

PART ELEVEN:

THE PROBLEM OF EVIL

1. *The Problem of Evil*. Generically, evil is of two kinds: *moral* evil (sin), and *physical* or *natural* evil (suffering). The over-all problem is well stated by Brightman as follows: "There is no dialectic of evil corresponding to the dialectic of good, for good is inherently rational and evil inherently nonrational. Good is a principle of totality, of coherence, of meaning. Evil is a principle of fragmentariness, of incoherence, of mockery. Hence there is no immanent logic in evil; evil is the Satan that laughs at logic. Yet there is logic in thought about evil, and many more or less logical solutions of evil have been proposed."¹ (Of course, for the unbelieving pessimist, to whom the totality of being is the product of sheer chance, and life meaningless, the problem of evil does not exist. Nor does it exist for the crass materialist who rejects *morality* in toto and substitutes *expediency* for it.) However, it should be noted here, at the outset, that in any study of the problem of evil, the problem of good cannot be avoided: in fact the problem is a compound one—the problem of good and evil. We list here some of the more significant proposals which human "philosophy" (speculation) has put forward in the course of time, as solutions of the problem.

(1) *The proposal that suffering is a Divine infliction of punishment on a person directly for a specific sin or course of sin indulged by him.* "He must not have been living right." "Why did God take our baby from us?" (a) The simple truth is that God does not directly "take" anyone: the God of the Bible is not a murderer. It is the Devil who is the murderer: the Devil murdered the whole human race when he seduced the Man and the Woman into sin (Gen. 3:17-19, John 8:44, Heb. 2:14-15). To be sure, in an over-all sense, death is in the world because sin is in the world (Rom. 3:23, 5:12; 1 Cor. 15:20-26; Jas. 1:13-15). But this does not mean that suffering is a

GENESIS

calamity directly inflicted on a person as punishment for his own personal sins. (b) This crude theory is flatly contradicted by the discourses which go to make up the Old Testament book of Job. Job's "comforters," it will be recalled, tried in vain to convince him that his calamities were Divine inflictions for some great sin he had committed. Job steadfastly refused to give any credence to their platitudes. The conclusion of the whole matter was the pronouncement of God Himself that the mystery of good and evil, in its deepest significance, is beyond human understanding (chs. 38-41, 42:1-6). (c) This "old wives' fable" (1 Tim. 4:7) is just as flatly repudiated by Jesus Himself and by the tenor of New Testament teaching as a whole (Matt. 5:45, 13:24-30; Luke 13:1-5; John 9:1-12, 30-34). (d) This proposed solution accounts only for suffering, and not for the greater evil, sin (Jas. 1:12-18; 1 John 3:4; Rom. 8:18-23; Ezek. 18:19-20). (e) The notion is not in accord with human experience of observed events in nature. St. Louis was hit by a devastating tornado in 1927. From many St. Louis pulpits the following Lord's Day congregations had to listen to pious fulminations to the effect that God had sent the tornado on the city as a punishment for its wickedness. But was St. Louis any more wicked than New York, or Chicago, or Los Angeles, or any other big city? Why, then, should St. Louis have been singled out for such a catastrophic punishment? One is reminded of the well-known couplet:

"If it's true God spanked the town for being over-frisky,
Why did He burn the churches down and save Hotaling's whiskey?"

(f) A final objection to this theory is that it is an insult to God, in its implicit assumption that the wholesale destruction of innocent children which always accompanies such catastrophes is to be a part of the Divine judgment. (g) Ten young men set out across No Man's Land in

THE PROBLEM OF EVIL

World War I. Only two returned: it is likely that the mother of each said, "I thank God for saving my boy." But what did the mothers of the other eight say? (h) There is no Scripture evidence to the effect that Christians will be shielded from physical evils just because they are Christians. Indeed, the evidence is all to the contrary. "In this world ye have tribulation," said Jesus (John 16:33; Matt. 5:45, 13:24-30; Rom. 8:35-39). (i) But, someone may be asking: Why does God allow the wicked to prosper and the righteous to suffer? One of the older Catechisms gives the best answer, perhaps, to this difficult question, as follows: "For two reasons: because the righteous can be confirmed in true holiness only by trials and sufferings; because God will not allow even the little good which the wicked may do, to go unrewarded; and therefore, as He cannot reward it in the next world, He takes this means of allowing it to be rewarded in this world."²

(2) *The proposal that all evil is illusory.* The Absolutists who define the Absolute as the All-embracing—Plotinus, Spinoza, Hegel, *et al*—must either concede that God embraces evil as well as good, or deny that evil actually exists. Invariably they drift into the latter position. But is it true? Certainly it is belied by press reports from over all the world, with their mass of sordid news about wars and rumors of wars, riots, sex orgies, murders, horrible cruelties, and crimes of every kind. Truly, violence abounds over all the earth today. Moreover, an illusion cannot be an illusion of nothing; hence, those who adopt this hypothesis must explain how the illusion originated. We are prone to forget that a figure must be a figure of *something*, a symbol a symbol of *something*, an appearance an appearance of *something*, a proposition a proposition of *something*, etc. It is just as difficult to account for an "illusion of mortal mind" as it is to account for sin and suffering. An even more serious objection to this theory is that, as Trueblood puts it, "it would cut the nerve of moral effort

GENESIS

if it were taken seriously." He adds: "If all evil, whether moral, natural, or intellectual, is truly illusory, we are foolish indeed to *fight* it; it would be far preferable to *forget* it."³ Dr. L. P. Jacks asks the question, "How shall we think of evil?" and answers it by saying, "We shall think ill of it." But how can we think ill of it if it does not exist? "For my own part," he goes on to say, "I would rather live in a world which contained real evils which all men recognize than in another where all men were such imbeciles as to believe in the existence of evil which has no existence at all."⁴ Trueblood rightly declares that "it is hard to think of God in moral terms if there is no genuine evil to fight." Whittaker Chambers, in the final chapter of his great book, *Witness*, in which he tells what he wants for his son as the latter becomes a man, makes this final impressive statement: "I want him to understand that evil is not something that can be condescended to, waived aside or smiled away, for it is not merely an uninvited guest, but lies coiled *in foro interno* at home with good within ourselves. Evil can only be fought."⁵ Plato wrote of evil as "the wild beast" that is in the soul. The notion that evil is illusory cuts the nerve, not only of individual moral effort, but of social progress as well: it is difficult, if not impossible, to generate zeal with respect to that which does not really exist.

(3) *The proposal that evil is incomplete good.* Advocates of this notion hold that the true is the *whole*, which alone is truly the good and the true and the beautiful. For example, "many patches of color within a painting are ugly, but the entire painting is beautiful," or, "ditch-digging might seem worthless until its contribution to civilization is perceived." Our weakness as human beings is that of finitude; as Spinoza would have it, in this world we are compelled to look at things *sub specie temporis*; if only we could view the whole *sub specie aeternitatis*, we

THE PROBLEM OF EVIL

could see that this whole is a plenum in which everything is rigidly necessitated; hence, that what we call "evil" is in reality only incomplete or unrealized good. But—how can we reasonably derive the goodness of the whole (the complete) from our awareness of the incompleteness of things? In fact, is it not just as correct to say that in some cases good is incomplete evil, as to say, in others, that evil is incomplete good? The mystery of evil is, in some way, inscrutable to us, tied up with the mystery of wholeness (holiness) or perfection: this we do not deny. But proposed palliative pronouncements do not give any proportionate explanation of the *mass of evil* in the world and the *gross viciousness* which attends it. Sin and suffering are not to be explained away with fastidious folderol, no matter how apparently sophisticated it may be. This view tends in the main toward Pollyana-ism: to become so saturated with mere mental mush as to be irreconcilable with the observed facts of the world around us. (Cf. Gen. 3:14-19, where we are told explicitly that nature is not perfect, but is, for the time being at least, under the curse of sin: cf. Rom. 8:18-25.) The Bible is the most realistic book ever given to the world.

(4) *The proposal that evil is needed as a contrast to the good.* From the beginning, the human mind has been impressed with, and intrigued by, the play of opposites discovered by experience. The ancient Pythagoreans constructed a Table of Opposites, and Socrates is made to argue for immortality on the ground that, as opposites tend to pass into each other, so what we call death is likely to be but a passing over into new life. (See the *Phaedo* of Plato.) A monotonous world—a world without all these contrasts—(it is said) would be too boring to be endured. Good is in constant danger of being lost in its conflict with evil; this fact alone teaches us to appreciate its value. As Henry van Dyke has put it, in quite simple terms:

GENESIS

"If all the skies were sunshine,
Our faces would be fain
To feel once more upon them
The cooling spash of rain.

"If all the world were music,
Our hearts would often long
For one sweet strain of silence
To break the endless song.

"If life were always merry,
Our souls would seek relief
And rest from weary laughter
In the quiet arms of grief."

This theory of contrast, it would seem, is not wholly false: the contrasts of experience surely do often stimulate the good. Still and all, this theory, like those stated above, fails to account for the *great body of evil* in the world and for the *gross inhumanities* associated with it.

(5) *The proposal that suffering has a necessary disciplinary function.* This view is supported both by experience and by Scripture. Suffering disciplines us, strips us of false pride, teaches us that we are but pilgrims on this earth, weary pilgrims who are sadly in need of a Refuge and Strength. Suffering burns up the superficial ambitions and pride of life, and turns us out as pure gold tested by fire. Without suffering we should soon be swallowed up by our own conceits; without suffering we could never understand God's love or be prepared for Heaven. If, as Scripture states, it was necessary for the Author of our salvation to be made perfect through suffering (Heb. 2:10), how can His saints hope to be perfected short of the same discipline? True it is that to the already rebellious sinner, suffering may become a goad to increased rebelliousness (which usually takes the form of an orgy of self-pity); on the other hand, the true believer uses suffering as a means of strengthening his moral fiber

THE PROBLEM OF EVIL

and deepening his faith in God. Adversity does not create good or evil in the heart, but is a potent force in bringing into the open the good and evil attitudes that are already there. It is also true, however, that suffering has brought many a hard-hearted worldly sinner to his knees in repentance. The principle of vicarious suffering and sacrifice (the innocent for the guilty) is the fundamental principle, not only of man's redemption, but also of his moral, social and spiritual progress in this present world. Freedom will work only if we make it work; democracy will work only if we make it work; and all too frequently the preservation of democracy and freedom will demand the shedding of innocent blood. The principle that without the shedding of blood there is no remission (Heb. 9:22)—and no moral and spiritual progress—runs throughout every aspect of man's life on earth. As Elizabeth Barrett Browning has stated this eternal truth so clearly:

“‘There is no God,’ the foolish saith,
But none, ‘There is no sorrow,’
And nature oft the cry of faith
In bitter need will borrow.

Eyes which the preacher could not school
By wayside graves are raised,
And lips cry, ‘God, be merciful,’
That ne’er said, ‘God be praised.’”

(For the disciplinary function of suffering, cf. Job 5:6-7, 17-20; Psa. 119:67, 71; Prov. 3:11-12; Rom. 8:18, 8:35-39; 2 Cor. 4:7-18, 12:9-10; Heb. 12:5-13; Jas. 1:12; 1 Pet. 4:12-14; Rev. 3:19.)

So much for human speculative attempts to fathom the profound mystery of sin and suffering. It is quite evident that these various proposals fall far short of giving any adequate clues to this mystery; hence, we are compelled to turn elsewhere in our quest for the solution of it. To what source, then, shall we turn? Obviously, to

GENESIS

revelation, to the Bible. God alone can give us the answer we seek—an answer that must be accepted, to some extent, by faith. All human thinking is evidence of the fact that the heart of the problem lies beyond the scope of sheer human intellection; that, as with most ultimates, reason must be supplemented by faith. After all, knowledge is *all that we believe* on the basis of sound evidence and logical thinking, *plus* trustworthy Divine revelation (Rom. 10:17; 1 Cor. 2:9-15; Eph. 1:6-12, 3:1-12). Then what does the Bible teach us?

