know God, can only be done by, as it were, joining the family, sharing in a form of life, coming to know how to use a language, for to know how to use this language is to know God, and this common knowledge of God is religion.⁷¹ He is to be found in the language people learn when they come to learn about religion,⁷² just as children come to know what the world is through the language they learn. But language here must be taken in the large sense of the role it plays in the community. So, for

example, the understanding involved in prayer cannot be separated from the activity of praying.⁷³ In the most general terms, belief in the true God is synonymous with worship,⁷⁴ and it is here that the nature of the believer's criteria become clear, for it is here that epistemology is identified with semantics in that "the meaning of God's reality is to be found in His divinity, which is expressed in the role worship plays in people's lives".⁷⁵

Now, one needs to be clear as to what it is that Phillips is rejecting when he identifies epistemology with semantics in this way. He is rejecting, as noted above, the transference of the criteria of physical objectivity into what he claims is a "language-game" that has its own criteria of reality,⁷⁶ but along with this objection there goes a whole set of denials which spell out what is involved in claiming that knowledge of God as a reality is not at all comparable, or related, to the knowledge of physical objects as realities:

i) it is denied that ordinary-language analysis is a suitable model for establishing what is the case in religion. It has already been shown that Phillips regards religious beliefs as being quite other than ordinary world-historical pronouncements, and also that they are not in the indicative mood. But there is a further contention, and it is that religious beliefs can only be analysed in ordinary-language terms at the level of their surface grammar.⁷⁷ But, says Phillips, this surface contention assumes "too readily that words such as 'existence', 'love', 'will', are used in the same way of God as they are used of human beings, animate and inanimate objects".⁷⁸ On the contrary, "Depth grammar is made explicit by asking what can and

what cannot be said of the concept in question. To understand the limits of what can be said about a concept, one must take account of the context in which the concept is used".⁷⁹

ii) it is denied that religion as a whole stands in need of justification. "The whole conception, then, of religion standing in need of justification is confused. Of course, epistemologists will seek to clarify the meaning of religious statements, but ... this means clarifying what is already there awaiting such clarification".⁸⁰ Forms of life are givens, they just are.

iii) it is denied that religious beliefs are explanatory. This denial is linked to his rejection of religious beliefs as ever being intended to be explanatory hypotheses. The whole of Religion Without Explanation is a presentation of this fundamental point in his thought. It connects to his rejection of religious language as being in the indicative mood. Rather, religious beliefs provide the "picture" that a man lives by. "But what does believing in a picture amount to? Is it like believing in a hypothesis? Certainly not ... It does not involve the weighing of evidence or reasoning to a conclusion. What it does involve is seeing how the belief regulates a person's life".⁸¹ Conversely, not believing a "picture" is not like not believing a hypothesis. The importance of this point comes out when one asks, as was done earlier, whether believers and unbelievers could find some higher criteria to settle their differences on the goodness of God. "Beliefs, such as belief in the Last Judgement, are not testable hypotheses, but absolutes for believers ... The absolute beliefs are the criteria, not the object of assessment".⁸² It is an implication

of this that believers and unbelievers do not contradict each other, but affirm and deny a given picture - the unbeliever simply declines to use the believer's picture, and vice versa.⁸³

iv) it is denied, in consequence, that the way things go in the world constitutes evidence in favour, or against, the religious "picture". It is usually thought that one needs reasons for religious belief, and that evidence is relevant to proofs of the validity of those beliefs. Not so, says Phillips, for we are dealing here with "bedrock"⁸⁴ matters. For example, what reasons are there for saying that one's sins are forgiven? How does a believer know this to be so? The believer might be tempted to look for evidence of this forgiveness, and say that he had experienced God's mercy, or that this mercy was shown in Christ dying for us. But what does the claim to forgiveness really amount to? To the believer pointing to expressions of God's mercy, not his searching for evidence for it.⁸⁵

If one is thinking of evidence for saying that one knows these things, there doesn't seem to be any. Wittgenstein says that the believer has 'what you might call an unshakeable belief. It will show, not by reasoning or by appeal to ordinary grounds for belief, but rather by regulating for all in his life'. These beliefs are taught not as beliefs which require further reasons to justify them. They are not opinions or hypotheses.⁸⁶

v) it is denied that inference is possible from the world to God. This denial is, again, an ubiquitous idea in Phillips' writing, and has as its basis not only the kinds of argument that Hume adduced,⁸⁷ but also the Kierkegaardian qualitative distinction between the temporal and the eternal. "Would it not be odd if the Creator were assessed in the light of his creation, rather than the creation being seen in the light of the Creator's nature? ... God is not to be judged by the

world, but the world is to be judged by God".⁸⁸

vi) it is denied that it is needful to be reasonable in religion. This denial brings together Phillips' thesis in a sharp way, and has to do with the attitude of the religious believer. In contrast to all theodacists who seek to show that the way things go is reasonable if rightly understood, Phillips regards the religious believer as facing an unfair world with a determination to "overcome". This determination is not a reasonable attitude, nor is it arrived at by the use of reason, but is the espousal of a certain kind of love, to possess which is to know God and to have eternal life.⁸⁹ What "the believer calls 'success' will seem a failure in the eyes of the world, what he calls 'joy' will seem like grief, what he calls 'victory' will seem like certain defeat. So it was, it is said, at the Cross of Christ".⁹⁰

b) There are many fine critiques of this whole epistemological thesis of Phillips,⁹¹ but let us raise only those points of criticism which are centrally relevant to this thesis.

Firstly, although Phillips denies that he has applied a predetermined philosophical position and epistemology to religious belief, and claims that the reverse is the case, that the struggle with problems connected with prayer led him to his position in philosophy,⁹² it is arguable that he has here a general thesis which cannot be shown to derive from the nature of belief, but which seems to be applied (with great benefit) to characterising religious belief. Thus, he says:

What I tried to urge was that the distinction between the real and the unreal does not come to the same thing in every context. To think otherwise is to fall into a deep confusion about the relation between language and reality.⁹³

But it is not all obvious how this claim can be deduced directly from the traditional language of religion, certainly not that of Christianity. The chief reason for saying this concerns the nature of Christianity as an historical religion set in time and space with all its particularity. There will be a need later to return to this neglect by Phillips of the historical dimension to Christian belief, when it is sought to incorporate the historical element centrally in an epistemology which is derived from the way religion is practised within classical theism. Whether that attempt proves successful is secondary to the important point that if there are epistemological claims made in Christianity, they must be deducible from the shape of its beliefs and practices if internal coherence is to be found, and described. Phillips' thesis does not seem to meet that test adequately.⁹⁴

Secondly, it is not at all clear that, when applied to the problem of evil, Phillips' thesis is centrally concerned with what Christians are trying to say. This objection may sound surprising, but as is shown in a moment in discussing Phillips' input of theology to theodicy, Christ and his death are not really needed for Phillips' account of the view of evil which the Christian believer has. Indeed, it has already been shown that Phillips' basic pattern of description concerns such non-historical and general notions as religious duty and the eternal. To this description the person of Christ is at best illustrative. Again, it seems not unreasonable to claim that to describe Christian belief one must incorporate irremovably the place of Christ in "Christian" epistemology - that is, in the case of Christianity, in what way knowledge of God is

achieved through Christ.⁹⁵

Thirdly, it is open to question whether Phillips has not taken the same position at bottom as was rejected above in relation to Görmann; namely, that what is absolute in religion is the commitment of the believer rather than the criteria to which he is committed. J.E. Smith makes this point (in relation to Wittgenstein) when he writes, "It is important to notice that the 'unshakeability' in question has nothing to do with the logical status of a belief, but only with the absolute tenacity with which it is held by the believer".⁹⁶ There is no doubt Phillips would protest vigorously that Smith has misunderstood this point, but how can Phillips argue against the fact that, say, marriage vows are only eternal, on his position, so long as the commitment to them remains tenacious, so long as the picture holds? The problem for Phillips is that, if he is successful against Smith's charge, then as Sherry says, his account of religious language leaves it "rather like a balloon floating in the air without any attachment to earth".⁹⁷ But, again, Christian belief is characterised by the "scandal of particularity" Just how does what is "known" in the Christian "picture" relate to history and specifically to Jesus of Nazareth?

But positively it is accepted, despite these problems, that Phillips has made out a case worth pursuing concerning the internality of criteria of intelligibility and their fixed relationships within a realm of discourse, and that understanding such internal coherence relates to identifying and describing those criteria, and that the whole context of belief and practice is needed to ascertain the role concepts play in a form of life.

What I am saying, then, as a response at this point to

Phillips amounts to this. There is a proper role for philosophy to play in describing the shape of belief within a "language-game", but it is another thing to claim that a particular epistemological thesis concerning the distinction between the real and the unreal not amounting to the same thing in every context means that in this context it does not amount to the same thing. It is one thing to claim the nature of the object addressed determines the grammar of the talk,⁹⁸ but it becomes merely circular to claim at the same time that, from the grammar of the talk alone, one can determine the nature of the object addressed. Either one assesses the "grammar" by knowing the nature of the object, or one assesses the object by knowing the nature of the "grammar", or one holds them dialectically in a process of conjecture and refutation. For Phillips to say that what the language says is itself might be perfectly alright, if it could be demonstrated that the object of that language is necessarily of the sort that Phillips supposes. But description itself cannot show that the terms of description used are necessarily the only ones that might be suitable - compare the various types of descriptive language that have arisen in the disciplines to tackle the question "What is man?". One's unease is increased by the fact that pervading Phillips' thought is a generalised theory of rationality which says that there is no general theory of rationality available. What is the game within which such a statement could be made?⁹⁹ To make this epistemological theory work in the religious language-game Phillips uses his method of contrast. Illuminating as this is on many occasions as to the character of religious beliefs, it nevertheless has, as Phillips uses it, the methodological effect of making the

content of whatever belief is thus handled only what is known by contrast. When infinite qualitative difference is added, then of course religious beliefs turn out to be radically different from ordinary-language uses - but does that tell one about the beliefs, or the philosophical techniques? Now, various points were noted above¹⁰⁰ that one must bear in mind when seeking to describe the status of the believer's criteria. The third of these was that there needs to be a coherence between the theodacist's understanding of what the believer's words mean and the role those words play in the community that uses them. In the light of my unease at this point about whether Phillips' epistemology and the techniques which he uses to apply it are external to religious belief, rather than internal to it, let us now turn to an account of his theology in his own terms, and at the end of it seek to resolve the difficulty.

3. Phillips' Theology and Theodicy

a) In section one some observations were made on the Christian world view by commenting on the type of language system that is used in classical theism in relation to its presiding concept "Theos", and it was determined to write within the interpersonal language system. A difficulty arises, however, concerning the connections between the type of reality Phillips holds God to be and whether God is personal, that is, personal in the "normal" sense of the word. Two lines of approach are possible at this point. One is to tackle this question directly, and to decide whether or not "person" is the sort of notion that can be entertained under the criteria that for Phillips constitute the Christian language-game. The other is to take a look at what Phillips has to say about Christian

theology and to see what it means, within his way of talking, to talk in personal terms. The latter course is taken for the reason that there lies in Phillips' use of the method of contrast a barrier to moving from ordinary use of language to the religious use of language.¹⁰¹ The word under discussion has to be understood within its religious use or not at all. What is not in doubt, however, is that Phillips uses the language of persons in relation to God. My interest now is in what it means in Phillips' theology to speak in absolute terms of God as a person - for as noted earlier (in some discussion of Hick) one of the unresolved problems of standard conception theodicy is how to handle this notion.¹⁰²

Distributed through various of Phillips' works there is a comprehensive account of Christian doctrine on offer relating to God as person, an account which almost amounts to a systematic theology.¹⁰³ Now it has already been claimed that theodicy needs to be set in the full range of terms in which believers seek to speak of their experience of God rather than in a short set of "theodical" terms. It will become clear in examining Phillips' theology of the "personal" God that what Phillips has to say about the believer's view of evil has reference to just such a wide range of terms.

b) Let us start on this point by picking up again Phillips' locating the believer's absolute obligations to God in terms of the family of God in which the Father, as the sole source of the existence of the children, has certain rights, and the children consequent duties. Phillips' point is that "to understand what it means to believe in God is to understand why God must be obeyed".¹⁰⁴ Indeed, to be a believer, is to look at

life in this way and to regulate it accordingly,¹⁰⁵ and to admit of no exceptions to one's obligations to God.¹⁰⁶ The Christian is, therefore, concerned with what God's will is, for in knowing God's will one knows God's nature for "God's nature is the grammar of God's will".¹⁰⁷ A connection arises, therefore, between what the nature and will of God are and the Christian community, for it is in the family of God that one finds knowledge of the known will of God.¹⁰⁸ "What can conceivably be said to be the will of God is determined by prevailing beliefs about God",¹⁰⁹ that is, what can be said about God's will lies within the general beliefs about the nature of God as set out in Christian traditions. It follows, Phillips argues, from this location of meaning in the public language of the community, that no private opinions can properly be held over against the community as to what the will of God is, and certain things cannot be said to be the will of God.¹¹⁰ A chief characteristic of the will of God is that, like the will of the dead, it cannot be changed for it is possessed of eternity.¹¹¹ It is not susceptible, therefore, to the way things go. "In this respect, the will of the dead is akin to the will of God; it is the measure in terms of which the individual assesses himself or understands himself and the world".¹¹² One cannot argue with the will of God,¹¹³ but only contemplate it.¹¹⁴ In this way God's will acts as a "given" in the life of the believer in terms of which he must resolve the problems he faces.¹¹⁵ So what is it not to be in the will of God? It is to experience the anger of God. But what is divine anger? And what is his mercy?

Here we come to face both Phillips' method of contrast,

and also his appeal to semantics as based in the use of language by the community. We have seen that in order to know the will of God the religious believer must be a participant in a shared language;¹¹⁶ he must learn the use of religious concepts, and to know how to use this language is to know God.¹¹⁷ It is also in this way that he knows what it is to be aware of the anger of God. To be able to see meaning in religious concepts in the sense of being able to use them is "to come to see what divine anger means", for it is "to come to view one's life in relation to the will of God, and to recognise the horror of estrangement from it".¹¹⁸ But to contemplate the will of God in this way is to see the difference between God's will and human wills. To be angry in ordinary-language terms means to be able to say "I am angry"; it involves a state of anger; it might or might not be justified anger. We know what all this is like, and we share its language. But the eternal will of God and anger of God are not so. Their "grammar" is different. And so is the "grammar" of God's mercy. Ordinary-language "mercy" is my plea, "Don't do this to me". But, in contrast, when the believer pleads for God's mercy he is not asking for favours in that kind of way. "What the prayer amounts to is: 'Don't let me become that'. One is concerned over what one is becoming as a person. One is talking about what one is in relation to the unchangeable reality of God".¹¹⁹ The reality of God's will, anger, and mercy, therefore, have to do with the internal relation that exists between the believer's seeing himself within the family of God and the sort of person he is becoming. They have to do with the believer's communion with God as the source of his hope for himself.¹²⁰ They do not have to do with interpreting

one's relation to God in terms of the way things go, but seeing the way things go within a certain picture.

But it has already been indicated that for Phillips the believer's way of seeing has to do with dying to the world-historical perspective and becoming alive to the eternal. But this is to talk of the nature of the believer's love of God, and also of his love of the world. Both of these are ways of giving expression to dying to the world's way of regarding things.¹²¹ To see the world as God's world would be, for the believer,¹²² to possess this love, but this would not be a cosmological theory. It would be to possess that certain kind of love which we have already seen overcomes the world and to possess which is to know God and to have eternal life.¹²³ It is the "measure which brings order to whatever is the case; not the order of a plan, but the order or meaningfulness involved in the exercise of love".¹²⁴ So this eternal love, this love of God, establishes for the believer an internal connection between seeing that there is a God and seeing the world in a certain way.¹²⁵ To see the possibility of such a love "amounts to the same thing as coming to see the possibility of belief in God".¹²⁶ So, belief, and understanding-in-religion, and love can all be equated with each other.¹²⁷ Again, by the method of contrast, the grammar of this love can be told. Temporal love depends on how things go, it may change, it may end in failure. Not so eternal love. So, for example, on the death of a loved one, the believer does not see eternal love as defeated by the way things have gone. "The death of the beloved must not rob life of its meaning, since for the believer the meaning of life is found in God. The believer claims that there is a love that will not let go

whatever happens. This is the love of God, the independence of which from what happens is closely bound up with the point of calling it eternal".¹²⁸

This love of God spreads out to all, for Christianity wishes to speak of a kind of love such that no man is excluded from it. It calls this kind of love, love of one's neighbour, and regards it as contrasting with everyday love of one's fellow man in that it lacks particularity, and loves the other simply because he is - it is thus internally related to the love of God apart from which it cannot be understood.¹²⁹ Indeed, love of one's neighbour is one of the implicit forms of the love of God,¹³⁰ and to have this love is to have the Spirit of God, and to walk with God.¹³¹ It is also in this context that one understands what sin is, for "The believer's sin is to behave in relation to people and things as if they were his by right".¹³² To see that the wages of such sin is death is not, however, to make a calculation that to be evil is to put oneself in the position of receiving unpleasant wages, thus separating the deserts of sin from the nature of sin. It is to have a horror of sin.¹³³ It is sin, of course, that puts man in need of the grace and forgiveness of God. Phillips' comments here are that clearly forgiveness does not depend on the good in one outweighing the evil,¹³⁴ but on the fact that, whilst still a sinner, man can walk with God as a present reality¹³⁵ (which is the point that he suggests unbelievers do not see). But this walking with God, this having the spirit of God, is known in our forgiving as we are forgiven: "if we forgive others, then we have the spirit of God in us, and this is our forgiveness".¹³⁶ There is no gap between our forgiveness of other people and

God's forgiveness of us.¹³⁷ To be cleansed from sin is to be able to carry on despite one's vileness.¹³⁸

It is in this context that the believer understands the power of God. "The true God is the God we think of as almighty, but as not exercising His power everywhere".¹³⁹ The influence of Simone Weil becomes significant here, for Phillips builds on her claim that "the spirit of God is the spirit of self-denial".¹⁴⁰ In this light, the spirit of renunciation is the spirit of God in man,¹⁴¹ and in this way, for example, Job is able to regard his life as a sacrifice to God, for the love of God is sacrificial, it involves a denial of itself.¹⁴² But this sacrificial element in the believer's life is not meritorious, for it is linked to the grace of God which cannot be willed into one's life but has to be contemplated, waited on,¹⁴³ for it has to do with taking account of something (eternal) which is other than oneself.¹⁴⁴ To talk of the power of God, then, is to speak by contrast as against the power of man. Divine power cannot be resisted, but it needs to be understood that this power of God works through the love of God,¹⁴⁵ which is sacrificial, not assertive.¹⁴⁶

The ability to give thanks to God is closely linked to seeing one's life as a sacrifice to God¹⁴⁷ for it is the ability to offer thanksgiving for life as a whole, with all its good and evil; to see the world as God's creation is to see meaning in life¹⁴⁸ and not to elevate oneself.¹⁴⁹ To give thanks in this way is to fix one's attention on the fact that people are, not how they are, and to give thanks.¹⁵⁰ Thankfulness to God is internally related to talk of the meaningfulness of life,¹⁵¹ which itself connects to the goodness of God in that God's

goodness "consists precisely in the fact that the meaning of life does not depend on how it goes".¹⁵²

The believer therefore lives in hope and peace. Despair is to think that life itself is hopeless,¹⁵³ but this hopeless despair is to live without Christ. The believer who is indwelt by Christ sees that the confession of man's radical insufficiency and inadequacy are preconditions for receiving the understanding or grace that comes from God, and which is the indwelling of Christ.¹⁵⁴ The hope that this indwelling brings is, however, not a hope for anything imparticular but is "simply hope, hope in the sense of the ability to live with himself".¹⁵⁵ It has to do with contemplation, not endeavour. This hope is also the meaning of salvation, for salvation is the ability of the believer to see his whole life, with its good and evil, as a gift from God, and thus to see that the love of God brings salvation from despair.¹⁵⁶ The peace of God that comes with salvation is the believer coming to terms with the fact that he is as he is in the gift of God - and perhaps this kind of acceptance is the meaning of saying that the peace of God passes understanding.¹⁵⁷ This peace is to know all things are in the hands of God, which means the believer knows, whatever the contingencies of life, he can say that with God all things are possible, for to say this means he recognises that God alone is necessary, and that one's love of God is fixed whatever is the case in the contingent world.¹⁵⁸ It is in this context also that the meaning of trust is to be found, for it is the commitment of the believer to the eternal God, whereby the believer ceases to be dependent on the odds for such-and-such an outcome.¹⁵⁹ Trust is "meeting the danger in God" and "seeing that what is

of value cannot be destroyed by the way things go".¹⁶⁰ Again, in this context one comes to see what prayer amounts to. Prayer is to be seen as one of the wider worshipful activities of the community¹⁶¹ in which, through praise and worship, the unshakeability of God is held fast,¹⁶² on the one hand, but on the other hand, such worshipful activities are the means by which the believer reaches an understanding of himself, where he "comes to himself".¹⁶³ So, for example, "although God does not come to know anything when one tells one's sins to Him, the person who confesses comes to know something about himself which he did not know before".¹⁶⁴ It is in this reciprocity of religious belief and self-understanding that the significance of the believer's talk of the afterlife is also to be understood. It does not say anything about a further quantity of life, but is the believer seeing his own life in the context of the eternal.¹⁶⁵ This view may also be expressed in terms of living a life regulated by the picture of the Last Judgement.¹⁶⁶

c) So perhaps one can draw together the main interests of Phillips' theology, and his view of the nature of God as person, in two quotes:

- i) The state of a believer's soul is seen by him in the light of its relation to beliefs in the Fatherhood and Love of God. The notions of the fatherhood and love of God constitute eternal life, the life of God, towards which the soul aspires.¹⁶⁷
- ii) I am suggesting then, that eternal life for the believer is participation in the life of God, and that this life has to do with dying to the self, seeing that all things are a gift from God, that nothing is ours by right or necessity ... In learning by contemplation, attention, renunciation, what forgiving, thanking, loving, etc. mean in these contexts, the believer is participating in the reality of God; this is what we mean by God's reality.

This reality is independent of any given believer, but its independence is not the independence of a separate biography. It is independent of the believer in that the believer measures his life against it.¹⁶⁸

D. Assessment

1. It has been shown that in Phillips' case theodicy runs parallel with the full range of his theology, and does not just relate to a few terms abstracted for analysis as definitions. It is also clear that what matters in this theodicy is the role concepts play in the life of the believing community. What the believer says and how he acts are internally related - there is no strictly theoretical account possible of religious belief. To learn the meaning of the religious "picture" is to learn how to react, and Phillips calls religious beliefs "expressive reactions".¹⁶⁹ It is also clear that Phillips offers a possible account of the absolute and non-hypothetical nature of religious beliefs, and that he does this by actually looking at what believers do and say. He certainly passes Wilson's test of not trying to derive the absolute criteria of Christian believers from this world, but from the nature of God and Heaven (or the eternal). Again, the language Phillips uses is indeed the language of the personal - Father, will, love, goodness, grace, forgiveness, etc. - and the role he gives this language is highly creative in describing the shape of Christian belief in the round.

2.a) But there are also things to be said on the other side. Firstly, and returning to the epistemological question which was left over, what is the degree of coherence between the account Phillips gives of theology and what in fact believers

do and say? How does Phillips in fact react to particular cases of belief? Let us refer, in order to answer these questions, to his comments on three mothers who had negative experiences to cope with as believers as he mentions them in "Religion and Epistemology: some Contemporary Confusions".¹⁷⁰ The first mother has a mentally handicapped child, and says, "Only my religious faith keeps me going. Of one thing I am sure: my child's place in heaven is secure". The second mother also has a handicapped child, but she says in grappling with the problem of evil, "Why shouldn't it have happened to me?". The third had become a mother after having as a teacher shied away from teaching mentally handicapped children, only to find that her own child for whom she had prayed was mentally handicapped. Her reaction was that through the birth of this mentally handicapped child she had come closer to God. For the first time she knew what it meant to cast her burden on the Lord. Now, how does Phillips describe these three cases of purported religious belief? The first, he says, he does not find "impressively religious". Indeed "it has little to do with religion, being much closer to superstition".¹⁷¹ Of the second, he says he finds the answer "extremely impressive", but thinks it probably needs a respect for a certain kind of religious belief to find it so. Of the third, he says nothing directly, but indirectly indicates this is true religious belief - she was forced "to re-think her whole attitude towards prayer and towards children. She did not suggest God had sent the child to her in order to change her attitude or as a rebuke for her former one". So, for Phillips, two of the mothers hold religious belief - "Both mothers refuse to look upon belief in God as an explanatory

hypothesis. They both, in what they say, participate in the love of God, a love which will not let them go, whatever the circumstances". But the first mother does not have religious belief, that is to say one could call it religious belief if one takes "Hick's paradigm of the religious believer", but Phillips prefers not to. He wishes to stress that "there is another kind of belief in God", the difference in which could be brought out "by comparing the roles which worship plays in the lives of the respective believers". However, what does this latter test amount to in the case of these mothers? I suggest it amounts to a predetermined epistemological test - does their worship have reference to an objective God and an objective Heaven? Yes? Then it is superstition. No? Then it is genuine religious belief. Put another way, the test is between the indicative and the imperative status of worship. What Phillips is doing is to say prescriptively, not descriptively, that religious language operates with a vocabulary of personal character, but with "grammar" that radically separates the imperative and indicative moods. But can this contention be carried through? Tilley puts his finger on the issue here:

Phillips claims that the utterance 'There is a God' ought really [to] be read 'God! ALLELUIA!!!!' But are the indicative and imperative moods so completely separated from each other? ... Generally, in every imperative there is implied some indicative claim. This can be seen by looking at English grammar, where the present and future indicative and the hortatory subjunctive can substitute for the imperative:

'Praise God!'	(imperative).
'Now we praise God in song'	(present indicative).
'We shall praise God'	(future indicative).
'Let us praise God'	(hortatory subjunctive).

... Until these matters are sorted out and the relation of the 'indicative' and 'imperative' elements clarified, Phillips' work has problems that need to be solved.¹⁷²

Phillips might well reply to this objection along the line that Tilley confuses surface and depth grammar, and that this analysis is ordinary-language analysis reasserting itself, whereas what is needed is to understand the depth grammar of "God" and "Praise". But one would then sense prescriptivism again. What is the test of which of these moods is depth grammar? And should they be thought in grammatical terms to exclude each other?¹⁷³ Phillips' test seems crucially to lie in the epistemological thesis he provides externally. He seems, then, to come after all under the same critique as was applied to Hick and Leibniz. Phillips supposes that all accounts of theology in the indicative mood are necessarily explanatory. This is neither necessary nor accurate, for it is shown later that a non-explanatory theodicy in the indicative mood accords better with the internal grammar of religious belief. In arguing this, most of the content and motivation behind Phillips' theological theodicy as outlined above will be of value, but it will be used in a different context from his epistemological theory. Behind my description of religious theodicy lies also another distinction shared with Tilley.¹⁷⁴ It is that whereas Phillips has equated statements of fact with conclusions that result from finding out, there is no need to do so. Indeed, this contention is based in the very discussion by Moore to which Phillips appeals for the groundlessness of "facts".¹⁷⁵ One knows or is certain of some facts, and it is odd to ask how one knows them or why one is certain of them. The oddity arises because they are facts and not conclusions. God is just such a fact for the believer who adoringly worships - or to put it rather differently and in Alvin Plantinga's terms, God is part

of the believer's noetic structure,¹⁷⁶ and has the presiding place in that structure. And just as Moore's facts have to do with the real world in which the commonsense person lives, just so God is a real fact in the believer's world. For him God is a reality.

b) Secondly, Phillips' theology is characterised by a number of tensions - the absolute over against the temporal; response over against inference; roles and meanings over against narratives (no biography of God); pictures that are constitutive over against reading facts from the way things go; generality of description of Christian virtues (for example, hope is hope-in-general) over against particularity; timelessness over against the historical (acts and events in history by God are inconceivable). Now in these regards no quarrel will be picked with the affirmative side of this theology as an account of how Christianity operates as a way of life - theology is about significance in the life of the believer of what he believes, and such significance will have the features Phillips emphasises by the method of contrast. There is no need to deny, however, that religious beliefs and practices are grounded in particular facts in history and particular contexts in life. As Sherry argues,¹⁷⁷ it does not follow that because religious doctrines are not simply deduced from the facts, the facts may not constitute necessary conditions for the beliefs.

3. There is, then, a proper descriptive task for philosophy in theodicy, and Phillips has identified some of the key features of religious belief to which such description must be directed if the believer's problem of evil is to be understood. My argument does not, however, accept the epistemological position

of Phillips, which has been argued to be externally provided out of a predetermined philosophical commitment, but returns to the assumption of standard conception theodicy that to talk of God is not to talk self-referringly. What the task in descriptive theodicy amounts to, therefore, is to have reference to the epistemology of standard conception theodicy, but to deny its philosophical method (section two above), and to have reference to the philosophical method of Phillips, but to deny his epistemology (this section).

It might be objected that to have reference to standard conception epistemology entails debating after all whether God exists as an ontological entity, and that the existence of evil is relevant to this, and so one is back at the beginning, and that only one of either the atheist or the believer can be right on this issue. This objection is to be rejected as a failure to understand the part that language plays in our coming to "know" anything at all, and the place that convictions play in knowledge. "Knowledge" is only available within the structuring constraints of the kind of language in use in a community - to "know" anything is to be able to speak about it in a certain way, to know how to use language in relation to it. As language-users we commit ourselves within communities to using language with certain purposes in mind, but that is another way of saying that what we know has to do with the role a concept plays in life. But a community does not have to be committed to any particular use of language. Now, we do in fact commit ourselves to ways of "knowing" within communities of use, that is, communities committed to shared meanings.¹⁷⁸ Applying these points it can be seen that what the believer and the unbeliever amount to are

people whose forms of life, that is, whose networks of meanings, do and do not include God, that is, do and do not give "God" a role in their language. The meaning of the existence of God, then, cannot be talked about sensibly apart from an understanding of the role that God plays/does not play in the language of belief/unbelief, that is, in the language through which the believer/unbeliever expresses what he "knows". To understand this point is to return, but in a revised sense, to the method of Aquinas - to talk of God is to talk about how he exists and how he does not exist.¹⁷⁹ The God who can be spoken about, the "available" God, exists in the epistemological structures that hold in religious belief. He does not exist (he is not "available") in the different epistemological structures of unbelief. But that is not a contradiction. It is a recognition of the shape of human knowledge as it is available through language, and is a recognition of the way in which language connects with reality as men and women act in the world as language-users.

