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He Takes Back the Ticket...For Us: Providence, Evil, Suffering, and the Vicarious Humanity of Christ

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1. The dilemma is stated well by Ivan in Dostoyevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov*. In his argument with his saintly brother Alyosha, Ivan makes it clear that he is all too aware of the absurdity of believing in the providence of God in a world of needless suffering, especially the suffering of children. So, in disgust, he returns the ticket of "eternal harmony" to God.

2. Do we dare keep the ticket ourselves today? How can we do that in all honesty? My proposal, building upon Karl Barth's argument that providence should proceed from Christology, considers the biblical emphasis of what T. F. Torrance has called *the vicarious humanity of Christ*. This means that Christ in his *humanity* believes when we find it difficult, if not impossible, to believe, especially when it comes to facing human suffering. Jesus lived a life of perfect faith in, worship of, and service to the Father, even at the cross, yet still believed in the providence of God. His belief is not simply a model of faith, but it is also *vicarious* faith. He believed (and believes) for us, as our representative, and in our place, as our substitute. The Son believed in the providence of the Father, as difficult as that is to do in a world of evil and suffering, so that we might believe as well.

3. Beginning with some introductory remarks on the issue and the proposal, I will then present four theses exploring the implications, promise, and problems of the vicarious humanity of Christ for providence, suffering, and evil.

Introductory Remarks with Fear and Trembling: How Do We Discuss the Mystery of Evil?

4. Do I really need to persuade anyone that there is a problem of evil? For those like Ivan, the skeptical brother in Dostoyevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov*, the indictment of a loving omnipotent God is obvious in the light of *dysteleology*, needless, gratuitous evil, most obviously seen in the suffering of innocent children.¹ Even if a kind of "eternal harmony" might result in such suffering, Ivan will hand back his "ticket" to such a world. It is not worth it. And in that refusal, he is refusing the morality, if not the existence, of a God who would create such a world.²

¹ Fyodor Dostoyevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov*, trans. Constance Garnett (New York: Vintage, 1955), 291.

² Kenneth Surin, "Theodicy," in *The Turnings of Darkness and Light: Essays in Systematic and Philosophical Theology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 82–83.

5. This is our world, too. It is a world of injustice. In Albert Goldbarth's poem, "Even, Equal," he describes the "two schoolgirls" found "under half-receded ice, the bruises frozen, into lustrous broaches at their frozen throats."

Whoever did it is still out there, is free and maybe needing more. The word "injustice" doesn't include the choking gall that burns through me...³

6. In "Meop," Goldbarth expresses for many what has been lost: the belief that "in some megamatrix substrate (God, or atoms, or Imagination) holds the infinite unalike dots at its body in a parity, and daily life reflects this." Why? One need to look only at a scenario such as,

...only yesterday, a girl, eleven, was found with the name of a rival gang, *Lady Satans*, carefully cut in her thigh and rubbed with drainpipe acid. Somewhere there may be a world where such as these are equally legitimized, but not here in the thick and swirling mists of Planet Albert.⁴

"Planet Albert" is my planet, too. Our planet.

7. The doctrine of providence only muddies the water. The question becomes, not just how God can permit or allow evil, but how can we say such a thing if we believe that God controls, let alone, dare we say it, *cares*, for the universe?⁵

8. Of course, not everyone is an Ivan. For some theologians, providence is the answer to the problem of evil. John Leith claims, "Christians all acknowledge that everything that happens is the will of God."⁶ Maybe not "all Christians," at least not myself, as strange as that may sound to many. But for some, God is not responsible for evil because, citing the Book of Job, God is not answerable to anyone.⁷

9. All Christians acknowledge there is mystery in the relationship between providence and evil. The crucial question may be, How does one approach the mystery? From Luther to Barth, some have lamented that the Church rarely sees providence in a Christological light.⁸ For Barth,

³ Albert Goldbarth, "Even, Equal," in *Beyond* (Boston: David R. Godine, 1998), 21.