The Bible teaches clearly that sin originated in the free choice of a personal being to challenge the sovereignty of God. (After all is not *any* sin committed by *any* person just such a challenge?) *And certainly this teaching is confirmed uniformly by our human experience. Sin must have originated in the free choice of some personal being to assert his own will above the will of God.* Human experience is bound to testify that impersonal (subhuman) entities are incapable of free choice; hence that they are neither normal nor immoral *per se*, but *amoral*. Only persons are moral beings. Whoever the first sinner was, therefore, he was the first anarchist, and anarchy is the first earmark of godlessness. The Bible teaches, moreover, that this present life is but the battle-ground on which the forces of good and the forces of evil are engaged in mortal combat for possession of the souls of men (Eph. 2:1-3, 3:10-12, 6:11-12; 2 Cor. 4:4; I Pet. 5:8-9). This, too, is unquestionably in accord with human experience. Furthermore, Scripture teaches that physical evil is, in a general sense, the penalty that follows upon the indulgence of moral evil (Gen. 3:16-19; Rom. 5:12-14, 8:18-23). (For the first statement of the law of heredity in literature, see Exo. 20:5-6. This passage has reference to the *consequences* of sin. In Ezek. 18:19-20, the reference is to the *guilt* of sin.) Suffering and death serve to put man in proper perspective to himself; they are proofs that

THE PROBLEM OF EVIL

he is a creature utterly dependent on God's providence for his very-continuance in existence.

Who, then, was this personal being who committed the first violation of God's law. Is man alone to be held responsible for the introduction of moral and physical evil into our world? I cannot convince myself that such is the case—that man can be made to bear the whole burden of responsibility for sin and suffering. In the name of eternal Justice—that Justice which is said to be the foundation of God's throne (Psa. 89:14)—something further, something or someone above and beyond man must be involved in this mystery with its many complex ramifications. Principal William Robinson of Overdale College, quotes Canon Wheeler Robinson on this problem as follows: "For anything we know to the contrary, there may be other spiritual influences from beyond the human sphere, such influences as were recognized crudely enough in the ancient belief in demons and in Satan. We cannot rule out the possibility of such extra-human influences." Principal Robinson himself adds: "All I am concerned to point out at the moment is that the question of believing in the actuality of the Devil is not a question of being 'advanced' or 'antiquated' in one's views. It is a much deeper question than this. It is not a question of Biblical literalism, but of seeing what the Bible is 'driving at.' It is a question of being able to account for the evil in the world—both physical and moral evil—while at the same time preserving belief in the goodness, integrity, and all-sufficiency of God, Most, if not all, moral evils can be accounted for on the assumption that man has free will and that his will is in rebellion against the will of God. Much physical evil can be accounted for as a by-product of the life process, but not all. Writers like Dr. Tennant think of physical evil as 'necessarily incidental.' But if it is both *necessary* and incidental, how is it possible to relieve God from responsibility for it? Either we must assume a 'fall' of some kind

GENESIS

in a sphere beyond the human, or God must be the author of evil. Strictly monotheistic religions have no other course open to them than to assume either (1) that evil is in the will of God, or (2) that there has been a primal rebellion of some *created* will or wills against the will of God. Is there any third alternative?" This writer goes on to say that there have not been wanting teachers from Origen (at the beginning of the third century) down to our own day "who have realized that something further is necessary, even in the matter of emphasis, if we are to account for physical as well as moral evil. The sin of man cannot be made to bear the whole burden. They have claimed that if we allow for the existence of discarnate spirits and for the fact of a collateral or of a primary 'fall' in such a realm, this explains better than any other existing theory the wide diffusion of evil in a universe which, as Christians, we believe to have been created by an all-powerful, all-wise, and all-loving God. Admitting that vagueness and indefiniteness of outline must necessarily be accepted, and that there are many gaps in our knowledge which condition this vagueness, such a view certainly does help to explain evil present at subhuman levels as well as throw light on the practical question of temptation in man, and on certain New Testament passages which insist that the redemption of God extends to the whole cosmos and is not concerned merely with man (see Acts 3:21, Rom. 8:21, 2 Pet. 3:13)."⁶

That evil did have its first beginning in the fall of Lucifer, an angel of superior attainments, is the teaching of the Bible. (Cf. John 8:44, 1 Tim. 3:6, Luke 10:17-18, 2 Pet. 2:4, Jude 6, Matt. 25:41, 1 Cor. 6:3, Rev. 20:10.)

Nor does this doctrine necessarily impugn either God's omnipotence or His goodness. For what does Omnipotence mean? It means that God has the power to do the intrinsically possible, but not the intrinsically impossible (*e.g.*, it is impossible for God to lie, and yet be our God); the

THE PROBLEM OF EVIL

intrinsically impossible would be that which is not consistent with His character, intelligence or will. God is self-limited only; never can He be limited by means and ends determined by any source external to Himself. His goodness is clearly seen in the Supreme Sacrifice of Love which He made for the redemption of His Creation (John 3:16-17; Rom. 3:23-24, 8:32; Eph. 2:4-10; Heb. 2:9-18, 12:1-2).

Note the following pertinent statements: "That evil exists is true, but is it necessarily evil that it does exist?" "A world free of evil would have to be a world which contained nothing capable of evil." "The theistic solution of the problem of evil, as against those who see the very possibility of evil as something itself evil, can be summed up in this: *Not even God can love a puppet*. It goes without saying that no puppet, however complicated may be the motions through which it is put, can love."

The "conclusion of the whole matter" is well stated by W. Robertson-Smith as follows: "To reconcile the forgiving goodness of God with His absolute justice, is one of the highest problems of spiritual religion, which in Christianity is solved by the doctrine of the Atonement."⁸ To which, in all truth, it should be added that it is resolved nowhere else, in no other system, in no other cult, in no other "religion," than in the Christian religion—in the fact of the vicarious Sacrifice of the Lamb of God for the sin of the world (John 1:29, 1 Cor. 15:3): the Act in which God did for man what man could not do for himself, to overcome the ravages of sin and suffering (Rom. 3:21-26, 2 Cor. 5:17-21), and to vindicate His own designs and sustain the majesty of His law (Rom. 2:5).

Although there is mystery here still, nevertheless we can fathom it to an appreciable extent: undoubtedly the residue of the mystery will be fully revealed when we shall see God face to face and know fully even as also we shall be fully known (1 John 3:1-2, 1 Cor. 13:12). Genuine faith,

GENESIS

as in Job's case, is willing to await the revelation of the righteous judgment of God (Rom. 2:5-6).

2. *The Doctrine of Angels.* Strong: "As ministers of divine providence, there is a class of finite beings, greater in intelligence and power than man in his present state, some of whom positively serve God's purpose by holiness and voluntary execution of his will, some negatively by giving examples to the universe of defeated and punished rebellion, and by illustrating God's distinguishing grace in man's salvation."⁹⁹ Biblical teaching regarding angels, their origin, nature, attributes, and works, may be summarized as follows: (1) *They are created beings* (Col. 1:16, Psa. 148:1-6). (2) *They are personal beings, i.e., possessing intelligence, feeling, and will* (2 Sam. 14:20, Luke 2:8-15, 2 Tim. 2:26, 1 Pet. 5:8, Rev. 7:11-12, 12:12). Certainly they are not just "good and evil thoughts." (3) *They are a special order (kind) of celestial (ethereal) beings, incorporeal in any physical sense of the term, yet not entirely bodiless:* that is, they share the ethereal luminous substance of all creatures of the heavenly world. Celestial beings cannot in the very nature of the case have the characteristics of our physical organization. It is for this reason we must lay aside our earthly bodies, and our blood which is the seat of physical or animal life, and put on spiritual (ethereal) bodies adapted to our environment in the next world, before we can be fully conformed to the image of God's Son (Rom. 8:29; Lev. 17:11; 1 Cor. 15:44, 49, 50; 2 Cor. 5:1-8). (The reference in these last two Scriptures is to the saints, not to the unconverted.) Hence, not having physical bodies, angels are unlimited by any sense of time or space, and know nothing of age, growth, or death (Heb. 1:14, Luke 20:36); hence they are also without sex distinctions (Matt. 22:23-30, 1 Cor. 15:50). It is obvious that pictorial representations which have come down to us from medieval art, in which they are represented as feminine creatures with wings, are wholly

THE PROBLEM OF EVIL

without scriptural warrant. Angels are referred to in the Bible in the masculine; moreover, ethereal beings have no need for wings. This means, of course, that angels constitute a company, and not a race; and that in all probability each was created separately and that each apostate angel fell by his own act. Again, the assumption that angels are creatures of the human imagination, corresponding to the demigods of the ancient mythologies, is absurd. Demigods were usually thought of as the offspring resulting from sensualistic relations between all sorts of imaginary creatures: the gods themselves were represented as consorting with humans, and even with brutes, and fantastic creatures of every kind were supposed to have inhabited the earth as a consequence of such illicit relations. (The tragedies of Euripides point up these facts more vividly, perhaps, than any of the other works of Greek literature. The Homeric epics also give us graphic pictures of the frailties of the gods: they are even represented as actually engaging in the battle before Troy and suffering the wounds of battle, in the manner of ordinary soldiers. Plato, it will be recalled, objected strenuously to these tales of the frailties and immoralities of the gods: The Divine, he insisted, must never be thought of as the author of evil.) It is silly to think that the Bible writers, surrounded as they were by sensualistic and idolatrous pagan neighbors, could have imagined an order of beings purely ethereal in nature and benevolent in their ministry, as angels are represented to be in Scripture. We therefore accept the teaching of the Bible about angels and their nature and work, as divine revelation.

(4) *They are a class of beings older than man and distinct from man.* They are not spirits or souls of the righteous dead. In Heb. 12:22-23, "innumerable hosts of angels" are clearly distinguished from "the general assembly and church of the firstborn" and from "the spirits of just men made perfect," that is, the righteous dead in their fully

GENESIS

redeemed state, clothed in glory and honor and immortality. (Cf. also Heb. 2:16, 1 Cor. 6:3, Matt. 18:10, Acts 12:15, Luke 1:19, etc.) The mention of the serpent in Gen. 3:1 implies the fall of Satan before the fall of man. In Gen. 2:1, "all the host of them" which God had created is generally taken to include the angels. Man was evidently the crowning achievement of God's creativity, created after the angelic host had been created. Angels are to be thought of as sharing in some incomprehensible way, the timelessness of the heavenly realm, as distinct from the temporality of our natural world.

(5) *They possess superhuman intelligence and power* (Psa. 103:20, 2 Pet. 2:11, Jude 9, 2 Thess. 1:7). (6) *Their intelligence and power, although superhuman, is not supernatural (infinite)* (Job. 2:6, Matt. 24:36, 1 Pet. 1:12, Rev. 20:1-3, 7-10). God alone is infinite, eternal, omniscient, timeless, without beginning or end. (7) *In number they are a great multitude* (Dan. 7:10, Heb. 12:22, Rev. 5:11). (8) *They seem to have organization, with various ranks and endowments* (1 Ki. 22:19; Matt. 26:53; Eph. 2:2, 3:10; 1 Thess. 4:16; Col. 1:16; Jude 9). (9) *Their work is to act as ministers of God's providence in the world of nature and of men* (Dan. 12:1; Luke 15:10; 1 Tim. 5:21; Matt. 4:11; Heb. 1:14; Matt. 13:39, 18:10, 25:31; Mark 8:38; 2 Thess. 1:7; 1 Pet. 1:10-12, etc.).