Cognitivists are quite used to living with these relationships between language and reality in relation to the human disciplines. Do the "Id", the "Ego", or the "Super-ego" exist?¹⁸⁰ Do social classes exist? Do the analyses of man-as-a-fact in the disciplines contradict each other? Do the "micro" and "macro" levels of analysis in sociology contradict each other? Is it a contradiction to say that man is made in the image of God (theology) and has common ancestry with the apes (science)? Is it a contradiction to say that physical objects are, and are not, solid? There is one argument in Waismann's article "Verifiability" which should have laid such ghosts to rest, but I fear it hasn't.¹⁸¹

It is worth following his argument closely, and doing so by quotation so as not to lose the nuances of presentation of the points he makes. What he shows about the relationship between language and reality, about the nature of "facts", shows the basis of discussion that needs to be entertained when facing the simple claims of the cognitivist:

People are inclined to think that there is a world of facts as opposed to a world of words which describe these facts. I am not too happy about that. Consider an example. We are accustomed to see colour as a 'quality' of objects. That is, colour cannot subsist by itself, but must inhere in a thing. This conception springs from the way we express ourselves. When colour is rendered by an adjective, colour is conceived as an attribute of things, i.e. as something that can have no independent existence. That, however, is not the only way of conceiving colour. There are languages such as Russian, German, Italian, which render colour by means of verbs. If we were to imitate this usage in English by allowing some such form as 'The sky blues', we should come face to face with the question, Do I mean the same fact when I say 'The sky blues' as when I say 'The sky is blue'? I don't think so. We say 'The sun shines', 'Jewels glitter', 'The river shimmers', 'Windows gleam', 'Stars twinkle', etc.; that is, in the case of phenomena of lustre we make use of a verbal mode of expression. Now in rendering colour phenomena by verbs we assimilate them more closely to the phenomena of lustre; and in doing so we alter not only our manner of speaking but our entire way of apprehending colour. We see the blue differently now ... blue does not inhere in it [the sky] as a mere quality, rather is it felt as the vital pulse of the sky; there is a faint suggestion of the operating of some force behind the phenomenon. It's hard to get the feel of it in English; perhaps it may help you to liken this mode of expression to the impressionist way of painting which is at bottom a new way of seeing: the impressionist sees in colour an immediate manifestation of reality, a free agent no longer bound up with things.¹⁸²

Adjective and verb thus represent, Waismann argues, two different worlds of thought, but there is of course also an adverbial way of talking about colour:

Imagine a language with a wealth of expressions for all shades of lustre, but without adjectives for

colours; colours, as a rule, are ignored; when they are expressed, this is done by adding an adverb to the word that specifies the sort of lustre. Thus the people who use this sort of language would say, 'The sea is glittering golden in the sunshine', 'The evening clouds glow redly', 'There in the depth a shadow greenly gleams'. In such phrases colour would lose the last trace of independence and be reduced to a mere modification of lustre ... There can be little doubt that, owing to this circumstance, the users of such language would find it very hard to see colour as a quality of things. For them it would not be the things that are coloured, rather colour would reside in the lustre as it glows and darkens and changes - evidence that they would see the world with different eyes.¹⁸³

Now, Waismann imagines that an objection to this set of suggestions might be to ask whether it isn't still true to say that we have the same experience whenever we look up at the sky, whatever language we use. Perhaps with gestalt diagrams in mind, he suggests we would be less happy if we were asked whether we have the same experience when we look at a picture puzzle and see a figure in it as before when we didn't see it. He comments:

You may, perhaps, say you see the same lines, though each time in a different arrangement. Now what exactly corresponds to this different arrangement in the case when I look up at the sky? One might say: we are aware of the blue, but this awareness is itself tinged and coloured by the whole linguistic background which brings into prominence, or weakens and hides certain analogies. In this sense language does affect the whole manner in which we become aware of a fact: the fact articulates itself differently, so to speak.¹⁸⁴

And after further examples of how "reality" is a function of characteristics present in a language, in which he considers the changes that would occur in one's notion of reality if one's language had a different logic, or possessed different modes of expression, or even from the conscious use of language at all, he asks what the objective reality is that is supposed to be described by language.¹⁸⁵ He puts himself in the place of a

defender of this "reality" apart from language, and suggests that what rebels in us against such suggestions as he has made is the feeling that:

the fact is there objectively no matter in which way we render it. I perceive something that exists and put it into words. From this it seems to follow that fact is something that exists independent of, and prior to language; language merely serves the end of communication.¹⁸⁶

He replies to himself that what we are liable to overlook here is that the way we see a fact - i.e. what we emphasize and what we disregard - is our work:¹⁸⁷

A fact is noticed; and by being noticed it becomes a fact. 'Was it then no fact before you noticed it?' It was, if I could have noticed it. In a language in which there is only the number series 'one two, three, a few, many', a fact such as 'There are five birds' is imperceptible.¹⁸⁸

In explaining what he has in mind he considers a language in which description does not take the form of sentences - a map, for instance, is not a conjunction of single statements each of which describes a separate fact. But in that case:

what, would you say, is the boundary of a fact? Where does the one end and the other begin? ... Here we begin to see how confusing the idea is according to which the world is a cluster of facts - just as if it were a sort of mosaic made up of little coloured stones. Reality is undivided ... In describing reality, by using sentences, we draw, as it were, lines through it, limit a part and call what corresponds with such a sentence a fact.¹⁸⁹

So he moves towards his conclusion that reality is not made up of facts in the sense in which a plant is made up of cells or a house of bricks. Rather, he says, if you want a simile:

a fact is present, in much the same sense in which a character manifests itself in a face. Not that I invent the character and read it into the face; no, the character is somehow written on the face but no one would on that account say that a face is 'made up' of features symbolic of such-and-such traits ... The elements of such an interpretation, without our

being aware of it, are already present in language - for instance, in such moulds as the notion of thinghood, of causality, of number, or again in the way we render colour, etc.¹⁹⁰

And in broad terms he draws out the general points he is making, which are that language supplies us with a means of comprehending and categorizing, and that different languages categorize differently. So, he asks and replies:

Does this not throw a light on what constitutes the noticing of facts? I would not dream for a moment of saying that I invent them; I might, however, be unable to perceive them if I had not certain moulds of comprehension ready at hand. These forms I borrow from language. Language, then, contributes to the formation and participates in the constitution of a fact; which, of course, does not mean that it produces the fact.¹⁹¹

When it was said, therefore, that reference is to be had to standard conception epistemology, it was not unreformed cognitivist epistemology that was in mind. The kind of epistemology argued for is one in which God is a reality for the believer, but what this means is understood with regard to the ways in which language supplies us with possibilities of comprehending and categorising differently, that is, in High's terms, of how we "indwell" language as we learn how-to-go-on in a form of life.

When the unbeliever says that God does not exist, and the believer says that God exists, it is taken that they do not straightforwardly contradict each other, but participate in differing ways of allowing facts to arise, facts which are contrary to each other in that the forms of life are contrary to each other. Specifically, the facts of classical theism are those which arise from the commitment to "draw the lines" by "putting one's signature" to the use in religion of interpersonal language, that commitment being made by becoming a worshipping participant in the community-of-use of that language. The question is,

therefore, as to the shape of theodicy in a community like that.

E. In What Sense Is Phillips a Theodicist?

Before closing this section, let us quickly clear away some misapprehensions that exist about Phillips and theodicy. Both Phillips and his opponents sometimes talk of his being an opponent of theodicy. For example, in the places where Phillips treats the problem of evil in any detail¹⁹² he says, on the one hand, "I do not know what is meant by a solution to the problem of evil. All I have tried to do is make clearer a religious view of evil",¹⁹³ and on the other, "Theodicies are part of the rationalism which I believe clouds our understanding of religious belief".¹⁹⁴ And Hick says that he thinks Phillips "rejects the very idea of a theodicy in the sense of a theory which seeks to show how the realities of suffering and wickedness may be compatible with the existence of an all-powerful and limitlessly loving God".¹⁹⁵

But Hick also writes:

Let us remember at this point what a theodicy is. It consists in a 'picture' of the universe or a hypothesis about the nature of the universe, a hypothesis or 'picture' in which evil can be seen as ultimately serving a good and justifying purpose. The interest of such a 'picture' largely depends, I would suggest, upon its connection with an actual living tradition of religious faith, rather than being a mere ad hoc invention of philosophers ... What we are asking is whether there are resources within that faith for meeting the problem of evil.¹⁹⁶

Now, if one ceases to identify "theodicy" with "standard conception theodicy", and ceases to talk in terms of "justifying" evil by showing that it has an ultimate purpose, and instead talks without prejudice about theodicy as asking, as Hick latterly

suggests, whether there are resources within the internal structures of belief for handling or meeting the problematic fact of evil, then Phillips is equally a theodacist, but in a different tradition of epistemology. His writing is precisely to do with the resources of belief, in the view that it takes, or in Hick's former terms, with the "picture" that holds within an actual living religious tradition. The dispute then is about whether or not the "picture" has the role of a hypothesis or not - and not whether Phillips is a theodacist or not.

Section Four

Section Four: Religious Theodicy: The Believer's Problem of Evil

A. Introduction

Let us now consider the shape of descriptive theodicy, the task being to offer an understanding of Christian belief held in a frequently hostile world, such belief having as a matter of "grammar" an absolute character.¹ How is it within classical Christian theism - a theism which commits itself to "drawing the lines"² by using the interpersonal model³ of theological language, and which does not see that language as being self-referring - that believers claim they are "able-to-go-on"⁴ without incoherence with regard to God and evil? To answer this question some clarification of how theodicy relates to interpersonal theology is required. To achieve this clarification let us proceed by the indirect route of hazarding a theodicy, the critique of which brings us to a point where we can use the arguments developed above. Then, secondly, let us develop proposals for a "Religious Theodicy". Thus, two attempts are made, one "instructional", the other "substantive", to relate theodicy to the interpersonal language through which believers "indwell"⁵ their belief. In the first, a return is made to Kaufman's suggestion that the experience of "transcendence" in interpersonal relationships is at the base of classical Christian theism, and a descriptive theodicy is detailed which builds on this experience as the main operative consideration.⁶ But the critique which follows⁷ finds formidable objections to supposing this theodicy would be of interest to worshippers. The role of interpersonal language in theology is, therefore, looked at again, and a second and full attempt is

made, in the light of lessons learned, to describe the believer's view of evil.⁸

B. Negative Experiences and Interpersonal Existence

1. First attempted theodicy

"Consider first", the theodacist might say, "what it is we believers are doing when we use the language of interpersonal transcendence in theology. We are referring for our theological understanding to our experience in interpersonal relationships of that which is beyond our power of access unless there is a giving from the other person. Now, it is part of what it means to be a person-in-relationship that there are boundaries within which 'I am' and boundaries within which 'he is'. To lack such boundaries is to cease from being a person. But what are the means by which persons relate and get to know about other people? Partly by activity and exploration - but such knowledge treats the other as an object in the world and by no means exhausts personal knowledge. To get to know the other person he must reveal himself to us. That lies within his power, and it is a gift. And reciprocally. Think now of the reverse side of this gift - what is it to receive such personal revelation? It is to have one's consciousness changed at the will of the other. We have to receive what is given or to reject it as false - but in either case we have been changed, not at our will. We have progressed in knowledge, but not on our own terms. Furthermore, it is possible for the other person to resist, and to impart nothing of himself at all, or a little, or misleadingly. There lies in the structure of

personal relationships therefore not only, as Kaufman argues, an awareness of transcendence that can serve as a basis for talk about 'theos' (theology), but also a basis for talk of that which can stand over against us and resist us (theodicy). There is nothing wrong of course in this double aspect to personal transcendence, it is simply the way things must be for there to be personal relationships at all. Ideal personal relationships do not consist of the abolition of this 'standing over against each other', or of the right of each person to privacy, but consist of a way of using these structures of personal relationship. But do ideal personal relationships require logically or actually that people yield up themselves at the request of others in all circumstances? Clearly not, for that would be to frustrate the rights of persons to become themselves, and not to be at the automatic behest of others. There are, therefore, to be discerned lying within the structures of even perfect personal relationships, occasions for disappointment. I want the other to give of himself; he does not, for proper reasons of his own, wish to give. That is his prerogative as a person; my fate is to be disappointed".

"But", it might be objected to this theodacist, "would it not be possible to eliminate from experience such feelings as disappointment?" "No", it would be replied, "that could not be done if personal relationships are to be loving. On the principle of falsifiability, for love to be anything, one must know what the negation of love amounts to. Whatever that negation amounts to, it could not be regarded as a good experience. There is written into the structure of personal relationships, therefore, the possibility of resistance; from

resistance to love flows disappointment; and one thus begins to talk in terms of suffering. It cannot be otherwise in a world of loving persons in relationship". "But", the protest might be, "should there not be a pause here to debate whether we could imagine persons and personal relationships of a quite different structure?"⁹ "No", would be the reply. "That is simply playing with words, for then, precisely, one would not be talking about people but about something else". "But", it may be further objected, "is there not a big jump from talking about disappointment to talking about suffering"? "No", would be the answer, "it is not a jump, but an inescapable consequence of being persons-in-relationship, and for the following kinds of reasons".

"It is part of being persons in this world, or in any finite world, that omniscience is incompatible with personhood, on the ground that to be a person is individually to have a consciousness that is unique (exclude here for the moment what is meant by saying God is omniscient, as that specifically does not concern finite persons). But to be a finite person is also to be physically separate. And it is also to live in relationship. But again, it follows, taking the idea of ideal relationships, these cannot be apart from separations. Such separations of persons-in-relationship may be geographical, or may be those of death, or may be those of goals.¹⁰ Now in terms of goals in life, to be a language-user is to be capable of setting one's own interpretations of the way the 'lines' are properly to be drawn (Waismann). To be a person is, therefore, to be able to draw the lines in one's own way, with the consequence that goals vary between people. But could there be any mechanism for ensuring all goals are compatible? To suppose that would entail

re-introducing omniscience, and omnipotence too, for not only would there need to be complete awareness by all persons of all goals, but the power to bring all goals into accord. But omnipotence also is incompatible with the notion of being a finite person. To be persons-in-relation, then, is to be in a structure of relationships that include not only disappointment and separation but also frustration". "But", says the objector, "frustration can lead eventually to deeper relationships, and absence makes the heart grow fonder, and so on". "That", replies the theodacist, "does not in the slightest contradict the point being made - it only shows it is not the only point to be made".

"But", the objector presses further, "is it not the nature of love to overcome just such things as disappointment, separation, and frustration?" "Perhaps", says this theodacist, "but, in overcoming, love admits of their existence. And, in any case, there are things to be said about the nature of love also. It is being taken for granted that to be a person is necessarily to exist in relationships, and also that ideal relationships are fully loving. What does it mean to say that?¹¹ It means that each person is not willing to exert his own power, for his own benefit, if it is to the hurt of others. But to talk in this way of self-restraint is to talk of self-denial and renunciation, and perhaps one may categorise all such acts of love as being sacrificial in structure; but only to the point where the mutual renunciations hold persons in equality of esteem. Take, for example, the relationships that hold in marriage. To be married on the basis of love is mutually to renounce the right to live as before, and is to withdraw one's power to dispose of one's life and resources at

one's own will. And to bring children into being out of love is a joint renunciation by a couple in a similar way. Room for a child to exist as a person involves a withdrawing from that social 'space' that is needed for the child. Deformed parent-child relationships occur where this withdrawing does not take place. Similarly, the emergence of the child as a person is the process of learning to withdraw from egocentricity - the assertion of self, regardless". "But", it might be objected, "such parent-child relationships are joyful, not sorrowful". "That", says this theodacist, "confuses a description of the structure of personal relationships with a description of how we behave as people. One can rejoice in exercising what it is to be a person, and willingly and happily participate in sacrificial love, without there being any significance in the joy and the happiness with regard to it being sacrificial love".

"Think now," continues this theodacist, "of the separation of people through death which was mentioned just now. Clearly death and suffering are synonymous. But, let us ask, is death a contingent, though unfortunate, circumstance for people, or is it intrinsic to being personal? Now, the idea of 'Heaven' has something to do with the idea of deathless and suffering-free persons in traditional language, but D.Z. Phillips has shown serious problems with such an idea.¹² He rejects the idea that the pattern of personal relationships we know on earth can be conceived to continue in the afterlife, as the pattern of such relationships depends on the context of this earth. He writes, therefore:

The life which is said to exist after death is said to be beyond all change. Yet all the relationships we have mentioned depend upon change for their very meaning. Mortality is not a limitation in human

relationships. On the contrary, it is a precondition of their being the kind of relationships they are.¹³

For a believer like Phillips, who doesn't think of heaven traditionally, therefore, death is clearly a negative experience as it is the final separation. But, of course, if conversely one argues as Hick does for personal development through many lives, then many deaths become intrinsic to personal existence.¹⁴ And even in strictly traditional terms, heaven cannot be attained before the parousia except through death".

"Link to this", the theodicist continues, "that in the process of being-a-person is involved the becoming that inheres in any process that has growth. But in personal growth there is the awareness of that which is being left behind as immature, or alternatively as that which lies ahead as decline. Either way, we constantly leave behind what we are, in a constant process of separation. Not for nothing do we talk of growing pains, and rise and fall, etc. Again, to forestall an objection, that is not to say we do not reach out for the future and live in hope and have happy memories. Those also have to do with our affirmation of the fact that we are, rather than being a comment on the structures of personal existence".

"But", it might be objected instead, "what of suffering not linked to relationships? What of pain? Could we not be people without pain?"

"Firstly", it might be replied by this theodicist, "all of the foregoing bring pain in the psychological sense. But mental pain is also entailed in being a finite person. One should not think here of the mental aspects of psychological pain, though these are not irrelevant. What is in mind is the structure of critical reason. To exercise critical reason is to

hold all one's present thoughts, views, and intentions, tentatively, and subject to revision, and this revision occurs by the negation of aspects of our present thoughts, either absolutely (they are wrong in part or whole), or relatively (they are in need of re-ordering or supplementation). Such negations occur because of the inadequacy of our present thoughts, and come about either by argument within oneself, or by force of what comes from beyond ourselves, and in both cases they can be understood as experiences of that which stands over against us, and transcends us. But to achieve this progress on the grounds of internal debate is to be aware of division within, and internal struggle. To achieve it on the grounds of what comes from without is to yield to the resistance of reality to our understandings. These things would, again, be true in ideal circumstances. Critical reason entails mental suffering. Again", it would be argued, "the joy of study, the wonder at discovery, the thrill of revelation do not contradict the structure within which such rewarding experiences occur. They are the joy and wonder and thrill that attaches to being a person, not an understanding of the nature of persons as thinking people".

"But", presses the objecter, "what of physical pain"? This theodocist might here refer in reply to the description of the necessities of any physical order presented by Austin Farrer.¹⁵ Thus, he might say, "To be anything at all in a finite creation is for that thing to be, and for it to be in its own terms. Everything is a fine thing in itself. The problem occurs over things being in relation, and, it might be added, from the fact that things do not possess personal attributes

such as imagination and love. It is entirely proper for anything to exist if it exists. But, within that properness, there is entailed in any finite creation inevitable physical suffering, for to say that it is proper for anything to exist that does exist, is also to say that it is proper for it to exist in its own terms, regardless". "But that argument does not apply to persons", it might be countered, "for persons do not exist in creation in the same way as things. Having imagination and love, and being set in a web of personal relationships, persons cannot exist regardless. Insofar as they do they are ceasing to exist as persons and exist as things". "Quite so", the theodacist replies, "and therein lies the link between pain and suffering, for persons are subject to the nature of their physical bodies as things in the world, and therefore are subject to the factors just mentioned, only they also suffer through having imagination and love. Even for persons, therefore, physical pain, and the whole struggle in nature, are inescapable aspects of what it is, along with other things, properly to be a thing. Being a person simply adds a further dimension to that suffering".

"But", it might be objected, "could there not be less pain"?¹⁶ "That", it would be replied, "is an odd question. It can either mean, could we be less aware of pain, or, could there be less instances of pain. The answer to both of those questions is obviously, yes. There would be less instances of pain if there were fewer things, for example. And there could be less awareness of pain if we used anaesthetics on a daily basis. Or even no pain at all if the total lack of this form of awareness of sentient beings to their environment were thought

not to amount to a contradiction of personal existence.¹⁷ But what kind of an answer would you take it to be if it were said there could be less pain if we had less imagination? Or less love? For example, the pain of child-bearing is not unrelated to being loving and imaginative persons. To be more sensitive as persons might be to increase the amount of pain, so perhaps the question might be as to whether there should not be more pain?¹⁸ And what kind of judgement is it to say there should be fewer things? How does one weigh the existence of a thing against its right to assert its existence? Such judgements are the lot in a finite creation of those things that are also persons. As persons there is entailed the responsibility of using one's imagination and love on behalf of impersonal creation. But this is done, even ideally, without omniscience and omnipotence, necessarily. Such a responsibility, therefore, will also be the occasion for suffering, as it is to have God's responsibilities without God's nature. That is why we talk, in terms of this responsibility, of having to make agonising decisions".

The argument of this theodacist would be, therefore, by describing in a direct way the nature of interpersonal relationships, that an ideal world in which there are people is a world in which there is necessarily negativity - and that, as it is not a limitation on God's part not to be able to do what cannot be done, the believer can confidently believe in the absolute power and goodness of God. The inescapable structures of negativity are, for people, the occasion of the sufferings associated with being both a person and a thing.¹⁹ This would not be to say that negativity culminates in suffering, though that could be the case, but rather that when one talks of

persons one talks of those who are subject for their personhood to a way of existing that entails negativities in the psychological, mental, and physical dimensions, and, in that persons have love and imagination, such negativities make them persons who suffer. Further, as it is entailed in being a person that one is in relationship with other persons, social suffering is entailed too, for we relate together as people in community in terms that derive from the structure of personhood.

"But", the objecter might reply, "in general terms, if this theodicy is right, it means that interpersonal theology has fatalistic implications, for it appears God has no choices - as a loving God he needs must create, and create those who are persons who can love in return. But as persons they needs must suffer." To this objection, our theodicist could reply that such is not the case, for a distinction can be drawn between suffering which we cannot end, because it lies within the basis of our possibility as persons, and instances of suffering which we can end. He might have appeal for a parallel to the notion of Kant that it is the nature of experiencing beings to think, and to think within certain structures, yet without any necessity being implied that those beings think any particular thoughts. "Just so", this theodicist might say, "it is necessary as persons to suffer, but not to suffer any particular case. Indeed, imagination and love precisely allow people to combat the need to suffer this or that, and to strive against all instances of suffering - though as persons they will suffer within the dimensions claimed, even in an ideal world". It is then, this theodicist would say, a question of realism, not fatalism, for both people and God remain free to act in relation

to the given structures of personal existence.

2. Critique of first attempted theodicy

What is one to make of such a theodicy? By that I mean, not how convincing it is within the terms of standard theodicy, but how truly it represents the patterns of thought believers as adoring worshippers entertain when they speak of the God whom they worship, and of whom they think in absolute terms, and in relation to whom they speak within the model of interpersonal transcendence?

The first point to be made is that, although this theodicy is thoroughly interpersonal, in seeking to understand interpersonal talk in Christian theology it in fact tries to proceed from the world to God, and in so doing brings talk of God under the presiding influence of the structures of actual finite interpersonal relationships. What God can and cannot do (his power) is determined by what is in fact the case, and which is claimed to be necessarily the case, even in ideal circumstances. The adoring worshipper, however, in his praise and adoration, attributes power to God absolutely, as study of the praise and adoration sections in hymnbooks will quickly show. The themes there are consistently the celebration of such statements as: "With God all things are possible" (Matt 19:26); "I know that thou canst do everything" (Job 42:2); "Is anything too hard for the Lord?" (Gen 18:14). Now, the meaning of such utterances may need careful attention, and perhaps this attention needs to have reference to their celebration in the setting of worshipful practice, but the fact remains that the adoring worshipper (unlike the philosopher or this theodicist) expresses himself, and must express himself, without qualification when speaking of God - and yet he does not thereby see

himself as guilty of hyperbole. That must be taken into account in a descriptive understanding of belief. But if one asks the question, "What, according to this theodicy, is the role in the believer's "picture" of such unqualified praise?", no answer can be given. But what kind of theodicy is it that cannot offer an understanding of the believer's praise?

The second point is that the above description of interpersonal relations would hold whether or not God is taken into account. It is in effect a non-theistic analysis. God, as it were, has to be accommodated by the theist who uses such an approach to the shape of this world's structures - if God, that is, is to be allowed a place at all. However, the theistic claim itself then becomes a matter for argument with the unbeliever, and the non-hypothetical character of religious belief is thus lost. But, for the believer, God cannot at all be left out of account, or made of subsidiary account, or given a "possible" and hypothetical role, for God is the one in relation to whom all things are held in account. This theodicy is not therefore true to the believer's "picture", for it makes God a contingency, a perhaps. Matters can be explained without him.

Thirdly, this theodicy cannot provide in its own terms any notion of the purpose of the existence of people. But the purposes of God are paramount to the worshipper. Now, talk of purpose here is not purpose as, say, in Hick's theodicy where it has the sense of calculated matching by God of means to ends. The believer sees purpose in terms of his duty to praise God - for does not the believer say the chief end of man is to be to the praise of God's glory? This dutiful purpose is well caught

by Horatius Bonar (1808-89):

Fill Thou my life, O Lord my God,
In every part with praise,
That my whole being may proclaim
Thy being and Thy ways.

Fill every part of me with praise:
Let all my being speak
Of Thee and of Thy love, O Lord,
Poor though I be and weak.

So shalt Thou, Lord, from me, e'en me,
Receive the glory due;
And so shall I begin on earth
The song for ever new.

So shall each fear, each fret, each care,
Be turned into song;
And every winding of the way
The echo shall prolong.

The fourth point is that, for the adoring worshipper, the first in order of transcending relationships that hold in his or her life is, as was noted in section three, that of God as Father. Now it was shown in discussing Phillips' theology that when believers talk of God in personal terms (that is, within the interpersonal model of theological language) it is not a straightforward matter, for the believer's life with God as Father has to do with dying to the "world-historical" and its "everyday" relationships, and becoming alive to what contrasts with those relationships, that is, becoming alive to the "eternal". The believer therefore, unlike this theodicit, brings order to whatever is the case, the order involved in the exercise of love and praise. But to do this is to fix one's attention on the fact that people are, that the world is, not how they are, and to give thanks.²⁰ Again, therefore, if there is a necessity of which the believer as believer is aware, it is not the necessity to justify God but the necessity to do his religious duty, which duty comprises "Giving thanks always for

all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ". (Eph 5:20).

The fifth point is that there is lying within this theodicy a form of the distinction between moral and physical evil which was found in earlier argument to be a false move in theodicy. The distinction between persons and things may be seen to be the basis for a restatement of the old distinction in a new guise. There is still a need, therefore, to find a way of handling "negativity" without succumbing to the confusions previously identified.

The sixth point is that although the theodicy is descriptive in the sense of describing the shape of actual human relationships, the intention is justificatory - not in the strong sense of showing that evil has a good and justifying purpose, but in the weak sense of seeking to prove that God is not to be blamed for what cannot be helped. It retains, therefore, an element of apologetic. Perhaps it will be found that this situation is an irremovable element of saying anything at all in this area - but it is worth trying again to offer a description of belief which simply intends to understand how a believer lives happily with his God in a frequently hostile world, and without any intention of seeking to "convince" anyone about God in the face of evil.

It would appear, then, that the believer as believer does not need logically or psychologically the kind of theodicy outlined above, for it is outside his interests and intentions. As Phillips said of Swinburne's theodicy,²¹ it is an example of the rationalism which clouds our understanding of religious belief.

3. The Role of Personal Language in Christian Theism

Now it is possible, in the light of this critique, to take Kaufman's basic idea of interpersonal theology, and to use it rather differently in order to come to an understanding of what the believer is doing when he uses the interpersonal language model to talk of God. Again, let us refer back to Phillips' account of the way in which religious language stands over against "world-historical" use. God is a person in the language of classical theism, yet he is omniscient, omnipotent, omnipresent, omnibenevolent, eternal, and infinite. Further, God is not a language-user. So in what sense does the believer refer to God as a person? As Phillips says, "What eludes us is the grammar of the concept; we find it difficult to give an account of it".²² Perhaps we can say, first, that God, as absolute, is absolutely that which stands over against all things. But secondly, that one way of talking about such a God is by holding what we know of persons-in-relationship before God absolutely.²³ Persons are known in revelatory relationship; God can only be known in revelatory relationship. People are separate; God is wholly other. Persons can resist giving of themselves, but may do so as a gift; God can have no demands laid on him, so his gift of himself is the pure gift of grace, always available. In love persons withdraw their rights as things to assert themselves, but act in sacrificial love; God is love. People are temporal; God is eternal. And so on.

But believers, whilst wishing to assert such beliefs, also talk somewhat differently. They talk in some senses as though God were one of us. Clearly, there is a need to distinguish what believers say from what they mean in what

they say, for they do not mean simply to contradict themselves; that is, one must look to the role that what they say about God as a person has in the structures of their belief. The question concerning the use of the interpersonal model in Christian theism is, therefore, one as to the function that language has in the community that chooses it as its form of expression.²⁴

Let us take a particularly hard example of the use of personal language by believers, and ask this time, not about man's sufferings, but whether God suffers. To be noted straight-away is that this is a matter of controversy in Christian belief, though certainly the view that has predominated is that God cannot suffer.²⁵ Now, how should the descriptive theodictist approach this dispute? My suggestion is that if one takes the approach just suggested of looking for the role of what is said, that the issue here is seen not to be one of whether God, as the reality who is worshipped, suffers, but what it means in the language of worship to use the vocabulary of personal suffering in relation to the God worshipped. When put this way, it becomes possible to see that the traditional reluctance of theologians to talk of God suffering was both right and wrong. It was right in that they were sensitive to the inappropriateness of attributing directly descriptive statements of suffering to the God worshipped, but wrong in that they thought this was because they could say he actually didn't suffer. If one looks, however, at the role talk of God suffering plays in the structures of Christian belief, it is by no means apparent that, as part of the use of the interpersonal model of theology, it is inappropriate for the believer to hold his suffering absolutely before God (in the way noted above in relation to other aspects of experience). Indeed, I would go further, and

say that arguments to be made later show the "grammar" of Christian worship assumes God and suffering need to be spoken of together if the shape of Christian belief held in a world that contains evil is to be understood.

It might be objected that what has just been suggested is merely definitional, and that the issue of whether God suffers cannot be lost in a manoeuvre which locates in a model a matter that resides in the experience of God. But that is precisely the point. As High showed in his discussion of meaning,²⁶ man's intellectual beliefs and linguistic performances are "indwelt" by man as he acts in patterns of language-use as a language-user who knows "how-to-go-on". Language has life in being used happily, and it is in this context questions of language and reality should be approached. By refusing to separate man, language, and reality, one is stressing that there is an inseparable bond between the language models man uses and the "available" God. For man to talk of God as a person at all, then, is for man to talk in language grounded in ourselves in interpersonal relationships. Is it inappropriate, in that case, for man's suffering to "indwell" that language, too? The question, approached in this way, is not then the empirical one of whether God suffers, but the philosophical one of what it means in Christian belief to use the interpersonal language model in relation to God. This cannot be a straightforward matter in terms of "surface" grammar traditionally understood, for reasons already stated. There is a need, therefore, in seeking to understand the language of persons in Christian belief, to attempt to describe the depth grammar by which the Christian worshipper holds God and suffering together. S.P. Schilling

in his God and Human Anguish²⁷ contrasts the points to be accounted for thus: God is spoken of as, on the one hand, transcendent, immutable, blessed in his perfection, and worshipworthy, and on the other, as becoming man, near as well as other, essentially love, and vulnerable to suffering. Schilling rejects the idea that in Christian belief God the Son provides no clues as to the Father named in the creeds as the creator.²⁸ My response to Schilling's pertinent remark is to attempt shortly a revised account of how it is the believer relates God and evil together through interpersonal language, an account made in the light of the role played by God the Son in the worship of the Christian community which sees itself as the family of those forgiven by God their Father.

4. Getting to Know God as a Person

It follows from what has just been said that what one understands by getting to know God as a person (i.e., becoming a worshipper) will differ from what it is to get to know other persons. Getting to know God amounts to two acts. First, coming to see oneself as a person before God. Second, coming to use Christian interpersonal language to say what it means to stand before God. But how does one come to make these acts? How does one come into the community of those for whom Christian beliefs are true and God is real? Is it not by believing the testimony of those who already know God as a person and who live before God and who structure the meaning of life in what it means to worship that God? But why should anyone believe their testimony, and worship God? Not, it would seem, for reasons, for the worshipper cannot say, "O God, I believe in you for the following reasons". The person who gets to know God

affirms he wishes to be the sort of person who believes God too, and affirms that he wishes to live, as the believer does, before God. Having made this move, life in this world is then judged in the light of what it means as a worshipper to use personal language of God, that is, in the light of what it means to know God.

Religious belief, then, has to do with what it is to be a person who has made the two acts above, that is, with what it means to participate in the believing community. It is the assertion that, on the basis of believing personal testimony, that is, believing the persons whose testimony it is, one's "meanings" will be from God. In sum, to join the Christian community is to become a worshipper; to become a worshipper is to come to love God through the use of the language of personal praise; to come to love God through the use of personal praise is to come to know God; to come to know God is to live before him as one who views everything in the light of the eternal. The believer, therefore, comes from God to the world, but not inferentially.

There is a broader point here. Let us refer to G.E.M. Anscombe's argument that "believing someone" is a neglected topic in philosophy,²⁹ and that imparticular "believing God" has been distorted into "believing in God". She claims that to understand what it is to believe someone

is important not only for theology and for the philosophy of religion. It is also of huge importance for the theory of knowledge. The greater part of our knowledge of reality rests upon the belief that we repose in things we have been taught and told. Hume thought that the idea of cause-and-effect was the bridge enabling us to reach any idea of a world beyond personal experience. He wanted to subsume belief in testimony under belief in causes and effects, or at least to class them

together as examples of the same form of belief. We believe in a cause, he thought, because we perceive the effect and cause and effect have been found always to go together. Similarly we believe in the truth of testimony because we perceive the testimony and we have (well! often have) found testimony and truth to go together! The view needs only to be stated to be promptly rejected. It was always absurd, and the mystery is how Hume could ever have entertained it. We must acknowledge testimony as giving us our larger world in no smaller degree, or even in a greater degree, than the relation of cause and effect; and believing it is quite dissimilar in structure from belief in causes and effects. Nor is what testimony gives us entirely a detachable part, like the thick fringe of fat on a chunk of steak. It is more like the flecks and streaks of fat that are often distributed through good meat; though there are lumps of pure fat as well.³⁰

But how does Anscombe's point link with the previous?

Through what she says about testimony. Now, we have seen that getting to know God as a person is coming to know-how-to-go-on in using interpersonal language of God as a result of believing the testimony of the community whose reality is thus expressed. It is coming to say "I-can-go-on" through believing the testimony of others who say "I-can-go-on" (or in community terms, "We-can-go-on"). If, however, as Anscombe says, believing testimony is "quite dissimilar in structure from belief in causes and effects", an attempt needs to be made to describe Christian belief in terms of that quite different structure. What is it for the worshipper to believe God on the basis of testimony? That, clearly, is a crucial question for descriptive theodicy.

