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Notre Dame, 1998, p. 152). The traditional conceptions of theism, based as they are on the book of Genesis, contain within them the seeds of a universal love, one which extends one's understanding of what sort of person is to be the object of my benevolence to all of humankind based upon each person's possession of the *imago dei*, and not just upon the contingent features of virtues I require for flourishing. For Christians, the parable of the Good Samaritan underscores that it is the enemy I encounter along the way, and not just the stranger happening into my community, that is the object of virtuous neighborliness. Thus, while one could make the case for placing normative priority upon family and friends in most instances, the reach of misericordia extends to the entire community of divine image-bearers, and can necessitate departure from if not harm to that local community, as is the case with a Dietrich Bonhoeffer, a Mother Teresa, or a William Carey.

Marilyn McCord Adams, *Horrendous Evils and the Goodness of God*. Cornell University Press, Ithaca and London, 1999. Pp.xi + 220. No price given.

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If there is a problem of evil, how should we state it? And how should we deal with it? A common line of thinking holds that the problem is either a logical or an evidentialist one, that it can be summarized by questions like "Can we consistently believe both in the reality of God and in the reality of evil?" or " Does evil render God's existence improbable or unlikely?" But how should we engage with the problem of evil considered in these terms? One way would be to start with a definition of the word "God" and with one or more premises concerning what the definition entails when it comes to what might or might not be expected in a world made by God. One might then seek to show either that evil is impossible or unlikely in such a world (our world), or that it is possible or even positively explicable.

Yet what should we take "God" to mean? And what premises might we subsequently invoke so as to challenge or defend belief in God's existence? For many contemporary philosophers "God" means "an all-powerful, all-knowing, morally impeccable person who will always prevent evil if morally obliged to do so and if able to do so". Much recent discussion of the problem of evil has therefore been concerned with suggesting that God either *lacks* or *has* morally sufficient reason for permitting the evil that occurs. Evil, so it is frequently said, is of two kinds: moral (the morally bad choices of created agents, together with their consequences) and natural (naturally occurring states or processes of an undesirable kind). To some philosophers it seems that both moral and natural evil could have no place in a world governed by an all-powerful, all-knowing morally impeccable person (the conclusion being that God *cannot* or *probably does not* exist). To others it seems either that evil is not demonstrably incompatible with the existence of such a person, or that such a person has good moral reason for permitting it (the conclusion being either that evil and God are compossi-

ble or that one can offer a persuasive theodicy which indicates why there is there is the evil that there is). And it is with an eye on such approaches (represented in recent literature by authors such as J.L. Mackie, Alvin Plantinga, William Rowe and Richard Swinburne) that Marilyn Adams writes in this book. But her aim is not to show that one or other of them is right. Rather, she seeks to recommend a change of direction to philosophers concerned with the problem of evil. For her view is that "the structure of any fair-minded debate about the problem of evil will be much more complicated" than recent literature has made it seem (p.13). One should not, she argues, discuss the problem only with respect to whether and how evil in general can or cannot be shown to be consistent or inconsistent with belief in the existence of God. Instead, she holds, one should focus on particular evils ("horrendous" ones). And, so she adds, parties to discussions on the problem of evil should take note of living religious traditions and of the values embraced both by those who subscribe to them and by others whose values are significantly relevant when it comes to reflecting on God and evil.

What does Adams mean by "horrendous evils"? She takes the phrase to signify "evils the participation in which (that is, the doing or suffering of which) constitutes prima facie reason to doubt whether the participant's life could (given their inclusion in it) be a great good to him/her on the whole" (p.26). What would be examples? According to Adams, they would include "the rape of a woman and axing off of her arms, psychophysical torture whose ultimate goal is the disintegration of personalities, betrayal of one's deepest loyalties, child abuse of the sort described by Ivan Karamazov, child pornography, parental incest, slow death by starvation, the explosion of nuclear bombs over populated areas" (*ibid.*) What makes such evils so pernicious, says Adams, "is their life-ruining potential, their power prima facie to degrade the individual by devouring the possibility of positive personal meaning in one swift gulp ... horrors afflict persons insofar as they are actual or potential meaning-makers" (pp.27 f.). But why does Adams focus so specifically on them? She does so because they cannot, in her view, be reconciled with the goodness of God by an argument intended to show that evil *in general* is not demonstrably impossible or unlikely in a world made by God, or by an argument designed to show that God has reason for permitting evil *in general*. According to Adams, "where entrenched evils are figured into the bargain, it is far from obvious that a perfectly good God would accept them as the price of a very good world with as favorable a balance of moral good over evil as God could weakly actualize" (p.30). Why? Because God's goodness must mean that he values "the individual qua person" (p.31). More precisely, it must mean that horrendous evils should be *defeated* in that those afflicted by them end up having lives which are a great good to them "on the whole by balancing off serious evils" (p.31). "For God to be *good to* a created person", says Adams, "God must guarantee him/her a life that is a great good *to him/her* on the whole and one in which any participation in horrors is defeated within the context of his/her own life ... For a person's life to be a great good to him/her on the whole, it is not enough that his/her life be objectively full of positive meaning or that these meanings be appreciated by