(10) *The angels were created innocent* (Gen. 1:31, Jude 6). (11) *Many of them preserved their original innocence, and by unbroken obedience to God, attained holiness* (Mark 8:38, Psa. 89:7, 1 Tim. 5:21). (12) *But others fell from their original state of innocence and of fellowship with God* (Job 4:18, 2 Pet. 2:4, Jude 6, 1 John 3:8, Matt. 25:41, Rev. 12:7-12). (13) *The angels who fell from their original state of innocence are wholly confirmed in evil, that is, totally depraved* (Matt. 6:13, John 8:44, Matt. 25:41, 1 John 5:18-19, 2 Pet. 2:4, Rev. 20:1-3, etc.). The evil angels rebelled purely of their own volition

THE PROBLEM OF EVIL

and hence for them there is no plan, no hope, of salvation. Man disobeyed as a consequence of yielding to temptation (seduction) from without, and for him, therefore, God could consistently plan and execute the Scheme of Redemption. (14) *The leader of this pre-mundane rebellion was an angel of superior attainments, by the name of Lucifer, probably an archangel, who deliberately chose to assert his will above the sovereignty of God, and who, through the specious plea of unlimited "personal liberty," persuaded some of his kind to embark on a course of open warfare against God and all Good (Isa. 14:12-14, Ezek. 28:13-17, Luke 10:18, John 8:44, Rev. 12:7-10, etc.).*

3. *The Mystery of Lawlessness* (1 John 3:4, 5:17; Rom. 4:15, 7:8; 2 Thess. 2:7). The Mystery of Lawlessness is the Mystery of Sin. Only a person who is utterly spiritually blind will deny that *sin is a fact of our world*. All great Bible themes—redemption, atonement, justification, remission, salvation, pardon, forgiveness, adoption, reconciliation, regeneration, sanctification, immortalization—all these have significance only in relation to the fact of sin. Make no mistake about it—*sin is a fact*. Sin is not just *irrationality* as the "depth psychologists" would have it; it is not just *immaturity* or just "missing the mark," as academic pundits would have it—not by any means! *Sin is depravity*, it has always been, is now, and will always be, open rebellion against God. Sin is the offspring of human presumption and oftentimes is wilfully cultivated, that is, sinners are sinners in most cases because they choose to walk after their own lusts (2 Pet. 3:3). Those who would "explain away" sin as "illusion of mortal mind," I would remind that the "illusion," and the origin of it, remain to be accounted for. Sin proceeds from the interior life of man, from vincible ignorance, a perverted will, or a seared conscience (1 Tim. 4:2); and the essential principle of sin is *selfishness*: there never was a sin committed that was not the choice of self above God, of man's right-

GENESIS

eousness (his own way of doing things) above God's righteousness (God's way of doing things). (Cf. Matt. 3:15, 6:33; Rom. 1:16-17, 9:30, 10:3; John 4:34.) To do things according to God's way is to obey the moral law; to do things contrary to God's way is to flout the moral law—this is lawlessness. A lawless world is a Godless world, and vice versa.

The "mystery of lawlessness" is commonly designated the "problem of evil," both moral and physical. Apparently all forms of evil descend upon human beings from one or more of three sources: (a) from what a person does to himself, (b) from what others do to him, and (c) from the physical framework in which he is destined to live in this present life. There is no doubt that a measure of impenetrable mystery attaches to this problem, the problem especially of the *origin* of sin and suffering and of the persistence of the *tremendous volume* of sin and suffering in our world. Cf. Job 11:7, chs. 38-41, also Isa. 55:8-9, Rom. 11:33-36: these passages clearly teach us that there are aspects of the mystery which lie beyond the pale of human understanding (Deut. 29:29). Hence, we must accept what God has revealed to us through His Spirit (1 Cor. 2:11-16) concerning this mystery and its relevance to human life and destiny. For if God has not revealed what we need to know, we simply have no solution for the deeper aspects of this problem. *But God has revealed to us all that we need to know*, for our own good, and this revelation is clearly set forth in Scripture, embracing the following particulars:

(1). *Sin had its beginning in the free choice of a person, uninfluenced from without, to rebel against the sovereignty of God.* This author will defend the thesis anywhere, at any time, *that sin could not have originated in any other way than in a personal choice to disobey the moral law, just as crime originates only in the free choice of a person to disobey the civil law.* As far as our knowl-

THE PROBLEM OF EVIL

edge goes, only *persons* are capable of making such a choice: indeed, the powers of self-consciousness and self-determination are the powers which constitute a person to be a person. Subhuman entities (rocks, plants, trees, fishes, birds, insects, beasts of the field)—all these are without the potentiality of being either moral or immoral: literally, they are *amoral*. (We do not haul animals into court and charge them with crimes.) Only persons are moral beings; therefore, only persons are responsible for their deeds (Rom. 3:20, 4:15, 5:13, 5:20, 7:7; Acts 17:30-31; Matt. 24:31-51; 1 Cor. 3:13; 2 Cor. 5:10; Gal. 6:7; Heb. 2:2-3; 2 Pet. 2:4; Rev. 20:11-15, 22:12). Hence, in attributing the origin of sin to a person, Scripture teaching is in harmony with human experience and common sense.

(2). *Personal beings are of three kinds (as affirmed in Scripture), namely, divine, angelic, and human.* (a) The divine Persons who make up the totality of the Godhead are the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit (Matt. 3:16-17, 28:19; 2 Cor. 13:14; 1 Pet. 1:2). In the dim light of the Old Testament revelation these Three were known as God, the Word of God, and the Spirit of God (Gen. 1:1-3; Psa. 33:6, 9; Rev. 19:13; John 1:1-14; 1 John 1:1, 5:7). (b) Angels, as we have noted, are represented in Scripture to be a special order of celestial (ethereal) personal beings, superhuman in intelligence and power, who serve as the ministers of God's providence. (c) The human being is described in Scripture (Gen. 2:7) as a body-spirit unity, a person, "a living soul." He is set apart as a species (as person and personality) by his thought processes. These are matters of human common sense and experience. Sin, of course, is not to be attributed to the Godhead who is altogether holy (John 17:11, 25; Heb. 4:15; Rev. 15:4). *Therefore sin must have originated among the angels or among men.*

(3). *According to the Bible, sin originated in the pre-mundane rebellion of the archangel Lucifer, who sought to*

GENESIS

break away from the sovereignty of God and to set up a rival throne somewhere beyond our universe. (a) The Scriptures intimate that Lucifer, prior to his fall, was an angel of superior rank and endowment: the name "Lucifer" itself means "the shining one," and in the Revised Version is rendered "Day-star." Cf. Isa. 14:12-15. Hebrew prophecy runs in parallels: hence in this Scripture the fate of the king of Babylon evidently is described as analogous to the fall of Lucifer. Cf. also Ezek. 28:13-14. Here the prophetic parallel is between Lucifer and the king of Tyre. "Anointed cherub" is a phrase designating an angel of high official rank, undoubtedly an archangel. The descriptive language which appears in these passages simply cannot be applied to any human being, except by analogy, and that only in a limited sense. (2) 1 Tim. 3:6, John 8:44. Cf. these passages with Isa. 14:12-15 and Ezek. 28:13-14. These statements could hardly have been made with reference to earthly monarchs. It seems evident that orthodox Christian scholarship is right in interpreting them as alluding to the rebellion and fall of Lucifer. It seems, too, that the archangel's fall was caused by pride, jealousy and false ambition; and that his appeal to his fellow creatures was the specious plea of "personal liberty," that is, for complete freedom from the binding force of any kind of law—a plea which has damned more souls than any other single lie. (*Liberty, it must be remembered, is not license.*) It is quite possible that he influenced other angels with false charges and lying accusations against God, as, for example, that the Creator was a tyrant who imposed His will on free creatures, etc., and that he exhorted them to follow him in breaking away from all Divine restraint and in setting up a rival government somewhere in the heavens. It would seem that up to this time God had never revealed His love to His angelic host; that they probably were aware only of His power. Hence some of the angels were prompted to heed Satan's lies and to follow him into open

THE PROBLEM OF EVIL

rebellion; by far the greater number, however, remained loyal to the Divine government. As Milligan writes: "How pride got possession of Satan's heart it may be difficult for us to conceive. But it seems probable, from the statement of Paul in First Timothy (3:6), that it was in some way owing to his elevation above those around him. He may once have been the archangel, superior even to Michael. But in an evil hour his eye was turned from the Creator to himself as the highest, the most gifted, and the most influential of all the creatures of God. His heart swelled with pride; ambition took possession of his soul; and rebellion was then seen in heaven. But justice and judgment are the dwelling-place of God's throne, Psa. 89:14. He reigns in the midst of the most perfect righteousness, and no sin can be tolerated for a moment in His presence. And hence He had but to speak the word, and Satan, with his rebel host that kept not their first estate, was instantly cast out of heaven and bound in 'eternal chains under darkness to the judgment of the Great Day,' Jude 6."¹⁰ (Cf. 2 Pet. 2:4, Matt. 25:41, Luke 10:18, 1 Cor. 6:3.)

(4). *Apparently Satan and his rebel host, having attempted a direct encounter with those of their kind who remained loyal to God, were cast out of Heaven, to become wanderers "to and fro in the earth" (Job 1:7). Cf. Ezek. 28:16, Isa. 14:15, 2 Pet. 2:4, especially the words of Jesus, in Luke 10:18 (the Logos was present, of course, when this incident occurred; hence, as Jesus, He was recognized by these evil spirits: cf. John 17:5; Jas. 2:19; Matt. 8:29; Mark 1:24, 5:7; Luke 4:34; Acts 19:15).* (This is a notable instance in which the truth about a given subject cannot be obtained in its fulness short of taking into consideration the teaching of the Bible as a whole.) The rebellion of these wicked angels was inexcusable from any and every point of view. Eternal Justice forbade any plan of salvation for them. Prior to their rebellion they had

GENESIS

been in close personal fellowship with God; they had known Him as their Creator and Ruler; they had been fully aware of His wisdom and power; they must have known that all being depended on Him for continuance. Besides all this, they sinned purely of their own volition, without having been influenced from any source outside themselves. They were not seduced, as man was. They decided of their own free will to enter upon a course of sin, motivated by their own inordinate ambition. *They became in fact the first anarchists.* For these reasons, and possibly others unknown to us, their rebellion was inexcusable. Therefore, their moral state, as a result of this complete rejection by their Creator, is one of *total depravity*. They are "kept in everlasting bonds under darkness unto the judgment of the great day" (Jude 6), "committed to pits of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment" (2 Pet. 2:4). What kind of "bonds," and what kind of "darkness"? Bonds of reprobation, undoubtedly, and the darkness of implacable hatred and despair. Having realized from the time of their fall, that they are irretrievably and eternally lost, they are *totally depraved*. From the moment of his fall, Lucifer became "Satan" or "the Devil," the chief of evil spirits. The word "Satan" is from the Hebrew, and means "Adversary," "Accuser," "Enemy," etc. The Devil is an implacable and insatiable enemy of God, man, and all Good.

(5). *The last end for these wicked angels, and all their ilk, including all wicked, neglectful, and unforgiven human beings, will be eternal segregation in hell.* (1) Someone may ask, Why did not God annihilate these evil angels when they rebelled against Him? Of course, it would be sheer presumption on our part to answer this question dogmatically. There are certain intimations, however, which may give us clues to a partial apprehension of this mystery. Science, for example, teaches that God does not, and reflection leads us to believe that He would not, annihilate that

THE PROBLEM OF EVIL

which He has created. One of the first laws of nature is that the total amount of energy (or matter) of the cosmos is constant. Matter changes form, but nothing of the original total stock is lost in the process. Reason would add, it seems to me, that if God does not annihilate matter, He surely will not annihilate spirit. As a matter of fact, were He to annihilate anything that shares personality with Him, either angelic or human, He would be acting inconsistently, that is, in opposition to Himself. But to act thus inconsistently is contrary to His nature as Deity; hence, it seems that the word "annihilation" is not in the vocabulary of Heaven. Certainly there is every reason to think that at the "times of restoration of all things, whereof God spake by the mouth of his holy prophets" (Acts 3:21) this earth which we now inhabit will be *renovated* rather than *annihilated* (Isa. 65:17, 66:22; 2 Pet. 3:1-13).

I am reminded of a story which appears in one of the published books of sermons by W. H. Book, longtime Minister of the great Tabernacle Church of Christ, Columbus, Indiana. Book tells us that he was holding a revival meeting in Hagerstown, Maryland, once upon a time, and, as was the custom in earlier days, prior to the sermon each evening he spent a few minutes answering questions that individuals might see fit to put into a "query box" at the entrance to the meeting hall. One evening he received a question which read substantially as follows: If God is all-powerful, as you preachers say, and there is so much evil in the world, as you say, and if the devil is the source of this evil, as you also say, then why doesn't God kill the devil and put an end to all this sin and misery? Brother Book read the question aloud, carefully, and then answered: "I would say that God would not want to kill the devil, because that would leave too many orphans in Hagerstown." To this we would be justified in adding, I think, that if God should kill the Devil, the large part of the earth's population would be orphaned. Despite the

GENESIS

apparent flippancy of this answer (to the question equally flippant), the fact remains that it was in harmony with the teaching of Jesus, who, on a certain occasion in answer to the caviling Jews, blistered them with the statement: "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father it is your will to do" (John 8:44).

