

St. Augustine, Freewill, and the Problem of Evil
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I. Outline of Talk

1. The Problem
2. Rejected Solutions
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5. Grace and the Structure of Man's Will
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II. Passages

1. Either God is willing to remove evils, and not able, or able and not willing, or neither able nor willing, or both able and willing, if he be willing and not able, he is impotent, which cannot be applied to the Deity. If he be able and not willing, he is envious, which is generally inconsistent with the nature of God. If he be neither willing nor able, he is both envious and impotent, and consequently no God. If he be both willing and able, which is the only thing that answers to the notion of a God, from whence come evils? Or why does he not remove them? [Bayle, *Dictionnaire Historique et Critique*; quoted in Kirwan p. 67].
2. God's attitude to good men is a father's; his love for them is a manly love. "Let them be harassed by toil and sorrow and loss," says he, "that so they may acquire true strength." Pampered bodies grow sluggish through sloth; not work but movement and their own weight exhausts them. Prosperity unbruised cannot endure a single blow, but a man who has been at constant feud with misfortunes acquires a skin calloused by suffering [Seneca, *The Stoic Philosophy of Seneca* p. 30-1].
3. When I came to think of my God, I knew of no way of doing so except as a physical mass. Nor did I think anything existed which is not material. That was the principal and almost sole cause of my inevitable error. For the same reason I also believed that evil is a kind of material substance with its own fouled and misshapen mass...And since piety (however bizarre some of my beliefs were) forbade me to believe that the good God had created an evil nature, I concluded that there are two opposed masses, both infinite, but the evil rather small, the good larger [Conf 5.10.20].
4. For you evil does not exist at all, and not only for you but for your created universe, because there is nothing outside it which could break in and destroy the order which you have imposed upon it. Superior things are self-evidently better than inferior. Yet with a sounder judgment I held that all things taken together are better than superior things by themselves [Conf 7.13.19].

5. I did not know that evil has no existence except as a privation of the good, down to that level which is altogether without being [*Conf* 3.7.12]. Or does [evil] not have any being? Why should we fear and avoid what has no being? If our fear is vain, it is certain that fear itself is evil, and that the heart is groundlessly disturbed and tortured. And this evil is the worse for the fact that it has no being to be afraid of. Yet we still fear. Thus either it is evil which we fear or our fear which is evil. Where the does it come from since God made everything Good? [*Conf* 7.5.7]
6. Now we do not say that God is omnipotent as if to believe that he is even able to die, or as if he should not be omnipotent because his is unable to do that [*Contra Faustum Manichaeuni* 26.5; quoted in Kirwan p. 64].
7. Here someone may perhaps say, Where do sins themselves come from, and where does evil in general come from? If from men, where do men come from? If from angels, where do angels come from? The answer that these latter come from God, though perfectly true, will give the impression to anyone who is inexpert and not very competent at investigating abstruse questions, that evils and sins are connected by some sort of chain to God. [*De Duabus Animabus contra Manichaeos* 8.10; quoted in Kirwan pg. 74].
8. What causes this monstrous fact? And why is it so? The mind commands the body and is instantly obeyed. The mind commands itself and meets resistance. The mind commands the hand to move, and it is so easy that one hardly distinguishes the order from its execution. Yet mind is mind, and hand is body. The mind orders the mind to will. The recipient of the order is itself, yet it does not perform it... So there are two wills, Neither of them is complete, and what is present in the one is lacking in the other [*Conf* 8.10.24].
9. [At the time] I believed continence to be achieved by personal resources. I was so stupid as not to know that, as it is written, “no one can be continent unless You grant it” [*Conf* 6.11.20].

III. Bibliography

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