others; s/he must recognize and appropriate meanings sufficient to render it worth living" (p.156)

In developing this proposal Adams's strategy is "to consider a variety of contrasting positions and to probe the resources of each for showing how an omnipotent, omniscient and perfectly good God could defeat horrors within the context of the participants' lives" (p.179). But what positions and resources does Adams have in mind? An important claim for her is that God is personal. "Divine personhood", she says, "offers systematic advantages where the problem of horrendous evils is concerned. For horror-defeating power is meaning-restoring power, and meaning-making is personal activity par excellence!" (p.81). Yet how shall we understand divine personhood? With a view to this question Adams draws attention to theologies which leave room for divine understanding and choice while also sharply distinguishing between God and creatures. And she defends the claim that God is the source of value rather than a figure subject to moral duties and obligations. She also insists that creatures depend on God for their being and for the exercise of their causal powers. God's action, she argues, is "agency enabling" (p.84). She admits that "when it comes to defeating horrors, Divine passibility seems prima facie to afford certain systematic advantages" (p.83 and Chapter 8). But she is also unhappy with views of God's power which deny that it includes "power to produce *supra*natural effects — those that lie outside, go beyond any that created natural powers could produce" (p.84). For Adams, therefore, God's personhood entails that God can act so as to give value to human lives both by being a standard by which lives are to be judged as valuable and by being able creatively to bring about lives which can be found valuable.

In expounding and defending this conclusion, Adams adopts a twofold strategy. First she draws attention to a range of things which some have thought to be good or valuable (her intention being to indicate how, while going beyond sources and notions employed by some familiar contemporary essays on the problem of evil, one might find one's life to be good overall). Second, she indicates how we might think of God as acting so as to leave participants in horrendous evils convinced that their lives are full of positive significance. In doing all this (and as well as doing more than this review can note) Adams offers: (1) an exploration of the notions of purity and defilement (designed to consider ways in which one might take people and God to be related); (2) an exploration of the notions of honor and shame (with special emphasis on biblical texts and on the notion of God as honoring us); (3) a defense of the claim that aesthetic values are important when it comes to a sound philosophical discussion of the problem of evil since "paradigm value is one and [since] Divine *Goodness to* created persons is at least in part a function of endowing their lives with valuable aesthetic features" (p.149); (4) an emphasis on the conclusion that horrendous evils can only be finally "trumped" by a redeeming activity of God which guarantees to all people a state of permanent happiness with God (so what is sometimes called "the doctrine of universal salvation" is very much a part of Adams's answer to the challenge of horrendous evils, one which she offers while paying special respect to the fourteenth century English writer Julian of Norwich); (5) a firm recommendation of the impor-

tance of what Adams takes to be the Christian doctrines of the Trinity and the Incarnation (Adams maintains that "it is *God's* becoming a human being, experiencing the human condition from the inside, from the viewpoint of a finite human consciousness, that integrates the experience into an incommensurately valuable relationship" [p.168]).

In concluding her discussion, Adams tells us that the "direction" of her attempted solutions to the problem of horrendous evils "lies in pointing to the incommensurate Good that God is and to ways that God could be and act to ensure that participants in horrors have lives full of positive meaning" (p.189). But why should we concede the premise on which her whole discussion is based? Why should we suppose that "horrendous evils" are special in the way that she suggests? As far as I can see, she mostly seems just to assume that the goodness of God is seriously compromised if people involved in horrendous evils cannot end up effectively being grateful for them. Yet one might equally argue that God's goodness is no less compromised by the fact that there is any evil at all. And one might reasonably suggest that, when it comes to the problem of evil, little of substance is achieved by addressing the topic of horrendous evils rather than the topic of evil in general. On the other hand, however, Adams's attempts to show how horrendous evils might be defeated are surely worthwhile whether or not one thinks that they are needed in order to show that evil does not render God's existence either impossible or unlikely. For, regardless of the problem of evil, the horrors which vex Adams have special features (as she indicates) which are very much worth considering when it comes to how we might think of ourselves in relation to God. And it is well worth asking how they might look when viewed against the range of perspectives (evaluative and Biblical) that Adams highlights.