C. Severest Negativity and Christian Theodicy

1. Second Attempted Theodicy

My second attempt at understanding how believers (those who have come to know God) persist in their belief in a world

that is frequently hostile, seeks to have reference to the richly nuanced totality of experience-thought-interpretation³¹ which comprises the Christian religious "picture". The aim is to describe such "facts" without destroying that rich totality by abstracting items of Christian vocabulary from their life-setting, which setting in the case of the Christian community is crucially and paradigmatically located in worship.³² I am now, therefore, concerned to bring to the centre of argument the claim that Christian theodicy must be judged by tests appropriate to understanding credal language. Put differently, the claim is that the rationality of Christian theodicy coincides with the rationality of Christian worship. Such rationality, it is argued, involves believing testimony, commitment to it as an interpretive perspective, and the basing of one's life on the "facts" as they arise within that perspective and as one learns how-to-go-on in it. By application, worship is the celebration in the Christian community of its reality thus established. This second theodicy is thus an attempt to give an account of negativity as it enters into the rationality, the "facts", the "reality", of the believing community as it proceeds from God to the world using the interpersonal model of theological language to express its beliefs. Let us see, therefore, if a description can be given of the Christian "picture" which will show the place within it of the severest case of negativity in human experience - for if the "picture" can contain the severest case it will hold for all lesser cases. First, then, the nature of this severest negativity is identified as "affliction". Next, it is shown, through a discussion of the shape of "Religious Theodicy", how it is that even "affliction" is not

felt by believers to negate their belief. Thirdly, attention is turned to the place of negativity in Christian worship and theodicy by considering what is taken to be, for the worshipper, the severest "affliction" of all, the suffering of God in Christ.³³

2. Severest Negativity Identified as Affliction

a) Writers on theodicy often isolate some particular example or kind of negative experience as the crucial test for the love of God. Dostoievski set this in the suffering of innocent children,³⁴ McCloskey points to the sheer extent of evils,³⁵ Campbell to continuous and intense pointless physical pain,³⁶ Roth to the horrors of the Holocaust experience,³⁷ Hick to the problem of "suffering".³⁸

b) Simone Weil, however, suggests that pain or any other single category, however intense and prolonged and widespread, is but one dimension of a more total and more serious condition that marks the limits of meaninglessness in man's experience. To this condition she gives the name "malheur", which is standardly translated "affliction".³⁹ She writes:

In the realm of suffering, affliction is something apart, specific and irreducible. It is quite a different thing from simple suffering. It takes possession of the soul and marks it through and through with its own particular mark, the mark of slavery.⁴⁰

Affliction, the mark of slavery, she suggests has three dimensions - physical, psychological, and social. Pain can strike us in any of these dimensions, but when it comes in one dimension only it is both easier to overcome and to forget than if it involves all three together. "Affliction" enters into our being in a total way, and is "the great enigma of human life".⁴¹ It can seize the souls of even the innocent and possess

them as their sovereign lord,⁴² and leaves its victims mute (they have no words to express what is happening to them) and impotent (they are in no state to help anyone at all). Affliction can make God appear absent for a time and for some, who in this condition cease to love, God's absence becomes final.⁴³ Each of the dimensions - physical, psychological, social - is present, then, in the severe negative experience of "affliction". This is not simple suffering, however violent that may be, but the condition where one is left permanently scarred in one's existence in this world. Weil writes in terms of "an uprooting of life, a more or less attenuated equivalent of death", "a state of mind ... as acute as that of a condemned man who is forced to look for hours at the guillotine", "the event which has seized and uprooted a life[and]attacks it, directly or indirectly, in all its parts", "something specific and impossible to describe in any other terms".⁴⁴ A pain, she says, that is only physical does not scar the soul in this way, it does not leave the mark of a slave when it is past - though, on the other hand, where there is no physical pain there is no affliction of the soul.⁴⁵ Nor does purely psychological pain reach the dimension of affliction, for psychological suffering that is spared physical pain can be eliminated by a suitable adjustment of the mind.⁴⁶ Nor is there really affliction in the social dimension alone, and for the same kinds of reason. Social degradation alone is not affliction, though it is an essential part of it.⁴⁷

c) Now, it is not necessary to follow Weil through her particular applications of this idea to see she has made a suggestion of great usefulness and validity. Suffering in its

severest form, that is affliction, is multidimensional and comprehends at once the whole way in which people exist in the world - the physical, the psychological, the social. Such suffering would indeed be a thing apart, and deserves a special designation, and "affliction" seems particularly appropriate in the light of the biblical uses of that word.⁴⁸

It is at this point that I now wish to push further the links between our negative experiences of the world and the shape of religious belief, for affliction focusses human apprehension of negativity in all its dimensions at once. The course of argument now seeks to show how Christian belief relates to negativity in general by showing how it relates to affliction specifically. How does the worshipper hold together, as realities, severest negativity - that is, affliction - and God, in his belief?

d) Let us introduce a second idea from Weil. She argues that to contemplate the world is to come to realise, "The essential truth to be known concerning this universe is that it is absolutely devoid of finality".⁴⁹ This is a sharper way of putting the points made earlier that it is not finally possible to ground fundamental criteria of evaluation in reasons, and that a feature of religious belief is that it locates such absolute criteria not in this world but in God.⁵⁰ Allen⁵¹ talks of Weil's claim by using the word "void" for the position a person comes to when he or she realises the lack of finality in this world means he or she must refuse to treat the world as an object of desire if the relation to God is to be absolute. He writes, "... love for God begins not with the desire for God, and not with seeking God, but by withholding ourselves from

all other things". And he also adds, "if we have withheld ourselves, if we have acted so as to leave the void exposed, then and only then does God have access".⁵²

I propose to change the use of Weil's word "devoid" and Allen's word "void" to refer not just to the lack of finality in this world, but also, in the light of affliction, to the meaninglessness that is a corollary of affliction. For the one afflicted the world has become "void". He cannot ask for what purpose this affliction occurs, for in its own terms it can for him have no meaning.

e) There is one other comment to make. It is not being specified what actual instances in life are afflictions, apart from talking of Christ's affliction on the Cross. This is not a failure of concept, but a recognition that, for the believer, actual afflictions are placed in relation to his or her understanding of Christ's affliction. The believer's afflictions lie within the "picture", whereas Christ's affliction is part of what constitutes the believer's "picture," as will become clear in subsequent argument. To describe Christian belief, it is paramount to understand primarily the affliction of Christ. In understanding that, one is in a position to see how the believer moves towards the (structurally) less significant afflictions that occur elsewhere. But there is a methodological reason also within descriptive theodicy for not itemising afflictions. For the religious "picture" to have absolute status it must be able to accommodate the possibility of such a condition as affliction, whatever the actual form affliction might take. This is the hardest test for descriptive theodicy, for what is in mind is the end point of negativity,

whatever that possibly might be. To cite instances of affliction would be, methodologically, to limit the test.

3. The Shape of Religious Theodicy

a) "Affliction" is, then, the severest apprehension of negativity in all human modes of existence at once. It is also the crucial test for religious theodicy, for it is the severest test of coherence in the believer's "picture".

b) But does the way things go not make any difference to the believer, even in the case of affliction? In general, answers to this testing question have been of two kinds. Some have said, "Yes, the way things go in this world is important to the believer because it is God's world, and therefore empirical data are important, indeed crucial, evidence of the nature of the governance of the world by God - and are, of course, the basis from which we can infer either his existence, or his nature, or his competence, or all three". Within this kind of response lies the shape of traditional discussions of the problem of evil.

In contrast, and despite some appearances to the contrary, the overwhelming response of the Christian community is ultimately and intrinsically, "No, it does not matter how things go in this world - though he slay me, yet will I trust him". It was the isolation of, and emphasis on, this facet of Christian belief that was the notable element in Flew's "Theology and Falsification".⁵³ Noting the Christian believer was prepared to go to any lengths of qualification of his concepts in order not to abandon his belief in a personal God of love, Flew took the challenge to the Christian - if you do not really believe that it matters how things go, if you persist in believing "God is

love" no matter what happens, then no circumstance can serve as a falsification of your belief, and therefore your statement, being compatible with all states of affairs, even contradictory ones, can have no meaning. Now the notion of "affliction" has just been set out as the severest negativity in human experience. If this, then, is not allowed by the believer to be a falsification of "God is love", what can the believer mean by such a claim? Flew's challenge can, therefore, be set definitively in this context. "Does affliction not make any difference to the believing community?"

c) What kinds of response are possible to Flew's challenge as philosophers make their input to the activity of theodicy? Some seek to deny the validity of the falsification principle itself.⁵⁴ However, whatever the detailed arguments on this, one thing remains the case - in a commonsense way it does seem an extra-ordinary thing to claim that "God is love", whatever happens. Flew has here voiced a central and long-avoided difficulty, and it should be faced. Other philosophical responses have fallen into the cognitivist, non-cognitivist, and grammatical categories mentioned earlier.⁵⁵ Cognitivist theists agree that "God is love" asserts a "fact" and have sought to show that in some way it is falsifiable in principle, and therefore meaningful (and true). Non-cognitivists have claimed religious belief is not fact-asserting, and is therefore invulnerable to Flew's principle. The grammarians have argued the "facts" of religious belief belong to a different rationality from "physicality", and that such facts have meaning within their own rationality, which, again, is immune to falsifiability principles. Now, it has been argued above that in a descriptive

philosophy one should leave everything where it is and seek to elucidate, understand, what is found, and that one should have reference to the whole context in which statements are made. Doing this leads one to make two observations. First, that Flew is indeed right in charging that it does not seem to matter ultimately to the Christian community, as a whole, how things go, even in cases of affliction. The second, however, is that for some believers it does seem to make a difference, for they lose their belief. The task, then, is to understand how this can be the case. Why does affliction matter to some, but not matter ultimately? In responding to this question, some of the implications of High's arguments concerning the nature of religious understanding need to be explored. Just how is it that the believing community says it "can-go-on" in the face of affliction? In tackling such issues, one will be investigating how it is the believing community resists Flew's further charge that it is confused, dishonest, or stubborn in persisting in its belief in the face of affliction.

d) My initial response to Flew is to make the point which is central to descriptive philosophy, and which is made by the grammarians especially, that it does philosophers no credit to attribute elementary and obvious blunders to whole communities.⁵⁶ The moves made by the Christian community, as it uses interpersonal language as it stands before God, may not make sense on the particular criteria applied to them by the "normative" philosophical critic, but that does not mean they do not make sense within the framework within which they are made. It is a reply to Flew in itself that the power of Christian belief and practice for millions of intelligent people who have

agonised over this question for hundreds of years cannot be gainsaid by a few lines of skilful academic logical analysis. After all, the essence of Flew's challenge actually predates Christianity and has been forcibly repeated regularly in its history,⁵⁷ but without apparently disturbing the persistence of belief. There must be an aspect of this Flew and his fellow arguers have missed, a perspective they have ignored - for the believing community, as a whole, faces the contradictions of life - more powerful by far than any intellectual contradictions - and still persists in believing and practising its faith, arguably with as much intellectual and moral rigour and integrity as Flew's. Their continuing witness is that they can say "happily" "God is love", and the way things go does not seem to be able to destroy this belief. It is the case, therefore, that affliction does not make any fundamental difference to the Christian community as a whole.

But perhaps we should re-phrase the challenge. Ought it not make a difference? I think not, for such a question implicitly assumes the stance of normative philosophy. In contrast, it is of the essence of descriptive philosophy that a system of belief, a persisting form of life, be taken as it is, in its givenness, and its rationality revealed. The "ought" question posed in this way is an external one, and supposes external criteria for correctness. What needs to be looked for are the internal criteria, the "grammar" of the system. It only "ought" to make a difference if the community of belief feels it ought to - but this is not the case, as the persistence of the community shows.

It may be objected that this approach prevents philosophers

from commenting adversely on evil communities of belief (e.g. Nazism) - which must apparently be taken as they are - and also on erroneous beliefs in a community (e.g. belief in witches). Both of these objections are misunderstandings. The point is that anyone (not just the philosopher) may make religious and moral judgements, and it is just such a judgement which rejects or accepts Nazism as a "picture" of worthwhile human life - there is agreement or refusal to play that game. The philosopher is in no better case in that regard. And belief in witches is a mistake within a form of life - it is not a form of life, a "picture" in itself. Description can perhaps show its incoherence - but by reference to the internal criteria of the way of life in which such a belief is set. Certainly, one can make mistakes within "grammar", and one common mistake in belief is dealt with below, but to ask whether there ought to be this "grammar", this form of life, is a very odd philosophical question, as is such a question as "Ought there to be a world?", or "Ought I to exist?". The proper task for philosophy is to set out, with all the clarity that can be achieved, what it means for the world to be, for me to be. And, similarly, what it means for the believing community to be. Philosophical thought, then, may well reveal the nature of mistaken moves, and how moves are correctly made, but not whether there ought to be moves. Philosophy needs to be practised in relation to a form of life in the same way as science is practised in relation to the form of the world. Its task is to set out the nature of the given, not to decide whether it ought to be. This, of course, has consequences for philosophical methodology and makes its task descriptive. But as this point has been previously

argued it is merely repeated here as forcible reiteration. Logical analysis cannot exist outside of a system of rationality,⁵⁸ and therefore the logical task is to clarify the nature of the rationality of the system through its own criteria. In the case of the Christian community of belief the way things go has not led to the quick and immediate demise of belief in a good God, nor to a slow and reluctant death by a thousand qualifications. That is what needs explanation - but, given the arguments in this paragraph, such explanation will be an account of the rationality of belief, not an attempt to account for it.

Affliction, then, as the severest manifestation of the way things go, is simply not felt by the believing community, as it would be by Flew, as being an opposition to, a refutation of, their belief. It is incumbent on us, then, to listen sensitively to what it is that the believer is saying, and to describe it accurately. It has been argued already that to do this one must sense what weight terms have in a language and not just their definition,⁵⁹ and that this weight is felt in experience - for the language of belief gains its meaning in the total life situation and this meaning is richly nuanced. The experience of affliction is "felt" within the unity of the community's experience-thought-interpretation, and is located in the "grammar" of belief by the role that it plays in that belief. As seen when discussing "evil", the term cannot without distortion be isolated or removed from that living context, and then opposed to it. Thus an advantage becomes apparent in thinking as Weil does in terms of dimensions of affliction, rather than in terms of precise definitions, when stating the problem of evil, for dimensions take us out into

the life situations that are the location of the word in use in the community of belief. The significance of affliction in religious belief when approached descriptively is, then, the "weight" that it has in the "picture" of the religious community.

But, it may be objected, it seems to have been forgotten that it was admitted that there are some for whom affliction is precisely an experience that has been found crushing, and who have abandoned their belief in its face, and for whom it is correct to say that the way things have gone for them has been a factor in the loss of belief. For such people it is not philosophical analysis, but experience in life and within the believing community, which leads to loss of belief. Examination of this objection below⁶⁰ reveals, however, that the connection between the way things go and loss of belief is by no means as simple as this way of putting it assumes.

e) Let us take it, then, that Flew's charge of lack of meaning in Christian concepts is premature. In that case, what kind of meaning can they have?

i) First, let us face the difficult, yet inescapable point that there is a necessary distinction to be drawn between "surface" and "depth" accounts of belief. It has just been suggested that the long-term historical persistence of a community of belief which is intellectually rigorous, and which aims for moral and spiritual integrity is itself a basic datum in the argument. The "surface" of the belief system of such an historical community may well, however, be culturally articulated, and contain thought forms which belong essentially to the contextual culture, that is, precisely, to the non-belief elements in that culture, or even to its a-belief elements. If

this is granted - and apart from a particular and very high view of revelation as directly revealed and therefore context-free truth, I do not see how it could be denied - then "surface" accounts of a community of belief must be recognised and described in this light. Accurate philosophical description will reveal where it is that the non-belief/a-belief structures have penetrated the experience and expression of the community in this way, and it is in this context that one needs to understand the character of "mistakes" in the beliefs of a community. Descriptive philosophy will, however, wish to proceed in a markedly different way from philosophical analysis. In the latter, the procedure identifies "surface" and "depth": "Here according to our criteria is a 'mistake' therefore here is a blunder".⁶¹ But philosophical description will proceed more cautiously and distinguish "surface" from "depth": "Here is a 'mistake' - what is it that this community is trying to say by continuing to put it this way"?⁶² As Tertullian realised long ago, central difficulties in religious language are not to be taken woodenly, or at face value, a point powerfully reinforced by I.T. Ramsey.⁶³

But to clarify what is "depth" and what "surface" in expressions of belief a criterion is needed for "depth". My contention here is an application of Phillips' claim concerning the significance of worship in Christian belief. The depth grammar of belief is to be found in the "grammar" of worship⁶⁴ - exactly where a community of belief finds reality in its persisting historical experience of worship, exactly there is the true nature of that community revealed, and ipso facto, the criteria for the interpretation of experience are also to be found there.

What a community does in the moment of adoring worship constitutes what it is. What it does in that constitutive activity is the "depth" of what it says. Now, it is inconceivable that a community can offer adoring worship, all that is involved in the language of praise, and at the same time have reservations as to the one adored, for adoring worship consists of the attribution of absolute worth to the one adored, or else it is blasphemous. And this inconceivability is both logical and practical. Everything the community expresses must be in turn measured by this criterion of whether it could be held at the moment of adoring worship.

Now, if this is the case, the loss of belief experienced by individuals may be seen to have a rather different character from the description of it with which the objections came. There the assumption was made that the way things go in the world can for some individuals lead directly to a loss of belief. But in the light of present considerations, the situation needs to be described rather differently:

ii) Believers are members of a community which in adoring worship expresses its unqualified devotion to God, and this adoring worship provides the depth criteria for the community's interpretation of the way things go. But this worship is given because that community has committed itself to a testimony,⁶⁵ a testimony which marks the beginning for their conceptualisation. Believing that testimony marks a new discovery which, for that community, becomes the basis of reality - it is a fundamental discovery which is constitutive, in that it gives that community its epistemological perspective, and regulative, in that what can and what cannot be said

("grammar") flows from it. Expressed differently, there is in this totality of experience-thought-interpretation a commitment to a particular epistemological "direction" for saying what is and is not the case. As this testimony has these functions it becomes for that community the bedrock in the cognitive domain. It provides both the origins and the framework within which experience arises and new experiences are interpreted. There is no breaking this richly nuanced totality of experience-thought-interpretation which is bound up in a commitment to a particular testimony. All that flows from this totality is depth belief.

But, what is meant by talking of an epistemological "direction"? Can epistemology have a direction? Perhaps this can be clarified by referring to the difficulties Sherry raises when seeking to understand what the connections might be between Phillips' "pictures", why people should want to live with such "pictures",⁶⁶ and what the ontological status of the entities depicted in them is supposed to be. Now, Sherry recognises that within the "pictures" there is a direction of implications which spells out the meaning of the "pictures":

... the form of life of one who lives with such pictures involves many different responses, but especially that of worship. This will include both fear and love, for these are the appropriate responses to the unseen judge who is also infinite love. Conversely, the response of worship demands an appropriate object; there is a logical and religious requirement that the objects of worship be supremely holy and good, for otherwise worship would become idolatry. If we could show that perfection entails transcendence, we could construct a logical chain as follows:

worship → holiness → perfection → transcendence.

One could go quite a way along this path, but I think that its limitations are already plain ... is there actually anything that is truly worshipful?⁶⁷

His answer is that there are two routes which might provide the substance required. One is natural theology, and he cites Malcolm and Aquinas as examples of those who have tried this route. The other is that "we might look for features in men's experience of the world which lead them into the form of life called worshipping transcendent being ... This is surely one of those cases when men's responses are dependent on facts about the world ..."⁶⁸ Sherry seems to have in mind here that the worshipworthiness of God would be something that was deduced from the facts. So, for example, experiences of the mystical or the numinous could be instanced as reasons for belief, as also might be meditation on the life of Christ⁶⁹ - the object of the exercise being, Sherry says "to point to some element in our experience which we consider to be a manifestation of a transcendent being".⁷⁰ He concludes:

... the possibility and utility of certain language-games and forms of life depend on facts about the world.⁷¹

However, Sherry is then faced with the difficulty of how the "facts" in the "pictures" relate to the "facts" in the world, and he introduces into discussion Meynell's "type-jump",⁷² that jump being instanced in the relationship that holds between statements of observation and the laws of physics, and in the move from observable human behaviour to transcendent human mind. Sherry then says, applying the discussion:

Clearly, therefore, religious doctrines are not simply deduced from the facts, although the latter may constitute necessary conditions.⁷³

Disappointingly, after recounting the types of problem attaching to this position, Sherry says, regarding why and how people do go on to build religion on such facts, "I cannot hope

to solve the fundamental yet difficult problems which are raised here".⁷⁴

Now, Sherry at times comes close to the heart of the matter in this discussion, but takes wrong turnings. Let us agree with him in not seeking answers via natural theology, for reasons already given. Also, let us agree that Phillips' epistemology leaves over the issue as to why people should want to use religious pictures. But let us not think that the only remaining option is a return to unreformed standard epistemology, which either sees an inferential connection between picture-facts and "real" facts (Sherry's first suggestions above), or an appeal to the rather mysterious "jump" connection he points to in Meynell, and which he admits explains very little. Indeed, this "jump" theory is itself an admission that standard epistemology, unreformed, cannot deliver what it claims to - clear facts to be known. What Sherry does not see is that he has himself several clues which he could have used to state the whole issue differently. Firstly, that for a fact to be a necessary condition means simply that. Secondly, that if a "fact" is a necessary condition, it has this same status in the religious language-game ("picture") for, again from previous argument,⁷⁵ one cannot separate "real" facts from facts-as-they-are-meant-in-language-use. Thirdly, that we stand before such facts as givens. Fourthly, that we respond to such givens by "picturing" the world in their light - one proceeds from the totality of experience-thought-interpretation, that is from the "picture", to living in this world. Now Sherry mentions the meditation by Christians on the life of Christ. But why do Christians meditate on the life of Christ? Because they believe

him.⁷⁶ Why do they believe him? - not for reasons, for that kind of calculation is not what is meant by saying one believes someone. Such belief is precisely apart from reasons - it is what one does when one does not reason about someone, but takes him for what he is. But, it might be objected, people do come to belief by meditating on the life of Christ. We need to be careful here. To know Christ is to worship him. But, as has already been said, one cannot offer worship by saying, "O God, I worship you for the following reasons." One becomes a worshipper by responding in an affirmation, not by reasoning on an hypothesis. Is this affirmatory nature of belief not the meaning of the Caesarea Philippi interchange between Christ and his disciples, which talks in terms of revelation (and not that which comes from flesh and blood)?

"Whom do men say that I am?"	"Some say ..."	Reasoning
"Who do you say that I am?"	"Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God ..."	Confession, Affirmation
"On this rock will I build my Church ..."		Form of life ⁷⁷

So, to have a "picture" is to affirm certain facts. Such facts are transmitted in the form of life by testimony - that is, by witnessing to the facts. But in religion such facts are celebrated in worship, where they are given absolute status in the community, as it believes God. Meditation on the life of Christ by unbelievers has, in contrast, a quite different structure, for worship is not involved. But to believe Christ is to make a religious judgement that one wishes to live before him in a relationship of worship. To move from the position of unbelief to that of belief is to move from one "picture" to another. To do that is to be captivated by the new "picture",

and to come under its authority, and to affirm one will live before it. In the light of such worship, the believer interprets the way things go and says what is and what is not the case in the world.

Using Sherry's method of typography, this can be laid out in terms of epistemological "direction", in the way that he laid out logical direction:

necessary condition (Christ):

affirmation (confession) → testimony (witness) →

celebration (worship) → interpretation (response to the world).

But this epistemological "direction" underlies all knowledge which is based on "believing". In fact of course, all these moves are made at once, e.g. again Caesarea Philippi.

iii) But "surface" expressions of a belief system are adapted to, and articulated to, contextual cultural thought-forms which precisely do not arise from a commitment to the foundation testimony. Their "surface" character is an expression of the fact that they are statements of belief which conform to "secular" criteria, rather than (or as well as) to the "religious" perspective (or, specifically, Christian perspective) which flows from the foundation testimony. Now one notable feature of these secular criteria of interpretation is that the epistemological ordering of reality in the form affirmation → testimony → celebration → interpretation is broken. The secular mind claims to look only at the way things go, and to derive directly from this empirical observation the criteria of interpretation for what is observed. As a result of the "facts" thus

"known", the perceived negativities in experience are taken as direct evidence which prevents the offering of worship. Commitment to God is withheld. And for the believer for whom this secular epistemology is captivating, belief is lost.

However, this loss of belief can now be seen not to be due to the intrinsic character of the way things go, but to an acceptance from the contextual culture of "secular" assumptions as to the epistemological "direction" for correct argument and inference. It is not the way things go, however severe, that brings loss of belief, but the acceptance of an alien epistemological "direction" for saying how things go - a direction which is secular in that it claims empirical experience can provide its own criteria of interpretation. Loss of belief is therefore occasioned by the believer confusing the surface-and-contextual expressions of belief with what is believed at depth.

Alternatively, the secular mind may itself accept that naive secular thought is untenable, and that "facts" are generated within an interpretative process; in which case the "loss" of belief may be understood as following from the acceptance by the one who lapses of a new testimony - a testimony that replaces the Christian one. In this case, however, the religious epistemological "direction" still holds, for the secularist has here adopted a "religious" stance. But this case is not then an instance of a loss of belief, but a new belief. There is a commitment to a new testimony which becomes the constitutive factor in his new reality. For such a man his old explanations now become inconceivable. Insofar as this position takes on correctness of an absolute kind perhaps the element of obedience and worship are also present though

transmuted.

As to what causes a believer to lose one commitment and to gain another, that is, to believe one testimony rather than another, that, though interesting, is not germane to this argument - though a clue might be found in Phillips' and Dilman's discussion of how meaning is found in life.⁷⁸ One learns, it is said, from contact with a man of character - one learns from what this man's maturity, courage, humility, honesty, kindness is able to inspire in one - and from contemplating what this man meets in his life. That is what knowing and learning are like here. In terms of arguments above, one feels the weight of a testimony. But be that as it may, what is germane is the centrality and cruciality of commitment to a testimony as the basis of cognition in religion.

It might, of course, be possible for a whole community of belief to lose its commitment. In the light of previous discussion one may see this loss of commitment as possibly arising from a failure of the community to maintain its practice of worship at depth (which would lead first to a distortion and then to a loss of its interpretative perspective), or through acceptance of a new testimony (which would mark a new perspective). Either of these processes could be catastrophic or gradualist in nature. But neither could arise directly from empirical evidence, from the way things go. The groundwork of epistemological possibility argued above prevents that option of explanation. "Evidence", including "empirical" evidence, is always secondary, epistemologically, never primary. "Facts" are theory-laden. And that applies to both believer and the one who "loses" belief.

f) The distinction that has been drawn between "surface" and "depth" in relation to the grammar of religious belief, together with the notion of epistemological "direction", prove to be useful tools in seeking to tackle the question of what the relationship is in Christian belief between "affliction" and the God of love. "Affliction", it can now be argued, is not a condition to be "explained" in terms of a "surface" theodicy, but calls for an attempt to describe the shape of Christian belief in a way that follows the moves at depth by which that belief proceeds in its epistemological "direction" from God to the world, and does so in terms of the language of interpersonal theological formulation. It has been argued above that within this language the presiding concept is "God". Let us now explore some aspects of what believers say in the context of what they do and ask what it means at depth to say in this language, "All things depend on God" - for in saying all things depend on God, the believer is saying that experiences of "affliction" also depend on God. How is that possible?

i) The first thing to notice about "All things depend on God" is brought to our attention by Phillips, for in his discussion of this utterance he chooses as the context of discussion the practice of prayer.⁷⁹ This context reminds us immediately that what we have here is not an hypothesis, but a fundamental confession, and that, as a confession, it forms part of the worship of the community, that is, as has been said, part of all that is involved in the language of praise. It is part of the believer's submission of his whole nature to God as transcendent, the quickening of his conscience by God's holiness, the nourishment of his mind with God's truth, the purifying of

his imagination by God's beauty, the opening of his heart to God's love, the surrender of his will to God's purpose - all gathered up in adoration as the most selfless emotion of which man is capable.⁸⁰ It has been shown that "confession → worship" has an important role in religious epistemology, and stands structurally between the necessary condition of Christian belief and the believer's response to the world. In this utterance, therefore, we have a religious utterance of peculiar significance for theodicy as descriptive understanding, for the content of this confession makes it the second item in the structure of Christian belief, allowing only the presiding concept itself to take precedence. It is the ground of all further claims to religious knowledge. It is the first step taken in the believer's movement from God to the world.

ii) But the second thing to notice is also brought to our attention by Phillips' reaction to this utterance, and it also concerns the distinction between "surface" and "depth" grammar. What is it the believer means at depth, Phillips asks, when he confesses "All things depend on God"? As, in the context of worship, this utterance is not an hypothesis, it is not appropriate, Phillips argues, to put to it tests that would be appropriate to an hypothesis - that is, it is not appropriate to ask, "Is there a being such that ..." - a question which operates at the surface level of ordinary-language analysis, and makes the existence of God dependent on satisfactory evidence and argument. Rather, to approach such a confession as an utterance of worship should be to seek to provide an account of what God means to believers, that is, to provide a grammar of religious belief:

to say what is meant by belief in God, one must take account of what God means to religious believers; one must have some feeling for the game. We must ask what worshipping an eternal God means in the way of life in which it has its life.⁸¹

At this point in his discussion, Phillips turns for help to an argument of Simone Weil's,⁸² the form of that argument corresponding to the use we are making of "surface" and "depth" understandings of belief. Using Weil, he suggests that to formulate the question as to what the believer means in the first way above, the way he rejects, is to have a "natural" God in mind - that is, a God who is bound to the way things go in an explanatory bond. Instead, one should seek to understand the "supernatural" God, the God who will be found within the second way of taking the question, the eternal God whom the believer adoringly worships in confessing "All things depend on God". Now it becomes clear at this point that, when one talks of an epistemological "direction" that proceeds from God to the world, the presiding concept of God involved has the shape of the God of whom the confession is made that all things depend on him - that is, the presiding concept needs to be understood in terms of the "depth", "supernatural" God. The "natural" God of the secular epistemological direction, the God in the hypothesis, lies in the "surface" only of this key utterance of religious belief. Loss of belief in the face of affliction may well arise if the believer makes the mistake of confusing at the depth level of his belief the latter with the former, and deciding rightly that such a God cannot properly be worshipped, but then loss of belief precisely arises from a confusion, and not from the way things go in the world.

iii) But let us explore this a little further.

Careful attention to what is said in worship has been shown to help descriptive understanding of the shape of belief. The worship of the community reveals, as nowhere else can, what it is that believers do and do not say as they "indwell" the language of worship, and make the move "I-can-go-on". Here, above all, it must be insisted, one cannot separate man, language, and reality, and here is the social matrix which is the proper focus for the study of theodical language. It has already been argued that it is practically and logically inconceivable for the worshipper to hold reservations about the God adoringly worshipped. Now Phillips' point (from Weil) regarding the kind of God appropriate to worship is an aspect of this argument, in that such adoring worship cannot contain within it any attempt to justify God in the light of the way things go, nor relate to him as one (possible) existent among existents. Such a God would be merely "natural"; but worship requires a "supernatural" God. I am here denying what Roth argues when he says,

For a moment such a worship experience sets things right between God and an individual, if not the world as a whole. But memory can spoil everything.

Even as a person prays a confession in good faith, complaints may intrude.⁸³

The ground of my denial is that "confession" is a form of honest belief, not honest doubt. What Roth's believer is doing is to hold his confusions before God, not his confessions in good faith. But, nevertheless, an argument is made later,⁸⁴ together with Roth, that there is a form of praise that includes protest. As will be seen, that is quite a different issue.

iv) There is, then, on the basis of the present argument, a clear epistemological ground for making the

distinction that Weil and Phillips suggest regarding what is meant by the term "God" in classical theism, at depth. The "natural" God, the "surface" God, is the result of thinking in the secular epistemological direction. The existence and nature of the "natural" God, the God of the Philonic tradition,⁸⁵ can be inferred directly from the way things are (or dis-inferred if one argues from evil). There is the beauty, awefulness, goodness -- explanatory inference drawn? That there is a God. There is the evil, ugliness, triviality -- explanatory inference drawn? That there is no God. The existence and nature of such a God is, therefore, contingent, it is a perchance, it is a perhaps, dependent on the inference drawn. But the depth God, the super-natural God, is not at all located in this way in belief. The totality of experience-thought-interpretation, the constitutive and regulative commitment to a testimony, the worship which is the crucible of cognition and reality for the believer, fixes God as unshakeably certain.

v) But (and this is where the argument now departs radically from Phillips) the historical reference (the necessary condition) of the foundation testimony means that the believer's "world" is grounded. The departure from Phillips here is occasioned by the need in describing Christian belief to give an adequate place to a consideration of the historical experience of affliction, both in the life of the believer, and in relation to the affliction of God in the person of the necessary (historical) condition of Christian belief - Christ. The basically a-historical assumptions of Phillips' language-game approach to semantics (to know God is to have the idea of God and to know how to use religious language) do not seem to be

able to bear the weight that a critical remembrance of affliction necessitates. Understanding "how-to-go-on" in Christian belief needs to be described in terms which enable the theodacist to hold in view what is involved in the religious use of language by the worshipper of the God on whom all things depend, but the worship of that God, in those terms, in Christianity, refers to the role that is given to the afflicted Christ as an historical figure by the Christian community. The Christian believer, in that he is a Christian and not something else, affirms in his worship that his beliefs bring together Christ and God. That is why Christ is worshipped. For Phillips, however, as has been seen, to have eternal life is to know God. But, as John's gospel puts it (17:3), eternal life is to "know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ". Some of the complexities of this knowledge of God through the historical Christ will be explored later.⁸⁶

For the moment, attention is given to two other moves made in Christian belief, insofar as the confession "All things depend on God" is understood through the historical Christ. The first is that the range of interpersonal relationship language given predominance is that of family, for the community speaks in terms of Son and Father. This is the context in which the account of Christian theology which Phillips sets out under the motif of doing the will of the Father needs to be considered. When it is said that "All things depend on God", what is meant, then, is that all things depend on God who has the role of Father in the belief of the community, and further, that what this means is to be understood through the role of the Son - "He who has seen me has seen the Father".⁸⁷ At this point the

second move comes to the forefront, for the Christian community has made the eucharistic act central in its understanding of the role of the Son in revealing the nature of God the Father. But the eucharistic act of worship also serves to place the sacrificial suffering (the affliction) of Christ as God and as man critically in the experience of the community - for the community proceeds in the light of its understanding (through the Son) of the "supernatural" God, the Father on whom all things depend, to the world in which affliction occurs. "Affliction", therefore, is not something which can become for the Christian community that which is in need of explanation, for it is crucial to the means by which it explains to itself the form of life that it is. To be a member of the Christian family, to commit oneself to the Christian testimony, to make the confession "All things depend on God", is not at all, therefore, like the kind of statement that Flew supposes it to be. It is an utterance that has to be placed in the religious epistemological "direction", and explored in terms of its "depth grammar", if its meaning is to be understood.

g) There is no case, therefore, for expounding any interpersonal theodicy which seeks to give an account of affliction by reference to a natural or surface God. It is now attempted to confirm this judgement in principle by a critique of two types of theodicy typically developed in relation to such a surface God, and it is claimed that this critique applies to all theodicies based on inference from the way things go. This critique will take me some way towards showing the nature of the mistake made by the person who, like Flew, thinks that the way things go presents the basis of a logical dilemma for

the believer, or who, alternatively, argues from the experience of the way things go to unbelief.

i) In the light of the foregoing, my argument is that all theodicies which infer directly to God from the way the world goes, in that they use the secular epistemological "direction", are mistakenly irreligious. Let us call such theodicies, Theodicies of Inference.

