

world containing moral good but no moral evil. Under these conditions God could have created a world containing no moral evil only by creating a world without significantly free persons. But it is possible that every creaturely essence suffers from transworld depravity; so it's possible that God could not have created a world containing moral good but no moral evil.

And now it is a simple matter to specify the proposition *P* we were looking for on page 548: a proposition whose conjunction with

(21) God is omnipotent, omniscient, and all good

is consistent and entails

(22) There is evil

Obviously,

(26) God creates a world containing moral good, and every creaturely essence suffers from transworld depravity

will do the trick.

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MIDDLE KNOWLEDGE *

IN controversy with Dominicans, Jesuit theologians have held that God has what they call "middle knowledge." By this they mean that God knows, not just what is actual and what is merely possible, but also which of the various possible free actions *would* be performed by each possible free creature in any possible situation. Consider:

(1) If David stayed in Keilah, Saul would besiege the city.

(See I Sam. 23:1-14.) It is claimed both that God knows with certainty that (1) is true and that Saul's action would be free in a sense that is inconsistent with any sort of determinism.

Plantinga seems to agree that God has such knowledge. But I do not think that is possible, because I cannot understand what it would be for such counterfactuals as (1) to be determinately true, given the Jesuits' and Plantinga's assumptions about free will. (1) cannot be true by corresponding with an actual siege of Keilah by

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Saul, because no such event ever was or will be actual. (1) cannot be true by virtue of a logically or causally necessary connection between its antecedent and its consequent; for then Saul's action would not be free in the relevant sense. For the same reason the truth of (1) cannot be explained as due to a conditional intention of God to *cause* Saul to besiege Keilah if David stayed there. On the other hand, a nonnecessitating basis for the truth of (1), in Saul's actual intentions and character, would not yield the certainty that is ascribed to middle knowledge. Strictly speaking, it would be a basis for the truth, not of (1), but of the claim that Saul would *probably* besiege Keilah if David stayed there.

The least clearly unsatisfactory explanation that the Jesuits gave for the possibility of middle knowledge is Suarez's. He held, in effect, that (1) is true by virtue of Saul's having the primitive, unanalyzable property of being an agent who would freely besiege Keilah if David stayed there. I object that I do not have any primitive understanding of such a property.

According to Plantinga's interesting explanation of the possibility of middle knowledge, for (1) to be true is for it to be the case that some possible world in which David stays in Keilah and Saul besieges the city is more similar to the actual world than is any possible world in which David stays in Keilah and Saul does not besiege the city. For two reasons, however, I think Plantinga fails to establish the possibility of middle knowledge.

A. He does not really give us a new solution, but a new form for old solutions. For it is not plausible to hold that all similarities among possible worlds are relevant to the truth of such conditionals as (1). What are relevant are similarities in such matters as causal laws, intentions, and people's characters. But we have already seen that these matters cannot provide an adequate foundation for truths to be known by middle knowledge.

B. Middle knowledge, according to those who ascribe it to God, is supposed to be useful to God in making decisions, and God's choices in creating are supposed to be partly explained by the truth of some of the relevant counterfactuals. The truth of those counterfactuals must therefore be prior to God's choices, in the order of explanation. But Plantinga's analysis makes God's choices prior, in the order of explanation, to the truth of counterfactuals. For it makes the truth of counterfactuals depend partly on which possible world is actual, which depends in part on God's choices.

Plantinga supposes it may well be a fact that every possible free creature would do some wrong, if God created it and permitted it to

act freely, no matter what else God did. This seems implausible to me, even on the assumption that God has middle knowledge. If we hold the Jesuit theologians' conception of free will, it is plausible to suppose (as they did) that there are infinitely various ways in which God's grace can affect us inwardly and outwardly while leaving our wills free to reject his commands. If, as Plantinga supposes, it is logically possible for us to lead sinless lives, surely there are, for most of us, some possible helps of grace by which we would in fact be induced to lead, freely, sinless lives—if such counterfactual claims about free actions can be true at all.

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PLANTINGA ON POSSIBLE WORLDS AND EVIL *

IN his paper Plantinga presents two important arguments. First, there is an argument to establish that there are possible worlds including free acts, that an omnipotent God cannot create; and, secondly, building on the conclusion of his first argument, there is an argument to solve one form of the problem of evil by showing that there is no inconsistency in asserting both that an omnipotent, omniscient, all-good being exists and that evil exists.

His first argument, I believe, contains a mistake. The mistake is Plantinga's claim that there is a state of affairs in *W* that includes every state of affairs God strongly actualizes in *W* but does not include Curley's freely accepting the bribe. I argue that, if God can weakly actualize *W*, then there is no such state of affairs in *W*. The general strategy of Plantinga's argument, however, is, I think, correct, and I accept his conclusion that there are possible worlds containing free acts, that an omnipotent God cannot create.

It is important to note that Plantinga's arguments rest on the controversial assumption that it is necessarily true that, if a person is caused to do *A*, then he does not freely do *A*. Neither of the major arguments in his paper is a good argument if this basic assumption—the thesis of incompatibilism—happens to be false. For, if the compatibilists are right, then presumably God can actualize a world in which Curley freely accepts the bribe and also can actualize a world in which Curley freely rejects the bribe. Therefore, Plantinga will not have proved that there are possible worlds containing free acts that God cannot create. And, if the compatibilists are right, it is false that every creaturely essence suffers from transworld depravity (see Plantinga's paper for the definition of this concept), and, con-

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