⁴ Goldbarth, "Meop," 40.

⁵ Paul Helm, *The Providence of God* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 1994), 25.

⁶ John Leith, *Basic Christian Doctrine* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1994), 25.

⁷ R. K. McGregor Wright, *No Place for Sovereignty: What's Wrong with Freewill Theism* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 1996), 201.

⁸ John Stackhouse, *Can God Be Trusted? Faith and the Problem of Evil* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 101–103; cf. B. A. Gerrish, *The Old Protestantism and the New: Essays on the Reformation Heritage* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), 131–149 and John Sanders, *The God Who Risks: A Theology of Providence* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 1998), 116.

faith in Christ means that

There is for it no obscurity concerning the nature and will and work of the Lord of history, no ambiguity concerning His character and purpose, and no doubt as to His ability to see to His own glory in history.⁹

Barth is fond of citing John 5:17: “My Father is still working and I also am working.”

10. The Christological implications for providence still remain to be unpacked it seems to me. One implication that does not seem to have been explored is suggested by T. F. Torrance’s doctrine of *the vicarious humanity of Christ*.¹⁰ The implications of Jesus Christ for providence, evil, and suffering are usually seen in one of two ways: One, in terms of Jesus Christ as the revelation of God, a God who is close to us, a God who loves us, as seen in the life and ministry of Jesus. As John Stackhouse says, in Jesus

We see what we desperately need to see: God close to us, God active among us, God loving us, God forgiving our sin, God opening up a way to a new life of everlasting love.¹¹

⁹ Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, trans. and ed. by G. W. Bromiley and T. F. Torrance, 4 vols. in 13 parts (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1936–1969), III/3, 34 (hereafter cited as *CD*).

¹⁰ The most important writings on the vicarious humanity of Christ are found in T. F. Torrance, *The Mediation of Christ*, rev. ed. (Colorado Springs: Helmers and Howard, 1992); and “The Word of God and the Response of Man,” in *God and Rationality* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971), 133–164; James B. Torrance, “The Vicarious Humanity of Christ,” in *The Incarnation: Ecumenical Studies in the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed*, ed. T. F. Torrance (Edinburgh: The Handsel Press, 1981), 121–147; *Worship, Community, and the Triune God of Grace* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 1996), and Thomas F. Torrance, James B. Torrance, and David W. Torrance, *A Passion for Christ: The Vision That Ignites Ministry* (Edinburgh: The Handsel Press; Lenoir: PLC Publications, 1999). The implications of the vicarious humanity of Christ for view of salvation are discussed in my book, *The Vicarious Humanity of Christ and the Reality of Salvation* (Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 1991). Pastoral implications are addressed in my essays, “The Atonement as the Life of God in the Ministry of the Church,” in *Incarnational Ministry: The Presence of Christ in Church, Society, and Family: Essays in Honor of Ray S. Anderson*, eds. Christian D. Kettler and Todd Speidell (Colorado Springs: Helmers and Howard, 1990), 58–78 and “‘For I Do Not Do the Good I Want...and I’m Tired of Trying’: Weakness and the Vicarious Humanity of Christ,” in *On Being Christian...and Human: Essays in Celebration of Ray S. Anderson*, ed. Todd H. Speidell (Eugene, Oreg.: Wipf and Stock, 2002). Elmer M. Colyer provides a helpful survey of the vicarious humanity of Christ in T. F. Torrance’s thought in *How to Read T. F. Torrance: Understanding His Trinitarian and Scientific Theology* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 2001), 97–126. Cf. Andrew Purves, “The Christology of Thomas F. Torrance” in *The Promise of Trinitarian Theology: Theologians in Dialogue with T. F. Torrance*, ed. Elmer M. Colyer (Lanham: Md.: Rowman and Littlefield, 2001), 51–80 and Alister E. McGrath, *T. F. Torrance: An Intellectual Biography* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1999), 156, 160.