Hell, the penitentiary of the moral universe, was, according to our Lord's own statement, "prepared for the devil and his angels"; as Chrysostom was wont to say, in the early days of Christianity, Hell was prepared, not for men, but for the devil and his angels, but if men go there, it will be strictly because they cast themselves into it. The eternal segregation of all the wicked, both angels and men, in hell (Gehenna) will follow the Great Judgment. (Note Matt. 8:29—"to torment us before the time"; also Matt. 25:31-46, esp. v. 41; John 5:28-29; Acts 17:30-31; 2 Thess. 1:7-10; Rev. 20:11-15, etc.)

(6). *The good angels, on the other hand, are rewarded with everlasting happiness (blessedness) and this consists in being with God, seeing Him "face to face," serving Him and enjoying Him forever: cf. Matt. 18:10.* The good angels are also called the *elect* angels (1 Tim. 5:21). This does not mean, of course, that their remaining faithful was the result of their election; it means, rather, that their election was the natural consequence of their fidelity. The good angels are the executors of God's judgments (Matt. 13:36-43, 16:27, 24:29-31, 25:31; 2 Thess. 1:7-10; Jude 14), and the ministers of His benevolence toward the redeemed (Heb. 1:14, 12:22; Luke 2:8-15). Accounts of angelic ministrations, both of benevolence and of judgment, occur repeatedly throughout the entire Bible. *E.g.*, Gen. 16:7, 18:2, 22:11-18, 19:1-17, 28:12, 32:1; Exo. 3:2; Gal. 3:19; Exo. 14:19; Judg. 2:1; Num. 22:31; Josh. 5:15; Judg. 6:11-12, 13:2-21; 2 Sam. 25:16; 1 Ki. 19:5; 2 Ki. 6:17; Dan. 6:22, 7:10; Zech. 2:3; Matt. 1:18-25; Luke 1:26-38, 1:11-20; Matt. 2:13-20, 4:11, 28:2-5; Luke 2:8-

THE PROBLEM OF EVIL

15; Acts 1:9-11, 5:19, 8:26, 12:6-9, 10:3, 27:23-24; Rev. 1:1, 5:2, etc. Many authorities believe that the "Angel of Jehovah" frequently mentioned in the Old Testament Scriptures was the Logos Himself in pre-incarnate manifestations or theophanies (cf. Mic. 5:2, 1 Cor. 10:1-4).

(7) To summarize: the Bible teaches explicitly as follows: (1) That the source of sin, of the entire burden of sin which the human race has brought on itself (Rom. 3:23), is the Devil (1 John 3:8). (2) That the pedigree of sin, therefore, is Satan, lust, sin, and finally death (Jas. 1:13-15). (3) That the wages of sin is death (Rom. 6:23), not only *physical* death, the separation of the spirit from the body and the consequent dissolution of the physical frame (Gen. 2:16-17, 3:19, 5:5, 4:33; John 19:30; Heb. 9:27), but also *spiritual* death, the second death, eternal separation from the Source of Life (2 Thess. 1:7-10; Rev. 20:14, 21:8, 2:11). Whatever else the word "hell" may signify in Scripture, it does signify the loss of God and of all Good (Matt. 25:41). Death, in whatever form it may take, is in the world because sin is in the world (Gen. 3:17-19; Rom. 5:12, 6:23, 7:14; 1 Cor. 15:21-26, 50-57; 2 Cor. 5:4; Heb. 9:27, etc.). (4) That the Son of God was "manifested, that he might destroy the works of the Devil" (1 John 3:8, 3:5; Matt. 1:21; John 1:29; Heb. 2:14-15, 9:28; 1 Cor. 15:3, 20-26, 50-57). Redemption in Christ Jesus is *complete* redemption, that is, redemption in body and soul and spirit (1 Thess. 5:23), redemption both from the *guilt* of sin (Ezek. 18:19-20) and from the *consequences* of sin (Exo. 20:5-6). (Cf. Luke 1:68; Rom. 2:4-11, 8:18-25; Gal. 3:13; Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:14; Tit. 2:14; Heb. 9:12; Rev. 5:9, 14:3-4, etc.) As Jesus spoke to the hard-hearted and unbelieving in His own day, so He speaks to the neglectful, disobedient, and wicked of every age, including the present one. "Ye are of your father, the devil," etc. (John 8:44), and "Ye will not come to me, that ye may have life" (John

GENESIS

5:40). *There can be only one reason why men keep on living in sin: it is the fact that they will to do so* (2 Pet. 3:9; Matt. 11:28; John 10:10, 11:25-26; Matt. 23:37; Luke 13:34).

I quote here the following statements by H. C. Christopher, from his great work, now long out of print: "A being that *can not err* must be infinite in his attributes. Wherever there is finiteness, there is necessarily and unavoidably the possibility and capability of wrong-thinking and wrong-doing. Absolute perfection inheres only in the Infinite. Imperfection inheres in the finite, *because they are finite. Here lies the potential origin of sin, the possibility of sinning being inseparable from, and inherent in, finite beings. . . .* Angels knew nothing of the innate and undeveloped powers and sentiments of their nature, and were unconscious of the evil lurking deep below the surface, like the germ in the seed, and awaiting only the necessary influences and excitements to arouse the dormant powers into activity. It may seem strange to talk of influences and exciting causes of developing sin in heaven, among beings of whom all our conceptions embrace the ideas of purity and happiness; yet sin first erupted in heaven."¹¹

4. *The Fact of Sin.* It has been said that one might frame an argument of sorts against the Deity of Jesus, against the inspiration of the Scriptures, or against the need for religion, but that *it is impossible for anyone to successfully deny the existence of sin.* The universality of sin is an ever-present fact. The consciousness of guilt breaks forth in the literature of all peoples. Legalists, statesmen, philosophers, and poets alike testify, with Pascal, that accountable persons are unrighteous, "for each one tends to himself, and the bent toward self is the beginning of all disorder." The consequences of sin—sickness, suffering, death—are apparent on every hand. We can escape the *guilt* of sin, through the efficacy of the atoning blood of

THE PROBLEM OF EVIL

Christ, but none can avoid its *consequences*. Sin is here, there, everywhere, and only the morally blind will deny the fact. Nor do we obviate the fact of sin by resorting to such meretricious terms as "immaturity," "irrationality," "missing the mark," etc., to sugar-coat it.

5. *The Adversary of Souls* (John 8:42-47, Eph. 6:10-18, 1 Pet. 5:8-9). The Bible teaches unequivocally that there is a personal Devil: the doctrine runs throughout Scripture from beginning to end. As the enemy of all Good, Lucifer is presented in Scripture as Satan (Abaddon in Hebrew, Apollyon in Greek) in the Old Testament: (Rev. 9:11; Job 26:6, 28:22; Prov. 15:11; Psa. 88:11); as the Devil, in the New Testament, the chief of the evil spirits (fallen angels, demons, 2 Pet. 2:4, Jude 6). The word "Satan" is of Hebrew origin, meaning "Adversary," "Accuser," "Enemy," etc.

That there is a personal Devil is evident from the following Scriptures: (1) The testimony of Jesus (John 8:44, 12:31; Matt. 13:38-39, 25:41, 22:29-30: these statements are too explicit to allow for the notion that in speaking of angels and demons, Jesus was merely accommodating His language to the Jewish traditions of His time); (2) the testimony of the Apostles (1 John 3:8; Rev. 12:9, 20:2, 7, 10; 1 Pet. 5:8; 2 Pet. 4:4; 2 Cor. 4:4, 11:14; Eph. 2:2; 2 Thess. 2:9; 1 Tim. 1:20); (3) the epithets by which he is described, e.g., "the prince of this world" (John 14:30, 16:11), "the god of this world" (2 Cor. 4:4), "the prince of the powers of the air" (Eph. 2:2), "the prince of demons" (Matt. 12:24), "the tempter" (Matt. 4:3), "the adversary" (1 Pet. 5:8), the "accuser" of the saints (Rev. 12:10, Job 1:6-12), "the old serpent" (Rev. 12:9), the first liar and the first murderer (John 8:44); (4) the terms (similes and metaphors) by which his activities are described, as, e.g., a fowler (Psa. 124:7, 1 Tim. 3:7, 2 Tim. 2:26), a sower of tares (Matt. 13:25, 39), a wolf (John 10:12), a roaring lion (1 Pet. 5:8), a serpent (Rev. 12:9,

GENESIS

20:2), a dragon (Rev. 16:13). These terms all suggest Satan's total depravity, and his diabolical malice and cunning.

The testimony of Scripture that there is a personal Devil is corroborated by human common sense and reason. If there is no personal Devil, then man must be held accountable for all the evil in the world, and such a burden of guilt would be overwhelming. Why is it more "absurd" that a moral being should have sinned against God in past ages, than that moral beings should sin against Him now, as obviously they do? *Belief in a personal devil is far more reasonable than belief in an impersonal spirit of evil:* as a matter of fact, "impersonal spirit" is a contradiction in itself, for spirit essentially is personality. Moreover, in view of the fact that between man and the lowest forms of life there are numberless graduations of being, why is it thought incredible that between God and man there should be ethereal creatures of higher than human intelligence? One of the most ingenious devices the Devil employs in deceiving people is that of "selling" them the lie that he does not actually exist. Let every intelligent being beware this diabolical and totally destructive lie.

According to Biblical teaching, the history of man is but the facade behind which Satan and his rebel host have sought relentlessly, and with venomous hatred, to defeat God's eternal purpose and plan for His Creation. This unceasing conflict, characterized by diabolical vindictiveness, has continued through several phases as follows:

1. *The first phase of a direct frontal attack.* It would seem that, on the specious plea that God, in asserting His sovereignty and establishing moral law, was proving Himself to be a tyrant, Satan persuaded some of the angelic host to enlist under his banner. Their objective, apparently, was to break away from all restraint: they were the first *anarchists*. (*Libertinism*, the notion that every man should be permitted to do just as he pleases, according to the teach-

THE PROBLEM OF EVIL

ing of Aristippus of Cyrene in ancient times—to follow his “natural impulses,” according to the more sophisticated version, the credo of Rousseau and his so-called “progressive education” disciples—the confusion of liberty with license, is widespread in our time. But *lawlessness is godlessness*, and vice versa.) Under Satan’s persuasion, his rebellious cohorts had the effrontery to undertake a personal encounter with the celestial forces of good. The immediate result was the expulsion of the rebels from their original estate (“proper habitation”) (Luke 10:18, 2 Pet. 2:4, Jude 6). Having been unceremoniously cast out of Heaven, Satan became “the god of this world,” that is, of the kingdom of this world (John 12:31, 14:30, 16:11; 2 Cor. 4:4; Eph. 2:2). But—why did not God segregate these rebel spirits in hell at the time of their defection? Why does He even to this day allow them to roam the cosmos at will, seeking whom they may devour (Job 1:6-7, 1 Pet. 5:8)? Of course, we have no clear answer to this question. It would seem, however, that the Divine plan was to permit these devils to demonstrate their true character, their total depravity, that by so doing they would prove themselves fit only for Hell, and in this manner would vindicate the justice of God before all intelligences, both angelic and human, of the entire cosmos (1 Cor. 6:3). This may have been the reason why Satan was permitted to appear in the presence of God to accuse the patriarch Job (Job 1:6-12), and why he is permitted to continue in his Satanic role as Accuser of the saints (Rev. 12:10). It might be well to consider also that there is no evidence that our Heavenly Father had, prior to Satan’s rebellion, ever made any demonstration of His great love for His creatures (that supreme demonstration, Supreme Sacrifice, awaited the death on the Cross of His Only Begotten Son); that only His eternal *power* and divinity (Rom. 1:20, Isa. 57:15) had as yet been revealed. At any rate, we have no complete answer for this question (Deut. 29:29), probably

GENESIS

because it is not our right, as creatures, to have it, or because we could not comprehend the depth of this mystery, even if some attempt were made to reveal it, because of the inadequacy of human language to communicate the ineffable. Be that as it may, we are told expressly that, although cast out of Heaven and doomed to walk up and down in the earth, the ultimate segregation of these rebel angels will take place at the end of our age (aeon), that is, at the termination of the Reign of Messiah (1 Cor. 15:20-28, Phil. 2:5-11, Rev. 20:10).