The invalidity of inference to God from the way things go has been clear since the time of Hume, though there has been great resistance to accepting this as so. It is to Phillips' credit, however, that he has recognised our inability by any process of inference from contingent events to account for the certainty, unshakeability, sureness, that is the hallmark of belief. This point has now been taken further by showing how it is that this absolute character of religious belief is not a matter of obstinacy, intractability, or blindness, but is based on an insight into the nature of epistemology missed by conventional accounts which first reduce depth factors in belief to surface ones and then argue in the wrong direction. We can now see the crucial mistake made by inferential theodicies is that they cannot represent matters as the believer knows them to be. God cannot, in an adequate Christian theodicy, be located at the end of an inferential process or function as an explanation of the way things go. Look again at the way people worship, and at what the saints have written. That God "possibly" exists; that God is "possibly" good; that God stands in need of, or could be the subject of, justification; that God lies at the end of a process of reasoning; all such notions are foreign to, and destructive of, theodicy. These considerations are all

to the adoring worshipper both logical and practical inconceivabilities.

But the nature of inferential theodicies lands the believer who seeks to use them in a still worse plight for, if successful, they would entail the would-be believer in first following the inferential trail to its limit, that is, to the question of affliction - and then, as Mitchell and Crombie realise in their responses to Flew, making an act of trust which, by the very nature of the process of inference, must be without reason or justification. That is, Mitchell and Crombie see the believer making as the crucial move in his rational belief an act of blind trust.⁸⁸ It is clear that some such notion as blind trust must be the case in all theodicies of inference in that both the contradictoriness of the presenting evidence, and also the nature of the supposed relationship between belief and reason, makes it follow. The implication of all such theodicies is that the believer as believer becomes a believer just where the reasoning runs out, where justifications cease. However, this understanding of crucial religious belief without regard to the movement of thought in the religious epistemological "direction" is fatal, if accurate.

But my argument is that this understanding is not accurate. The worshipper does not reason in this way; on this evidence; in this direction. Nor could he. Nor would he. For a further damaging result is entailed in theodicies of inference. If successful, such theodicies result in a God whom no believer would worship. Phillips is quite damning on this point:

I shall argue that religious believers have cause to feel miserable if 'the complete picture' does show what Crombie hopes it will show, for then God's evil nature will have been demonstrated. Far from having suspended judgement on God, Mitchell and Crombie have prepared the way for His condemnation.

... according to these philosophers we ought to feel reassured, for what we are confronted by is not haphazard suffering, but planned suffering, and, what is more, suffering planned on an infinitely big scale ...

If God is this kind of agent, He cannot justify His actions, and His evil nature is revealed.⁸⁹

In contrast to all attempts to argue to God from the way things go, together with their associated theodicies, attempts which operate at the "surface" of religious expression, the realisation that the "grammar" of theodicy must conform to the "grammar" of adoring worship, if it is to describe the depth of belief, will, and must, involve a quite different approach to understanding the epistemology of belief. No theodicy which conflicts with what is possible in worship can survive the descriptive procedure. The sharp edge of philosophical description is revealed, and cuts away volumes of mis-directed effort.

ii) There is, however, a second type of theodicy which is more subtle in presenting itself as expressing "depth" belief, and which may be seen as having fictitious "depth grammar". Theodicies of this second type will be termed Theodicies of Acceptance. My critique of them is made by first going further in determining what is meant by "looking" at what believers do and what the saints have said, so as to be clear about the nature of fictitious depth. Then comment is made on the theodicies themselves. Phillips fails to notice, or ignores, this necessary sorting out of what is meant by looking. His mistake here is that, in discussing what believers mean by praying "All things depend on God", he assumes the religious

dependence referred to is all of a kind. But is this the case? Now Phillips does distinguish between "superstitious" and "true" belief,⁹⁰ and might thus be thought to be making a distinction between types of dependence. But the effect of his discussion is not to identify different kinds of religious dependence, but to deny that some "believers" are in fact believers at all, for they are merely "superstitious". That is an over-harsh judgement, and in fact misconceived. They are believers, but believers who are making a mistake in that they understand the depth of their worshipful belief in mistaken terms, that is, in terms of surface (ordinary) language, and in secular epistemological categories. However, as Phillips rightly argues elsewhere,⁹¹ one should not confuse the ability of the believer to give an account of what he believes, with the ability to believe. Let us spell this out. It is not right to think here in quantitative terms, as Phillips does, of "some" believers who are true believers and "some" who are superstitious,⁹² but in terms of "surface" and "depth", for in this way one is dealing with all believers qua believers. It is a question of what all believers are saying and doing within the shape of the confession to which they are committed, rather than the shape of the explanation which one-and-another give of that confession, that is, it is a matter of proceeding in a philosophically descriptive way which will reveal what in their speech and acts is grammatically deep. It is true that there is a quantitative aspect also, in that some believers live nearer the surface, and for more of the time, than others. Indeed the "story" in the community is told in a language that is "surface" rather than "depth", but then we must remember previous argument as to how

it is that systematically misleading expressions in the language of a living community do not necessarily contain contradictions in use, and that there is a proper distinction between "form" and "function" - that is what it means for the community to know the "weight" of words, and to know their role in its way of life.⁹³ This fact of surface articulation of beliefs is, therefore, not relevant to the qualitative discussion of the role of those articulations in practice. The weakness of Phillips' position is therefore being avoided. It is not an issue of some believers being authentic and others not. Given the contention that there is a right description of the "direction" of religious epistemology, can "depth" belief be identified and described? I think to some measure it can. There is no need to disenfranchise, then, perhaps the largest part of the believing community. But there is a need to be quite clear about the difference between fictitious and genuine depth.

Occasion has already been taken to reject Crombie's and Mitchell's philosophical account of blind trust as a misconception of the depth nature of religious trust and a mis-reading of the way believers relate to God's existence and nature. It is now argued that Theodicies of Acceptance are the religious expression in the believing community of just this kind of blind trust which is the end result of the inferential process. These theodicies are practical and pietistic counterparts to, and match the shape of, Theodicies of Inference. Theodicies of Acceptance express the view that religious trust accepts the way things go in the world, even if it be affliction, for one can find in the way things go some meaning, some purpose, which

is intended by God. One can infer from the way things go to the specific will of God for the believing individual or the religious community, and can see in them the intentions, activity, and mind of God.

My critique of such Theodicies of Acceptance owes much to the discussion of affliction found in Soelle's Suffering.⁹⁴ In this book she develops Simone Weil's suggestions about affliction, an aspect of Weil's thought Phillips strangely misses, but which can serve as an important factor in penetrating the "depth grammar" of the "supernatural" God. Soelle argues that, in the face of the way things go in the experience of affliction (in each of its dimensions), believers have shown a tendency to suppress responses of resistance (especially in the social dimension), and have instead emphasised two alternative types of response. The first of these responses is based on the view that divine power can be, and is, vindicated through human powerlessness - suffering as a result is seen as having a religious purpose. The second type of response, corresponding to the first, but from the human side, is that it is proper to promote, as the true understanding of affliction, the willingness to suffer. Why God sends affliction is thus taken up within a general acceptance that it is sufficient to know he causes it and causes it for a purpose. Such Theodicies of Acceptance are not, and cannot be, militant and defiant in affliction. Suffering, even affliction, is to be accepted, and transformed through acceptance.

But is this "acceptance" well-founded in the depth grammar of belief? Does the believer have to understand what the will of God for him is by inferring it from things that happen? The

key figures to whom this kind of pietism appeals as models of acceptance, e.g. Jesus and Job, stand in fact in contradiction to these theodicies, for they did not understand God in the light of what happened, but understood the way things were in the light of their dependence on God. These Theodicies of Acceptance rationalise negativity in the way things go by inferri that God is perhaps testing the sufferer; perhaps punishing him; perhaps refining him; perhaps allowing an expiation to be made. But as Soelle argues, these kinds of inference, understood as they are by religious piety in the context of God "breaking" pride and demonstrating human powerlessness, have at their heart an exploitation by God of human dependence. Further, the implication is that it is right and proper to rejoice in such exploitation. Soelle points out that here is the psychology of masochism in the celebration of pain. The blind trust of philosophical theodicies of inference has been transferred into the kind of religious trust for which neither Jesus nor Job are models. Soelle observes:

Affliction strikes even the pious. How can it be punishment in that case? The training value of suffering is negligible ... Suffering produces fruits like curses, imprecations, and prayers for vengeance more readily than reform and insight. Suffering causes people to experience helplessness and fear; indeed intense pain cripples all power to resist and frequently leads to despair. It is precisely the Old Testament that corrects again and again theological theories based on the premise that God sends suffering. (She quotes Job 5:6f).⁹⁵

Again one sees, therefore, that not only can the believer not follow through this inferential process from events to evaluations, but, should he do so, he comes to a God whom he would not worship. Worship thus again sets its own criteria for belief. It excludes the very principle of inference hidden

in Theodicies of Acceptance, and also the "natural" God who is implied by that principle. Despite the initial appearances of such piety to the contrary this kind of dependence is surface in nature, and is only fictitiously depth.

To reinforce this conclusion, let us stay with the point that the shape of a theodicy can lead to a God other than the one a careful looking at "what the saints and believers do and say" could possibly entail.

Soelle's argument⁹⁶ that "masochistic" tendencies in pietistic religion, though wrong, are at least understandable, because they bring a kind of help, an existential stance, to some people in some circumstances, can perhaps be offered as an excuse for believers not readily seeing the implications of Theodicies of Acceptance. But over against this masochistic tendency there stands the frightening companion piece advanced by some theologians, and which is implied by all such theodicies - the sadistic God. Submission (or, in present terms, acceptance as a source of pleasure is one thing, but the God who acts to produce suffering, and cause affliction, and is glorified for doing so, is another. Combining Crombie's account of a God who plans suffering on a universal scale and Soelle's account of Calvin's sovereign God, there is seen at the end of all inferential theodicies the justification of, and trust in, a God to whom devotion is unthinkable, and adoration a blasphemy. Masochistic submission to such a God has no religious worth, whatever its practical value. The dialectical bond between masochistic piety and sadistic theology is strong and intrinsic. The means of testing and training are identical with the means of punishment. From this equation it follows that the means of

testing and training lack morality, for those means are indistinguishable from the means of punishment. There is the further point that, to be moral, punishment should be proportion to the offence. But gladly to accept suffering as extensive and intensive as we know it to be, together with its random distribution, and to praise the God who sends it, is to praise a God who fails, in any noticeable regard, to have a sense of justice or proportion. Dostoievski's denunciation of such a God, in the mouth of Ivan, with regard to the suffering of children, is beyond contradiction.⁹⁷ But as Dostoievski also knew, in that Alyosha persists in his belief even whilst agreeing with Ivan to rebel against such a God, we do not see in such a God the depth grammar of belief.

iii) A description, then, of Theodicies of Inference, and the sub-type Theodicies of Acceptance, show neither of them to be possible understandings of the God whom the believer adoringly worships or of the depth nature of religious dependence. The epistemological direction of such theodicies is faulty; their account of the nature of religious trust is inadequate; their implications for the nature of God are inappropriate; and their failure to ground theodicy in worship makes them incapable of grasping the depth rationality of belief. Flew's attack on such theodicies is right on target. The person who finds the way things go cannot support belief in such a "surface" God is saying something penetrating.

But to show that, whilst technically correct, what Flew is opposing is not the essence of the matter is hardly sufficient. Attention now, therefore, turns to attempting to describe the shape of the Religious Theodicy which seeks to avoid the errors

of understanding isolated above. By use of contrast, however, it is apparent that some aspects of the shape of such a theodicy are already discernable - it will be consistent with the religious epistemological "direction"; it will offer an account of trust that matches what one sees when one looks at saints and believers practising their faith; it will imply a God who can fittingly be adored in interpersonal worship; and it will have the same shape as the structure of worship.

Let us call such a theodicy a "Theodicy of Dependence".

h) What is meant by religious dependence if it is not acceptance of the will of God as inferred from the way things go? This question brings us back to Phillips' claim that a consideration of what a believer means by "All things depend on God" should concern itself with seeking to understand what the believer can and cannot say about God, that is, with what he means in the things he says and does.

i) Phillips suggests the hallmark of religious dependence is seen in the act of "thanking God for one's existence".⁹⁸ Let us interpret this to mean that the speech-act of prayer carries the weight of meaning pointed to by the summary utterance we have been considering, namely, "All things depend on God". This prayer of thanksgiving - thanking God for one's existence - marks, thus, the third item in the structure of belief, for it determines how the believer relates to the God on whom all things depend, even affliction. So far, then, adoring worship, in its shape, has the elements (a) coming to know in the worship of the Christian community the supernatural God spoken of as Father, (b) the confession that all things depend on him, and (c) thanksgiving to the God on whom all things

depend, and who is Father, for one's existence.

Now, though the speech-act of prayer is less embracing than that of worship, nevertheless, as a particular case of worship, it shares its general shape. Prayer, as an act of worship, is performative in nature - that is, the prayer brings a state of affairs into being.⁹⁹ As an act of worship, it brings into being the reality, the "world", which arises from believing the foundation testimony. With prayer, a "world" exists that is absent without it, a relationship exists that is absent without it. In this "world" the believer ventures in faith.¹⁰⁰ But in contrast to Phillips, of course, this "world" is being seen as historically grounded and epistemologically directed.

Confirmation that prayer, as an act of worship, has such a role in the experience of the believer can be found by contrasting, as Phillips does, the shape of everyday thanksgiving with the special shape of thanksgiving found in prayer.¹⁰¹ What is the shape of everyday giving of thanks? First, everyday thanks refer to those thanked having done one thing rather than another, that this was done rather than that. Second, everyday thanks refer to particular cases. We are grateful for something(s), and we are so because we make value judgements. It hardly needs arguing that such a structure centrally incorporates the process of inferential reasoning. Something happens; I make a value judgement; I infer to the will and intentions of the causing agent; and give him thanks. That prayer can be, and often is, of this "natural" and "surface" and "secular" form also hardly needs demonstrating and neither does the difficulty of offering thanks for affliction to such a God who sends

particular "things" for which thanks should be given. But this shape of reasoning will not fit the act of worship contained in the prayer, "All things depend on God", for this prayer is confessing that all actual and particular things about which various and opposite value judgements are made, some favourable some unfavourable, are a cause for thanks to God - including even affliction. Everyday-thanks, precisely, does not do this, it hasn't this shape at all. The weight of the believer's "supernatural" prayer of thanksgiving is felt, rather, by actually thanking God for one's existence. In the context of this worshipping speech-act, it is clear that thanks to God are not felt to be linked to particular events, or value judgements on them, in the way thanks to other people seem to be. The difference lies in the lack of any inferential element in worshipping prayer. There is no specific reference to the way things have gone. As Phillips accurately observes:

When the believer thanks God for his creation, it seems to be a thanksgiving for his life as a whole, for everything, meaning the good and the evil within his life, since despite such evil, thanking God is still said to be possible. In devout religious believers, there seems to be no question of blaming God, but only of praising Him.¹⁰²

Now, such an account may be thought to suggest believers are remarkably insensitive. But this objection is, to say the least, not in accord with the principle of charity. Believers are manifestly not insensitive to good and bad events, but simply do not infer from those individual events, or even from the run of events, to God. Giving thanks to God in prayer means being able to come to the world with love, to have a love for the world, to bring meaning to life, meaning unshakeable by the way things go because it is not inferred from it. And that is

true of believing prayer in the time of affliction, too.

It might be objected that the believer does not typically give thanks only for his existence, his creation, and that Phillips' description has, therefore, missed the main problem. Typically, it might be urged, the believer gives thanks for his creation and preservation, and does not this latter type of thank not relate without a shadow of doubt to the way things go? Does the believer give thanks even in affliction? Put differently, are ontological thanks enough? Is belief not located in providential thanks too? But let us notice that Phillips' argument can be extended properly to meet this quite apposite objection. Returning to the quotation from Phillips, it makes no difference at all if it is modified to read: "When the believer thanks God for his creation and preservation ...", without changing a single word that follows. Indeed, the passage thus emended, makes better sense, and Phillips was at fault for not noticing the "everything" has breadth as well as depth. The thanks the believer offers are for the whole of life - that it is, and what it is. But, it isn't just that Phillips can be interpreted in this emended way. Previous arguments provide the structure for understanding why the believer must give such "whole" and unreserved thanks, without qualification. Ontological and providential thanks arise simultaneously with, and from, his commitment to the Christian testimony and its cognitive domain. The epistemological basis of his whole reality, in that it proceeds to the way things go from his commitment, means that for the believer all things depend on God. In worship he expresses his commitment to give thanks for life as a whole, for everything.

There is, however, another objection to be set against Phillips' claim. He seems to allow to the believer no "blaming" of God, only "praising", "thanking". But in this Phillips is not true to his own method of looking at religious practice, for believers have frequently "blamed" God in vehement terms, both for their existence and for their lot. For example:

I am the man who has seen affliction under the rod
of his wrath;
he has driven and brought me into darkness without
any light;
surely against me he turns his hand again and again
the whole day long.

He has made my flesh and my skin waste away, and
broken my bones;
he has besieged and enveloped me with bitterness and
tribulation;
he has made me dwell in darkness like the dead of
long ago.

He has walled me about so that I cannot escape;
he has put heavy chains on me;
though I call and cry for help, he shuts out my
prayer;
he has blocked my ways with hewn stones, he has made
my paths crooked.

He is to me like a bear lying in wait, like a lion
in hiding;
he led me off my way and tore me to pieces;
he has made me desolate;
he bent his bow and set me as a mark for his arrow.

He drove into my heart the arrows of his quiver ...
he has filled me with bitterness, he has sated me
with wormwood.

He has made my teeth grind on gravel, and made me
cower in ashes;
my soul is bereft of peace, I have forgotten what
happiness is; so
I say, 'Gone is my glory, and my expectation from
the LORD'.

Lamentations 3:1-18 (RSV)

At a later point, the place in credal language of such outbursts will be described in a way that shows their place in

theodicy,¹⁰³ but at this juncture discussion will be confined to the point that the believer is clearly capable of blaming God. But, it is a blaming that takes place within the security of belief - it is, with whatever difficulty, an expression of relationship. This being the case, it does not in any sense set providence (the way things go) against ontology (that God is). Phillips should not have ignored this blaming, for it is a part of the structure of worship. He is right, however, insofar as the believer draws no inferences from it. Indeed, the compiler of Lamentations sees nothing amiss in following immediately with:

The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases, his
mercies never come to an end;
they are new every morning;
great is thy faithfulness.
'The LORD is my portion', says my soul, 'therefore
I will hope in him.'

Lamentations 3:22-24 (RSV)

To the mind which thinks in terms of the "natural" God, such blaming can only be destructive of belief for, if things go in this world in this blameworthy way, they must count against God and his goodness, and must (pace Crombie and Mitchell) count decisively. We do know what counts against such a surface God. To call such a God blameworthy, yet wholly loving and wholly good, is not compatible with either intellectual honesty, moral integrity, or adoring worship.

But the writer in Lamentations, Job, Paul, and the saints, exhibit a different "dependence" - a kind which gives thanks in all things to a supernatural God. When such believers assert the goodness of God, they do not mean that life has been, or should be, filled with good things (theodicies of inference), nor (theodicies of acceptance) that "properly understood" the

way things go is good, or for our good. It is rather that their belief in God provides them with the genesis (the foundation affirmation), and the exodus (the epistemological application), of their understanding of reality. For them God is an unshakeable reality, not an explanatory answer. From that unshakeable reality they view the way things go. To that unshakeable reality they direct their praise.

To say "All things depend on God" is, then, within the practice of worship, to thank and praise God the Father for one's existence, both creation and preservation; it is to thank and praise him for life as a whole. Further, as has already been seen, such thanksgiving and praise, for the Christian, will be offered through the Son, for it is through the worship of the Son, within the eucharistic act, that the believer understands both the Father, on the one hand, and affliction, on the other.

ii) Should the present discussion be taken one stage further, and the claim be made that religious dependence at depth passes beyond the notion of "thanks" to that of "praise" alone? For example, Westermann¹⁰⁴ notes that there is no word "to thank" in Hebrew, and that praise is a stronger, more lively, broader concept which includes our "thanks" in it. After showing by contrast (in a way reminiscent of Phillips' method) that praise differs from thanks in that it elevates the one being praised; involves looking away from oneself; is marked by freedom and spontaneity; has a forum and occurs in a group; is joyful; speaks in the second person; (as against: leaving the one thanked in his place; expressing my thanks; there being an element of requirement in thanks; privacy of

circumstance for particular thanks; openness to be commanded to thank; speech in the first person), Westermann says that what is involved in praise is unlike thanks in that it is neither an attitude nor a feeling of gratitude, but a response. However, it would seem better to describe Christian worship in terms already set out, that is, that religious "thanks" is praise - for Westermann's points are accommodated by regarding the use of "thanking" language in the community as the surface expression of the depth "praising" worship.

j) I feel it is now safe to claim there is within the shape of belief, within its "grammar", when described at depth, no reason for thinking affliction can negate that belief. The claim that it can is based on a misconception of what it is the believing community is doing and saying in worship. It fails to feel the weight. Worship is not directed to a "natural" God inferred from the secular epistemological "direction" of thought. It is "giving thanks" in a way that creates its epistemological stance, in a way that recognises God as supernatural. Such a God is quite literally for the believer one who makes all things possible, for he is the beginning and end of the believer's reality. In him, from him, through him, and to him, the believer lives, moves, and has his being.¹⁰⁵

But the shape of a "supernatural" Theodicy of Dependence remains so far basic, and in need of further clarification and development. To this I now turn.

4. Affliction and the Revelation of the Nature of God

Let us now turn to the third part of this discussion of Religious Theodicy and consider the place in the Christian "picture" of the affliction of Christ.

a) The Christian community has always regarded the affliction of Jesus on the Cross as of peculiar revelatory significance as to the nature of God. This extremity of sacrificial love has been thought to show both the extent and the quality of the love of God, which is his nature, and also to be a comment on the nature of God's omnipotence - a comment regrettably not much heeded in recent discussions of the problem of evil, which have centred attention on such issues as freewill and omnipotence per se.¹⁰⁶

b) But the Christian community has also seen in the affliction of Jesus on the Cross an example - no, more than that, the paradigm case - of man's experience of affliction; Christ, believers say, was made a curse for us as one of us. It is the Christian claim that in and through this paradigmatic affliction Christ showed in the fullest way the nature of complete religious dependence (Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit), a dependence which takes into itself both imprecation (Why have you forsaken me?) and thanking (My God, My God ..., and, Today in paradise).

c) Thus, Christian claims concerning the significance of the Cross of Christ see the affliction there endured as crucial for understanding both the nature of the God worshipped, and also the kind of response to that God which it should make in its own afflictions. The testimony of the Christian community is that in the paradigmatic experience of Christ on the Cross is to be found the historical meeting point of "ultimate affliction" ("ultimate" in that God was in Christ; "affliction" in that all the dimensions of negativity were there - the pain, the despair, the abandonment - physical, psychological, social); "final

revelation" (of the nature of God and of the believer's appropriate response); and "unshakeable belief" (at the end-point of negativity and meaninglessness).¹⁰⁷

d) In the conceptual world of the Christian believer, then, the Cross of Christ represents severest negativity in all its dimensions, and as such this affliction epitomises meaninglessness, for the Cross, to the believer, stands contrary to all reason - only dialectically and paradoxically can the folly to the unbeliever of the word of the Cross serve as the basis of meaning for the believer. It is to the "foolishness of God", and to the "weakness of God", that the believer has reference.¹⁰⁸ The kind of response to this "folly" made by the believer is characterised by the negation of the negative, for it is claimed that therein lies the shape of the power and the wisdom of God:

the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God ... it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe ...

God chose what is foolish ... what is weak ... what is low and despised ... even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are ... He [God] is the source of your life in Christ Jesus, whom God made our wisdom, our righteousness and sanctification and redemption ...

(1 Cor 1:18-31, R.S.V.)

It can be no easy matter to offer a descriptive understanding of the belief of a community which thus locates its constitutive basis in an event claimed to reveal the nature of God through the exhibition of sheer refractoriness and negativity in the way things go.¹⁰⁹ Yet this feature of Christian belief is what makes it possible to make the same circumstance both the test and the ground of the internal coherence of that belief. Here, belief is at its extremity, or, to use earlier terminology, here

the believer faces the "void", for beyond this point of affliction the believer conceptually cannot go - indeed, with the notion of epistemological "direction" in mind, it can be seen that in proceeding from God to the world, and in making Christ the necessary historical condition of its way of life, the believer comes to the world with a form of religious understanding that arises from the Cross of Christ. This is not to say, however, that this affliction as a human experience was unique, for as Soelle argues¹¹⁰ the truth of the symbol lies in its repeatability. But it is to claim that, for the believer, no afflicted person need look in vain to the suffering of Christ as an expression of dependence on God in the face of affliction. The believer does, however, hold this affliction as having a unique place in his "picture", for it is the suffering of God the Son.¹¹¹

But it is apparent that there is in the Christian "picture" a set of closely interlocking factors, for it is the centrality of the eucharistic rite in the union of the believing community with God which brings out the centrality of the historical cross of Christ in the existential experience of the community. But the eucharistic rite is no mere historical remembrance, for in this rite the distinctive understanding in the community of the nature of its dependence on God is celebrated.¹¹² In order to understand the structure of Christiantheodicy, then, it is not only needful to understand, as was attempted above, the shape of Christian praise of the God on whom all things depend, for, to understand that, it is now seen to be needful to understand the Cross of Christ from which it arises, and which it reiterates. It is, then, within the practice of worship of the crucified

Christ that the community determines the weight theodical terms have in its belief. What the love of God means in the Cross of Christ is the role it has throughout Christian expression. What omnipotence means in the Cross of Christ, it means throughout the Christian "picture".

e) Let us now attempt to describe the significance of the Cross in Christian belief, and see if a coherent account can be given. (From now on, for brevity, the "Cross of Christ" will be termed the "Cross"). The key interpretive elements that meet in the Cross are I would argue, a) God and man, b) love and omnipotence, and c) dependency and response. Each of these elements is necessary to a Christian understanding of the Cross, and together they are sufficient for its description. They are the stuff and substance of all theories of the atonement. No other dimensions are needed to describe the significance of the Cross in Christian belief, for all other factors reduce to one or other of these elements. Yet each of the elements is structurally essential. The first element concerns the relationship between the infinite and the finite. The second concerns the interaction of the infinite and the finite. The third concerns the continuing existential awareness of the power of the Cross in the believing community, that is, the richly nuanced totality of experience-thought-interpretation of the community whose reality is grounded in the Cross.

These interpretive elements are, then, taken to be the necessary and sufficient dimensions for describing the shape of Christian understanding of the Cross. But as my argument is that the "grammar" (what can and cannot be said) of Christian theodicy coincides with the "grammar" of Christian worship, and also that

the "grammar" of Christian worship has the same shape as the "grammar" of the Cross, it follows that the shape of Christian theodicy can also be set out in the terms just introduced, insofar as their meaning derives from the Cross. It is difficult to overstate the fixedness of the structure of "depth" belief here. The Cross, worship, and theodicy, despite their differences of realisation, have the same "grammatical" shape. To know what can and cannot be said of one, is to know what can and cannot be said of the others. They have the same shape because they all arise together, and as one, from the historical point where Christian belief identifies ultimate affliction, final revelation, and unshakeable belief. At that point exactly, what the Christian believes about God and man, about omnipotence and love, about dependency and response, are structured in relation to each other and hold together.

There is, however, a clear distinction between the first two elements and the third, in that the third bears in on the believer in a personal manner. The third element is therefore treated separately in the next item under the heading "Affliction and the Response of the Believer".

f) It is a persuasive feature of the theodicies of Farrer and Hick that they are set against a background discussion of our first element, namely they discuss what is possible by way of the relationship of God and man bearing in mind what is possible by way of the relationship between the infinite and the finite.¹¹³ Both of these writers set at the base of their theodicy the claim that the finite cannot exist in proximity with the infinite. Unfortunately, neither of them locates his discussion in the context of worship - or makes conceptually

central to theodicy the Christian claim that uniquely in Christ ~~are~~ the infinite and the finite bound together. It is now argued, however, that "looking" at believers requires that discussion of this element "God and man" must start with reference to the Cross, that is, with reference to what is revealed there uniquely about this relationship.

i) For Hick, the relationship of God and man is a key element in his theodicy, and it is set out in terms of a necessary epistemic distance if man is to be free and moral, and if man is to be capable of loving God by his own choice. For Hick, therefore, the distancing of man and God from each other is a logical and practical "must" which concerns man's epistemological and existential possibilities.¹¹⁴ Farrer, however, gives the point an ontological orientation, in that he argues the being of man cannot exist in the presence of the being of God, and this argument leads him to take seriously the concept of a chain of being in which man exists at an appropriate point - not too far distant, but not too close.

ii) The crucial difference between Hick's and Farrer's understandings is that Hick's distancing of man follows from a decision by God calculated to achieve a desired end, namely man's freedom, whereas for Farrer the distancing flows from what makes finite existence possible at all and is, therefore, an aspect of the nature of God's being. For Hick, the consequent problem of his basic position is that the way things go in the world is, ultimately, positively determined by God through an act of his will. This act determines that man can, if man chooses, interpret the way things go in such a way that he is conscious of God in and through them. Hick cannot

therefore, I would argue, escape from the strictures made earlier on inferential theodicies, although his position is not straightforwardly inferential for one cannot infer directly to the existence of God or to his purposes - believing is something one opts to do. But nevertheless, it appears, God is in need of a theodicy in view of the way things do go. This is a most interesting and subtle move for it partly recognises the place of choice in epistemology, and partly the place of interpretation but without running, as Phillips tends to, into fideistic problems. But Hick's solution is an uneasy one. Hick in fact requires for his theodicy to work that the believer makes two options, though Hick can provide no reason for one of these and only an arguable reason for the other. First, why should anybody opt for the theistic view of the world? Hick might answer that one opts because one experiences God's presence. That, however, would be for Hick to retreat from "experiencing-as" to experience - and that he does not wish to do. But, within his epistemological theory, the "as-ness" of the relationship between God and man rules out in principle there being any reason for this option - one simply chooses so to do, and in choosing becomes open to the theistic "experiencing-as".¹¹⁵ Second, why should anyone opt for Hick's epistemological theory? Presumably, only because one becomes convinced of its reasonableness as one possible epistemological theory. Both of the choices are, therefore, more or less arbitrary. Ironically, the result is the opposite of the whole thrust of Hick's apparent intention, for theodicy is cut loose from history and is tied instead to arbitrarily based commitment, and possible theorisation. Precisely, Hick's theodicy sits loose to the relationship

between God and man which the Christian community finds uniquely in the Cross as an historical event. The Cross simply isn't needed in the shape of Hick's theory - that shape only needs "theism" and an epistemology, the Cross being subsequently fitted into this scheme by reference to the general theory. In Hick's theodicy, then, the Cross is merely adjectival to the believer's understanding of the relationship of God and man.

This non-centrality of the Cross to theodicy is not how the Christian believer sees the matter. The relationship between the infinite and the finite is, in Christian belief, expressed definitively in Christ, and specifically in the Cross. In Christ that "infinite distance"¹¹⁶ collapses, for God is known in Christ, and Christ is known in the Cross. God and man, infinite and finite, are here met together. As Weil paradoxically puts it:

Because no other could do it, he himself went to the greatest possible distance, the infinite distance. This infinite distance between God and God, this supreme tearing apart, this agony beyond all others, this marvel of love, is the crucifixion. Nothing can be further from God than that which has been made accursed.¹¹⁷

This "gospel", "grace", "reconciliation" stand at the beginning of Christian experience in Christ's death, and its centre in the celebration of that death in the community, and at its end in the viewing of death by the believer in its light. They stand in contradiction to Hick's whole scheme based as it is on distance and slow pilgrimage through the vale of soul-making.¹¹⁸ Is it unfair not to be surprised that Hick deletes from the second edition of his theodicy the part that discusses those theodicies which:

take seriously, and ... see as crucially relevant to the problem of evil, the central fact of the Christian religion - the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, responded to in human faith as God's decisive act of redemption.¹¹⁹

iii) Farrer sees the issue somewhat differently.