¹¹ Stackhouse, *Can God be Trusted?*, 104.

11. A second alternative is prominent in the Fathers. In Christ we see God providing a model of *vicarious suffering*.¹² A form of the *imitatio Christi*, this shows us the benefit of suffering for others, in order to achieve the “greater good.” Stackhouse, while rightly emphasizing the relevance of a “God-manward” movement in the deity of Christ, does not mention the significance of his humanity. The patristic model includes the element of Christ’s vicarious work, even that it involves Christ’s suffering, but Torrance’s doctrine of the vicarious *humanity* of Christ adds that it is the entirety of Christ’s life that was lived for us and on our behalf, not just limited to his death on the cross, or even including the suffering throughout his life. What implications might this have for understanding the relationship between providence and evil? Four theses will suggest some possible directions:

Thesis One: The vicarious humanity of Christ is based on the incarnation, the revelation of what it means for God to be Father as well as the revelation of what knowledge of the Father means to an obedient, faithful human being.

12. The incarnation must not be taken lightly. The logical conundrum of how the eternal, infinite God can become finite, temporal human being has long been a stumbling block to those considering Christian faith. Whatever may be the result of those deliberations, one thing may be said: The incarnation is an exhibition of the freedom of God. The doctrines of the impassibility and immutability of God have had rough times in recent years, and perhaps rightly so. But they are never to be understood as undermining the fantastic event of “something new” for God, as Torrance puts it, the nature of the incarnation to exert power, not just over our logic, but over our very lives.¹³ God is neither incapable of being moved with compassion; nor is God incapable of action: the incarnation powerfully demonstrates both.

13. Indeed, in recent years some theologians such as Clark Pinnock and John Sanders have suggested God’s interaction with created being in the incarnation involves not only the movement of his compassion and his ability to act, but also a kind of vulnerability, a “risk” which is a necessity of genuine love in God and freedom for the creature.¹⁴ As my college professor Jerry Irish once asked, “Can you genuinely love a person without being changed by them?” He was speaking of process theology, but the concerns of what is called the “risk” or “openness” view are the same. John Sanders, in his provocative and engaging book, *The God Who Risks: A Theology of Providence*, argues that God’s work and words are “open to be discussed,” “open to question, then open to being accepted and rejected.”¹⁵ Genesis 22, in the test of Abraham, reflects God’s

¹² James Walsh, ed., *Divine Providence and Human Suffering* (Wilmington, Del.: Michael Glazier, 1985), 163–179.

¹³ T. F. Torrance, *Divine and Contingent Order* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981), 6.

¹⁴ Clark H. Pinnock, “Systematic Theology,” in *The Openness of God* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 1994), 119.

¹⁵ Sanders, *The God Who Risks*, 46.

desire for genuine “human input,” of faith, of trust.¹⁶

14. I believe Sanders is right. For too long the Church has behaved as if it believed in grace as some kind of sheer, unyielding power, like that of Green Lantern’s power ring in the old Green Lantern comic books, a coercive power which challenges whether God really is, in his essence, love.

15. But are we ready for this kind of faith, this kind of trust? Certainly the story of Israel is the story of you and me, of humanity, of our inability and unwillingness to obey our creator. Is not the incarnation the story of God becoming human, in order to take up the response for us? God himself provides the “human input”! Even those at the foot of the cross exclaimed, albeit mockingly, “He trusts in God!” (Matt. 27:43). Dostoyevsky’s Ivan will not allow anyone to believe in the morality of God in such a world of needless suffering. The incarnation is God’s act, not only to provide the revelation of God, but also the genuine human response, especially in the light of the difficulty of belief. Sanders emphasizes the importance of the trust of Jesus: “Who will trust in God? Jesus will! Jesus shows us that we can trust the Father even unto death.”¹⁷ But notice that, for Sanders, this is restricted to the faith of Jesus as only a model, not as a vicarious act. Ivan needs more than a model. A virtuous model may at first inspire, but ultimately will frustrate. The hurts are too deep, the reality is too stark.