It would be well at this point to take note of the cases of *demonology* reported in Scripture. That this was something more than insanity is obvious for several reasons, as follows: (a) From such passages as Matt. 4:24, in which "divers diseases" are clearly distinguished from "torments," and "those possessed with demons" from the "epileptic and palsied." (b) From the fact that these evil spirits invariably recognized, and explicitly confessed Jesus for what He was—the Eternal Logos (Matt. 8:29; Mark 1:24, 3:11, 5:7; Luke 4:34; Acts 19:15; Jas. 2:19). These evil spirits also confessed the presence and work of the Holy Spirit in the personal ministry of the Apostles and their co-laborers: evil cannot remain silent, but must speak out the truth, in the presence of holiness (Acts 13:6-12, 16:16-18, 19:13-19). (c) From the fact that these evil spirits begged to be confined (localized) in physical bodies, even in bodies of swine, to escape some measure of their consuming restlessness ("going to and fro in the earth and . . . walking up and down in it," Job 1:7, 1 Pet. 5:8; cf. Matt. 8:28-33, Mark 5:10-19). (d) From the fact that they obeyed immediately when the Lord commanded, or even just willed, them "to come out," that is, exorcised them (Matt. 4:24, 8:32; Mark 1:25-27, 5:10-19; Luke 4:35). Note that the Apostles, through their possession of the baptismal measure of the Holy Spirit's powers and graces (Acts 1:1-8, 2:1-4; Luke 24:45-49; John 20:21-23;

THE PROBLEM OF EVIL

Heb. 2:3-4), also had this power of exorcism (Luke 9:1; Acts 16:18, 19:12). (e) From the fact of their admission that their ultimate destiny would be eternal segregation in Hell with all their ilk, and their begging at least a temporary respite from the infliction of this just penalty for their sins (Matt. 25:41; Matt. 8:29—"art thou come hither to torment us before the time?" Mark 5:7—"torment me not."). *Why should not these evil spirits have recognized Jesus for just who He was? Why should they not have recognized the working of the Spirit's power? Had they not been with Jesus (as the Logos), and with the Spirit, in eternity, prior to the creation of the world? Had they not been cast out of Heaven along with their leader, Satan (Luke 10:18), when they had rebelled against the Divine government? Why, then, should these various Scriptures be interpreted as describing forms of insanity when they clearly indicate diabolism?*

2. *The second phase: the attack on the generic seed of the Woman.* (1). On seeing our first parents living in complete happiness in Eden, Satan, thirsting for revenge, set about to seduce them from their state of innocence, and to mar—and, if possible, to destroy—the image of God in which they had been created. Let us imagine a man who has a neighbor whom he hates—and a hater is always a murderer at heart (1 John 3:15); this man knows he cannot prevail in a personal encounter with this neighbor; but the latter has a faithful old dog, long a protector of the family and a cherished pet; so this would-be murderer proceeds to get revenge by stealing out under cover of darkness and poisoning the animal. In like manner, Satan, who dared not attempt a second frontal encounter with God, made his way stealthily into Eden and exerted his diabolical cunning on Adam and Eve. We all know the sordid story. The Woman yielded to the seductive voice of the tempter, and the Man, apparently out of his love for her, followed her into the transgression (2 Cor. 11:3,

GENESIS

1 Tim. 2:14). Thus did Satan murder the whole human race: by bringing sin into the world, he brought death, "for that all sinned" (Rom. 5:12-13, 3:23, 6:23; John 8:44; Heb. 2:14-15, 9:27; Gen. 3:19, 5:5; Jas. 1:13-15). (2). No doubt the Devil gloated over that apparent victory. Imagine his consternation, then, on hearing the Divine pronouncement that the Seed of the Woman should bruise the Old Serpent's head (Gen. 3:14-15; Rom. 16:20), that is, ultimately bringing to defeat his nefarious schemes. May we not rightly suppose that Satan did not know what, precisely, the word "seed" implied here (although he had superhuman knowledge, he did not have omniscience), and may well have interpreted it to designate the genus that descended from the Woman (Gen. 3:20)? Setting out, then, to frustrate what he thought to be the meaning of this mysterious oracle, his first move was to impel the Woman's firstborn, Cain, to clobber his brother Abel to death, in an act of jealous rage; and so the first crime was committed in the very shadow of Eden, and it was the awful crime of fratricide (Gen. 4:1-8). Still and all, the birth and naming of Seth ("substitute") must have been understood by the Devil to mean that the battle had just been joined and there would be more to come. (3). His next move was a bold one. By fostering the intermarriage of the pious Sethites ("sons of God," that is, as belonging to the Messianic Line) and the irreligious Cainites ("daughters of men," Gen. 6:1-4) He brought about a condition of universal wickedness (Gen. 6:5): it always happens that when the good mingles with the bad, on the level of the bad, the whole becomes bad. Imagine Satan's glee on hearing God say, "I will destroy man," etc. (Gen. 6:7); and then imagine, if possible, his embittered frustration when he heard God commanding Noah, "Make thee an ark of gopher wood" (Gen. 6:14). The Flood came, and the race was not destroyed, as Satan had planned, but was

THE PROBLEM OF EVIL

rebuilt through righteous Noah and his progeny (Gen. 6:8-10).

3. *The third phase: Satan's war on the elect of the Old Covenant*, the fleshly seed of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—the Children of Israel (Matt. 8:11-12). (Election is election to responsibilities, not to special privileges, except, of course, only as responsibilities to God are in essence privileges *per se* for all who love Him: Rom. 8:28, Matt. 11:29-30, 1 John 5:3.) (1) It was inevitable that when God called Abraham's fleshly seed to become the temporary custodians of the worship of the living and true God (monotheism), Satan should be stirred again to every conceivable effort to frustrate the fulfillment of the Abrahamic Promise (Gen. 12:1-3, 17:9-14, 17:19, 26:1-5, 28:13-17; Exo. 2:24, 6:4, 19:5-6, 34:27-28; Lev. 26:9; Deut. 5:1-5, 9:9-11, 26:16-19, 29:10-13; Judg. 2-1; 1 Chron. 16:13-19; Jer. 31:31-34; Neh., ch. 9; Luke 1:72-73; Acts 3:25, 7:51-53; Gal. 3:15-19). Hence, under the very shadow of Sinai, while thunders and lightnings bespoke the presence of God in communion with Moses atop the holy mount, the people down below were incited to cast and set up a golden bull (the symbol of the Cult of Fertility, in which ritual prostitution played a leading role) and worship it in the manner of the Egyptian orgies with which they had once been all too familiar; and three thousand paid the price of their idolatrous folly by death on the spot (Exo., chs. 19, 24, 32; cf. Acts 2:37-42, 7:38-41). (2) Again, because of their oft-repeated acts of rebellion against God and His servant Moses, of the entire adult nation that had crossed the Red Sea only two survived the forty years of wandering in the Wilderness, to cross the Jordan under Joshua into the Promised Land. These two were men of great faith, Caleb and Joshua (Num. 13:6, 16, 30; 14:6, 24, 30; Josh. 14:6-15). All the rest left only their bleaching bones behind—mute memorials indeed of their gross unbelief. (3) Later, the

GENESIS

Devil stirred up the people to clamor for a king so that they might ape the practices of their idolatrous neighbors. Against the counsel of God through Samuel (1 Sam., ch. 8), the people crowned Saul, who turned out to be a miserable failure. We all know the tragic accounts of the apostasies, cruelties, wars, orgies, etc., of the royal courts both in Samaria and in Jerusalem. Ultimately, in the very face of God's special messengers, the great Prophets, and their counsels of individual righteousness and social justice, and their warnings of the disaster that would befall the nation for ignoring the God of their fathers and His moral law (Jer. 18:5-12), the whole nation became corrupt, vessels fit only for destruction. Then it was that Jerusalem was trodden down by the Gentiles (Samaria had already fallen to the Assyrians), first by the Chaldeans and finally by the Romans, and God permitted the inhabitants to be carried off into the Captivity and finally dispersed among all peoples of the then known world (Jer., ch. 52; Isa. 63:10-19; Neh., ch. 9; Matt. 23:37-38, ch. 24; Mark, ch. 13; Luke 13:34-35, 19:41-44, ch. 21; 1 Pet. 1:10-12). (Cf. especially Acts 7:51-53, Acts 2:23, 2:36, 3:14-21; Luke 23:13-25, Matt. 27:20-26; esp. the horribly tragic implications—in the light of subsequent history—of Matt. 27:25.) (4) Thus Satan's conflict with the Old Covenant elect came to an end in their Captivity and Dispersion, that is to say, apparently in their forfeiture of their Divine election and apparently in the frustration of God's Eternal Purpose. (Cf. Isa. 46:8-11.) (Review here the gruesome story, as given us by Josephus, of the two-year siege of Jerusalem by the Roman legions under Vespasian and Titus, A.D. 68-70. We are told that the streets of the city were ploughed up, and that literally not one stone of the Temple was left upon another. Cf. the prophetic testimony of Jesus: Matt. 24:1-2, Mark 13:1-2; Luke 19:41-44, 21:5-6.) (5) Apparently Satan's triumph was complete. But only *apparently!* Because it was now

THE PROBLEM OF EVIL

dawning on the Devil's understanding that the oracular utterance respecting the Seed of the Woman was to have its fulfilment in a Person, in the Person to be titled Messiah, Christos, Christ, The Anointed One. The numerous declarations of the Prophets of old that the Coming One should be of the Seed of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Gal. 3:16), of the tribal lineage of Judah (Gen. 49:10, Num. 24:17, Psa. 60:7, Rev. 5:5), of the royal lineage of David (Isa. 11:1-5, Ruth 4:21-22; 2 Sam. 7:12-16, 23:1-5; Psa. 89:3-4, 89:34-37, 132:10-18; Isa. 9:6-8, 11:10, 55:3-4; Jer. 23:5-6; Amos 9:11; Matt. 1:1, 9:27, 21:9, 22:41-42; Acts 2:25-36; Rev. 5:5, 33:16); that this Coming One, whose goings forth are from of old, from everlasting, should be born of a virgin, in Bethlehem of Judea (Mic. 5:2; Isa. 7:13-14; Matt. 1:18-25; Luke 1:26-35); that He should be the great Prophet "like unto" Moses. (Deut. 18:15-19; Acts 3:19-26, 7:37); that among His numerous other names He should be called Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace (Isa. 9:6); that He should come from Edom with crimsoned garments (Isa. 63:1), and tread the winepress of the judgment of God *alone* (Isa. 63:3; Matt. 26:36-46, 27:46); that He should be the Supreme Sacrifice for the *sin* of the world (Isa. 53:1-9, John 1:29, 1 Cor. 5:7); that He should be raised up from the dead and crowned King of kings and Lord of lords (Psa. 16:10, 24:7-10; Acts 2:22-32, 13:32-37; 1 Cor. 15:1-20; 1 Tim. 6:13-16; Rev. 19:11-16); that He should be King-Priest forever "after the order of Melchizedek" (Gen. 14:17-20; Psa. 110:1-4; Heb. 6:13-20, 7:1-3, etc.). As this Messianic anthem swelled louder and louder, attaining its full crescendo in the life and work of John the Baptizer, the last of the School of the Prophets, Satan began to realize at long last that God planned, when the fulness of the time should come, to invade the "kingdom of this world" as Incarnate Deity in the Person of The Anointed, and that the destiny of all intelligent crea-

GENESIS

tures of the universe was to be entrusted to the determination of this Coming One, Messiah, Christ. In view of this realization that God's Remedial System was to be entrusted for execution, not to the generic seed, nor to any particular ethnic seed, of the Woman, but to a single Person, the God-Man (Gal. 1:16), the Seed of Woman exclusively (Matt. 1:18-25, Luke 1:26-38, Gal. 4:4), there was but one course for Satan to pursue, and that was to await the appearing of this Redeemer whose defeat he must encompass in some manner or himself suffer eternal segregation in Hell. This was precisely the course that Satan did pursue: hence, the relative silence—the holy hush, one might say—that characterized the interim between the time of Malachi and that of John the Baptizer.