In an argument on the relationship of the infinite to the finite he explores various possibilities as to how man's being may be screened from God's, and thus exist. Could there be a spiritual screen? Is it a physical screen? He proceeds by comparing and contrasting two stories which symbolise the possibilities, but finally abandons the discussion:

We have told two stories, and rubbed them together. We could tell many more; but the more we told, the greater would be our disgust. There must be something radically false about a line of speculation which reduces the most august of mysteries to the triviality of a nursery tale ... Our first thoughts were best; we cannot swim in such waters.¹²⁰

It is not possible, therefore, to speculate in Hick's fashion, for:

If we ask the question 'O God, why did you make such a world as this?' we do not know the meaning of what we ask, because we cannot conceive the conditions, or rather, the unconditionedness, of the creative choice. All we can do is make up our minds whether or no we are grateful for the creative acts which have made us what we are, and put us where we are.¹²¹

We can, therefore, it seems, infer nothing in this area. We can choose to give thanks if we wish, Farrer says, but such a choice is blind, for explanatory stories can offer no help, explanatory theories can have no substance. There is in this position a strange mixture of the types of theodicy found in Crombie-Mitchell, Phillips, and Hick. Choice is paramount (Hick), the trust shown is blind (Crombie-Mitchell), the believer's response is shown in his giving thanks for all there is (Phillips). But there is also a fundamental rejection of

those theodicies. There can be no inference (pace Crombie-Mitchell), the notion of physical screens is suspect (pace Hick),¹²² and the nature of God as a real existent is crucial (pace Phillips).

iv) Despite the "whistling in the wind" Farrer feels driven to here, a position not at all in accord with what one sees when one looks at believers, there are aspects of Farrer's analysis which are worth pursuing. First, let us take up Farrer's interest as to whether God's creative activity begins closest to God, and proceeds outwards (the great chain of being),¹²³ or begins at the furthest remove and proceeds inwards and upwards. There is here an important consideration. Reflecting on this question, which clearly baffled Farrer, has led me, for reasons about to be set out, to reject both of these possibilities in favour of a third. This third approach involves understanding the nature of God's creative activity very differently from the way Farrer does, and again gives prior attention to the nature of God's activity towards man as experienced in the Cross of Christ. It is there that what is possible in the relation between the infinite and the finite is determined for the Christian community. Second, let us take up Farrer's rejection of explanatory stories and explanatory theories as to why things go as they do, and his deduction from this that the believer must retreat into wishful belief and gratefulness. Now, attention to the basic Christian testimony to the affliction of Christ is certainly attention to a story - but not to a fictitious and mythical story.¹²⁴ The story of the Cross represents in Christian belief the historical vanishing point of all human attempts to explain, all speculative theories,

for the Cross can have in the believer's world neither meaning nor justification, for it is a folly. The story of the Cross is, rather, for the Christian a declaration, a revelation to man of the nature of God, and, as such, it is a statement of the nature of both the omnipotence and love of God. There is the possibility of believing the Christian community when it affirms in its story that Christ is the witness by God to himself, of believing the testimony of those who have found in the Cross the bedrock of their reality; or the possibility of rejecting it. To respond to the testimony is to enter into the totality of experience-thought-interpretation expressed in the worship of the crucified Christ as he is known in that story, that story determining for the Christian the relationship of God and man, the relationship of the infinite to the finite. God was in Christ. And in the worship of Christ God is still present. But the God present in Christ is the God who was in Christ in his affliction. With that "picture" (story) the Christian comes to the way things go in the world. He comes from an "afflicted God" to an afflicted world with the unshakeable certainty that as the resurrection was the outcome in the foundation "story" of the affliction of Christ so the resurrection is for him the sign (sacrament) of his own call to create meaning out of meaninglessness. Within the continuing experience of the community of this same Christ celebrated in the Eucharist and at Easter, ultimate affliction, final revelation, and unshakeable certainty are locked together in the heart of Christian belief.

v) But, it may be protested, what sense can there be to talk of God being in Christ? Is this some claim of one

entity being "in" another - with all the consequent problems that have plagued Christian theology? Let us here again ask what role such claims play in Christian belief. My reply is that the role incarnational talk plays is that the community affirms it will live before this man as before God, and will worship before this one as before God, and will walk with Christ as with God. For Christians to talk of Christ is, therefore, the same in meaning as to talk of God. But, of course, they also wish to talk still of walking with God, and of having the spirit of God. What it is to talk of one of these rather than another is learned in the form of life. They are different ways in which the reality of God is experienced. But to understand talk of Christ in this way may be thought to be reductionist. That is to misunderstand. It is not being said Christians relate to Christ as though he were God, but that there is no difference for Christians between what God is and what Christ is.¹²⁵ But to understand that is to believe the testimony of Christians to Christ. It might also be asked whether the first Christians came to give Christ the same role as God in their beliefs for any reasons, thus admitting inference to God by the front door. It seems not. We have already instanced the Caesarea Philippi incident in this regard. Let us now note the "Doubting Thomas" incident which rebukes all those who would believe for reasons and encourages those who would confess before Christ, "My Lord and My God".¹²⁶ It might be objected that on this understanding of the shape of Christology anything might stand as a candidate, for one could give anything the role of God and stand before it as before God. This is absurd. Let us refer back to the discussion of the historical and epistemological grounding of

religious beliefs. Certain facts are necessary conditions for saying what is the case, even though what is the case is not deduced from them.¹²⁷ What Christ was as a person must be not incompatible with what God is. But the disciples lived along with the man Jesus. It is not that they lived along with God, nor that God was hidden in the man, nor that Jesus was also God, but that they came to see that for them to respond to what Jesus was, was the same as responding to what for them God was. He came to have the same role in their "picture". There is no question, then, of their "finding out" Jesus was God,¹²⁸ but of their reacting appropriately to the person of Jesus. Their testimony as a community was that the appropriate reaction was to view Jesus in the light of the "eternal", and not just the "world historical". That "leap" is what is meant by "having faith".¹²⁹

But, it may be variously objected, what was the basis of Jesus' certainty of God, and what was the nature of his self-consciousness, and wherein lay the basis of the disciples coming to see that to respond to him in that way was "appropriate"? Such questions again show the pressure on us to ask the questions of the non-worshipper and to think in terms of an objective/subjective dichotomy. To get to know that to respond to what Jesus was, is the same as to respond to what God is, one must make the two-fold act already detailed of coming to see oneself as a person before God, and coming to use Christian language to say what it means to stand before God. The Christian testimony is that to see oneself as standing before Jesus is the same act as seeing oneself as standing before God. The basis of "appropriate" response involved here is that of "recognition" -

"the world did not recognise him" (John 1:10), but those who did, those who "received him", those who "believed", those who were "born of God", saw his "glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father" (John 1:10-14 NIV). It is not possible, therefore, to separate discussion of the person of Jesus Christ (objectivity) from the response that the believer makes to Christ (subjectivity). To know him as worthy of worship is to join those who "recognise" him as worthy of worship, that is, to join those who draw the lines in a certain way. The question of who Jesus is, is thus "indwelt" by men and women in that they are believers or non-believers. The question of the nature of Jesus' certainty of God does not therefore arise for the believer, for neither the first disciples, nor those who have believed them, are responding to what Jesus believed about himself or to the empirical condition of his psyche. They are responding to what Jesus was as he lived along with them. To speak of Jesus' certainty of God is thus to speak of the way he lived, for the way he lived was such that the appropriate response was held by the first disciples to be to give him the same role in their "picture" as they gave to God. Understanding, here, is "knowing-how-to-go-on" in "recognising" Jesus as God the Son. To the impatient, "Well, was he in fact God or not?", the only reply can be that some do so "recognise" him, and some do not.

g) Let us now consider "love and omnipotence". The Christian not only holds that the love of God is seen in Christ on the Cross, but that God created through love and for love. There has also been a common assumption that "love" is a positive thing which acts positively. This assumption underlies the

"natural" view of love and accommodates "supernatural" love to everyday love. It is also the view of love which belongs to Theodicies of Inference, theodicies which have been shown to be inconsistent with the shape of the depth belief seen by describing how believers actually adoringly worship. This positive type of love does things, it changes the way things go. It is interventionist and has ends. Applied to God, it results in a "natural" God. Directed by God to man, it makes man's status and autonomy problematic, for who can resist the positive love of God? But what other account of love can there be? Here again, Simone Weil provides a clue. She suggests "supernatural" love can only be thought of properly in terms of an ability to withdraw, to refrain, to permit, to let be. In the case of God his infinity makes this the only logical and actual possibility. Weil writes:

On God's part creation is not an act of self-expansion but of restraint and renunciation. God and all his creatures are less than God alone. God accepted this diminution. He emptied a part of his being from himself.¹³⁰

And of course, Weil is but releasing the meaning which Christian believers find in Philippians 2:5-11, where Christ is seen as expressing this loving activity of God by a process of emptying, a process which finds its culmination in his affliction on the Cross.

There is in Weil's suggestion a possible basis for setting out a Theodicy of Dependence structured by such an understanding of the nature of God's love, and which the role the Cross plays in the life of the believing community witnesses to as in fact being the case. But structuring Religious Theodicy on this basis has implications for describing the Christian understanding

of the nature and status of man in his created setting. If the love of God, in Christian belief, is understood in terms of God negating his divinity, it follows that, in proceeding from God to the world, Christian belief can be described as having the following shape at depth:

i) Firstly, creation will not positively reveal the nature of God, or his existence, for creation is the realm from which, in the exercise of renouncing love, God has "withdrawn". But what, it might be objected, is the sense of "withdrawn" here? Clearly, not a sense that refers, at "depth", to God moving in time and space - though at the "surface" such language may be pressed into service. Let us refer again, as a clue, to the "withdrawing" that is involved in personal relationships which are loving, and to the mutual renunciations involved in bringing children "to be" in a family.¹³¹ But let us not suppose that the notion of divine creativity can in any case be comprehended. Language is here at its limits and beyond. The point is that the "direction" of divine creativity is represented by such a word as "withdraw", not the nature of its operation. On the latter, our finitude forever draws a veil. It might be objected in reply that in that case the notion of creation as that from which God has "withdrawn" is not so much incomprehensible as mere rhetoric. And if not rhetoric, then that a radical dualism is implied. In reply, let us ask what is meant by "comprehension" in this situation. The community's meanings, it has been argued, are to be ascertained by asking what role words have in its "picture". The point here, then, is what role the "cosmological" scheme plays in the form of life in which it is asserted. Now, the assertion by the

worshipping community that all things depend on God has been seen to be a confession. In that light we may see that the role of any cosmological scheme in religious belief is not that of providing a scientific hypothesis, but of maintaining a consistency between what the worshipper knows of the nature of God revealed in redemption and the nature of God in creation, for there can be no difference in these if coherence in Christian belief is to be granted. But the Athanasian controversy settled for classical theism that the shape of soteriology takes precedence over the shape of all other statements of Christian belief, for the test is that the God who saves must be sufficient for the salvation claimed. It is proper then, it seems, to move from the sacrificial and kenotic love experienced in Christ, to the sacrificial and kenotic nature of the God whose creative and redemptive nature can have but one shape for the worshipper. Thus the "supernatural" God at depth has the suggested relation to creation.¹³² But what, then, of the charge of an ultimate dualism? There is no such implication. Creation is, and must be, in the Christian form of life, placed in relation to the ultimacy of God. Such is the case here; that creation is, is dependent on the nature of God as "supernatural" love.

It is this kind of understanding of God's love which would provide the basis for Hick's and Bonhoeffer's claim that man lives in this world etsi deus non daretur. Hick's technical explanations with regard to a required epistemic distance are not needed, however, for the point is deeper than this. God's absence from the world is a manifestation of the operation of "supernatural" love - though it is also the case that the love whose essence it is to withdraw can still be present to the

world, even if it is not in the world.¹³³ Perhaps the metaphorical biblical language of God coming to the world, sending his Son to the world, revealing himself, etc., is not mere metaphor in religious language after all? The "supernatural" God comes to the world, insofar as believers live before him, and make his love, sacrificial love, known to the world. In the same way he speaks to the world. Crucially and paradigmatically for believers, this coming and speaking was in Christ. That is what is meant by believers saying Christ is the word (logos) of God (John 1:1), and that God speaks in these last days by a Son (Heb. 1:2). This speaking by the God who is not a language user¹³⁴ takes the form of what it is that Christ does:

The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own authority; but the Father who dwells in me does his works. Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father in me; or else believe me for the sake of the works themselves.

(John 14:10-11, RSV)

And the promise of Christ is that belief in him allows the community to continue and enhance God's speaking - through its participation in the activity of God (John 14:12-14), which is God's indwelling in the Spirit (John 14:15-17). But the trinitarian and responsive points are developed later.¹³⁵

ii) Secondly, man, in his awareness of his own existence, cannot find the true meaning of that existence within the world. That is what is meant by finitude. Indeed, as God is not known in power but in folly, it is only at the point where man feels the meaninglessness of the world-in-itself with intensity, and where he ceases to assert himself and his values, that man comes to the place where God can be known in the fullness of his sacrificial love.¹³⁶ But it has also been argued

that for the Christian believer, as he gets to know God, the affliction of Christ is the central element in his conceptual "world", and that, paradoxically, this "world" thus exists from the "void" experienced by Christ. This event of the Cross provides for the religious believer, therefore, the possibility of coming in his self-understanding to the end-point from which he comes back to the way things go with absolute meaning grounded in the nature of God as revealed in Christ's affliction. The refractoriness, negativity, meaninglessness of the world are thus viewed by the believer from within a "picture" that sets affliction inevitably and inescapably in God's "supernatural" love. The believer's self-understanding is thus seen to be placed in Christian belief in the nature of God's love as that which negates itself. And it can also be seen that the believer is called to respond to the world in like fashion (Ro. 12:1). The self-sacrificial mind that was in Christ is to be in the believer who desires to conform his life to that of the one worshipped (Phil. 2:5).

iii) The created world will, then, be self-contained and bound by its own nature. Everything in it will operate from compulsion. In it everything will seek to exercise its own inherent nature, the limits to this being only those of external or self-limitation. This is what Farrer calls "physicality" and Weil more generally terms "gravity".¹³⁷ And therein are contained the inevitable results of the operation of "supernatural" love. Only by renunciation and constraint, by non-intervention in a positive sense in the physical world, can this love of God be shown. The world as we know it, the way things go, is not simply an elaborate and planned stage for man's

moral development. Nor is it the "best possible world". It is the nature and shape of finite existence when God in his love "withdraws", and lets it be. Seen in this way, discussion of "possible worlds" and "counter-factual worlds" by recent theodacists¹³⁸ can be seen to be a failure to accept reality with seriousness. It is not, as Hick and Smart have argued, that positing such worlds is in detail unhelpful.¹³⁹ It is that they are in principle inconceivable. The world as it is is reality that derives from the operation of the deifugal (Weil) nature of God's love. It is the only possible world. But, notwithstanding this point, it is nevertheless the Christian claim that the ultimate expression of deifugal love is that God should come to his own in that world, and be rejected by that world in affliction on the Cross. In that event, it is claimed, is found the exact measure of the extent of God's renunciation of himself, that is, the exact measure of his love. From the human point of view, then, God is most fully revealed in his nature at the point of ultimate renunciation. This is what is meant by holding suffering absolutely before God - perhaps that is what the phrase "death of God" points to?¹⁴⁰

iv) The possible meanings of the word "omnipotence" are also clarified. The possibility of all things depends on the omnipotent exercise by the "supernatural" God of his love. Omnipotence is thus seen to be God's total ability to renounce himself, to empty himself, to restrain himself - for only omnipotence could make the infinite-divine less. But this omnipotence is thereby seen to be identical with the nature of God's love. Omnipotence is, therefore, the love of God in its action - renunciation. There can, then, be no clash in logic or actuality

between love and omnipotence. Omniscience similarly refers to God's flawless knowledge of his nature so understood. This kind of understanding of course has nothing to do with mistakes made in relation to the "surface" grammar of belief, and which derive from reasoning in the secular epistemological "direction".

"Natural" omnipotence is both logically inconceivable and actually impossible. The "depth" grammar of omnipotence relates, however, to the "supernatural" God. When this omnipotent-love is experienced by the worshipping community of believers, then the community expresses it in terms of God's almightiness¹⁴¹ - for God is felt to transcend all natural meanings and ways, for he does not seek to act as nature and man act, namely by asserting himself. The love of God is sacrificial; its nature is to deny itself. God is under no compulsion, however, for his actions are those of grace. And his grace is all-sufficient because he knows in all circumstances what sacrificial love entails.

v) Fifthly, the difference between man and nature is, however, that the sacrificial and renouncing love of God is a possible mode of existence for man. Here we can bring together points already developed. Man can choose to live on the basis of natural positive love, or by "supernatural" love characterised by renunciation, humility, self-negation. This choice is the challenge the Christian community has always seen in the event of the Cross, and which is the essence of the testimony to Christ to which the believer is committed. This testimony to "supernatural" love not only, therefore, marks the genesis of the different epistemology used by the Christian for saying how things go, but also provides the essential characteristics of

the religious dependence that brings man into communion with God. The nature and operation of God's omniscient love-omnipotence are grounded in negation - of the divine self. Religious dependence expresses this same kind of love. What the Christian believer commits himself to is the testimony that at the point of ultimate affliction there is also to be found final revelation of both God's true nature and his own. This experience is the location and anchor of his unshakeable belief. The historical reality of the Cross stands, the believer claims, as a valid and authentic understanding of the world, and man, and God. In relation to this revelation the believer comes into being; consequently, here also arises the "grammar" of belief, and within it, the character of his response. "God", "man", "omnipotence", "love", "dependence", "action" - they are severally and together the basic structure of depth belief, worship, and theodicy.

h) Now, it might be objected that this Theodicy of Dependence amounts when all is said and done to an "explanation", and that the attempt at a descriptive and non-justificatory theodicy has broken down. But such an objection is not cogent. Firstly, descriptive understanding, in showing the moves a believer makes as he proceeds from God to the world will, of course, by the use of its methodology, finally arrive with the believer at the world that is, and where it is located by the structure of belief. But that journey of understanding is quite different from the theodicist seeking to show that evil in the world serves some ultimate and justified purpose. But, secondly, the description has shown that what is in mind in the Christian "picture" is also non-justificatory. Both God and man are faced

with responding to the world that is, with all its negativity, in its givenness, as it arises from the eternal creativity of the divine nature. In both cases - God's and man's - this response is held by the believing community to be the occasion for further demonstrations of that sacrificial love which is the nature of the supernatural God. Both God and man thus meet the world that is in responsive love. There is no question, then, of justification in either a strong or weak sense but only of response. Purpose and meaning, in the Christian "picture" must be brought to the world in the exercise of love. However, thirdly, as noted in the Introduction, protagonists may press into use for their apologetic purposes whatever is at hand. But then it is a matter of religious judgement whether one finds the Christian "picture" advocated by such apologists captivating. Descriptive theodicy is only concerned with coherence, not "plausibility".

It might be further objected that such a theodicy differs hardly at all from Mitchell's notion of blind trust. Such a charge would, however, be a misconception of the whole description that has been made of the nature of religious belief. In reply let us concentrate on the role of "witness" in the life of the community - firstly, the "witness" of the Cross; secondly, the "witness" of the community to the Cross.

i) The Cross has been interpreted in terms of severest affliction which has been claimed to be the end-point of meaninglessness and negativity. It is the point at which all explanatory theories and stories are seen to fail both in fact and in logic. It is in the NT called the foolishness of God.¹⁴² It is without reason,¹⁴³ and is a "scandal".¹⁴⁴ It is,

for the believer, the final statement of the refractoriness of the way things go. But the Christian testimony has also been seen to be that the Cross thereby serves as a twofold "witness" - to the limits of meaning and explanation within this world, and also to the nature of the love of God. This "witness" of the Cross cannot be rationalised in terms of anything in this world. Nor could it be predicted. It is not derivable from anything that occurred in that historical event of crucifixion, nor is it an explanation of that event. It is in the language of Christian hymnody, a cause for amazement.¹⁴⁵ It is entirely appropriate, therefore, to use the word "witness" for this happening. A witness has two functions, as Diogenes Allen argues: a) it indicates or reveals a path to be followed, a path which goes in the direction of another reality, and b) it makes it incumbent on a person to act - either to follow or not follow the path indicated.¹⁴⁶ The Cross, as God's "witness" to the nature of his own love, is therefore both a revelation and a call to act.

ii) But how is the claim of such a "witness" to be authenticated and tested? Not at all by, or at the end of, theoretical discussion. The test, the authentication, is the practical one of doing, or not doing, of responding, or not responding, of believing the "witness", or not. A community of belief such as Christianity is not thus a collection of people who have come to an agreement about the coherence of a certain set of ideas or who are blindly trusting. It is the community of those who have accepted the testimony, socially communicated from generation to generation, that the revelation of love experienced in the Cross has power to create a reality, the shape

of which conforms to the nature of the One revealed. The believer, in believing that testimony, finds power there. With the experience of forgiveness and reconciliation that arises from the redemptive power of renouncing love, the believer finds both an epistemological and a psychological certainty based on the revelation of that love in the Cross. It is a power that returns the believer to the way things go in the world with new understandings, new interpretations, new courses of action. His "meanings" are brought to the world; the structures of his thought are determined by those of the Cross. To the believer all things are thus made new; he is a "new creation".¹⁴⁷ The believing community is itself, therefore, the "witness" to the "picture" that is constituted by the Cross. The kind of truth which is entailed is strictly of this kind. It is not inferential, or explanatory, or a last option of unseeing trust. It is motivating-belief which, within the experiencing and practising community of belief, is claimed to meet the criteria determined above - i.e. criteria which can be held at the moment of adoring worship. That is why the community persists. The rationality is one that has to be practised to be understood, that is, the meaning of the concepts is the role they play in life. But to practise this rationality, to live before the God revealed in the Cross, is also to test it, and, perhaps, to authenticate it. For example, Paul writes:

If God is for us, who is against us? He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, will he not also give us all things with him? Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? ... I am sure that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the

love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

(Romans 8:31-39, R.S.V.)

My argument is that, within the Christian form of life, this response is intended to be neither hyperbole, nor religious fervour, nor blind trust, nor a blunder. It is intended as an accurate expression of the rationality which arises from seeing the way things go in the epistemological "direction" which proceeds from God to the world. The Cross of Christ is seen by the believer as the final and paradigm case of affliction which gives meaning to all lesser cases. Severest affliction, ultimate revelation, and unshakeable belief are the essence of the "depth grammar" of Christian theodicy.

There remains one further task of description, for when the question of epistemological "direction" was explored it was suggested that the outcome is to be found in the believer's interpretation of the way things go, and that this outcome is evidenced by the nature of his response to the world. What does it mean for the believer to respond in the world to his belief that all things depend on the God known in Christ?

D. Affliction and the Response of the Believer

1. We are now in a position to return to the matter of the differing evaluations that underlie the unbeliever's and the believer's problems of evil. With what evaluations does the believer as worshipper respond to the negativity which for him is a reality as well as God being a reality?

Certain things have become clear in principle. Though both God and negativity are realities for the believer, he or

she views one in the light of worship of the other, and thus a simple dualism is ruled out. The believer comes from God to the world, he takes a religious view of negativity. Also, the Christian, in the ways described above, does not set even affliction over against God, for his "picture" places affliction centrally in his understanding of the "supernatural" God as known in Christ, that is, within the scheme he uses when making evaluations. The way this understanding works out in practice is well illustrated in Temple's comments that the Christian mind takes a different view of the significance of pain. The evil of sin, Temple says, outweighs the evil of pain, and the suffering of the guilty outweighs that of the innocent. Why? Because (and here let us refer back to the argument that for the believer "sin" is the fundamental evil)¹⁴⁸ sin is the "essential evil".¹⁴⁹ That, quite clearly, is the judgement of an adoring worshipper.

2. But it was also noted that the believer's evaluations have an absolute character, and thus far the discussion of this feature of belief has been in terms of, on the one hand, God as an unshakeable reality in the "picture" of the believer, and on the other, of the way interpersonal language is used absolutely. Reference, however, to H.H. Farmer's fine discussion of the experience of worship in his Revelation and Religion,¹⁵⁰ shows that the experience of the believer also needs to be described in terms of absoluteness, for the experience of God as known in worship is characterised by both "absolute demand" and "final succour". It is the aspect of absolute demand which gives substance to the religious judgements of Temple mentioned above, for "sin" is the failure to respond appropriately to absolute

demand, and, therefore, has a unique status in the evaluative system of the believer. But final succour seems to be the experiential element of which the believer is in need as he faces his life as an actuality in a frequently hostile world. Now final succour is only possible if there are no circumstances which lie beyond the view the believer can take of evil from within his "picture". But as we have seen that that "picture" is built on the basis that the severest negativity is affliction, and that the ultimate affliction is that of God in Christ, it follows that, as a worshipper of the God known in Christ, the believer can draw final succour from that God, for

In bringing many sons to glory, it was fitting that God, for whom and through whom everything exists, should make the author of their salvation perfect through suffering.

(Heb. 2:10 N.I.V.)

But the believer claims something further in relation to final succour and absolute demand, and it is that in God's forgiveness of sin he or she knows in experience the absolute goodness and the absolute power and the absolute love of God through Christ. Knowing this kind of forgiveness in life as a claimed experience of the nature of the "supernatural" God, the believer cannot then oppose the fact of evil against it - for as a forgiven sinner, as one who is alive to God in the world, as one who holds the world before God, his duty is to act in accord with the absolute demand to express the love of God, the sacrificial love of the supernatural God, and in so doing to find final succour, the strength of that love, with him. The way things go in the world is thus the occasion for being alive to God in the world, and not the occasion for the believer to doubt the existence of God.

Now I would like to take exception at this point to Winch's account of what it is to live as a believer.¹⁵¹ He suggests that five responses are involved. There is, he says, an internal relation between an all-powerful and all-good God, and (i) owing that God absolute obedience, (ii) not asking whether his love can fail (or, if one does ask, realising that the doubt does not relate to his power, but to thinking at all in such terms), (iii) not thinking that lapses of obedience will go unnoticed (omniscience) or his vengeance unvisited (for, if we are thinking in these terms at all, we are judging ourselves against a certain conception of the power of love), (iv) the kind of obedience (its extent) due to human authorities, and (v) taking up "an entirely different point of view" when approaching moral questions. What is wrong here is the spirit of the account. Winch's Christian seems to know nothing of the forgiveness of God in terms of grace. The model of God is one of positive power, and the model of the believer is of someone who is subservient. The outline is that of an authoritarian, albeit benevolent, dictatorship. Perhaps the cause of this failure to appreciate that the Christian model of God is that of a gracious and indwelling God is that Winch has approached the all-good, all-powerful God of the interpersonal theological model analytically, whereas the believer builds on a claimed experience. Let us note some words of H.R. Mackintosh here:

[Ritschl] insists that God's judgement of forgiveness is not analytic but synthetic. These formidable terms suggest a point of real importance ... the God who by His holiness shatters our claim to live before Him nevertheless by His love gives us a new life. And by the phrase 'a synthetic judgement' this fundamental point is emphasised, that the forgiving grace of God does not presuppose our worth but calls it into being.¹⁵²

The question arises, therefore, as to what the role is in the Christian "picture" of this experience of forgiveness of sin. I suggest the role played is that of bringing the believer to the position where he can say, "All things depend on God", as an utterance of worship, and not as a statement of inference from the way things go in this world. It is the means by which the believer passes over ("repents") from the world-historical view, to participation in the eternal. It is the act by which the believer moves into the community of those for whom the previously described rationality of worship constitutes "grammar". Mackintosh puts it more pietistically but to good effect: "Get into the company of Jesus and into the atmosphere of compassionate love He bears with Him, and let this tell upon you".¹⁵³ But what does this amount to other than to engage in the form of life of the Christian community? To know one is forgiven, to know in experience the all-sufficiency of the love and power of God, is to act in life before God as one who is absolutely forgiven, and upon whom there comes the absolute demand to do the duty of a member of the family of God (to praise God), and the absolute privilege of knowing the final succour that thereby arises.

3. Mention was made just now of the "indwelling" of the believer by God, and this indwelling concerns the claim of believers that God, through the Holy Spirit, lives in them as they live in the world. The Christian response to the way things go in the world, therefore, has reference to a full trinitarian conception of God. Now, Farmer's description of Christian worship has just such reference to its shape being trinitarian, but on this point two other writers can take us further in describing the connection between negativity, the Christian's response to

it, and the Christian's worship cast in trinitarian terms.

A major weakness of conventional theodicy is that it does not deal with trinitarian Christianity, but with a philosopher's version of monarchical Christianity. It is "God" and "evil". It has already been shown that theodicy which relates to theology in the interpersonal language model must of necessity be christological. But Christology is set in classical theism within the worship of God experienced as Trinity. Is it possible to spell out the significance of this for Religious Theodicy?

Moltmann has made a central issue the need to understand the Cross itself in trinitarian and interpersonal terms. He writes:

If we use the simple concept of God we are more and more inclined to reserve it for the Father who abandons Jesus and lets him die, but not to use it for the Son, who is abandoned ... But this 'empties the cross' of deity.

If, however, we begin by leaving the simple concept of God aside, we have to speak of the persons in their special relationship in this event. The Father is the one who abandons. He abandons Jesus to the abyss of being forsaken ... The Spirit is the Spirit of surrender of the Father and the Son. He is creative love proceeding out of the Father's pain and the Son's self-surrender ...

We have interpreted the cross in a trinitarian manner as an event occurring in the relationship between persons, in which these persons are constituted in their relationship to each other and so constitute themselves. And so we have seen the cross not as the suffering of only one person of the Trinity in human form ... a complete apprehension of the cross of Christ makes it necessary to think in trinitarian terms.¹⁵⁴

Now my interest here is not Moltmann's particular understanding of the Cross and the Trinity, but his emphasis on the connection between them being necessitated by an attempt to understand interpersonal aspects of Christian theology. Secondly, and to develop this point, let us refer to Elizabeth Moberly's

Suffering, Innocent and Guilty, where she draws attention to the connections in Christian thought between trinitarian language used of God, and the shape of human experience in society based on interdependence:

... the phenomenon of interdependence is receiving increasing attention, [but] its ultimate basis is not always recognised. Here we might find the so-called 'social doctrine of the Trinity' helpful. Interdependence, we have asserted, is the basic structure of personal existence. If we take this statement seriously we cannot limit its application to human personal existence, but should look also to the life of the personal God in whom we as Christians believe ... we see that the pattern of human life is to be one of reciprocity, self-emptying, and mutuality - the kenotic life we were created for and are called to, in the image of the trinitarian God.¹⁵⁵

This argument of Moberly's, that the basic structure of human existence is interdependence, and that it is possible to see the "kenotic" nature of that existence as finding its pattern in the image of the trinitarian God, enables me to bring together here the shape of the believer's understanding of the Cross, Moltmann's suggestion that this has a trinitarian dimension, the understanding of God's being as self-emptying sacrificial love, and the believer's response in the world, in a way that makes for a simple and unified description of the shape of Christian belief and action. But, it may immediately be protested, is not kenotic theory a failed attempt in theology, why try to resurrect it now? Geddes MacGregor, in He Who Lets Us Be,¹⁵⁶ has recently and independently reconsidered kenotic Christology in the light of Weil's suggestion used above as to the nature of God. He argues convincingly that the failure earlier in the century of kenotic Christology came about not because the notion of kenosis was faulty, but because it was applied to Christology alone and was not pushed back into a new

understanding of the meaning of the Trinity in Christian belief. Kenotic Christology, to make sense, needs a kenotic understanding of the Trinity as self-emptying and sacrificial love. What Weil, Moberly, MacGregor, and I are arguing is that the kenotic motif needs to be seen to be operating at all levels of theological and existential formulation of the shape of interpersonal existence if the coherence of Christian belief is to be seen. It is this unity of the structure of being as kenotic which provides the interpretive key to the inter-relationships of personal being, and which is the basis for legitimate worship of God in the believing community - worship here not being the subservience of mortal beings to divine power, but the celebration by adoring worshippers of God understood as the eternal source of self-emptying love, whom to know is life eternal. This way of understanding the relationship of the believer to Christology, and Christology to Trinity, seems to me to be preferable to that of Moltmann who, in his enthusiasm for his idea, identifies the Trinity and the event of the Cross - "The material principle of the doctrine of the Trinity is 'the cross,' and the formal principle of the theology of the cross is the doctrine of the Trinity".¹⁵⁷ When John's gospel says, "What God was, the Word was", (John 1:1, NEB) and the Johannine epistle affirms "God is love" (1 John 4:16), and also that "This is how we know what love is : Jesus Christ laid down his life for us" (1 John 3:16 NIV), then the cross of Christ and the revealing of the nature of God as sacrificial love found there, enter into the believer's experience within the kenotic structure of being. The self-emptying God, the self-emptying Christ, and the self-emptying believer are, as Moberly argues,

to be understood in terms of each other. The connection Moberly draws (as a believer) between the life of the believer and the life of God is thus internal, and structures one fixedly with the other. The "fundamental, ontological solidarity of human society"¹⁵⁸ lies in Christian belief, expressed in terms of interpersonal theology, in the fundamental ontological solidarity of the Trinity.

4. But what kind of act is it that those who have experienced the goodness and power of God in forgiveness should engage in? Is it sufficient to live in the world as those who know God's forgiveness, and as those who thank and praise God in all things? Has the Christian believer no criticisms to make? Now Roth asks the question, "Does forgiveness justify God fully?"¹⁵⁹ His answer is clearly, "No", for in A Consuming Fire¹⁶⁰ he develops a "protest theodicy" which argues that the Holocaust smoke "casts a pall over the empty tomb",¹⁶¹ and thus prevents the resurrection motif from being the occasion in this world "to sing only with joy and thanksgiving Easter hymns that spite the sting of death and the grave's victory".¹⁶² Whatever the test and the ground of theodicy in the ways described above, Roth would argue it remains a prime responsive act of the Christian to the way things are in this world that he protests to God - "a spirit of Christian rebelliousness constitutes one vital form of praise rendered to the God who gives us life that can and therefore must be good".¹⁶³ Now Roth's book constitutes his own Christian rebellion, but it is cast in the form of a response to a "natural" God. Is it possible to describe the way protest functions at depth in relation to the "supernatural" God?