Yet what of the account which Adams finally offers to indicate how horrendous evils might be defeated? One of its strengths lies in its stress on the difference between God and creatures. Take, for example, its claim that we do well not to think of God as a moral agent whose life and actions are to be judged in the way in which we judge the lives and actions of people. Classical authors such as Augustine and Aquinas would have found the thought to be obviously true. But it is rarely encountered in contemporary philosophy of religion, especially in discussions of the problem of evil, which often basically boil down to arguments concerning whether or not God is well-behaved. One might argue, as many do, that God's goodness has to be moral (that God has to be well behaved) since there is *no other way* for God to be *good*. But, as others have argued, that is a response which admits of reply on philosophical and biblical grounds, and in the light of ways in which God has been spoken about by Christians since the time of the New Testament. And Adams's rebuttal of it should be taken seriously. The same might be said of her treatment of God and human agency (in which she argues that God, without violating our human nature, can make us the people we end up becoming). Adams holds back from boldly embracing Aquinas's provocative doctrine that all human free actions are caused by God (cf. *In peri herm*, book I, lectio 14). But what she says comes very close to Aquinas's view of how God makes us to be what and who we are. And she develops her discussion in a fruitful and intelligent way.

But then, alas, there is Hell. Adams firmly relies on the hope that God can somehow bring it about that everyone shall enjoy bliss with him. She is an unrepentant believer in the salvation of all human beings and the unreality of Hell. And one might well wish to take one's hat off to her on that score. For the scenario she envisages is agreeable. How nice to think that all of us shall end with the joy of the beatific vision. But Adams gives us no serious reason to think that all of us shall do that. And she goes against New Testament and other Christian writings in supposing that everyone shall attain a state of contentment which leaves them reconciled to what has happened to them in this life and to what they have done in it. Adams, of course, knows this very well, so I am here merely drawing attention to a way of criticizing her book of which she is certainly aware. But the criticism is pertinent. And it is pertinent from the viewpoint of philosophy of religion when it comes to the problem of evil. Could it be that justice requires that some people are simply damned? There are familiar arguments for concluding that it does. If they are cogent, however, horrendous evils cannot be defeated as Adams would like to think that they might be.

Providence and the Problem of Evil, by **Richard Swinburne**. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998. Pp. xiv, 263. $65.00 (cloth), $19.95 (paper).

PHILIP L. QUINN, University of Notre Dame

This book is the final volume in Richard Swinburne's tetralogy on philosophical topics in Christian doctrine. It was preceded by *Responsibility and Atonement* (1989), *Revelation* (1991) and *The Christian God* (1994). Before he produced the tetralogy, Swinburne had published a trilogy on philosophical theology whose members are *The Coherence of Theism* (1977), *The Existence of God* (1979) and *Faith and Reason* (1981). Judged in terms of their combination of scope and quality, these seven volumes add up, in my opinion, to the most impressive body of work produced in analytic philosophy of religion during the twentieth century.

The book has four parts. In the first, which consists of two chapters, Swinburne explains why he thinks Christians need a theodicy in order to respond adequately to the problem of evil and then briefly surveys the resources Christian tradition provides to the theodicist. As he understands it, a theodicy is "not an account of God's actual reasons for allowing a bad state to occur, but an account of his possible reasons (i.e. reasons which God has for allowing the bad state to occur, whether or not those are the ones which motivate him)" (p. 15). A theodicy thus understood is, as he observes in a footnote, akin to what other philosophers, for example, Alvin Plantinga, describe as a defense. Swinburne holds that God may allow a bad state, E, to occur just in case (a) God has the right to allow E to occur; (b) allowing E (or a state as bad or worse) to occur is the only morally permissible way in which God can bring about a logically necessary condition of a good, G; (c) God does everything else logically possible to bring about G; and (d) the expected value of allowing E, given (c), is positive. He