4. *The fourth phase: that of the climactic struggle between Satan and Messiah, Christ Jesus.* (1) The prophet Isaiah had stated explicitly that God Himself would give a sign (special proof) of Messiah's appearance in the world: this identifying sign was to be that a virgin should conceive and bear a Son who should be named Immanuel (Isa. 7:14; Matt. 1:23; Luke 2:11-12, 2:34). Hence, moved by such mysterious portents as the Star in the heavens, the message of the Angelic Choir (Luke 2:8-15), the gathering at the Manger, the Visit of the Magi, etc., Satan's first act was to incite the cruel Herod to put the infant to death. But God sent His angel to warn Joseph and Mary, and they fled into Egypt with the Child, returning to Nazareth only after Herod's death (Matt. 2:1-23). (2) After some years of silence (Luke 2:52), we see Jesus appearing before John the Baptizer and requiring John to baptize Him. Hence, the profound significance of the events which occurred at the Jordan: after Jesus had come up out of the water, not only did the Holy Spirit anoint Him by descending in a dovelike form upon Him, but the Father Himself broke the stillness of centuries for the first time since Sinai to declare vocally, "This is my beloved Son, in

THE PROBLEM OF EVIL

whom I am well pleased" (Matt. 3:13-17, Mark 1:9-11, Luke 3:21-22). By these external acts the Holy Spirit officially anointed (inducted) Jesus into His threefold office of Prophet, Priest, and King (Psa. 2:1-9; Acts 4:26, 10:36-42), and the Heavenly Father officially introduced Him to the world as His Only Begotten Son. This anointing (*christ*-ing, from *chrīo*, literally, "smear," "rub on," hence, "anoint") by the Spirit and this avouching of His Sonship by the Father left no room for Satan to doubt that this truly was Messiah. (Note also the identifying sign given to the Herald, John, "upon whomsoever ye shall see the Spirit descending, and abiding upon Him," etc., John 1:29-34.) These identifications were a direct challenge to the Devil; as if God were saying to him, "This is He about whom the prophets testified and whose advent the world has long awaited: this is Messiah, my Only Begotten; therefore, do your worst!"

(3) The Devil joined battle at once, but in the Temptation which followed (Matt. 4:1-11), he came out "second best." But—did he give up after this first failure? By no means. Although it was necessary for angels to minister to the well-nigh exhausted Victor, the Devil departed from Him only "for a season" (Luke 4:13). He returned later in the most powerful temptation of all, in the Garden of Gethsemane. This time it was the temptation to yield to the elemental burden of sheer loneliness (aloneness): to the "tragic sense of life" itself. This—Unamuno has called it the supreme example of "the agony of Christianity"—it was necessary for Jesus to experience (Heb. 4:15). This He did experience in the Garden, and the soul agony was so poignant that great drops of His blood mingled with His sweat, to sanctify the ground under the old olive trees (Matt. 26:36-46, Mark 14:32-43, Luke 22:39-46). However, when Jesus emerged from Gethsemane, He had won the victory—over Himself, that is, over His human nature, and over His arch-enemy. Now He was fully prepared for

GENESIS

the Cross. Satan now realized, probably for the first time, that He could never win in a moral conflict with the Source of all good; under great urgency, therefore, he set about preparing the way for the use of his most potent weapon, death (Heb. 2:14-15), that is, to hasten the murder of the Son of God.

(4) The Tragedy of the Ages is now pushed vehemently to its denouement, as Satan's hatred builds up into diabolical rage. The Lord of glory is betrayed by one of His own disciples (Luke 22:3), and denied by another (Matt. 26:69-75). He is rejected by His own people (John 1:11), and sentenced to death by their ecclesiastical bigots, who then pressure Pilate, the Roman governor, albeit against his better judgment, into ratifying the death penalty (Acts 3:13-15, 7:51-53; Matt. 27:15-26; Mark 14:53-65, 15:6-15; Luke 22:66-71, 23:13-25; John 19:1-16; Acts 2:22-24). One cannot help wondering: Why such vindictiveness toward one who—in the eyes of those who were inflicting such cruelties upon Him—was merely an unlearned Galilean peasant? Think of the treacherous kiss, the scourging, the spitting on Him, the crowning (laceration) with thorns, the humiliation of dying between two common criminals, of having ignorant Roman (pagan) soldiers gamble for the few garments that were His sole material possessions; and finally, the death itself, by crucifixion, the most cruel and ignominious form of death that the inhumanity of man ever invented (the driving of spikes through the living quivering flesh of His hands and His feet)! Could all this have been inspired by any other source than sheer diabolical malice? What had this humble Personage done to evoke such fiendish mental and physical cruelties? Did not the Holy Spirit provide the certain answer to this question through the Apostle Peter: He "went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil: for God was with him" (Acts 10:38)? It is an unailing characteristic of Evil that its hatred of the

THE PROBLEM OF EVIL

Good assumes diabolical proportions sooner or later. Moreover, is it not ironical that Satan, of course unwittingly, was himself bringing about the literal fulfilment of the prophetic picture of the Suffering Servant of Jehovah (Isa., ch. 53)? Misunderstood, misrepresented, rejected, betrayed, denied, deserted, and seemingly abandoned by the Father Himself, truly this Sacrifice on the Cross—the innocent for the guilty—was treading the winepress *alone!* Even the Heavenly Father, out of sheer empathy, we are constrained to think, turned His face away momentarily from this awful spectacle on Calvary (Matt. 27:46). Satan and his minions must have howled with fiendish glee, when Jesus, on the Cross, said, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit" (John 19:30, Luke 23:46), and then bowed His head and "gave up the ghost." To Satan, this meant that Messiah was dead, that at long last God's redemptive Plan was forever frustrated.

(5) Imagine, then, Satan's utter consternation—imagine how his gloating was turned into cursing—on hearing the pronouncement of the angel at the Empty Tomb, "He is not here, for he is risen, even as he said" (Matt. 28:6-7). Yes, Satan and his rebel host reckoned they had achieved complete victory when Jesus died on the Cross. But they had reckoned without the working of God's almighty Power which he wrought when He raised up Jesus from the dead and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places, and crowned Him the Acting Sovereign of the universe (Eph. 1:15-23; Matt. 28-18; Col. 1:16-18; Acts 2:22-36; Phil. 2:5-11; 1 Tim. 6:13-16; 1 Cor. 15:20-28). The Empty Tomb was the final and incontrovertible proof to Satan and his minions that, although physical death was the limit of diabolical power, it was but the occasion for a demonstration of the strength of God's Almighty Arm; that the death and resurrection of Jesus—true Messiah—was but an integral part of the Cosmic Plan of God to "bring to nought him that had the power

GENESIS

of death, that is, the devil . . . and deliver all them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage" (Heb. 2:9-16). It meant that the ultimate end of the Divine Plan is nothing short of the death of death itself (Gen. 3:19, Isa. 46:8-11, Acts 2:23, Rom. 8:22-23, 1 Cor. 15:20-28, 2 Cor. 5:1-10). (Note also the teaching of Jesus, Matt. 12:38-40. That is to say, as Jonah came forth from the belly of the big fish in due time, so did our Lord come forth from the bowels of the earth: in a word, the one and only divine sign, vouchsafed all subsequent generations, of the ultimate defeat of Evil and the ultimate triumph of the Good, is the resurrection of the Prince of Life from Joseph's tomb. Christianity is the only faith known to mankind that has in it an empty tomb—the Empty Tomb; and this Tomb is empty because death had no dominion over the One whose body occupied it for the brief period of its entombment (Acts 2:22-36). *This Empty Tomb is the crowning glory of Christianity.*) It is significant, is it not, that the affirmation of the Resurrection was the fundamental motif of the apostolic testimony (Acts 2:32, 10:40-42, 17:30-31, 26:19-23; Rom. 1:4, 10:9-10, etc.)?

5. *The fifth and final phase: Satan's last-ditch efforts to bring down to Hell (with the lost of all ages) the spiritual seed of Abraham, God's elect of the New Covenant (Gal. 3:23-29).*

(1) The Resurrection of Jesus, the Advent of the Holy Spirit, and the Incorporation of the Church were the events in the development of the Remedial System which made inevitable the ultimate defeat of Satan and his ilk (1 John 3:8, Rev. 20:7-10). Today with all the desperation of a lost spirit engaged in a hopeless cause, he makes war on the Church. Realizing full well that he faces eternal segregation in Hell (Matt. 25:41), he seeks only to drag down the human race, and especially the Church, into the pit with him. Every true saint of God will realize as he

THE PROBLEM OF EVIL

presses on toward the final victory of faith (1 John 5:4-5), that

Satan ever watches round him,
Seeks to find the weakest part,
And in moments most unheeded,
Quickly throws his fiery dart.

Eph. 6:12—"our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers . . . against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in heavenly places." God's Eternal Purpose, that which He purposed in Christ Jesus, was that "unto the principalities and powers in the heavenly places might be made known through the church the manifold wisdom of God" (Eph. 3:8-12). (2) No doubt all Christians are subject to temptation by these unseen evil personalities who roam our cosmos. No doubt the wicked angels influence us to sinful impulses by the power of suggestion (telepathy) which is inherent in all types of personality, to which we surrender unless we keep ourselves clad in "the whole armor of God" (Eph. 6:1-20). By subtle suggestions, no doubt, they seek to entice us into sin, to cause us to injure ourselves in body and spirit, and finally to plunge us into perdition (Psa. 91:3, Luke 8:12, John 13:2, 1 Cor. 7:5, 2 Cor. 2:9-11, 1 Tim. 4:1, 2 Tim. 2:26, Eph. 4:27, Jas. 4:7, 1 John 3:7-8). *Note what God promises His saints, however, with respect to the wiles of these evil spirits* (1 Cor. 10:13, 2 Pet. 2:9, 1 John 1:8-10). That we may be reminded continually of our Heavenly Father's guidance and protection, Jesus teaches us to pray: "and bring us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one" (Matt. 6:13). As in the case of Job, diabolical malignity is always circumscribed by the power of the Almighty (Job 1:12, 2:6); the devils could not even plunge into a herd of swine without the Savior's permission (Matt. 8:28-34). (3) *What means shall the saints employ to resist the wiles of the Devil?* The most effec-

GENESIS

tive means of resisting temptation are these: knowledge of the Word of God and the ability to use it with discrimination (it is noteworthy that Jesus, both in the Wilderness and in the Garden, relied on the Word and Will of God: Matt. 4:1-11, 26:34-44; cf. Eph. 6:16, Heb. 4:12, Isa. 49:2, Hos. 6:5); meditation and prayer (Matt. 4:1-2, Luke 22:39-46); the faithful keeping of the Lord's appointments (Acts 2:42, 1 Cor. 11:23-30, Heb. 10:23-25).

6. *The vindication of God's Absolute Justice (including His Love), impugned by the presumptuous lies of Satan and his cohorts, will be the fundamental objective of the Last Judgment.*

What shall be the final outcome of this age-long conflict between the forces of Good and the forces of Evil? The Scripture answer to this question is explicit, positive, and challenging: the outcome will be, through the redemptive work of Christ and the sanctifying activity of the Holy Spirit, nothing short of the complete triumph of God (1 John 3:7-10, 1 Cor. 15:20-28, Phil. 2:9-11, Rev. 2:7-10). On this matter the Bible leaves us in no doubt whatever. It teaches expressly as follows: (1) *There will be a final universal Judgment in which all intelligent beings will stand before the Righteous Judge, to render a final accounting of their stewardship* (Matt. 11:20-24, 12:41-42, 25:31-46; Acts 17:30-31; Rom. 2:16; 2 Cor. 5:10; Heb. 9:27-28; Rev. 20:11-15). Both the just and the unjust (the saved and the lost) shall have part in the general resurrection which must, of course, precede the Judgment (John 5:28-29, 11:24; Acts 24:15; 1 Cor. 15:22; 1 Thess. 4:13-17; 2 Thess. 1:7-10; Rev. 20:13). This Last Judgment is an event to be expected in the future (Acts 24:25, Heb. 10:27); an event that is to follow physical death (Heb. 9:27), an event that is to be attended by all humanity (Matt. 12:41-42, 16:27, 25:31-32; Acts 17:30-31; 2 Cor. 5:10), an event for which those who are evil are "reserved" (2 Pet. 2:4-10; Matt. 13:24-30, 36-43). (2)

THE PROBLEM OF EVIL

At this Last Judgment, the Judge will be the Lord Jesus Christ. At His first Advent, the Only Begotten came as "the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29, Isa. 53:7, Acts 8:32, 1 Cor. 5:7, 1 Pet. 1:19, Rev. 5:6, 8, 12, 13; Rev. 6:1). At His second Advent, He will come as "the Judge of the living and the dead" (Acts 10:42; Matt. 3:12, 7:22-23; 16:27, 25:31; Luke 22:30; John 5:22-29; Rom. 2:16, 14:9-12; 2 Cor. 5:10). Though God is the Judge of all (Heb. 12:23), yet His judicial activity is exercised through Christ, both in the present state of things and at the Last Day (John 5:22; Matt. 19:28, 25:31-46, 28:18; Acts 17:31; 1 Cor. 15:20-28; 2 Cor. 5:10; Phil. 2:7-11; Rev. 3:21). Christ will appear in the Judgment in His threefold capacity. As Prophet, He will reveal the Father to His saints in glory (John 16:25, 17:24-26); as High Priest, He will present His saints before the Throne as an elect race, a redeemed people, a purchased possession (1 Pet. 2:9); as King, He will judge the world in righteousness (Acts 17:31).