To explore this question let us turn to the description offered by Brueggemann of the role of lament in the psalter. In his paper, "The Formfulness of Grief"¹⁶⁴ he claims:

The lament psalms offer important resources for Christian faith and ministry even though they have been largely purged from the life of the Church and its liturgical use.¹⁶⁵

Developing an argument (similar to the approach in this thesis) in terms of "form" and "function", he sees lament working thus in all that is involved in the language of praise:

The purpose of the lament is the creation and restoration of the member of the community by the action of the group. The function is rehabilitation/restoration and the form serves that function.

In considering the interaction of form and function, we are helped by the sociologists who see regularised language as the way a community created and maintains a life-world.¹⁶⁶ Such regularised speech activity serves both to enhance the experience so that dimensions of it are not lost and to limit the experience so that some dimensions are denied their legitimacy. This suggests, applied to the lament form, that its regularised use intends to enable and require 'sufferers' in the community to experience their suffering in a legitimate life-world. It is this form which enhances experience and brings it to articulation and also limits the experience of suffering so that it can be received and coped with according to the perspectives, perceptions, and resources of the community. Thus the function of the form is definitional. It tells the experiencer the shape of the experience which it is legitimate to experience.¹⁶⁷

A lament, therefore, is not a complaint - that would belong to theodicies of inference - for complaints expect something. But exactly here, Brueggemann makes the mistake of seeing Israel as complaining, and he thinks rightly so, because a complaint is a basis for action whereas a lament bemoans a tragedy which cannot be reversed, and is used by the apathetic who do not believe in a future.¹⁶⁸ Complaint, he argues however, is active and hopes for an intrusion which will fulfil the petition. But this

discussion confuses religious language expressed in the terms of surface articulations using the language of causality from contextual culture, and the depth of that belief rightly caught in the lament form. What the lament does is to recognise that this is a frequently hostile world, and to lay this fact before the God of absolute demand and final succour. In so doing the believer allows the form to function in his life as the judgement of God on the assertiveness that has caused the hostile state of affairs to arise in nature or between persons. When laid before God and directed at God it becomes the cause for action on the believer's part because it becomes apparent to the believer that it is absolutely not of the will of God. One can thus understand the finding by Westermann in The Praise of God in the Psalms¹⁶⁹ that "I found to my astonishment that there are no Psalms which do not progress beyond petition and lament!" Doxology is the expression in religious belief of the absoluteness of God's person, which is entirely faultless, and which directs the believer back to the world as the sphere in which he lives as a person aware that he is a "sinner", but a "forgiven sinner" who can joyfully walk in God's love as he knows the Spirit in his life.¹⁷⁰

5. At this point, a wider connection arises regarding Moberly's linking, through the doctrine of the Trinity, religious belief and the shape of society, and it is possible to describe what might be meant by seeing an internal connection between the Trinity as social and human experience as social. Soelle argues¹⁷¹ that the language of lament enables the sufferer to pass from solitariness and muteness in suffering, through the language of lament, to affirmative action in society.

She in fact attaches her account to social class interpretations, but this is application rather than description - the latter can stand alone, and is useful in giving flesh to Moberly's claim. Soelle charts her description of the progress of this response to suffering thus:

PHASE ONE	PHASE TWO	PHASE THREE
mute numb explosive	lamenting	changing
speechless moaning animal-like wailing	aware, able to speak psalmic language rationality and emotion communicated together	organising rational language
<u>isolation</u>	<u>expression</u> <u>communication</u>	<u>solidarity</u>
the pressure of suffering turns one in on himself autonomy of thinking, speaking, and acting lost objectives cannot be organised reactive behavior dominated by situation	the pressure of suffering sensitizes autonomy of experi- ence (can be inte- grated) objectives utopian (in prayer) suffering from the situation and analyzing it suffering	the pressure of suffering produces solidarity autonomy of action that produces change objectives can be organised active behavior helping to shape the situation
submissiveness <u>powerlessness</u>	<u>acceptance</u> and <u>conquest</u> in existing structures	<u>acceptance</u> and <u>conquest of powerless- ness</u> in changed structures

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Now the details of Soelle's description do not matter, but rather the connections that are apparent between lament and action. The believer's evaluations of the proper nature of society flow from his beliefs regarding the "supernatural" God as social Trinity and as revealed in the Cross. Within Theodicy of Dependence, therefore, can be found a description of the

believer's motivation to act to oppose suffering at all levels in society; all suffering, that is, except that which is the expression of the "supernatural" love of God in action.

But in what ways will the acts of a worshipper of an all-good, all-loving God differ from those of an unbeliever?

Now, the difference might not be in the values they in fact hold, but in the way the values are held. However, one is not looking here for coincidences of what might be the case, but for what must be the case in terms of the "grammar" of a form of life. Now, in this regard, the way beliefs are held matters. The unbeliever must, it seems to me, lack an absolute reference for personal understanding, and this will lead him inevitably to treat all people as equal - their needs, their interests, their status, and so on. The moral person, in the eyes of the unbeliever, will be rational, autonomous, and equal with all other moral persons.¹⁷³ But what then would be the cause of altruism? - that is, of self-emptying, sacrificial action. The arguments for this type of action do not appear to me to lie within what it is to be a person-in-relationship for, in a sense, altruism holds back on one's own proper place in the moral order without reason, if the moral order is genuinely in its own terms the expression of what it is to be a person. Altruism is, therefore, a problem for the unbeliever.

But, if one moves beyond altruism as a problem in unbelief to renunciation and sacrificial love as attributed by believers to God, and then brought back into the way persons should act in this world, one can see that altruism is internal to belief - believers cannot hold themselves as equal to other persons, but must always prefer others to themselves. This preferring

of others is not, as sometimes mistakenly found in piety, to demean oneself, but is to hold oneself before others as of no account,¹⁷⁴ as God revealed himself to be of no account in the Cross. This altruism is something Christians affirm. I can see no grounds for describing it as "reasonable" - but that is a religious judgement, not a philosophical description.

When one turns to the question of how the believer regards the created world differently from the unbeliever, then I think the difference is one of religious awe. Contemplation that the world is does not function as a cosmological argument,¹⁷⁵ but as a religious act, for the world as a whole is held before God, for all things depend on God. This religious awe is to see one's responsibility before God, it is to bring God to the world, and to tremble. Is it by accident that "amazement" and "fear" are the point at which Mark finishes his gospel?¹⁷⁶

Footnotes

Footnotes

Books are referred to by author's surname in upper case; articles by author's surname in lower case followed by short article title. Full publication details are given in the footnote when the work is not in the bibliography.

Introduction and Section One

1. See P.A. Angeles, Dictionary of Philosophy (London: Harper and Row, 1981), p. 292 for such suggestions.
2. See DAVIS, p. 4.
3. See DAVIS.
4. On this, see Fulton, "Theodicy".
5. On "truth" in relation to religious belief, see SHERRY, ch. 8. Also D.W. Hardy, "Truth in Religious Education", in J. Hull (ed.), New Directions in Religious Education (Lewes: The Falmer Press, 1982); MACQUARRIE (TAG), ch. 2.
6. For Hick, theodicy must meet both demands: see DAVIS, p. 39.
7. Thus broadly accepting PHILLIPS (FPE), pp. 66-8, but not the concessions to Palmer. See below, Section 4C.
8. Cf. DAVIES, p. 25. Also Hick, in DAVIS, p. 39.
9. Cf. the thesis built in RAMSEY (RL), pp. 41-4 on the tautologies "I'm I" and "Duty for duty's sake". For "presiding concept", see *ibid.*, p. 59, and below, p. 19.
10. The matters of "fact" being either/both man's finitude/sinfulness. See Job 40-42:6. Cf. Is. 45:9-11; Ro. 9:20-1; 11:33-5. Also BARTH, III/3, p. 293; H.J. Paton, The Modern Predicament (London: Allen and Unwin, 1955), p. 359; J.S. Whale, Christian Doctrine (London: Fontana, 1957), ch. 2; CAMPBELL, pp. 305-06. On H.L. Mansel's The Limits of Religious Thought, see the comments of J.S. Mill in PIKE, pp. 37-45.
11. The main issues concern the logical compatibility of the statements that God is omnipotent, that God is omnibenevolent, and that evil exists. See, e.g., HUME; Wisdom, "God and Evil"; Mackie, "Evil and Omnipotence"; Aiken, "God and Evil" (with reply in Pike, "God and Evil"); McCloskey, "God and Evil"; Pontifex, "The Question of Evil" (with reply in Doig, "The Question of Evil Re-examined"); Pike, "Hume on Evil" (with the discussion of onus of proof regarding the morally sufficient reason in e.g. Richman, "The Argument from Evil"; Hare and Madden, "Evil and Inconclusiveness"; Oakes, "God, Suffering, and Conclusive Evidence"; Dore, "Do Theodacists Need to Solve the Problem of Evil?"; Langston, "The Argument from Evil: Reply to Professor Richman"; Lugenbehl, "Can the Argument from Evil be Decisive After All?"; Fitzpatrick, "The Onus of Proof"; Penelhum, "Divine Goodness and the Problem of Evil"; PLANTINGA (GOM); Yandell, "Ethics, Evils, and Theism" (with the discussion in Kane, "Theism and Evil", and

Yandell, "Theism and Evil: A Reply"); Yandell, "The Greater Good Defense"; MADDEN and HARE; AHERN; Reichenbach, "Natural Evils and Natural Laws"; Ramberan, "Evil and Theism"; Wall, "A New Solution"; Paterson, "Evil, Omniscience and Omnipotence"; Gruner, "The Elimination of the Argument from Evil". On the issue of whether evil is "evidence", see e.g. Par-
 getter, "Evil as Evidence Against the Existence of God", (and the reply in Martin, "Is Evil Evidence Against the Existence of God?"); Moore, "Evidence, Evil and Religious Belief"; Wolfe, "Hume on Evil". On logical aspects of a Best Possible World, see e.g. Adams, "Must God Create the Best?"; Howe, "Leibniz on Evil"; McHarry, "A Theodicy", (and the reply in Perkins, "McHarry's Theodicy: A Reply"); Reichenbach, "Must God Create the Best Possible World?" (with discussion in Basinger, "Must God Create the Best Possible World? A Response"; Reichenbach, "Basinger on Reichenbach and the Best Possible World"). On logical aspects of the Free-will Defence, see e.g. Flew, "Divine Omnipotence and Human Freedom"; Mackie, op. cit.; Smart, "Omnipotence, Evil and Supermen"; Flew, "Are Ninian Smart's Temptations Irresistable?"; Pike, "Divine Omniscience and Voluntary Action"; Davis, "A Defence of the Freewill Defence"; PLANTINGA (GFE); Flew, "The Free Will Defence"; McGuinness and Tomberlin, "God, Evil, and the Free Will Defense"; Swinburne, "The Problem of Evil"; Davis, "Free Will and Evil". For a major response to Plantinga on "possible world" approaches, see Pike, "Plantinga on Free Will and Evil". On the issue of omnipotence, also see e.g., GEACH ch. 1-2 (with discussion in Harrison, "Geach on God's Alleged Inability to Do Evil"; Geach, "Can God Fail to Keep Promises?"; Harrison, "Geach on Harrison on Geach on God".); Gellman, "The Paradox of Omnipotence, and Perfection"; SWINBURNE (CT); Khamara, "In Defence of Omnipotence"; Rosenkrantz and Hoffman, "What an Omnipotent Agent Can Do"; Ramsey, "The Paradox of Omnipotence". For Schlesinger's logical arguments on the "maximum degree of desirability of state", see Schlesinger, "The Problem of Evil" and "On the Possibility", with responses in La Para, "Suffering, Happiness, and Evil"; Rosenberg, "The Problem of Evil Revisited"; Shea, "God, Evil, and Professor Schlesinger"; and Khatchadourian, "God, Happiness and Evil". For reply, see SCHLESINGER. See below for discussion, section 2A-B.

12. Less pessimistic than fn. 10. Man as imago dei has the rational basis for the theodical task, but experience shows it insufficient - but this will change in the eschaton. For aspects of this see Hick, "Theology and Verification", and HICK (EGL:b), pp. 333-41.

13. Man's rationality is given high status and wide scope. See, e.g. LEIBNIZ; also PLANTINGA (GOM), (NN), (GFE). There is a strong leaning to this position in all actual theodicies e.g. FARRER (LA); HICK (EGL); TENNANT; GRIFFIN.
14. To be distinguished from fn. 10. The point at issue is not some "defect" in man but man's proper attitude to God, be man defective or not. Kane, "The Concept of Divine Goodness" uses the terms "Unintelligibility Thesis" and "Impropriety Thesis" for the position in fn. 10. I suggest for here, "Impiety Thesis".
15. For some, theodicy is a matter of "practice", not "theory". God has justified himself, in fact, in the cross of Christ. See, e.g., PITTENGER (GD), p. 52; D. Jenkins, The Glory of Man (London: S.C.M. Press Ltd., 1967), pp. 89 and 107; WHALE, pp. 14-5; E.B. Castle, Approach to Quakerism (London: Bannisdale Press, 1961), pp. 98-106; Fulton, "Theodicy" - he also quotes P.T. Forsyth, The Justification of God; E.L. Mascall, He Who Is (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, Ltd., 1966), pp. 183 ff.; HEBBLETHWAITE, p. 56 - on Judaism but excepting Maimonides); D.L. Edwards, What is Real in Christianity? (London: Fontana, 1972), p. 138; Collins, "C.A. Campbell and the Problem of Suffering", pp. 315-16.
16. For surveys see for example, URMSON, and WARNOCK.
17. See AHERN. Cf. also KENNY. For comment, see below pp. 51-2.
18. For discussion, see pp. 13-22 below. On philosophy as system-building, see K. Wilson, Making Sense of It (London: Epworth Press, 1973), pp. 15-9.
19. See HICK (EGL). For comment, see below, pp. 15-8, 57-8, and 254-56.
20. See FARRER (LA). For comment, see below, pp. 27 and 257-58.
21. Cf. KEIGHTLEY (WGG), p. 21, "for the later Wittgenstein language is seen as a formative element in the social life of man which must be described in all its great variety". He cites WITTGENSTEIN at P.I., 124, "Philosophy may in no way interfere with the actual use of language; it can in the end only describe it", and P.I., 109, "We must do away with all explanation, and description alone must take its place." Cf. WARNOCK, ch. 9, esp. p. 86.
22. PHILLIPS (CP). See also Phillips, "The Problem of Evil".
23. HICK (EGL:a), Preface, p. X. Cf. PETIT, pp. 7-8.
24. The excellent selection of readings collected in PIKE shows this well - despite its sub-title "Readings in the Theological Problem of Evil". Cf. HEIMBECK, pp. 15-9 which sees TENNANT, and FLEW and MACINTYRE as exemplars of broader and narrower philosophical approaches to theology - namely, system and analysis.

He sees this affecting method, scope, and intention. See also H.A. Hodges, "What Is To Become of Philosophical Theology?" in H.D. Lewis, Contemporary British Philosophy, Third Series (London and New York: George Allen & Unwin, 1956), pp. 212-17.

25. Cf. SHERRY, p. 65 similarly regarding ethics in the writings of Moore and Ross being concentrated on e.g. "good", "ought" and "right". Similarly, political philosophy being narrowed to "justice" and "natural rights".
26. For this see SCHILLEBEECKX, Part 1, ch. 1.
27. HICK (EGL:a), p. 282.
28. This is argued fully in section 2D below.
29. PHILLIPS (FPE), p. 9. Indeed, pp. 5-10.
30. For the fulness of theology in mind here, see below, pp. 162-69.
31. Though where systematic theology is in the ascendent, claims otherwise might be made.
32. See below, pp. 142-75.
33. See LEIBNIZ.
34. Ibid., p. 73.
35. Ibid., p. 123.
36. For "internal" epistemology, see below, pp. 217-24. For Bayle's epistemology, which opposes faith and reason, see P. Edwards (ed.), Encyclopedia of Philosophy (London: Collier-Macmillan, 1967), Vol. I, 259-61. GRIFFIN, pp. 135-36 compares Calvin to Bayle.
37. A. Flew, An Introduction to Western Philosophy (London: Thames and Hudson, 1971), p. 291 defines philosophical rationalism as maintaining there are self-evident and non-tautological truths from which we can deduce substantial conclusions about the way things have been, are, and will be.
38. In editorial comment in LEIBNIZ, pp. 11-2.
39. See HICK (FK). For comment see BRAKENHIELM, pp. 69-109.
40. Ibid., section II. See also Hick, "Religious Faith as Experiencing-As".
41. HICK (FK), p. vi.
42. Ibid., p. 144.
43. All quotes from HICK (EGL:b), pp. 281-82. For a defence of Hick's thesis, see B. Miller, "The No-Evidence Defence", International Journal for Philosophy of Religion, III (1972): 44-50. Miller cites a previous literature. For a general attack on Hick's theodicy, see Kane, "The Failure of Soul-Making Theodicy". Hick replies in HICK (EGL:b), pp. 376-84. Cf. Kane, "Soul-making Theodicy and Eschatology" and Hick's reply in HICK (DEL), ch. 13. For further debate, see below, section 2, fn. 223.

44. HICK (GUF), p. 54. Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 68-9 and BROWN (RR), p. 125.
45. HICK (EGL:a), pp. 301-11.
46. *Ibid.*, pp. 311-13.
47. *Ibid.*, pp. 312-13.
48. For this notion see RAMSEY (RL), pp. 59-60. Cf. also p. 37.
49. See below, pp. 27-33 and 175-80.
50. See above, p. 4.
51. For a critique of finite theism, see OWEN, pp. 49-58 and HICK (EGL:b), pp. 27-9. For "internal" limitation in God, and its implications for theodicy see Hick's discussion (*ibid.*, pp. 30-3) of E.S. Brightman; and also ROSS. For a recent exposition, see SCHILLING, pp. 240-45. Also GRIFFIN, pp. 243-50.
52. The broad term quasi-theism is taken from MADDEN & HARE, ch. 6. They list Brightman, Whitehead, Hartshorne and Royce. Also on p. 11 they see aspects of it in Barth and Tillich. See, e.g., COBB; HARTSHORNE; OGDEN; TILLICH.
53. For recent expositions of Whitehead (via Hartshorne), see PITTENGER (PG) with its bibliography on pp. 39-42, and GARRISON, CH. III - with bibliography at pp. 218-23. For "panentheism", see the latter, pp. 44-50.
54. E.g. ROBINSON. He uses "co-inherence" as an alternative, p. 84.
55. The fullest of these is GRIFFIN. See also Griffin, "Creation out of Chaos"; GARRISON, pp. 50-4; PITTENGER (PG), ch. 7. For a sympathetic critique of process theodicy, see Frankenberry, "Some Problems in Process Theodicy". See also the critiques of Griffin's position in DAVIS, pp. 119-28.
56. See KAUFMAN, ch. 4. "Two Models of Transcendence". AYER, pp. 45-7 maintains transcendence is unintelligible, but see reply in PHILLIPS (CP), p. 39. Cf. KEE for transcendence in secular terms. On "models", see BARBOUR; RAMSEY (MM); and King, "Models of God's Transcendence". For a critique of Kaufman, see Jones, "Gordon Kaufman's Perspectival Language".
57. See below, section 4.
58. See above, pp. 11-2.
59. E.g. McCLOSKEY, ch. II. Cf. Puccetti, "The Loving God". Also both SONTAG (GE) and ROTH throughout.
60. Thus, from the theistic side, HICK (EGL:b), p. 11 quotes H.E. Fosdick that for the theist the mystery of evil is very difficult, but for the atheist the problem of goodness is impossible. He also cites TSANOFF, p. 5; and G. MacGregor, An Introduction to Religious Philosophy (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1959), p. 253. I would add MADDEN & HARE, pp. 32-4

on isomorphism of good and evil. Contrast FARRER (LA), pp. 8-9 which argues from evil to God. Cf. also Cahn, "Cacodaemony", and the reply in King-Farlow, "Cacodaemony and Devilish Isomorphism". D.L. Edwards (op. cit. fn. 15), p. 130 makes it an issue of inescapable choice as to whether good or evil is the problem. Cf. also Clark, "God, Good, and Evil".

61. See COWBURN. For a reductio ad absurdum of Leibnizian optimism, see BARTH, III/1, pp. 388-414. HICK (EGL:b) ch. VII offers a good review of 18th century optimism. Cf. also Jolivet, "Evil"; Sutherland, "Optimism and Pessimism". The most quoted example of theodical optimism is Pope's Essay on Man. For the ultimate basis of epistemology in ambiguous situations, see JEFFNER, pp. 128-29 on the non-justifiable but inescapable choice between "metaphysical pessimism and optimism".
62. For Hick, see above pp. 16-8; for Hume, below p. 48.
63. On the "privative" view of evil, see the review of the debate in Kane, "Evil and Privation", and the reply in Anglin and Goetz, "Evil is Privation".
64. Cf. PHILLIPS (FPE), p. 265.
65. Cf. PHILLIPS (FPE), p. 14. See also Malcolm, "Is it a Religious Belief" on affective aspects of religious belief.
66. See ZUURDEEG, p. 58 for "convictional language". Cf. McCLENDON and SMITH, pp. 29-35 and 79 ff. HORDERN is much influenced by Zuurdeeg.
67. On the distinction of convictional and indicative language, see ZUURDEEG, pp. 56-7.
68. Borrowing a term from EVANS. Evans argues that "Jones" utterance "God is my creator" involves a certain attitude and a certain commitment to a way of life and that to separate them is to deny the "logic" of biblical language. Cf. the notion of "tonitions" in Wisdom, "God and Evil".
69. See MADDEN and HARE. For comment, see Ruiz, "God and the Problem of Evil".
70. See e.g. FLEW (GP), (PA), and Flew, "Theology and Falsification". On Flew as non-neutral, cf. TILLEY, p. 104.
71. See Puccetti, "The Loving God".
72. See AUGUSTINE (CG), p. xxxv. The full title is "Concerning the City of God, Against the Pagans".
73. See VOLTAIRE. For the complex relationships between Candide and Leibniz' Theodicy, see W.H. Barber, Voltaire, Candide (London: Edward Arnold, 1960), pp. 41-57. L.G. Crocker's edition of Candide ou L'Optimisme (London: Hodder and Stoughton), pp. 10-5 thin the attack is on "Leibnizianism" generally, not on Theodicy.

74. See fn. 61 above.
75. See TSANOFF. For comment, see SCHILLING, pp. 155-56.
Cowburn instances A.-D. Sertillanges, O.P.,
Le Problème du Mal (Paris: Aubier, 1948), p. 11 for
optimistic hope in historical review.
76. Cf. PHILLIPS (FPE), p. 72, "Hick is not content with
conceptual analysis. He wants philosophy to promote,
praise, blame, and advocate."
77. See GRIFFIN. For comment, see pp. 52-3 below.
78. For discussion of philosophy as ideologically neutral, see
WARNOCK, pp. 114-18. MITCHELL (JRB), however, sees
philosophy operating at two levels a) deductive
reasoning within a system of thought; and b)
comparison of rival internally consistent systems
of thought. And K. Wilson (op. cit. fn. 18, pp.
11-2) sees philosophy having three functions:
analysis of logical structure, recommendation of
changes in the fundamental conceptual structure,
and system-building.
79. KEIGHTLEY (WGG), pp. 67 ff. See also the general argument
in SHERRY, pp. 33-45. For discussion see below,
pp. 149-52.
80. See JOURNET. For comment, see pp. 70-1 below.
81. See FARRER. (LA). Cf. Hebblethwaite, "Austin Farrer's Concept"
82. See MARITAIN (TPE). Also (GPE).
83. These words are used in a general rather than a technical
sense, though the two obviously relate. Wittgenstein
distinguishes reference (Bedeutung) from sense (Sinn)
in Tractatus. See HUDSON (WRB), pp. 23-5 for comment.
84. See, e.g., HICK (GUF), pp. 1-36. Cf. I.T. Ramsey, Models
for Divine Activity (London: S.C.M. Press, Ltd.,
1973), p. 58. However, the division of cognitivists/
non-cognitivists in HEIMBECK, pp. 21-3 is not in mind,
as that is really the distinction between non-
reductionists and metatheological sceptics. (He
lists, for example, D.Z. Phillips and J. Wisdom as
cognitivists).
85. See BRAITHWAITE.
86. PHILLIPS (RWE), ch. 9 writes on Braithwaite under the
chapter title "Unconscious Reductionism"; but H.D.
Lewis, Philosophy of Religion (London: The English
Universities Press Ltd., 1965), pp. 91-7 terms it
"attenuation", by which he means "emaciating it and
reducing the substance of it" (p. 97).
87. PHILLIPS (RWE), pp. 147-48, (cf. p. 151) - Phillips here
denies his position is reductionist.
88. HICK (GUF), p. vii. Cf. the title of ch. 2, "Religion as Fact
asserting".
89. Hick "Theology and Verification".

90. HICK (GUF), pp. 22-24.
91. Ibid., pp. 24-5.
92. Ibid., pp. 25-8 for Hick's account of the differences. Cf. Nielsen, "Wittgensteinian Fideism" for his eight "dark sayings" of this position. For Phillips' account, see (FPE), ch. 1.
93. PHILLIPS (RWE), p. 147.
94. Ibid., p. 149.
95. PHILLIPS (FPE), p. 63.
96. HICK (GUF), ch.1, "Theology's Central Problem".
97. BROWN (RR), pp. 81-139.
98. Ibid., p. 103.
99. Ibid., p. 119.
100. Ibid., p. 139.
101. Ibid., pp. 122-28, 134-39.
102. Ibid., p. 134.
103. Ibid., pp. 129-33. Swinburne complains, "I do not find enough argument in Phillips' paper ..." (p. 129).
104. For what it means to say "pictures" do not contradict each other, see PHILLIPS (RWE), pp. 165-67.
105. For "construction of reality", see BERGER and LUCKMANN. On sociology of knowledge and religion, see BERGER, pp. 49-65. For development of the latter point see below, pp. 122-29 and 176-80.
106. For issues raised in this paragraph, see the helpful ch. 5 in SHERRY, esp. the notion of spirituality as having to do with both a way of life in which people attempt to acquire holiness and an awareness of the presence of God through prayer, meditation and other spiritual practices (p. 110), and the transformation of the whole personality (p. 112). For discussion, see below, section 4C.
107. See HICK (GUF), pp. 29-33. He argues philosophy is not for or against religion, but is for and against the belief-worthiness of religious claims. But see Hardy (op. cit. fn. 5) on truth and truth claims in religion - "Truth, in whatever sphere it appears, cannot be given a concrete definition; it is rather what people at work in these spheres are striving together to delineate" (p. 115).
108. See also below, p. 85 and cf. esp. HAIKOLA, pp. 129-47. Also see Kellenberger, "Three Models of Faith". On the rebellious belief of devils, see SMITH, p. 73. Also see PHILLIPS, (CP), p. 28.

Section Two

1. In PIKE, pp. 85-102. On the relationship between Hume and "Philo", see the review of debate in GASKIN, pp. 159-66. For discussion of Gaskin on Hume, see below, pp. 47-9. For some responses to Pike's article, see articles cited in fn. 68 below.
2. PIKE, p. 86.
3. For Aiken, Flew, Mackie, and McCloskey, see bibliography. Pike cites for C.J. Ducasse, A Philosophical Scrutiny of Religion (New York: The Ronald Press Co., 1953), ch. 16; for J.S. Mill, Theism (New York: The Liberal Arts Press, 1957), p. 40; for J.E. McTaggart, Some Dogmas of Religion (London: Edward Arnold, Ltd., 1906), pp. 212 ff. HICK (EGL:b) pp. 365-86, in his survey of theodicy (1966-77) speaks of Pike (together with Plantinga) as "having done definitive work on the logical issue" (p. 370). For Pike's recent detailed response to and development of Plantinga, see his "Plantinga on Free Will and Evil".
4. PIKE, p. 87.
5. AHERN, p. 3.
6. Ahern's translation, *ibid.*, p. 2, but with changed typography. For Latin text in Patrologia Latina, VII, 121, see *ibid.*, p. 11 where Ahern in his fn. 2 notes differences of translation compared with HICK (EGL).
7. Later discussion distinguished the active from the passive will of God. For a brief discussion see COWBURN, pp. 32-4. For the notion of "permission" see Kern and Splett, "Theodicy", and cf. the title of MARITAIN (GPE). On what God is "able" to do see GEACH, ch. 1-2, and SWINBURNE (CT), ch. 9 and pp. 288 f
8. Note AHERN, p. 11, fn. 3, that though this is commonly attributed to Augustine (e.g., in J.W. Steen, "The Problem of Evil: Ethical Considerations", Canadian Journal of Theology, Vol. XI, No. 4 (1965)), only the substance of it is in Augustine, at Confessions, Bk. 7, ch. 5.
9. See below, pp. 57-8 and 64-8.
10. For exposition and critique of "Augustinian" theodicies, see HICK (EGL:b), pp. 169-98. Cf. also pp. 236-40. For an excellent summary of Augustine's writing on "evil", see Kern and Splett, "Theodicy".
11. Summa Theologiae, 1, Q.2, A.3 as quoted in AHERN, p. 3.
12. See SILLEM.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 43.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 44.
15. *Ibid.*

16. Ibid., pp. 44-5. For modern interpreters of Aquinas' handling of the problem of evil, see esp. MARITAIN (TPE) (GPE); JOURNET; CONNELLAN; COPLESTON; Burrell, "A Psychological Objection". For comment on the Thomist tradition, see GRIFFIN, ch. 7; McCLOSKEY; and HICK (EGL:a), pp. 99-120. Sillem (p. 45 quotes V. White O.P., God the Unknown (London: Harvill Press, 1956), p. 44, in support of his position. He rejects as false the view that in Thomas reason and faith are juxtaposed and cites thus J. Baillie, Our Knowledge of God (London: O.U.P., 1939), p. 127.
17. See McCLOSKEY. For discussion of McCloskey's thought, see Reichenbach, B., "Natural Evils and Natural Laws".
18. Ibid., pp. 39-40.
19. Ibid., p. 42.
20. On "Manichaeism" see J. Hastings (ed.) Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics. (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1921), vol. 8, pp. 394-402.
21. PHILLIPS (FPE), ch. XIII.
22. Ibid., p. 263. For a similar use of "role" as important in this regard, see SHERRY, p. 137.
23. See below, pp. 75-6 and 112-16.
24. See above, pp. 21-2.
25. For discussion of religious belief and "absolute", see below, pp. 161-69.
26. Taken from Hume's Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion, section X, as in PIKE, pp. 22-3, with changed typograph
27. AHERN, p. ix. Epicurus' "invidus" is here "malevolent".
28. See GASKIN.
29. Ibid., p. 168.
30. Ibid.
31. Ibid., p. 166. In addition to Gaskin's discussion cited fn. 1 above, see N. Capaldi, "Hume's Philosophy of Religion: God Without Ethics." International Journal for The Philosophy of Religion, I (1970): 233-40; B.L. Clarke, "The Modern Atheistic Tradition", same Journal, V, (1974): 209-24; D.W. Harward, "Hume's Dialogues Revisited", International Journal for Philosophy of Religion, VI, (1975): 137-53. Cf. also H.D. Aiken, in HUME, p. ix—he thinks Hume destroyed rational religion in order to restore faith as the only and sufficient bulwark of the religious life.
32. GASKIN, pp. 166-67.
33. GASKIN, p. 166 here cites the Kemp Smith, 2nd ed. (Edinburgh, 1947), p. 142.
34. Ibid.
35. GASKIN, p. 167.

36. Ibid., pp. 42-6.
37. Ibid., pp. 46-54.
38. Ibid., p. 41.
39. Ibid., p. 16.
40. Ibid., pp. 57-8.
41. Ibid., p. 16.
42. Ibid., p. 58. Contrast to Hume, SONTAG (GE) (GW) which make evil and atheism the starting point for thought in theodicy.
43. Dialogues X, in PIKE, p. 26. Here pace, Wolfe "Hume on Evil" who argues that Hume saw evil as strong evidence against God, but not amounting to proof. Moore, "Evidence, Evil and Religious Belief" argues rather that evidence is not applicable to whether God exists as we do not know what kind of universe would constitute evidence for the God of theism. See also, Pargetter, "Evil as Evidence Against the Existence of God" and the reply in Martin, "Is Evil Evidence Against the Existence of God?" On Christian response to ambiguity, see Ruiz, "God and the Problem of Evil: A Critical Review", p. 601.
44. GASKIN, p. 167.
45. See GÖRMAN, p. 16.
46. See Mackie, "Evil and Omnipotence", (p. 47 in PIKE).
47. Ibid.
48. See AHERN. Cf. Ramberan, "Evil and Theism" for a similar approach. Also, Fitzpatrick, "The Onus of Proof".
49. Ibid., pp. 34-8.
50. Ibid., p. 35. For the notion of "proportionate good", see *ibid.*, p. 31. Cf. Yandell, "The Greater Good Defense", p. 4 - Every evil is logically necessary to some good which either counterbalances or overbalances it, and some evil is overbalanced by the good to which it is logically necessary. For criticism of Yandell, see Kane, "Theism and Evil", and for the reply, see Yandell, "Theism and Evil: A Reply".
51. Ibid., p. 36.
52. Thus, AHERN, p. 37 instances R.D. Bradley: "A being which is responsible for evil through not preventing it when it could is not wholly good", and "If a being is willing that evil exists, then it is not perfectly good." And unattributed (p. 41, fn. 30): a) A being which does not prevent unnecessary evil when it can is malevolent; b) A being which does not prevent avoidable evil when it can is malevolent.
53. Ibid., p. 38. Cf. here, Reichenbach, "The Deductive Argument"
54. He refers to pp. 22-32. For a further argument see below, p. 55. For his statement of the necessary and sufficient conditions for solving the problem of evil, see his p. 31.

