

Doctrine of the Difficulty of Theodicy

1. There are four questions which neither natural reason or the Bible allows us to understand.
 - How can a holy God permit moral evil?
 - How could a being created pure ever fall?
 - How can we be responsible for inborn depravity?
 - How can Christ justly suffer?

2. Perhaps some day an answer to these questions will be given. Perhaps in eternity these questions will not matter any longer.

3. However, until the day of understanding arrives, or a state of perpetual indifference, the heart of man will wrestle with the mysteries the mind conceives.

4. Taking the first inquiry as to how a holy God could permit evil, some arguments have been suggested to form a theodicy (*Theos*, God; *dike*, justice) or a vindication of the justice of God.

5. Conservative theologians have suggested the following propositions.
 - Freedom of the will is necessary to virtue.
 - God suffers more from sin than the sinner.
 - With the permission of sin God provided a redemption which is of more infinite value than the act of transgression.
 - God will eventually overrule all evil for good.

6. Consider now the first proposition, *Freedom of the will is necessary to virtue*. While it is not hard to conceive of a universe without sin, the question is whether or not such a universe is the best.
 - Professor A.H. Strong writes, “*We cannot deny that God could prevent sin in a moral universe. But it is doubtful whether God could prevent sin in the **best** moral universe. The most perfect freedom is indispensable to the attainment of the highest universe.*”
 - Charles Spurgeon declared, “*There could have been no moral government without the permission to sin.*”
 - E. G. Robinson said, “*God could not have revealed His character so well without moral evil as with moral evil.*”

7. While the discussion continues, the conclusion of the matter has to be this for the conservative Christian. Since God created the universe the way He did and allowed sin, then this expression of creation has to be the best, or God would have created the universe in a different manner, for He could have done no other.
8. Whatever God ultimately performs is “*very good.*”

Is God the Author of Sin?

9. To the next logical question “*Is God the Author of Sin?*” the answer is, “*no.*” God is holy and righteous. He cannot be tempted to do wrong neither can He, or will He, tempt others to evil.
10. God is not the author of sin, but the author of free beings, Adam and Eve, who were themselves the authors of sin. God does not decree efficiently to work evil desires or choices in men.
11. God decrees sin only in the sense of decreeing to create and preserve those who will sin. In all of this man attributes sin to himself and not to God. Moreover, God hates, denounces, and punishes sin.
 - Though the brothers of Joseph had their intentions and their actions overruled by the sovereignty of God, it does not lessen their wickedness (Gen. 50:20).
 - Pope Leo X brought on the Reformation by his greed and yet was guilty.
 - Jesus said of His betrayal, Matthew 26:24 “*The Son of man goeth as it is written of him: but woe unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! it had been good for that man if he had not been born.*”
 - When Robert G. Ingersoll asked, “*Why did God make the devil?*” one theologian responded, “*God made a holy and free spirit who abused his liberty, himself created sin, and so made himself a devil.*”
12. And there we must leave the whole matter. God thought it best to allow sin; individuals are responsible for their own actions; God is just in judging sin, and gracious in forgiving it.