(3) *The subjects of the Last Judgment will be the entire human race, and the evil angels: all humanity, each person possessed of a body reunited with spirit, the dead having been raised, and the living having been changed* (1 Thess. 4:16-17; 1 Cor. 15:51-52; Matt. 25:31-33; Rev. 20:12-13); *the evil angels* (2 Pet. 2:4, Jude 6), the good angels appearing only as attendants and ministers of the Righteous Judge (Matt. 13:39-42, 24:31, 25:31; 2 Thess. 1:7-10; 1 Tim. 5:21; 2 Tim. 2:10). (4) *The design of the Last Judgment, in the Eternal Purpose and Plan of God, is to be "the revelation of the righteous judgment of God."* That is, not the *ascertainment* of the moral character of those appearing for judgment, but the *revelation of God's righteousness, justice, and holiness.* The notion that God will line all men up in rows and look them over, as in a military inspection, to ascertain their moral standing, is absurd. Our moral standing is known to God fully every

GENESIS

moment of our lives (Psa. 139:7-10; Job 26:6, 28:10; Prov. 15:3; Jer. 23:23-24; Acts 17:24-28; Heb. 4:13). Judgment will be, rather, the full and complete revelation of God's righteousness to all intelligent creatures, both angels and men. Thus the saints will be presented in the judgment clad in the fine linen of righteousness (Rev. 19:8-14), their sins having been covered by the atoning blood of Christ, forgiven and forgotten, put away from them forever (Psa. 103:12, Jer. 31:34, Heb. 8:12), that is, clothed in glory and honor and incorruption, the habiliments of eternal redemption (Rom. 2:7, Heb. 9:12). *In their manifestation, the ineffable greatness of God's love, mercy, and salvation will be fully disclosed to all His creatures.* The lost will be presented in the Judgment as they really are, that is, in all the realism of their neglect, rebelliousness, and iniquity. Even their secret sins will be brought to light and revealed to the whole intelligent creation. For the first time, perhaps, in the presence of Infinite Holiness, they will come to realize the enormity of their sinful lives, and the corresponding awfulness of their loss of God and Heaven; and the result will be weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth (of remorse, despair, and possibly rage occasioned by their utter frustration: Matt. 8:12, 13:42, 13:50, 22:13, 24:51, 25:30; Luke 13:28; Rev. 6:16-17). This final demonstration will be sufficient to prove to all intelligent creatures that Satan's charges against God have, from the beginning, been false and malicious, proceeding from a totally depraved being. *The result will be the complete vindication of God Almighty, which is, in itself, the primary design of the Last Judgment* (1 Cor. 6:2-3). This final demonstration of God's righteousness and of His love, in the salvation of His saints through the Atonement which He Himself provided to sustain the majesty of His law (Rom. 3:21-26), will be sufficient of itself to condemn Satan and all his kind.

(5) *Following the Great Judgment, both the saved and*

THE PROBLEM OF EVIL

the lost will enter upon their respective eternal states of being (Matt. 25:34, 41; John 5:29; Rev. 20:11-15, 21:1-8). As Jesus has so clearly stated, between the two classes there will be "a great gulf fixed" (Luke 16:26), that is, the verdict will be final (Rev. 22:11, cf. Job 14:1-4). In all likelihood, this judgment will be one of self-examination and self-determination: individual conscience, confronted by absolute Holiness (Perfection: Matt. 5:48, Heb. 6:1), will send each person to his own proper "place," as in the case of Judas (Acts 1:25)—the "place" determined by his own moral effort in this present probationary life. For the redeemed, this final state will be that of Union with God (the Beatific Vision), the union of the human mind with the Mind of God in knowledge and the union of the human will with the Will of God in love (1 Cor. 13:9-13; 1 John 1:1-4, 4:7-21). For the lost, the final state will be that of the complete loss of God and all Good (2 Thess. 1:7-10), Scripturally designated the second death (Rev. 2:11, 20:6, 14; 21:8; cf. Matt. 10:28, 23:33, 25:30, 25:41; Mark 9:43-48; Rom. 6:23). (Cf. Matt. 25:46. Note the use of the word "eternal" here: *whatever it means with reference to the timeless state of the redeemed, it means the same with reference to the timeless state of the lost.* "Eternity" in Scripture seems to mean, not stretched-out time, but *timelessness*: it is impossible for the mind, in man's present state, to grasp the significance of this term.) It should be noted here, finally, that the success of the Divine Cosmic Plan is to be determined, not by the number who are saved, but by the greatness of the salvation that God will ultimately reveal in His saints. Should only one man appear in the Judgment, clothed in glory and honor and incorruption (Rom. 2:7), redeemed in spirit and soul and body (Rom. 8:23, 1 Thess. 5:23), this one example will prove to be so indescribably glorious as to be sufficient to vindicate Divine Justice and Love (Isa. 46:9-11). (Love is, of course, an essential aspect of justice:

GENESIS

otherwise an Atonement would not have been necessary. As a noted preacher once said, A God who is all love would be an unjust God. This points up the fallacy—and the folly—of the various cults of “Universalism.”)

7. *Diabolism has existed in all ages.* (1) This is evident from the divine anathemas on such practices as idolatry (worship of graven images, of the heavenly bodies—sun, moon, stars); worship of animals and birds and insects, even of the human reproductive organs (phallic worship); sorcery, divination, augury, necromancy, in fact, all kinds of occultism. (These are overlapping terms, of course: cf. “consulting with familiar spirits,” that is, through spirit-mediums, fortune-tellers, etc.) (Exo. 20:4-6, 22:20; Lev. 19:4, 26:1; Deut. 4:15-19, 4:23-24, 7:25-26, 27:15; 2 Chron. 11:15; Psa. 97:7, 115:4; Isa. 42:7; Jer. 10:11; 1 Cor. 8:4, 10:14; 1 John 5:21.) (2) The Cult of Fertility which flourished throughout the pagan world in ancient times, included the worship of the “Earth-Mother” (*Terra Mater*) the essential feature of which was *ritual prostitution* (on the theory of imitative magic, namely, that human physical coition enhanced the fertility of the fields); *phallic worship*, that is veneration of the images of the male reproductive organs (this was practised in Athens in the time of the so-called “Enlightenment,” that is, the age of Socrates and Plato); and the worship of animals noted for their prolificness, such as the bull, the snake, the he-goat, etc. In the days of the Empire, the Roman Saturnalia was a period of complete public sexual promiscuity. (Cf. Exo. 32:7-8, Lev. 17:7, and especially Rom. 1:18-32.) (3) Note also Biblical references to *devil-worship* (Deut. 12:31, 32:17; Psa. 106:37; 2 Ki. 17:17; Ezek. 16:20-22; 1 Cor. 10:20; Rev. 9:20). (4) Note that as a rule these occult practices incurred the death penalty (by stoning) under the Mosaic Law (Exo. 22:18; Lev. 19:31, 20:6, 27; Deut. 18:9-14; Jer. 27:9-10). King Saul’s downfall was complete when he consorted with the

THE PROBLEM OF EVIL

Witch of Endor (1 Sam. 15:23, also ch. 28). (5) In the New Testament these are sins that will damn the soul (Luke 16:27-31; Acts 15:20, 17:29; 1 Cor. 8:1-6, 10:14, 10:19-22; Gal. 5:20; 1 John 5:21; Rev. 21:8, 22:15). (Note the quacks who tried to emulate the methods of the Apostles: Acts 8:9-13, 18:24, 13:6-12, 19:13-20.) These practices were all manifestations of diabolism in Bible times. It is well-known that devil-worship has been a feature of some kinds of so-called "spiritualism" even in modern times. (Suggestions: Research into the history of the Kabala, and into the history of "black magic" in the Middle Ages. Read the *Pharsalia*, Book VI, by the Latin poet Lucan, for a vivid account of these horrible practices in Thessaly; also the tragedy by Euripides, the *Bacchae*, for a study of "orgiastic religion." Look into contemporary voodooism as practised by West Indian Negroes. "Hexing" belongs in this category: see Hardy's novel, *The Return of the Native*, for the "hexing" of Eustacia Vye, who had acquired the reputation in the community of being a witch.)

8. *Does diabolism exist in our day?* It is difficult to think otherwise, else how could we account for the following: (1) the monstrous inhuman careers of a Hitler, a Goebels, a Stalin, and their ilk; (2) the vicious sex crimes, thrill murders, senseless killings, horrible forms of torture (*e.g.*, flaying a prisoner of war alive and making the skin into a lampshade), the cruelties of concentration camps, racism and attempted genocide, the "brain-washing" of captives taken in battle, etc.; (3) the prevalence of organized cults devoted exclusively to the spread of atheism. (This is something new in the world: ethnic groups—no matter how primitive—have uniformly recognized, in some way, their dependence on a higher Power or Powers.) (4) The rise of the totalitarian state. This also is new. Absolutisms have always existed: that is, systems in which absolute social and political control is exercised by the monarch,

GENESIS

(Matt. 22:30, cf. Acts 23:8). The theory that the doctrine of angels was just a bit of folklore to which Jesus accommodated Himself impugns both His wisdom and His goodness. He spoke so frequently of angels that his contemporaries *did suppose* Him to be accepting it as a matter of fact that angels do exist. If this belief was just a popular superstition without any foundation in fact, and Jesus knew this to be the case, surely His veracity—an essential aspect of His sinlessness—would have impelled Him to correct it. However, if He did not know any better, did not know that this was nothing but folklore, then His wisdom was deficient and He can be rightly accused of propagating error. But Jesus came to bring Truth, not error (John 14:6, 8:31-32). Again, if Paul had known that there are no such beings as angels, he could not have been honest in contenting himself with forbidding the Colossians to worship them (Col. 2:18): he would have been compelled to deny their existence as he denied the existence of heathen gods (1 Cor. 8:4). As Christopher writes: "The Inspired Volume not only assures us that this material world, and the living beings upon it, were created by God; that matter, as also the beings which are formed of it, owe their existence to Him directly; but it also reveals the existence of another order of beings, who inhabit a world invisible to us, who constitute a distinct category of intelligent creatures, and who, as a world, form an integral part of the universe. . . . The generic name of *angel* is given to this order of spirit beings. . . . We conceive of them as beings very high in the scale of creation, possessing powers similar to those of man, but far transcending his in every particular. They are classified in the Christian Scriptures as 'Thrones, Dominions, Principalities, and Powers,' names indicative of rank, glory, and majesty."¹²

2. *The doctrine is reasonable.* It is entirely reasonable to believe that there is a class of beings between man and

THE PROBLEM OF EVIL

God, celestial, ethereal, unlimited by any sense of space or time, in view of the many gradations that are known to exist between man and the lower forms of life. Again, practically all heathen mythologies have their inferior deities and demigods. Mythology has its origin in tradition, and tradition, as a rule, in some original fact. "Every counterfeit must have its genuine." Hence the existence of lesser deities in all heathen polytheisms, and the disposition of men everywhere to believe in beings superior to themselves and inferior to the Supreme Being, is a presumptive argument in favor of the existence of angels. Again, the entire Christian world accepts the doctrine of immortality. If there is a spiritual entity in man that lives on after the death of the body, why should it be thought unreasonable that God created spirits without physical bodies? While in Scripture angels appear with bodies, it is evident that these were not physical bodies, inasmuch as they could make themselves visible and then vanish from human sight, and it is in the sense that they do not possess *physical* bodies that we speak of them as being *incorporeal*. But this experience does not suggest doubt as to the reality of their bodies: it simply intimates that their bodies are not composed of gross matter (cf. 1 Cor. 15:47-49). Jesus appeared to the Eleven on several occasions after His resurrection and then vanished from their presence (Mark 16:12-14, Luke 24:13-31, 36-43; John 20:19-26, 21:1-14), and though He possessed the same individuality as before His death, it is evident that His body had undergone an important change of texture (Luke 24:39-40). (Indeed on occasion He vanished from human sight even while in His human body: Luke 4:30, John 10:39.) Moreover, the fact that in some cases in the Bible record, angels are represented as appearing in human form is evidence not that they really did have this external form, but, rather, that *men of old thought they did*. Had they actually possessed physical bodies they could hardly

GENESIS

have vanished from human sight as they often did. We must remember that "all flesh is not the same flesh," and that there is not only such a thing as a natural body, but that there is also such a thing as a spiritual body (1 Cor. 15:39-44).