55. Ibid., p. 38. I side here with Ahern, and against Lugenebehl "Can the Argument from Evil be Decisive After All?". Lugenebehl argues an Omnipotent God could have permitted us to have the required knowledge to see the connection of good and evil. But that would suppose omniscience for finite beings, and that is not possible.
56. See GRIFFIN. As a process theodist Griffin is a keen critic of classical theism.
57. Ibid., p. 19.
58. Classical theism does not speak of "omnipotence" apart from the context of other attributes of God which are strictly personal - love, grace, forgiveness, mercy, etc. The question is, therefore, what does classical theism mean by omnipotence? On this, see below, pp. 67 and 268-69.
59. See McCLOSKEY. For a further argument against McCloskey's point here, see below pp. 75-6.
60. Ibid., pp. 8-9.
61. Ibid., p. 9.
62. Ibid.
63. Ibid. The "elsewhere" is footnoted by McCloskey as Meta-Ethics and Normative Ethics (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1969).
64. AHERN, pp. 78-9.
65. Ibid.
66. Ibid., p. 50. This argument is central to Ahern's treatment of "actual evil". It also cuts against actual theodicies for they are all equally attempting an impossible task of seeking to establish what only God's eye can see (pp. 56-7) - the inter-relations between all events.
67. GRIFFIN, p. 20.
68. Ibid. The effect of this point of Griffin's is to make redundant the discussion in the literature (over Pike's article "Hume on Evil") as to whether in fact the theist can supply a morally justifiable reason for God creating this world. (See, e.g. Dore, "Do Theodists Need to Solve the Problem of Evil?"; Richman, "The Argument from Evil"; Langston, "The Argument from Evil"; Oakes, R.A. "God, Suffering, and Conclusive Evidence".) See further below, pp. 75-6.
69. McCLOSKEY, p. 21.
70. HICK (EGL:b), p. 3.
71. Ibid., p. 5.
72. HICK (EGL:a), pp. 33-9. Cf. DAVIS, p. 40. Hick leaves process theodicy on one side on this basis ((EGL:a), p. 36); he sees it as an internal dualism in the Godhead, whereas traditional theism concerns God as "limitlessly" good and loving.

73. Ibid., p. 35.
74. Though the finite theist would reply that one man's evasion is another man's truth, and that he is not defending hellenized Christianity.
75. On some problems of "worshipworthiness" and the God of classical theism, see McCLOSKEY, ch. 5, "God as Finite and Imperfect: Worshipworthiness". See also Rachels, "God and Human Attitudes". GRIFFIN, ch. 17, "Worshipfulness and the Omnipotence Fallacy", defends process theodicy against the charge that it does not describe a reality which is perfect and hence worthy of worship. However, what he does is to redefine "perfect" to include necessary limitation.
76. However, in his recent contribution to DAVIS, Hick more clearly states that theodicy concerns internal coherence of the believer's problem (p. 39). But the discussion is still apart from its location in worship as argued below in section 4C.
77. DOSTOYEVSKY, Bk. 5, ch. 4. See Harries, "Ivan Karamazov's Argument", for comment, and an attack on Phillips' and Soelle's responses in theodicy. On "rebellion", see p. 87 below, and on "protest", see pp. 282-84.
78. HICK (EGL:b), p. 370.
79. Many authors speculate whether, on balance, good in the world outweighs evil, or vice versa, thus implying a quantitative approach. Some, however, suggest any evil in the world raises the full problem of evil, thus implying a qualitative view of evil and good. Two problems attach to both positions. Firstly, no-one is sufficiently omniscient to make such judgements. Secondly, there are no criteria for assessing the relative weights of goods against evils. My position is to argue we are faced here with an irreducible ambiguity.
80. Job 13:15. The RSV gives a different interpretation, but the AV is taken here as expressing the character of religious belief characterised by unconditional trust.
81. J. Rawls, A Theory of Justice (London: Oxford University Press, 1972). (Rawls' "bargaining game" aims at players arriving at unanimous agreement on a set of principles that will henceforth serve as the criteria of evaluation of practice.)
82. On this see section three, and pp. 201-02, 259-62.
83. For my understanding of "form of life", see below, p. 126. See on "form of life", Sutherland, "On the Idea of a Form of Life"; Raschke, "Meaning and Saying in Religion".
84. See HICK (EGL:b), pp. 370-72, and most recently in DAVIS, p. 40 where he writes, "even if it should be sound, I suggest that their argument wins only a Pyrrhic victory". (Cf. pp. 43-4).
85. See PIKE, p. 102.

86. For a background of ideas regarding rational doubt in religion, see Caton, "The Theological Import of Cartesian Doubt". He argues Descartes reverses the traditional theological solution by subordinating faith to reason, and thereby establishes the secular attitude characteristic of modern rationalism (p. 221) On the distinction between "philosophical" and "practical" doubt, see PHILLIPS (RWE), pp. 1-8, together with the attack throughout that book on the Humean legacy of philosophical doubt in religious understanding. On the question of "natural assumption" in epistemology, see FARRER, (FS) pp. 12-3, and on belief as "practical and passionate", see FARRER, (LA) pp. 11 For a variation on this last in terms of "saving faith" see FARRER, (FS) pp. 14-5, which argues for a proper distinction between saving faith and philosophical reflection, with the consequence that the philosopher must know that he is examining or articulating the assumptions of the believing mind. For Farrer's philosophical side, see FARRER (FI), and for his ideas on religion see FARRER (SB).
87. E.g. PHILLIPS (CP), p. 106, "All I have tried to do is to make clearer a religious view of evil", and his talk of the philosopher's "descriptive task" in PHILLIPS (RWE), p. 189.
88. L. Wittgenstein, Zettel 144. (Oxford Blackwell, 1967), ed. G.E.M. Anscombe and G.H. von Wright, trans. G.E.M. Anscombe.
89. Ibid., 173.
90. See WINCH (ISS), pp. 23 and 83 ff. For the argument on this point and the references to Winch and Holmer in this paragraph, see SHERRY, pp. 118-19.
91. For discussion of Holmer, see SHERRY, pp. 118-21 (full Holmer bibliography given on p. 220). See also Sherry, "Learning How to be Religious".
92. Above, p. 56.
93. I take it biblical "definitions" such as "I am who I am" and "He who is" are making this point. "God is love" is hardly a definition; cf. "God is a consuming fire" (Hebrews 12:29, cf. Deut 4:24).
94. Especially his theory of the brokenness of language regarding God. See BARTH, III/3, p. 293.
95. Cf. section one, fns. 10 and 15.
96. HICK (EGL:b), p. 4.
97. Ibid., p. 5.
98. Ibid. See above, p. 57.
99. See MILES, pp. 159-64.
100. Above, pp. 42-6. See also below, pp. 112-16. For discussions of the meaning of "existence" talk in theology, see KEIGHTLEY (WGG), pp. 80-84 and 139-57; SHERRY, pp. 191-93; HUDSON (PAR), pp. 89-105. Keightley

feels the weight of both the "cognitive" and the "grammarians" positions, and remains cautiously non-committal; Sherry leans towards the need to recognise "ontology" as implicit in the grammar; Hudson rejects the "existence" question.

101. Above p. 9. Also see below, section 3.
102. HICK (EGL:b), p. 4.
103. As Aquinas argued, the impossibility lies in the nature of illogicality, and not in the task. See AQUINAS (ST) Ia, q25 art 3. Descartes argued that God can do absolutely anything. For discussion see GEACH, ch. 1, but cf. SWINBURNE (CT), p. 160. See also section 4, fn. 106. Also, see GORMAN, p. 26, for details of the Norwegian Johan B. Hygen's Guds allmakt og det ondes problem (Oslo, 1973), which, Gorman says, makes an examination of "omnipotence" in Christian tradition and concludes that though the concept is early and well-established, it has weak support in the Bible and the earliest Church. In these, "pantokrator" means "ruler of everything", and is largely a title of honour and reverence.
104. GEACH makes much of this in relation to God as Truth, but see the discussion with Harrison noted above section 1, fn. 11. Cf. also Khamara, "In Defence of Omnipotence" on God being able to, but not breaking his promises.
105. Below, pp. 268-69. On "love-omnipotent", see RELTON, ch. 6, "The Omnipotence of Love in Relation to Human Freedom" Cf. FERRÉ (RR) ch.4, "Nature and the Problem of Evil", pp. 259-69, which defends his theodicy of a "sovereign God of love".
106. HICK (GUF), p. 176.
107. MADDEN and HARE, p. 4.
108. Ibid. For critique of the "privative" definition, see HICK (EGL:b), pp. 53-8, and McCLOSKEY, pp. 25-41. See also fn. 63 in section 1.
109. See JOURNET. For a slightly more cautious approach, see CONNELLAN.
110. Plotinus, 1st Ennead, 8th Treatise, "The Essence and Origin of Evils". Quoted by Journet, *ibid.*, p. 27.
111. MADDEN and HARE, p. 5.
112. Ibid.
113. Above, pp. 13-9.
114. SONTAG maintains the opposite - see fn. 42 above.
115. MADDEN and HARE, p. 5. For comment, see GRIFFIN, pp. 252-53.
116. For discussion of this problem, see GILL. In the context of specifying "evil", see the subjective element in FARRER (LA), pp. 18-19.
117. See NOVAK, in bibliography.

118. In H.D. Aiken, Reason and Conduct (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1962).
119. NOVAK, pp. 159-60.
120. Ibid., p. 160, (as quoted by Novak).
121. Ibid.
122. See below, pp. 131-32.
123. See DAVIES, pp. 22-4. Davies's point would undermine that of Wainwright, "Christian Theism and the Free Will Defense: A Problem", which argues that as God is a moral agent and yet cannot sin, so the Free Will Defense cannot argue that moral agency in man logically involves ability to sin.
124. NOVAK, p. 160.
125. Ibid.
126. Ibid., pp. 160-61.
127. Ibid., pp. 161-62. Cf. here Phillips' use of Kierkegaard - see below, section 3. Similarly, see Lewis, "On Forgiveness", replying to Minas, "God and Forgiveness"
128. Ibid., p. 163. Cf. the approach of Job's friends!
129. Ibid.
130. See above, pp. 4-5.
131. By constitutive I mean "makes what it is". See below, pp. 139, 225-31, and 241-48 for development.
132. NOVAK, p. 165. Cf. the argument in SONTAG (GE) passim. For a strong recent reiteration, see his contribution to DAVIS, pp. 137-51.
133. GÖRMAN, p. 65. Görmán's book, esp. ch. 4-5, is heavily influenced by HARE (LM) and (FR).
134. Ibid., cf. MOBERLY, p. 1, for the problem of evil as an ethical question.
135. Op. cit., p. 146. Cf. the similar argument in Hitterdale, "The Problem of Evil and the Subjectivity of Values".
136. On the motive for this, see COWBURN, p. 5. He takes A.-D. Sertillanges, Le probleme du mal, (Paris, 1948, II, p. 50) to task for implying that if one's view of reality could be all-embracing, one would, on the aesthetic argument, see no evil at all. Cf. also Pope's Essay on Man, "All nature is but art unknown to thee ... in erring reason's spite, One truth is clear, Whatever is, is right."
137. The influence derives through Thomist theology. See above, fn. 63 (section 1), fn. 108 (this section).
138. See Mrs. Mary Baker Eddy, Science and Health with a Key to the Scriptures (1875). See also, McCullough, "Theodicy and Mary Baker Eddy". Cf. "maya" in Advaita Vedanta Hinduism.
139. On this, see HICK (EGL:b), pp. 49-53 and 70-82.

140. See McCloskey, "God and Evil", in PIKE, p. 63. For a rejection of these traditional distinctions in a process theodicy, see GARRISON, pp. 21-2.
141. Ibid.
142. Ibid.
143. Ibid.
144. Ibid., p. 62.
145. Ibid.
146. Ibid., p. 61.
147. Ibid., pp. 61-2.
148. Ibid., p. 62.
149. Cf. Mitchell's argument for the worth of the cumulative case in MITCHELL (JRB), ch. 3 passim. Also cf. the argument from "converging evidences" advanced by Cardinal Newman in his Grammar of Assent. HICK (FK), ch. 4, describes Newman's thesis as the adding up of probabilities until they amount to a virtual certainty (p. 90). There are strong elements of additive methodology in Hick's theodicy. WISDOM pp. 157 f draws attention in his essay "Gods" to the use of cumulative argument in courts of law. Note also SWINBURNE (CT), pp. 45 f for a defence of inductive reasoning - "an argument from premisses to a conclusion in which the premisses count in favour of, provide evidence for, the conclusion, without entailing it."
150. See FLEW (GP), p. 63.
151. McCloskey, "God and Evil", in PIKE, p. 63.
152. Ibid., pp. 63-4.
153. McCLOSKEY, ch. 8, p. 83.
154. PIKE, p. 65.
155. McCLOSKEY, p. 113.
156. McCLOSKEY does not provide the reference.
157. PIKE, p. 65.
158. McCLOSKEY, p. 113.
159. Ibid. Cf. PETIT, p. 88.
160. HICK (EGL:b), pp. 262-65.
161. See for this, McCLOSKEY, p. 97 (which refers in turn to MARITAIN (TPE), p. 6).
162. Ibid., p. 98, (quoting MARITAIN (TPE), pp. 16-7. McCLOSKEY p. 73, compares MARITAIN (GPE), pp. 37 ff.
163. Ibid., pp. 98-9.
164. Ibid., p. 99.
165. See (section 4), fn. 123. Cf. Burch, "The Defense from Plenitude".

166. McCLOSKEY, p. 74.
167. Cf. COWBURN, pp. 70 ff, and pace HICK (EGL:b), p. 8. See also PITTENGER (PG), p. 72.
168. For my use of "depth", see below, pp. 216-17.
169. See below, pp. 286-87. QUINN, argues the opposite - what is morally required is co-extensive with what God commands.
170. For example, 1 Cor. 11:17-34.
171. See HICK (EGL:b), pp. 337-41.
172. For a criticism of Hick's handling of biblical material, see Davis in DAVIS, pp. 59-60. For Hick's reply, see *ibid.*, p. 67.
173. See PHILLIPS (FPE), p. 74.
174. See HICK (FK), p. 144.
175. For recent clarification by Hick of such "progress", see DAVIS, p. 66 - but this does not meet my point.
176. For a "Protest Theodicy", see ROTH, and his contributions to DAVIS, pp. 7-22 and 30-7.
177. Cf. GRIFFIN, pp. 27-8.
178. This term derives from Leibniz. For comment, see HICK (EGL:a), p. 164 and pp. 193-97, and GRIFFIN, pp. 133-34. JOURNET, pp. 42-3 attacks it as a distortion of his favoured "privative" view.
179. See above, pp. 55-6.
180. See above, pp. 75-6.
181. Centrally argued by J. Wilson, N. Williams, B. Sugarman, An Introduction to Moral Education (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1967), pt. 1.
182. On some of the problems here, see B.C. Farr, "Is Moral Education an Impossible Dream?", Journal of Moral Education, 3 (1974):223-28.
183. Cf. Swinburne, in BROWN (RR), p. 83. He attempts some terminological clarification making use of Wallace, "The Problems of Moral and Physical Evil". Cf. also COWBURN, p. vii, who divides (as a basic thesis) troubles which are no one's fault, from moral evil and its consequences.
184. See FARRER (LA), p. 30.
185. This is the aspect missing from radical dualism which makes evil a reality per se.
186. *Ibid.*, p. 26.
187. So also Paterson, "Evil, Omniscience and Omnipotence", p. 15. Cf. SONTAG (GE), p. 29, which says that where God is concerned this distinction between natural and moral evil breaks down.

188. Flew has consistently maintained this from his early "stratonician" principle to his later "presumption of atheism" - e.g. FLEW (PA), ch. 1. Cf. discussion above, pp. 71-4.
189. See HICK (EGL:b), p. 238.
190. See Kane, "The Failure of Soul-making Theodicy".
191. See FARRER (LA), p. 34.
192. For an account and critique of this see Mackie, "Evil and Omnipotence", in PIKE, pp. 53-5. See MEYNELL (GW), pp. 71-5 for a reply to Mackie so that "third-order good" does not entail an infinite regress.
193. See Swinburne, "The Problem of Evil", in CAHN and SHATZ, pp. 3-19 (esp. pp. 14-5).
194. McCLOSKEY, p. 19.
195. In PIKE, pp. 61-2.
196. See below, pp. 205-07.
197. In PIKE, pp. 63-5.
198. Ibid., p. 64.
199. McCLOSKEY, p. 18.
200. AHERN, passim. Contrast McCLOSKEY, ch. 1 and 2.
201. See GRIFFIN, pp. 282-85, for further distinctions amongst "intrinsic" goods and evils. Also, specific evils may relate to "kinds" rather than "cases" - AHERN, ch. 4.
202. In PIKE, p. 47.
203. It has been suggested to me a) that the plotters might have thought they were doing "right", or b) that by "good" they refer to social utility, whilst recognising that moral evil results. I don't think that these, or similar alternatives, affect the basic issue in the theodacist's use of the phrase "moral evil", which is intended to refer to any situation of adversely judged moral behaviour. Conversely, "good" means all positively judged moral behaviour whatever its motivation. "Right" and "social utility" fall in this instance within this frame.
204. PHILLIPS (RWE), p. 181.
205. PHILLIPS (FPE), p. 26.
206. Ibid., p. 33.
207. GÖRMAN, p. 15.
208. Ibid.
209. FARRER (LA), p. 7.
210. GRIFFIN, pp. 15-6. Griffin returns several times to "Evil, problem of, ... as theoretical", in a useful series of expositions: pp. 15-6, 102, 179, 220, 228-30, 239, 241.

211. AHERN, p. 1.
212. Section One, fn. 15.
213. See HEBBLETHWAITE, in bibliography.
214. Op. cit., pp. 8-10.
215. Ibid., respectively, ch. 2 and ch. 3.
216. Ibid., p. 10.
217. For lists of such questions, see *ibid.*, p. 40, and JOURNET, p. 15 (who includes Aquinas' list of questions).
218. Ibid., p. 13.
219. Ibid., ch. 7.
220. Ibid., p. 100.
221. Ibid., p. 2.
222. "Felt" is my word, but seems to capture what he says on pp. 10-3. For my use, see below, pp. 111-12 and 119.
223. See HICK (EGL). In addition to fn. 43 in section 1, for discussion of Hick's theodicy see: Puccetti, "The Loving God", and the reply, Hick, "God, Evil and Mystery"; Trethowan, "Dr. Hick and the Problem of Evil", and the reply, Hick, "The Problem of Evil in the First and Last Things "; Ward, "Freedom and the Irenaean Theodicy", and the reply, Hick, "Freedom and the Irenaean Theodicy Again"; Rist, "Coherence and the God of Love", and the reply, Hick, "Coherence and the God of Love Again "; MADDEN & HARE, and the reply, HICK (EGL:b), pp. 375-76. See also Hick's "Remarks" in the debate between Phillips and Swinburne in BROWN (RR) pp. 122-28. Also the critique in GRIFFIN, ch. 13. For Hick's recent restatement of his position, together with his defences against, and critiques of S.T. Davis, J.K. Roth, D.R. Griffin, F. Sontag, see DAVIS, passim.
224. HICK (EGL:b), pp. 334-35.
225. Pace A. Boyce Gibson, "Differing Perspectives in Religion and Philosophy", International Journal for Philosophy of Religion, 1 (1970):16-21.
226. For the interaction in the present of experience and tradition in theology, see SCHILLEBEECKX, section 1, ch.1.
227. Cf. WARD (CG) for an attempt to set philosophical handling of theology in such a broad context, and esp. ch. 3. "The Credal Context of Belief in God". WARD (RT), however, is an exercise in metaphysics, and seeks a God compatible with various major religions (p. 1), though still meeting the desires of worship (p. 234).
228. See section 4 for development.
229. See RAMSEY (BSR) in bibliography.
230. Ibid., p. 23. He is here supporting F.D. Maurice.
231. Ibid.

232. Ibid.
233. See GÖRMAN p. 61. Cf. WARD (CG), pp. 1-4, for a protest about the distance that much philosophy of religion has from the practised belief it claims to discuss.
234. See RAMSEY (RL), ch. 2, esp. p. 89. See also Ramsey, "The Paradox of Omnipotence".
235. Above, pp. 66-7.
236. PHILLIPS, (RWE), ch. 3.
237. Ibid., p. 27.
238. Ibid., passim.
239. Ibid. Besides Tylor, he discusses thus, for example, Frazer, Marett, Freud, Durkheim.
240. This is the thrust of PHILLIPS (RWE), ch. 10, "Does God Exist?", but generally underlies (CP) and (FPE).
241. PHILLIPS (RWE), p. 152.
242. Ibid., p. 172.
243. For discussion, see SHERRY, pp. 117-34.
244. Cf. the central thesis of Winch, "Meaning and Religious Language", that to understand the way in which a system of ideas is related to reality one needs to examine the actual application in life of those ideas, and not fasten attention on the "peculiar entities" referred to by them. Cf. esp. PHILLIPS (FPE), pp. 101-09.
245. WITTGENSTEIN (LRB), p. 71. For comment see HUDSON (WRB), pp. 165-67 and PHILLIPS (DI), p. 65.
246. WILSON (LPT), in bibliography.
247. For this catena of points see *ibid.*, pp. 13-7.
248. Ibid., pp. 18-19. I have added "evil" to Wilson's list. He has "negative".
249. Ibid., pp. 19-20.
250. Ibid., pp. 20-1. Cf, e.g., WITTGENSTEIN (PI), 19 and 23: "to imagine a language means to imagine a form of life", "... the term "language-game" is meant to bring into prominence the fact that the speaking of language is part of an activity, or of a form of life". On "form of life", see below, p. 126.
251. I am using "speech-act" here to stand for the inter-penetration of speech and action by which meaning is communicated, and which lies within later "Wittgensteinian" philosophy. For the technical use of "speech-act" as linguistic act, see AUSTIN; EVANS; J. Searle, Speech Acts: An Essay in the Philosophy of Language (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969). For a recent thorough application of this idea to theology, see McCLENDON and SMITH. See further below, pp. 122-2
252. Cf. above, pp. 42-6, and below, section 4C.

253. Op. cit., p. 18.
254. Cf. Roth, in DAVIS, p. 8. "What does 'evil' mean? That question itself is a crucial element in the problem of evil. The word often, functions as a noun, suggesting that evil is an entity. In fact, evil is activity, sometimes inactivity ..." Cf. above, p. 45, D.W.D. Shaw, Who is God? (London: S.C.M. Press, 1968), chs. 3-4, on taking God's attributes adverbially. Cf. Brunton, "A Model for ... D.Z. Philli
255. In FLEW (LL), pp. 11-36.
256. Ibid., p. 13.
257. Ibid., p. 14.
258. Ibid., pp. 18-9 (Ryle here discusses "Satan").
259. Ibid., p. 22.
260. For example, Proverbs, ch. 8.
261. However, in section 4 an account is given of how believers can be led into mistaken understanding: see pp. 217-24.
262. J. Jeremias, Rediscovering the Parables (London: S.C.M. Press, Ltd., 1965), pp. 12-3.
263. Cf. Farrer, "A Starting-Point", pp. 10-1. Cf. G.C. Stead, "How Theologians Reason", *ibid.*, pp. 108-09.
264. Cf. Farrer, "Revelation", in MITCHELL (FL), pp. 95-9. (The incarnation is "the self-enacted parable of God-head."). See also KING, pp. 111-12 for application of Farrer's point to Christology.
265. Cf. I.M. Crombie, "The Possibility of Theological Statements" in MITCHELL (FL), esp. pp. 65-7. Cf. C. Lewis, "On the Logic of Belief Claims in Religion", p. 165 for the inter-connectedness of meaning in theological doctrines and their setting in life. He cites N. Smart, Reasons and Faiths (London, 1958), p. 12 to similar effect.
266. See Foster, "'We' in Modern Philosophy", esp. pp. 199-203. He is commenting on G. Ryle, "Ordinary Language" (reprinted in C.E. Caton (ed.) Philosophy and Ordinary Language (Urbana, Chicago, London: University of Illinois Press, 1970), pp. 108-127.
267. See HIGH (LPB). My points (i) and (ii) have reference to his pp. 1-69. Cf. also pp. 101 f. Cf. SMITH, p. 6; Raschke, "Meaning and Saying in Religion". For sharp criticism of High, see HELM, pp. 59-63.
268. Ibid., pp. 43-4. See also W. Alston, "Theories of Meaning" in A. & K. Lehrer (eds.), Theory of Meaning (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1970).
269. This idea he bases on WITTGENSTEIN (PI), 151. Cf. the comments on "understanding" in SHERRY, pp. 117-30 and 189-90.
270. High here appeals to WINCH, pp. 24 f.

271. AUSTIN sets out the criteria of "happiness", pp. 14-5. McCLENDON and SMITH make a sustained application of Austin's thesis to theology as the science of convictions, and link happiness with justification of convictions (ch. 4).
272. HIGH (LPB), p. 22. Cf. the use of "indwelling" (based on M. Polanyi) by Gill, "Tacit Knowing and Religious Belief", pp. 87-8.
273. The bearing of this claim on descriptive theodicy is worked out in section 4.

Section Three

1. See above, pp. 21 ff.
2. See above, pp. 13-9.
3. See above, pp. 48-9.
4. See WILSON (LPT), p. 25. Cf. HARE (LM) (FR) passim.
5. Ibid., p. 26.
6. Ibid., p. 27.
7. Ibid., p. 28.
8. See above, pp. 71-4.
9. Op. cit., p. 65.
10. Op. cit., pp. 65 ff. See also MEYNELL (SNC), pp. 39-40 on subjective/objective aspects of verification of value statements.
11. See above, pp. 75-6.
12. Ibid., pp. 66 ff. Cf. L. Kolakowski, Religion (Glasgow: Fontana Paperbacks, 1982), p. 97.
13. On the "third man", see Universals 1 and 2, Course A303, Units 23-25 (Bletchley: Open University Press, 1973), and the literature there cited. Cf. the discussion on regression of criteria contained in Brown, "Religious Morality"; Campbell "Patterson Brown on God and Evil"; Flew, "The 'Religious Morality' of Mr. Patterson Brown"; Brown, "Religious Morality: A Reply to Flew and Campbell". See also HICK (FK), pp. 95-119, for a limited regression. Cf. also HARE (LM), pp. 68 f. for the claim that a complete account of criteria is impossible. On this, see MITCHELL (MRS) - but his defence of his own position against the charge of circularity (p. 161) is weak.
14. WILSON (LPT), pp. 91-7. For discussion of Wilson's theory of meaning, see BRAKENHIELM, pp. 31-7.
15. Ibid., p. 94.
16. WILSON (LCB), p. 71.
17. Thus, the "Augustinian" theodicies which appeal to the remote past and future as perfect.

18. Thus, "Best Possible World" theories. Cf. Mother Julian's "But all shall be well, and all shall be well, and all manner of thing shall be well."
19. Thus "Irenaeian" theodicies. See MADDEN & HARE, and also GRIFFIN, for such summary characterisations of theodical theories.
20. For the background of ideas in this paragraph, see esp. Whitaker, "Philosophy and the After Life", and BOROS, pp. 104-30.
21. GÖRMAN, ch. 5, "Analysing Evaluative Problems". Görmán builds on HARE (LM) and (FR). Cf. MOBERLY, p. 1, on the evaluative approach.
22. Ibid., p. 62.
23. On "fixedness", see above, p. 126. On commitment cf. fn. 178 below. On "God" and "good" as bound together in language, see the debate between Brown, Flew and Campbell cited in fn. 13.
24. Above and below, pp. 107-8 and 276-78. See also Pittenger, "The Meaning of Words in Worship".
25. For discussion, see below pp. 225-31 and 241-48. On "theistic" worship, see SWINBURNE (CT), pp. 282-92: ("to show explicit respect towards a being acknowledged as the de facto and de jure lord of all things", p. 283). But my specification is designed to leave as many questions open as possible. I owe the "Temple" quote to D. Watson, I Believe in Evangelism (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1976), p. 157; but his page reference is incorrect. It is from W. Temple Readings in St. John's Gospel, 1st and 2nd Series, (London: Macmillan, 1968), p. 67. See for philosophic discussion of "Worship", Rachels, "God and Human Attitudes" (this thesis responds to most of the points). Cf. Oakes, "Reply to Professor Rachels".
26. See SHERRY, p. 200, fn. 12, and ch. 6, esp. pp. 140-43, "Excursus: Theology as Grammar".
27. See KEIGHTLEY, (WGG), p. 55, for grammar as standards of intelligibility; PHILLIPS (CP), p. 8 for depth grammar as what can and cannot be said of a concept.
28. See, e.g., on "anticipatory theory", K. Popper, Objective Knowledge: An Evolutionary Approach (London: O.U.P., 1972), ("there is no sense organ in which anticipatory theories are not genetically incorporated",) pp. 71-2. On "paradigms of thought", see T.S. Kuhn, The Structure of Scientific Revolutions (Chicago: University Press, 1970) 2nd ed., "until the scientist has learned to see nature in a different way - the new fact is not quite a scientific fact at all.", p. 53. For the use of Kuhn in philosophy of religion see MITCHELL (JRB), and G. Green, "On Seeing the Unseen: Imagination in Science and Religion", Zygon, vol. 16, No. 1 (Mar. 1981), 15-28, esp. 23-5.
29. On these points, see PHILLIPS (RWE), p. 3; (FPE), p. 7.

30. This expression derives from P. Winch. For comment see SHERRY, pp. 35-6.
31. Cf. the rejection of old answers about ontology in QUINE. On "pictures", KEIGHTLEY (WGG), pp. 73-80, shows, pace Nielsen, Durrant, Hudson, that Phillips uses "picture" = "logical space of a belief".
32. This is Phillips' phrase in PHILLIPS (CP), p. 106.
33. PHILLIPS (FPE), ch. 11. See also PHILLIPS and MOUNCE, App. 1, and pp. 82 ff. Cf. their contribution to HUDSON (IOQ), pp. 228-39.
34. In his Rights and Right Conduct (Oxford: Blackwell, 1959).
35. For 22 contributions about the "Humean guillotine", see HUDSON (IOQ).
36. PHILLIPS (FPE), p. 225.
37. Ibid., pp. 228-29. Cf. PHILLIPS (RU), ch. 10.
38. Phillips refers to Fear and Trembling (O.U.P., 1939), pp. 84-5.
39. PHILLIPS (FPE), p. 97 "religious beliefs cannot be understood at all unless their relation to other forms of life is taken into account". Cf. (RU), pp. 196-97.
40. PHILLIPS (FPE), p. 226.
41. PHILLIPS (RU), ch. 10. On the importance of "practice", see PHILLIPS and MOUNCE, passim.
42. On this, see SHERRY, pp. 58-9, where he expresses surprise at the lack of comment in Phillips on analogy, and refers to Phillips' rejection of natural theology of any sort. Phillips does use the word analogy, but in the context of contrast, e.g. (FPE), p. 50; (CP), p. 128 - a contrast he calls in the former "radical discontinuity of the relation".
43. PHILLIPS (FPE), p. 231.
44. PHILLIPS (FPE), ch. X.
45. Ibid., p. 21.
46. Ibid., pp. 20-1.
47. Ibid., p. 208.
48. Ibid., p. 214.
49. Ibid., p. 218. Quoted from Purity of Heart, trans. Steere, Douglas (Fontana Books, 1961), pp. 120-21.
50. Ibid., p. 213.
51. Ibid., p. 212.
52. Ibid., p. 209.
53. Ibid.
54. Ibid., p. 210.
55. Ibid.
56. Ibid.

57. And similarly on the "death" of the marriage, if divorce ensues. For the religious application of this to the "death" of God as "turning their backs on God", see PHILLIPS (FPE), pp. 111-22, esp. pp. 119-20. Cf. PHILLIPS (DI), pp. 76-7.
58. E.g. PHILLIPS (RWE), p. 151; PHILLIPS (CP), ch. 1, also p. 149; PHILLIPS (FPE), pp. 11-2.
59. PHILLIPS (FPE), p. 109.
60. PHILLIPS (RWE), pp. 189-90. See also HAIKOLA, pp. 129-47 on the language-games of "Unbelief".
61. Cf. on this, KEIGHTLEY (WGG), pp. 67-8.
62. See below, pp. 245-47 and 282-84.
63. PHILLIPS (FPE), pp. 101 ff., cf. p. 159. For "Idolatry", see PHILLIPS (CP), p. 159.
64. PHILLIPS (CP), p. 160.
65. See below, pp. 171-73, and 235-6.
66. PHILLIPS (CP), p. 160.
67. Above pp. 13-9.
68. This charge of "fideism" is much discussed. The essential elements are in Nielsen, "Wittgensteinian Fideism", and for a reply, see PHILLIPS (FPE), ch. 5.
69. PHILLIPS (FPE), pp. 11-2.
70. PHILLIPS (RWE), p. 181.
71. PHILLIPS (CP), p. 50.
72. Ibid., p. 51. Cf. the statement "to have the idea of God is to know God" - ibid., p. 18.
73. Ibid., p. 60. Cf. above, pp. 62-3 on Winch and Holmer.
74. Ibid., p. 150. See above, p. 4 and below, section 4. Note Phillips' rather different statement in PHILLIPS (FPE), p. 68 - but see section 1, fn. 7. Cf. SMART, p. 74.
75. PHILLIPS (FPE), p. 130.
76. Passim, e.g. PHILLIPS (FPE), pp. 2-3; (CP), pp. 21-3.
77. PHILLIPS (CP), pp. 4-11.
78. Ibid., p. 8.
79. Ibid. Cf. fns. 26 and 27 above.
80. PHILLIPS (CP), p. 10.
81. PHILLIPS (FPE), p. 89.
82. Ibid., p. 90. For a contrasting account of the non-testability of basic theistic assertions as being parallel to the non-testability of statements in science cast at a high level of theoreticity, and for the implications of assuming this, see Botterill, "Falsification and the Existence of God: A discussion of Plantinga's Free Will Defense".
83. Ibid., pp. 84-7. See further below, pp. 175-76.