3. *Finally, the doctrine of angels is spiritually constructive*, in that it helps to build us up in the most holy faith. (1) *It affords a barrier against materialism.* Materialism, indeed secularism of all kinds, deadens spiritual sensibilities. This present world has a charm which the physical nature of man finds hard to resist. It is easy to put wealth, world honor, pleasure, or business first, and to forget the "things that abide," such as faith, hope, love, piety, and spirituality. In the past century our schools have been invaded by a materialistic philosophy which has deadened man's concepts of spiritual realities. We have developed a class of teachers who, like the Sadducees of old, "say that there is no resurrection, neither angel, nor spirit" (Acts 23:8). They teach that "matter" (or energy) is the irreducible of all forms of being, that when the human body returns to the dust personality is annihilated. Man, they say, is simply an aggregate of protons and electrons; hence, that when the body dies everything human dies with it. This teaching has deadened the convictions of the modern ministry and has all but destroyed the evangelistic spirit of both pulpit and pew. It has rendered people, generally, indifferent to divine things. We need to emphasize anew the ideas of soul, spirit, angel, personal devil, personal God, etc. When the church loses sight of the meditative and the spiritual (call it "mystical" if you wish), the church will die of dry rot. (2) *It strengthens our faith in God's protecting care.* One of the blessings of adoption enjoyed by the Christian is heavenly protection. Knowing that a host of these ethereal creatures are constantly keeping watch over the "heirs of salvation" (Heb. 1:14), he is encouraged to press on "toward the goal unto the prize

THE PROBLEM OF EVIL

of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 3:14). What was written aforetime with reference to the Son of God, applies equally with reference to all the saints: "He will give his angels charge over thee," etc. (Psa. 91:10-12). Jesus tells us expressly that even little children are recipients of angelic care and protection (Matt. 18:10). It is a source of much comfort to the Christian to accept this statement in childlike faith, believing, in the words of John Milton, that

"Millions of spiritual creatures walk the earth,
Unseen, both when we wake and when we sleep."

(3) *Whole-hearted acceptance of this doctrine will help us in the struggle against sin.* It is a constant source of strength to know that these divine messengers—ministering spirits—are ever near at hand to sustain us if we manifest courage to remain true in the face of severe temptations (Matt. 4:11). Truly, in running the Christian race, we are constantly surrounded by "so great a cloud of witnesses" (Heb. 12:1-2), unseen and unheard, yet strong in grace and mighty in power! (Cf. Rom. 8:37-39, Cor. 10:13).

REVIEW QUESTIONS ON PART ELEVEN

1. What are the two general kinds of evil?
2. Criticize the popular notion that suffering is a direct Divine infliction of punishment for a personal sin or course of sin. What truth does the Book of Job contribute to the evaluation of this notion?
3. Criticize the view that all evil is illusory.
4. Criticize the view that evil is incomplete good.
5. Criticize the notion that evil is needed as a contrast to the good.
6. Discuss the disciplinary character of suffering.
7. What is the teaching of the Bible with regard to the origin of sin?

GENESIS

8. Is sin possible of any other form of being than that that of a person? Explain your answer.
9. Show how ordinary human experience supports the view that sin had to originate in the act of a person.
10. Who, according to Biblical teaching, was the person who committed the first sin? What was his motive?
11. How does the Christian doctrine of Atonement reconcile the antinomy between God's omnipotence and His goodness?
12. Summarize briefly the Biblical teaching about the nature and the work of angels.
13. What is the significance of the Biblical teaching with respect to good and evil angels?
14. Explain what is meant by "the mystery of lawlessness."
15. State the pedigree of sin as given in James 1:13-15?
16. Whom does Jesus explicitly identify as the first liar and the first murderer?
17. What is the proper distinction between *liberty* and *license*?
18. Who were the first anarchists in our cosmos?
19. Can anyone consistently deny the existence of sin in the world?
20. What powers specify the person to be a moral and hence responsible being?
21. Relate immaturity, irrationality, and depravity. To what extent, would you say, do these terms differ in meaning, if they differ at all?
22. What do we mean when we say that angels are incorporeal beings? On the other hand, are they bodiless? Explain your answer.
23. Explain the teaching of Jesus in Matt. 22:23-30 with respect to the nature of angels.
24. Does the Bible support the notion that angels are glorified spirits of deceased saints? Explain.

THE PROBLEM OF EVIL

25. What Scriptures may be cited to prove that angels are created beings?
26. What Scriptures may be cited to show that angels, though superhuman, are limited in intelligence and power?
27. What does the Bible have to say about their number?
28. List several incidents in which angels are represented as playing important roles in Scripture.
29. What does the Bible specifically state to be the work of angels?
30. What is the essential principle of sin?
31. What was the first phase of the Satanic rebellion against God? What was the result of it?
32. Who was Satan originally and what apparently was his office?
33. In what role does Satan appear in the story of Job?
34. What do we mean when we say that the evil angels are *totally depraved*? What Scripture phrases prove this to be true?
35. What did God permit Satan to do to Job? What restriction did He impose on Satan?
36. Give reasons for believing that Satan is a person.
37. What are some of the names given Satan in the Bible? What are some of the terms used to describe his role as the enemy of all good?
38. Should we hold God responsible for suffering and death? If not, why not?
39. By what specific term does the Apostle Peter describe Satan's activity in human affairs?
40. What is the import of the Apostle Paul's designation of Satan as "prince of the powers of the air," and "the god of this world"?
41. What is the limit of Satan's power?
42. What shall be the ultimate reward enjoyed by the good angels?

GENESIS

43. Distinguish between the *guilt* of sin and the *consequences* of sin. In what two Scriptures do we find this distinction indicated?
44. Show that the Biblical doctrine of Hell is entirely reasonable.
45. What truths are to be derived from the cases of demonology recorded in the Bible?
46. What was the second phase of Satan's war on God?
47. Explain why it was possible for God to extend mercy to the first human sinners, but not possible for Him to extend mercy to Satan and his rebels.
48. What did Satan do to bring about universal wickedness in the age before the Flood?
49. What was the third phase of Satan's war on God?
50. In this connection, what was the special significance of the Messianic prophecies of the Old Testament?
51. What was the fourth phase of Satan's war on God?
52. In relation to this conflict what was the special significance of the scene at the Jordan immediately following Jesus' baptism?
53. When did the anointing of Jesus take place and what did it signify?
54. What was the direct challenge implicit in the Father's avouching of the Sonship of Jesus immediately following the latter's baptism?
55. In what climactic event did the conflict between Messiah and Satan terminate?
56. What was the significance of the Resurrection of Christ in relation to Satan's ultimate destiny?
57. What special significance has the Resurrection in the Christian System as a whole?
58. How does Jesus relate the Old Testament story of Jonah to the fact of His own resurrection from the dead?
59. What is the fifth and final phase of Satan's war on God?

THE PROBLEM OF EVIL

60. By what methods do these evil spirits influence human-kind in our day?
61. What has God promised His saints with respect to the wiles of these evil spirits?
62. What special means shall the saints employ to resist the wiles of the Devil?
63. What is to be the final outcome of this Satanic rebellion against God?
64. State the Biblical doctrine of the Last Judgment. Who will be the Judge at the Last Judgment? What classes will be present for the Judgment?
65. What shall be the essential character of this Last Judgment? What is the apparent import of the Apostle's declaration that the saints shall judge angels (1 Cor. 6:3)?
66. In what sense will the Last Judgment be the vindication of the Justice and Love of God?
67. What shall be the respective destinies of the saved and the lost following the Judgment?
68. What is the significance of the word *eternal* as used by Jesus in Matt. 25:46 with reference to the destinies of *both* the saved and the lost?
69. What are the evidences that diabolism has existed in all ages?
70. What are the evidences that diabolism exists in our day?
71. Give some reasons, aside from Biblical teaching, for accepting the existence and activity of angels as facts.
72. On what grounds do we say that the doctrine of angels is reasonable?
73. On what grounds do we affirm the doctrine to be spiritually constructive?
74. What is meant by heavenly protection and how do angels figure in it?

GENESIS

75. What does Jesus teach about angels and little children?
76. What practical values derive from wholehearted acceptance of Biblical teaching about the work of the angels? And Biblical teaching as well concerning the cosmic conflict between the forces of good and the forces of evil?

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THE PROBLEM OF EVIL

Samuel M. Thompson (MPR, 507-508): "A world free of evil would have to be a world which contained nothing capable of evil. A world without natural evil would be a world without the use of one thing by another for its existence; and this, it seems, would be a world without change. Considering the problem, however, primarily with respect to moral evil, we can imagine this condition fulfilled in two different ways. A world may contain nothing capable of moral evil because there is nothing in it capable of acting on its own initiative. Such a world would contain nothing which had reached the stage where morally responsible action is possible. The beings existing in such a world would be neither morally good nor morally evil; they would be unmoral [amoral]. The other sense in which we may conceive something incapable of moral evil is in the sense that it is perfectly good. A world which contained moral agents all of whom were incapable of doing wrong, or were able to refrain from doing wrong and did so refrain, would be a world free of evil. These are the two alternatives to the contention, which we are here defending, that a world which contains free agents is a world which contains evil but that the existence of such a world is good. It seems quite plain that a world in which free agents are included is in some significant sense a higher existence than one in which free choice would be impossible. The theistic solution of the problem of evil, as against those who see the very possibility of evil as something itself evil, can be summed up in this: *Not even God can love a puppet.* It goes without saying that no puppet, however complicated may be the motions through which it is put, can love."

* * * *

GENESIS

(The late Dorothy L. Sayers was an Oxford professor, a brilliant literateur, author of the well-known Lord Peter Wimsey (detective) stories, and withal a profound Christian believer. The following excerpt is taken from the text, *Introduction to Religious Philosophy*, pp. 11-12, by Geddes MacGregor. Published by Houghton Mifflin, Boston, 1959.)

"The only letter I ever want to address to average people is one that says: Why don't you take the trouble to find out what is Christianity and what isn't? Why, when you can bestir yourself to learn technical terms about electricity, won't you do as much for theology before you begin to argue ?

Why do you never read either the ancient or the modern authorities in the subject, but take your information for the most part from biologists and physicists who have picked it up as inaccurately as yourselves? Why do you accept mildewed old heresies as bold and constructive contributions to modern thought when any handbook on Church History would tell you where they came from?

Why do you complain that the proposition that God is three-in-one is obscure and mystical and yet acquiesce meekly in the physicist's fundamental formula, '2P-PQ equals IH over 2 Pi where I equals the square root of minus 1,' when you know quite well that the square root of minus 1 is paradoxical and Pi is incalculable?

What makes you suppose that the expression 'God ordains' is narrow and bigoted whereas the expressions 'nature provides' or 'science demands' are objective statements of fact?

You would be ashamed to know as little about internal combustion as you do about beliefs. I admit that you can practise Christianity without knowing much about theology, just as you can drive a car

THE PROBLEM OF EVIL

without understanding internal combustion. But if something breaks down in the car, you humbly go to the man who understands the works, whereas if something goes wrong with religion you merely throw the creed away and tell the theologian he is a liar.

Why do you want a letter from me telling you about God? You will never bother to check up on it and find out whether I am giving you a personal opinion or the Church's doctrine. Go away and do some work. Yours very sincerely, Dorothy L. Sayers."

* * * *

"Just as the account of creation in Genesis has been able to communicate the majesty of God the Creator within every cosmology from Ptolemy to Einstein precisely because it is not a blow-by-blow account of the origin of the cosmos but a dramatic dialogue transcending all world views, so the apocalyptic setting of the Sermon on the Mount and of the call to discipleship, 'Follow me!' grounds the summons of Jesus in the absolute character of God and of his demands upon us. We may answer No to the summons, but answer we must."

—Jaroslav Pelikan, art., "Theologian and Thinker" (tribute to Dr. Schweitzer), *Saturday Review*, Sept. 25, 1965.