84. PHILLIPS (RWE), p. 163.
85. Ibid., p. 164. For my account of "forgiveness" see below, pp. 275-78.
86. Ibid. The quote from Wittgenstein is from WITTGENSTEIN (LRB), p. 54.
87. Ibid., ch. 2, "Hume's Legacy".
88. PHILLIPS (FPE), p. 213.
89. Ibid., p. 74.
90. Ibid., pp. 74-5. Cf. also *ibid.*, p. 83, and above, fn. 49.
91. See, e.g. SHERRY; KEIGHTLEY (GG), (WGG); TILLEY; NIELSEN (CCR); HAIKOLA; BAEZ; BRAKENHIELM; HUDSON (PAR), (WRB); HELM; and essays in PHILLIPS (RU); DURRANT; Le "Phillips, Barth and the Concept of God"; Olding, "D.Z. Phillips and Religious Language"; Nielson, "Wittgensteinian Fideism"; Olmstead, "Wittgenstein and Christian Truth Claims"; Richmond, "'Religion without Explanation': Theology and D.Z. Phillips"; Shepherd, "Religion and the Contextualisation of Criteria"; Watt, "Religious Beliefs and Pictures". Robinson, "Review"; Brunton, "A Model".
92. PHILLIPS (FPE), p. 62.
93. PHILLIPS (FPE), p. 63.
94. For the historical emphasis, cf. SHERRY, pp. 45 and 51. For discussion see below, pp. 229-30 and 248-74.
95. See SHERRY, pp. 45-6.
96. In DELANEY, p. 64, fn. 7.
97. SHERRY, p. 57. Cf. Richmond, "'Religion without Explanation Theology and D.Z. Phillips" for support for Sherry's points.
98. PHILLIPS (CP), p. 41.
99. Cf. WITTGENSTEIN (PI), pp. 66-7. Cf. here the problem over the metaphysical nature of the "principle of verifiability".
100. Above, pp. 139-40.
101. For method of contrast see above, p. 144. See PHILLIPS (CP) pp. 43 ff. for discussion of God as a person.
102. Above, pp. 66-7.
103. Pace Phillips in BROWN (RR), p. 120, where he says religious talk is not all of a piece or capable of being fitted into a neat theological system.
104. PHILLIPS (FPE), p. 228.
105. Ibid., p. 157.
106. Ibid., p. 231.
107. PHILLIPS (CP), p. 153. For full discussion see, pp. 149-57.
108. Ibid., p. 152.
109. Ibid., p. 153.
110. Ibid., pp. 150-52; PHILLIPS (FPE), p. 249.

111. PHILLIPS (DI), pp. 57-8.
112. Ibid., p. 58.
113. Ibid., p. 69.
114. PHILLIPS (CP), p. 50.
115. PHILLIPS (FPE), pp. 248-49.
116. PHILLIPS (CP) - See above, p. 153.
117. Cf. PHILLIPS (FPE), p. 69, "It makes no sense to ask which came first, the language or the theology". By language here, Phillips says he means "the language of worship, contemplation, and religious practices".
118. PHILLIPS (CP), p. 51.
119. Ibid.
120. Ibid.
121. PHILLIPS (FPE), p. 56.
122. For Phillips' qualifications to this, see his fn. 22 in (FPE), p. 61.
123. Ibid., p. 74.
124. Ibid. (Phillips footnotes to P. Winch in PHILLIPS (RU), pp. 34-8).
125. Ibid., p. 21. (Phillips acknowledges Kierkegaard's influence here).
126. Ibid., p. 29.
127. Ibid. The text reads "understanding", but the context is that of religious understanding.
128. Ibid., pp. 23-4.
129. Ibid., pp. 22 & 234-35.
130. He makes much use of Simone Weil on this. See WEIL (WG), pp. 94-166. For Weil, see section 4, fn. 40.
131. PHILLIPS (FPE), p. 26.
132. PHILLIPS (RWE), p. 148.
133. PHILLIPS (FPE), p. 194.
134. Ibid., p. 191.
135. Ibid., p. 192. Phillips says this in criticism of a point in Wisdom's "Religious Belief". In his paper "Wisdom's Gods" (FPE, ch. IX), Phillips praises Wisdom for delivering us from the mistakes of positivism in that Wisdom holds that the reality expressed by beliefs about God is to be found in certain patterns of human reactions, but criticizes him for not going far enough and therefore remaining subject to his own critiques (p. 202) - because he seeks justification beyond the point where it makes sense to do so (p. 199).
136. Ibid., p. 217.
137. Ibid., p. 216.

138. PHILLIPS (CP), p. 68.
139. PHILLIPS (FPE), p. 247 (Phillips is here quoting WEIL (WG), p. 101). Cf. PHILLIPS (DI), pp. 37-8, and PHILLIPS (CP), p. 128.
140. PHILLIPS (CP), p. 100.
141. Ibid., p. 70.
142. Ibid., p. 100 (Phillips italicizes is).
143. Ibid., p. 71. On contemplation and waiting, cf. ALLEN, passim. Allen is heavily influenced by these themes from Weil.
144. Ibid., p. 68.
145. Ibid., p. 128. Cf. fn. 139, above.
146. Ibid., pp. 100-01.
147. Ibid., p. 100.
148. Ibid., p. 97.
149. Ibid., p. 103.
150. PHILLIPS (FPE), p. 51.
151. PHILLIPS (CP), p. 105.
152. Ibid., p. 102.
153. Ibid., p. 97.
154. Ibid., p. 62.
155. Ibid., p. 67.
156. Ibid.
157. Ibid., p. 68.
158. Ibid., pp. 129-30. That is, Phillips rejects "with God all things are possible" as meaning either that God can do the impossible, or that petitionary prayer proceeds like a scientific experiment. He says at (CP) p. 130 that it means that only God is a necessity, and that everything else is merely possible for religious believers.
159. Ibid., p. 124.
160. Ibid.
161. Ibid., pp. 36-7.
162. PHILLIPS (RWE), p. 172.
163. PHILLIPS (CP), p. 61.
164. Ibid., pp. 55-6.
165. PHILLIPS (DI), p. 49.
166. PHILLIPS (RWE), pp. 164-67.
167. PHILLIPS (DI), p. 45.
168. Ibid., pp. 54-5. (Phillips' underlining).
169. TILLEY, p. 63, cites this expression from Phillips' paper "Infinite Approximation", Journal of the American

Academy of Religion, 43, 3 (September 1976): 486.
Cf. PHILLIPS (FPE), p. 108. Also cf. Wisdom, fn.
135 above.

170. PHILLIPS (FPE), ch. VII. All quotes from pp. 127-29.
171. On Phillips having a notion of "true religion" see
KEIGHTLEY (WGG), pp. 67 f. & 84 f. Cf. above, pp.
150-51 and below, pp. 234-36.
172. TILLEY, pp. 108-09.
173. For a test for "depth grammar" in relation to worship, see
below pp. 216-17.
174. TILLEY, p. 109.
175. See PHILLIPS (RWE), ch. 10 for his handling of "Moore's
truisms".
176. See his article in DELANEY, "Is Belief in God Rational?".
177. See SHERRY, p. 85.
178. See above, pp. 125-29. Cf. PHILLIPS (CP), p. 45, which is
based on P. Winch, "Nature and Convention", Arist.
Soc. Proc., (1960), p. 246. Phillips remarks, "In
the final analysis, the nature of the commitment
follows from the nature of the language". For
development see below, pp. 201-03.
179. See above, p. 42. Of interest here is the attack in
McKINNON on treating religious belief in terms of
"God exists" rather than "I believe in God" - pp.
56-61 and 81-2.
180. Cf. here RAMSEY (RL), p. 38, with its parallel between
God and the elusive "I".
181. See Waismann, "Verifiability", Pt. III. For constructive
discussion of Waismann's article, see SHERRY, ch. 8,
and HUDSON (WRB), pp. 62-7. Sherry discusses criti-
cally (pp. 172-75) Waismann's suggestion that "true"
is "systematically ambiguous", but unfortunately in
developing his own position (pp. 175-78) he does not
comment on the argument I quote. But this argument
is important to the distinction Sherry makes (pp.
175-76) between truth in relation to actual states of
affairs (ontology) and truth in relation to true
beliefs, judgements, propositions, etc. (language
and epistemology). This importance can be seen in
HUDSON, pp. 64-5. Hudson observes (p. 65), "We must
proceed through linguistics to ontology", and cites
WITTGENSTEIN (PI), 373, "Grammar tells what kind of
object anything is". For comment on this quote (with
emphasis on the word kind), see Bell, "Theology as
Grammar: Is God an Object of Understanding?" which
shifts the emphasis to the precedence of language
over ontology. Cf. also KING, pp. 77-8.
182. Ibid., pp. 137-38.
183. Ibid., pp. 138-39.
184. Ibid., p. 139.

- 185. Ibid., pp. 139-40.
- 186. Ibid., p. 140.
- 187. Ibid. Cf. above, pp. 122-27.
- 188. Ibid.
- 189. Ibid., pp. 140-41.
- 190. Ibid., p. 141.
- 191. Ibid. For accounts of the larger debate concerning language and epistemology, see further BRAKENHIELM, ch. 4; McCLENDON and SMITH, passim; and HACKING. See further on epistemology, below pp. 218-24.
- 192. PHILLIPS (CP), pp. 84-106; BROWN (RR), pp. 103-21, 134-39.
- 193. PHILLIPS (CP), p. 106.
- 194. BROWN (RR), p. 139.
- 195. Ibid., p. 122.
- 196. Ibid., p. 124.

Section Four

- 1. See KEIGHTLEY (WGG), p. 79. "For it to be a religious belief, it would have to have - as a matter of 'grammar' - an absolute character".
- 2. See above, pp. 179-80.
- 3. See above, p. 21. See on this, Glenn "Criteria for Theological Models", especially the argument that models for the doctrine of God are culturally situated. Cf. HORDERN, who lays great emphasis on what he calls "The Personal Language Game" (ch. 8) and "Theological Language and Personal Language" (ch. 9), and is influenced by J. Macmurray's stress that personal knowledge is the paradigm case where man knows the meaning of "know".
- 4. See above, pp. 124-26.
- 5. See above, p. 127.
- 6. Below, pp. 184-94.
- 7. Below, pp. 194-97.
- 8. As indicated above (pp. 94 and 99), the word "negativity" will be introduced at that point rather than continuing to use "evil".
- 9. The debate from counter-factual instances is not always sufficiently careful on this point. To imagine what might be the case within the limits of given structures is permissible. To imagine what different structures there might have been serves no purpose in descriptive understanding of what is. Cf. HICK (EGL:a) p. 343. See also below, p. 268.

10. To the objection that the notion of separation here is not univocal, this theodist could reply that plurality of types of separation reinforces the point made on p. 193 below that negativity has various dimensions, and also that there is a family resemblance within the notion of negative experiences.
11. This general question was raised for me by Hardy, "What Does It Mean To Love?". On the answer given here see also PITTENGER (PG), pp. 71-2.
12. PHILLIPS (DI), passim.
13. Ibid., p. 17.
14. HICK (EGL:a), pp. 383 f. and (DEL).
15. FARRER (LA), pp. 23-31 and ch. IV. Farrer also argues for "accidentality" as inseparable from the character of our universe (p. 76), but the theodist here doesn't need this for his basic case.
16. See on "pain", Kane, "Evil and Privation", pp. 48-51; Hare, "Pain and Evil"; Puccetti, "Is Pain Necessary?"; ELPHINSTONE, ch. 10-12; HICK (EGL:a), ch. XV. (The latter provides a bibliography including a physiological and medical literature). This theodist is not using the idea in LEWIS, p. 81 of pain as "God's megaphone".
17. For this point see HICK (EGL:a), pp. 340-45, "Pain and the Structure of the World".
18. On this, see the discussion in SOELLE, pp. 43-5 of the thesis in KITAMORI that we should "earnestly seek and desire pain".
19. SONTAG (GE) emphasises this same point of necessary negativity, but does so in terms of meontological existentialist categories.
20. For the themes of contemplation and attention see, e.g., WEIL (WG), "Forms of the Implicit Love of God", pp. 94-167. Cf. above, p. 167.
21. See BROWN (RR), p. 139. On interests and intentions, see GORMAN, pp. 18-9.
22. PHILLIPS (CP), p. 43. Cf. Pittenger, "The Meaning of Words in Worship".
23. Putting it this way brings out that theological language of persons is not concerned with essences, but with relations. The grammatical use of the substantive "person" here is systematically misleading (Ryle). This is also the case with the substantive "love", e.g. in "God is love". Cf. above, pp. 111-16.
24. See above, pp. 117-22. Cf. also PHILLIPS (CP), pp. 45-50, and the interesting ideas in King, "Concepts, Anti-concepts and Religious Experience". She develops the notion that it is not what is said (the concept), but how it is said that is essential. For King, religious language "speaks out of the awareness [of God] rather than about it".

25. For the roots of this doctrine, see MACGREGOR, ch. 2. For a critique of impassibility, see same work, and SCHILLING. The standard critical historical surveys are BRASNETT and MOZLEY. For recent explorations, see MOLTSMANN (CG); KITAMORI; LEE. See also McWilliams, "Divine Suffering in Contemporary Theology" for accounts of Moltmann, Cone, Kitamori and MacGregor Surin, "The Impassibility of God and the Problem of Evil" for the Cross as a "suffering theophany"; Woolcombe, "The Pain of God". I am taking W. Temple's suggestion that it is truer to say there is suffering in God than that God suffers (see MOZLEY, p. 163) as obscuring rather than clarifying the issue.
26. See above, pp. 122-29.
27. See SCHILLING. Cf. MOZLEY, pp. 177-83 for six necessary questions: the nature of God as Absolute; His relation to creation; the relationship of time and eternity; the nature of feeling in God; the religious value of passibility; the significance of the Cross.
28. Ibid., pp. 248-56.
29. In DELANEY, pp. 141-51. See SMITH (passim) for extended historical discussion of the use in the Bible and Christianity of "belief" as the verbal sign designating allegiance, loyalty, integrity, love, commitment, trust and entrusting, and the capacity to perceive and respond to transcendent qualities in oneself and one's environment, rather than as a series of dubious or at best problematic propositions.
30. Ibid., p. 143.
31. See SCHILLEBEECKX, section 1, to whose account of the nature of theological "facts" I owe a debt.
32. For my use of the word "worship" see above, p. 139. For the argument in relation to worship see below, pp. 225-29, 241-48.
33. The "grammatical" place of the "affliction" of Christ in the believer's "picture" is discussed below, pp. 248-7.
34. The Brothers Karamazov, ch. "Rebellion". See DOSTOYEVSKY.
35. McCLOSKEY, ch. 2.
36. CAMPBELL, pp. 287-306. On Campbell's theodical views, see Collins, "C.A. Campbell and the Problem of Suffering". Also see D'ARCY (PW), pp. 117-20.
37. ROTH, passim. See also in DAVIS, pp. 7-22, 30-7.
38. HICK (EGL:b), p. 334.
39. See Translators note, WEIL (WG), p. 76. Surin, "The Impassibility of God and the Problem of Evil", p. 103 equates this with "dysteleological suffering", and also equates it with HICK (EGL:a), pp. 371-72 and SOELLE, p. 149. However, Weil's notion is theoretically more creative - see discussion below.

40. WEIL (WG), p. 76. For Weil's influence on theodical thinking see PHILLIPS (CP), pp. 98-106. (Cf. below pp. 227-28, 263 ff). Also ALLEN; and Allen, "Natural Evil", and "A Christian Theology", passim. For a bibliographic article on Weil, see Springsted, "The Works of Simone Weil".
41. Ibid., p. 78.
42. Ibid., p. 79.
43. Ibid., p. 80. N.B. below pp. 217-24, for an account of how loss of belief is to be understood.
44. Ibid., pp. 77-9.
45. However, prolonged or frequent physical suffering is not an "attack of pain", and is an affliction. Ibid., p. 77.
46. Ibid.
47. Ibid., p. 78.
48. Psalm 88 is particularly vivid.
49. Op. cit., p. 130.
50. See above, section 3.
51. See ALLEN. Cf. also HICK (EGL:a), pp. 371-72, but he emphasizes the mystery of meaningless suffering as the ground of ethical response by man. Cf. Fletcher, "Literature and the Problem of Evil", together with the editorial comment in Mark, "The Sense of Evil and the Sense of Order" for the progression in literature, to the ultimate point in Satre's Les séquestrés d'Altona of a world without meaning. See also Mijuskovic, "Camus and the Problem of Evil", and CONNELLAN, pp. 20-44 for discussion of Camus.
52. Ibid., pp. 15-6. For use of the notion "void", see also ROTH, p. 62.
53. Reprinted in FLEW and MACINTYRE. The literature is considerable. See, FERRE (LLG) and HEIMBECK, for lengthy replies. See also the retrospective in Religious Studies, 5, No. 1 (1969) which includes further comment by Flew; Flew, "Theology and Falsification: Silver Jubilee Review".
54. See High, "Belief, Falsification and Wittgenstein", and Churchill, "Flew, Wisdom, and Polanyi: The Falsification Challenge Revisited". Cf. Lewis, "On the Logic of Belief Claims in Religion" that the more basic claims in all systems of thought are unfalsifiable; and similarly MCKINNON.
55. As examples, respectively: Hick ("eschatological verification"); Hare ("bliks"); Phillips ("language-games").
56. Cf. SMITH, p. 12 for an historian's similar comment. On "blunders" see WITTGENSTEIN (LRB), pp. 55 ff. Cf. the comments on this in HUDSON (WRB) p. 183.

57. Some argue that evil and suffering are a pre-condition for the existence of Christianity which is a response to them, e.g. Gruner, "The Elimination of the Argument from Evil", p. 416. Even if this is the case, it still remains for that response to be philosophically described. Bowker, "Suffering as a Problem of Religions", agrees suffering creates the opportunities for religions.
58. There is an extensive debate on this, and my position is here stated. See, e.g., the debate in BROWN (RR) between N. Malcolm, C. Lyas, and B. Mitchell, on the rationality of religious belief, and between P. Winch, M. Durrant, & S. Brown, on meaning and religious language (pp. 143-255). See also DELANEY; TRIGG; McCLENDON and SMITH; and WILSON (ed.). For a bibliography of sixty books and articles on rationality and religious commitment see CAHN and SHATZ, pp. 308-10. For my understanding of "form of life" see above, p. 126.
59. See above, pp. 105-11.
60. See below, pp. 217-24.
61. Cf. PHILLIPS (FPE), p. 86. Cf. fn. 56 above.
62. Ibid., p. 59. Phillips seems not to make a strong distinction between blunder and mistake. I am using them differently to indicate a radical incoherence in a form of life, as against a misapprehension as to the shape of one's form of life. The former is destructive of belief, the latter is not necessarily so.
63. RAMSEY (RL), passim. E.g., logical "mistakes" in incarnational doctrine are not felt as mistakes, let alone "blunders" in the context of living worship.
64. For "worship", see pp. 225-31. The "grammar" of worship concerns the standards of intelligibility implicit in the language and activity of praise. Cf. esp. SMART, passim.
65. See above, pp. 201-03.
66. SHERRY, p. 82.
67. Ibid.,
68. Ibid., p. 83.
69. Ibid.
70. Ibid.
71. Ibid., p. 84.
72. SHERRY, p. 85, cites MEYNELL (SNC), p. 216; MEYNELL (GW), pp. 127 f.
73. Ibid.

74. Ibid., p. 86.
75. See above, pp. 122-29. See also, Olmstead, "Wittgenstein and Christian Truth Claims" for comment on language-games not being based on contextless seeing.
76. Cf. Anscombe, "What Is It to Believe Someone?", in DELANEY, p. 142, on "Abraham believed God ...".
77. Matthew 16:13-8. To the objection that there is reasoning involved in the confession, I would counter that Christ's comment (v 17), denies this. To the objection that Christians do not worship Christ, but God through Christ, I would refer to pp. 259-62 below, and to trinitarian formulation. Also, the use in the gospels of "worship" as respect is not what is in mind here.
78. PHILLIPS and DILMAN (SD), p. 23.
79. PHILLIPS (CP), ch. 5, "Prayer and Dependence". For critique of Phillips' position on prayer and worship, see Henderson, "Theistic Reductionism and the Practice of Worship"; Thomas, "Prayer and Ordinary Language"; Allen, "On Not Understanding Prayer". My arguments seek to accommodate these points. For Phillips' position vis-à-vis modern theology, see Carr, "The God Who Is Involved", p. 328.
80. Cf. above, p. 139.
81. PHILLIPS (CP), p. 83.
82. Ibid., p. 98. "Simone Weil's distinction between a natural and a supernatural conception of God is all important" He cites WEIL (GG), p. 10.
83. ROTH, p. 94.
84. Below, pp. 282-84.
85. See above, p. 37.
86. See below, pp. 248-74.
87. John 14:9. Cf. v 7 "henceforth ye know him and have seen him".
88. Both articles reprinted in FLEW and MACINTYRE. Cf. critique in PHILLIPS (CP), pp. 88-91. The point is that Mitchell's "unconditional trust" is made in God's case without the benefit of the exclusive interview that produced the partisan's trust in the stranger. And in Crombie's case, trust in the "complete picture" for believers on this earth, can only be trust. However reasonably MITCHELL (JRB) sets out the theistic arguments, the notion of "unconditional trust" is an adverse critique on the shape of his argument - though, as argued here, it is a valid phrase - but it needs setting in the religious epistemological direction. The notion in Mitchell, "Faith and Reason A False Antithesis?" (p. 141) that one can have unconditional trust and believe the whole of one's thought may be mistaken is very problematic. For further difficulties in Mitchell's position, see Esposito, "On Getting the Sceptic to Heaven".

89. PHILLIPS (CP), pp. 92-3.
90. PHILLIPS (FPE), pp. 101 f.
91. Ibid., p. 263.
92. See, for example (CP), p. 95, and (FPE), pp. 127-28.
93. See above, pp. 117-22.
94. SOELLE, in bibliography.
95. Ibid., p. 21.
96. Ibid., ch. 1, "A Critique of Christian Masochism".
97. DOSTOYEVSKY, ch. "Rebellion".
98. PHILLIPS (CP), pp. 95-6.
99. Not, of course, on its own - but without prayer there could be no inter-personal relationship with God, and therefore the "picture" (world) of interpersonal theism would not be possible.
100. On faith as "venture", see PHILLIPS (CP), pp. 123-24. See HELM, pp. 99-100, for Tennant's paralleling of religio and science in terms of faith as venture.
101. Ibid., pp. 95-7.
102. Ibid., p. 97.
103. Below, pp. 282-85.
104. WESTERMANN, pp. 25-30. He bases his discussion on A. Wendel Das freie Laiengebet im vorexilischen Israel (Leipzig: Eduard Pfeiffer, 1932), p. 170.
105. The point here is a conceptual one. However, for its religious expression compare 1 Cor. 13:7, "Love bears all things...hopes all things, endures all things." See also Acts 17:28.
106. For readings on omnipotence see the collection in URBAN and WALTON. For an extensive bibliography on "free-will", see O'CONNOR, pp. 125-37. For articles and books advancing and attacking the "Freewill Defence" see CAHN and SHATZ, pp. 302-03.
107. For use of words such as "greatest and most decisive", "total and final" with reference to Incarnation/Crucifixion, see A.E. Harvey's summary of G.W.H. Lampe's, God as Spirit (1977) in HARVEY (ed.), p. 4. For the Cross as "paradigmatic" in Christian belief, see HICK (FK), pp. 232-33. Also *ibid.* on the "one revealing moment". On "unshakeable belief", see Hick's story, told *ibid.*, p. 233 fn. 26.
108. 1 Cor. 1:10-30. Cf. HICK (FK), p. 232 on the basic "paradoxical conviction" in Christian belief regarding the crucifixion.
109. For Luther's paradoxical notion that the love of God was concealed in the wrath of God, and for a modern application, see KITAMORI, esp. ch. 9. For an account of Kitamori, see McWilliams, "Divine Suffering in Contemporary Theology", pp. 43-7. Also see SOELLE, pp. 43-5.

110. SOELLE, pp. 81-86.
111. On this see above, pp. 199-201 and below, p. 259.
112. To the objection (see, e.g. HARVEY (ed.), pp. 4-5 that one should not seek one decisive moment in the Christ-event as peculiarly significant, see KITAMORI, p. 47 and 1 Cor. 2:2.
113. Thus, FARRER (LA) relates to (FI), and HICK (EGL) to (FK).
114. For Hick's thesis see above, pp. 15-8.
115. Hick's position is set out in HICK (FK), Pt. II; HICK (GUF), ch. 2-5.
116. WEIL (WG), p. 82.
117. Ibid., pp.82-3. For comment see Little, "The Symbolism of the Cross".
118. For a recent clarification by Hick of this "pilgrimage", see DAVIS, p. 66. However, the point here is that Hick's emphasis lies in eschatology, whereas the N.T. emphasis lies in Christology. See HICK (EGL:a), p. 297.
119. HICK (EGL:a), pp. 255-56.
120. FARRER (LA), p. 75.
121. Ibid.
122. It might be objected that Hick's thesis does not rely on "physical screening" of man from God. But see Hick's statement, "By means of matter and living flesh God both builds a path and weaves a veil between Himself and the creature made in His image." (EGL:a), p. 296. Can one not for "veil" read "screen"?
123. See A. Lovejoy, The Great Chain of Being (Harvard University Press, 1936). His notion of the principle of plenitude forms part of Hick's analysis of Augustinian theodicy (HICK (EGL:a), pp. 76-88). Farrer's theodicy has many Augustinian features.
124. The use of the word "myth" in theological contexts is so various I use it here cautiously. The sense here is what the man in the street would mean by it. If, however, the sense of "myth" is that there is a depth grammar to the story (myth) of God incarnate, then this is central to my argument. On this, see Sykes, "The Incarnation as the Foundation". For the debate, see GOULDER; and HARVEY (ed.).
125. John 1:1; 14:9.
126. John 20:28. On this text, see MacIntyre, "The Logical Status of Religious Belief", p. 195.
127. Above, pp. 217-22.
128. Cf. PHILLIPS (FPE), p. 131.
129. "Faith" is thus an activity - unfortunately there is no English word for this, but paralleling "to know/the knower/the known", and "to believe/the believer/the believed", one might suggest the feel is caught by

"to faith/the faither/the faithed". In terms of earlier ideas, "to faith" is to say "I-can-go-on, I-will-go-on", it is to "indwell" the language, it is to "put one's signature", it is to "draw the lines" it is to proceed in the religious epistemological "direction". Cf. on this paragraph, and the next, the thesis in SMITH, p. 87, that the Christian movement arose not as a body of persons who believed that Jesus was the Christ, but as an upsurge of a new recognition in human history.

130. WEIL (WG), p. 102.
131. Cf. above pp. 187-88.
132. For the notion that Christian beliefs about God as creator need to be thought of in terms of negation, see Barth's "Gott und das Nichtige" in BARTH, vol. III/3, and the account of the "Existentialist God" in SONTAG (GE). For further comment on kenosis, see below, pp. 280-81. That creation is co-eternal with God's supernatural love, cf. PITTINGER (PG), pp. 69-70 where he cites Aquinas and F.W. Dillistone as seeing eternal creation as compatible with Christian belief.
133. Cf. KEIGHTLEY (GG), p. 284, "The absence of God is His mode of appearing".
134. See above, p. 198.
135. Below, pp. 274-87.
136. The influence of ALLEN is strong here. Cf. above, pp. 207-
137. FARRER (LA), p. 54, and WEIL (GG), pp. 1-4. For discussion of Weil's use of "gravity", see ALLEN, ch.3, esp. pp. 36-
138. Especially PLANTINGA (GOM), (NN), (GFE); and Pike, "Planting on Free Will and Evil".
139. HICK (EGL:a), pp. 343-45; Smart, "Omnipotence, Evil and Supermen".
140. On "death of God", see T.W. Ogletree, The 'Death of God' Controversy (London: S.C.M. Press Ltd., 1966).
141. Cf. GEACH, ch. 1.
142. 1 Cor.1:25.
143. 1 Cor.1:17.
144. 1 Cor.1:23. (Gk. "skandalon").
145. For example, "Amazing grace ..."; "I stand all amazed at the love ...".
146. In a paper read at the Oxford Society for Historical Theology, and privately circulated, "Nature as a Witness to God's Existence and Wisdom", p. 8. Cf. Ricoeur's "wager" in RICOEUR, p. 355 - the wager being to risk standing in a symbol-system and verifying it by allowing it to illuminate one's existence.
147. 2 Cor.5:17 (RSV).
148. Above, p. 82.

149. See W. Temple, Readings in St. John's Gospel (1st & 2nd Series) (London: Macmillan, 1968), pp. 247-48.
150. See FARMER, ch. 3-4.
151. In BROWN (RR), pp. 216-19.
152. See MACKINTOSH, pp. 210-11. For an outstanding example of a purely analytical approach (strictly theoretical) to the Christian notion of God's forgiveness, see Minas, "God and Forgiveness". This article unconsciously illustrates Mackintosh's claim, "forgiveness is a marvel that baffles all logic" (Ibid., p. 210). (Cf. Minas, p. 45). But see the replies to Minas in QUINN, pp. 136-46, and in Lewis, "On Forgiveness".
153. Ibid., p. 214.
154. Moltmann, "The 'Crucified God': A Trinitarian Theology of the Cross". See also MOLTSMANN (CG): Sears, "Trinitarian Love", adds Hans Urs von Balthasar and H. Mühle to those who have linked the Trinity and the death of Christ (pp. 657-60). In a footnote on p. 659 he sees the Trinity as part of his "interpersonal ontology". Cf. Moltmann, "The Trinitarian History of God".
155. MOBERLY, p. 3. Cf. Lochman, "The Trinity and Human Life" for the personal, social and compassionate character of the Trinity.
156. See MACGREGOR. For comment on MacGregor see McWilliams, "Divine Suffering in Contemporary Theology", pp. 47-50. See also Macquarrie, "Kenoticism Reconsidered" for a review of debate, and a proposal that kenoticism refers to a continuous act of self-sacrifice and that the Incarnation is only one moment in that history. N.B. his points (p. 124) that "creation too is a kenosis" and that God limits himself by sharing the gift of existence with his creatures.
157. Moltmann, "The 'Crucified God'", p. 295.
158. MOBERLY, p. 3.
159. In DAVIS, p. 33.
160. See ROTH. Roth depends heavily on E. Wiesel.
161. Ibid., p. 83. On "protest" cf. RICOEUR, p. 319, "It is to God that Job appeals against God" - though Ricoeur has in mind penetrating "beyond any ethical vision to a new dimension of faith, the dimension of unverifiable faith".
162. Ibid.
163. Ibid., p. 84.
164. See, Brueggemann "The Formfulness of Grief".
165. Ibid., p. 263. Cf. WESTERMANN, pp. 264-65, who suggests the influence of Stoicism is to be seen here.
166. Brueggemann here footnotes BERGER; BERGER and LUCKMANN; and T. Luckmann, The Invisible Religion (New York: Macmillan, 1967).

167. Ibid., pp.264-65. Cf. with this above, pp. 120-22.
168. He is here developing an idea of Gerstenberger's - see his p. 266, fn. 16. For Gerstenberger's full ideas see GERSTENBERGER and SCHRAGE, esp. pp. 116-29. SOELLE also comments on lament (see p.285 below). Brueggemann also cites C. Westermann, The Praise of God in the Psalms (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1965), and "The Role of the Lament in the Theology of the Old Testament", Interpretation, 28 (1974), 20-38 as seeing lament as a bold form of protest.
169. Op. cit., fn. 168, p. 74 (It is ibid. in WESTERMANN). My attention was drawn to this by Brueggemann, op. cit., p. 265, fn. 13.
170. On doxology, see esp. BERKOUWER, pp. 266-75 where he discusses "the profoundest point in all reflection on the problem of theodicy: is it possible to stand in this evil world and sing a doxology ..." (p. 266). Cf. above, pp. 195, and 247-48.
171. SOELLE, pp. 70-86.
172. Ibid., p. 73.
173. See W. Kay, Moral Development (London: Allen & Unwin, 1970 rev. ed., passim. Kay thinks of "altruism" as equality with others. Altruism is variously defined in dictionaries as either "regard for others" or "self-sacrifice in the interest of others". I am using it in the latter sense.
174. E.g., 1 Cor.4:9-13. MITCHELL (MRS), p. 44 cites H. Hart, The Concept of Law (Clarendon Press (1961)), p. 187 as listing "limited altruism" as part of minimum natural law - but by altruism Hart means "mutual forbearance", which hardly meets the test here. Cf. BALLARD, pp. 73-5 for altruism as the heart of the gospel, but being open to the charge that it is beautiful but useless.
175. Cf. PHILLIPS (FPE), pp. 38-57, esp. the closing paragraph.
176. The two most reliable manuscripts end at v. 8.

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Articles

Key to Abbreviations

APQ	American Philosophical Quarterly
CJP	Canadian Journal of Philosophy
ET	Expository Times
HJ	The Heythrop Journal
IJPR	International Journal for Philosophy of Religion
IPQ	International Philosophical Quarterly
JTS	Journal of Theological Studies
JVI	The Journal of Value Inquiry
PAS	Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society
PQ	The Philosophical Quarterly
PR	The Philosophical Review
RS	Religious Studies
SJT	Scottish Journal of Theology
TS	Theological Studies
TT	Theology Today

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