16. Ivan’s question is a question of God’s character. Is God loving? Is God caring? In light of the ambiguity of creation, are love and care really that evident? For some, such as Paul Helm, the traditional distinction between the two wills of God is helpful: the will which is expressed in creation, the revealed will (what is, empirically known), in which good and evil coexist, and the “secret” will (what ought to be, according to God’s ultimate desire).¹⁸ The “problem of evil” arises because of these two wills.

17. Helm raises the issue of what is ultimately the nature of God as “Father.” The vicarious humanity of Christ speaks, however, of a different revelation of God as Father than a distinction between God as he appears to be and a “God behind God’s back.”¹⁹ The one will of God is seen in Jesus Christ, in his becoming human, and doing for us what we have been unable to do for ourselves. As Barth puts it, God “wills and works what He has revealed as His will and work in Jesus Christ, His Son.”²⁰ Sanders has rightly seen this distinction between the two wills as a part

¹⁶ Ibid., 53–54.

¹⁷ Ibid., 105.

¹⁸ Helm, *The Providence of God*, 130, 133. Cf. John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, ed. J. T. McNeill, trans. and indexed by F. L. Battles. 2 vols. Library of Christian Classics 20 and 21 (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1960), I.17.2, citing Rom. 11:33–34.

¹⁹ T. F. Torrance, *Reality and Scientific Theology* (Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 1985), 201 n. 3: “We cannot know God behind his back, as it were, by stealing knowledge of him, for we may know him only in accordance with the way he has actually taken in revealing himself to us.”

²⁰ Barth, *CD* III/3, 34.

of the doublemindedness of the tradition: trying to hold together both the God of biblical history and the God of Greek metaphysics.²¹ Such a monistic Being is in stark contrast with the richness of the biblical God who reveals himself in history as in an eternal relationship of love between the Father and the Son through the Spirit.²²

18. Sanders, however, seems to create his own problem when he weds language about God to that which is “embedded within the conditions in which God has placed us.”²³ This is part of his plea to view scriptural language concerning God’s actions, such as “God repenting” as univocal, not analogical. Granted, we must speak of God with human language. But has not God taken upon our “condition,” not just to reflect our thoughts about God as Father, based on our experiences (simply as representative), but also to take our place (as substitute), because we do not know God, because we cannot fathom the ways of God? We need Christ’s vicarious *knowledge* of God in a world which sends us mixed signals. The qualitative distinction between God and humanity does not condemn us to silence, as Sanders would suggest, but rather stresses our need for the Son’s vicarious knowledge of the Father (Matt. 11:27; John 14, 17). So also, the wonders of God’s providence do not point to a coercive God who causes everything to happen in minute detail. As Davies and Allison suggest, the fact that “the hairs of your head are all counted” (Matt. 10:30) is not instruction in meticulous providence, but a reminder of our ignorance; we do not know.²⁴ But the Son does, for us. What the Son knows is the heart of the Father. We made manifest our ignorance in our betrayal of the Son. So he prays, “Father, forgive them; for *they do not know* what they are doing” (Luke 23:34).

19. Sanders cites Moses’ ministry as intercessor (Exod. 32–34) as an example of how God is influenced through “a forceful presentation by one who is in a special relationship with God.”²⁵ So one would assume that the Father heard the Son because of the “forceful presentation” of his life and sacrifice. But that creates an unfortunate chasm between the Father and the Son, which others have expressed in a doctrine of the atonement in which the Father’s wrath and justice are satisfied by the sacrifice of the innocent Son, a particularly Nestorian temptation in the kind of extreme Calvinism which John McLeod Campbell, the great nineteenth century Scottish theologian had to counter in his book, *The Nature of the Atonement*.²⁶ No, the *homoousion* between the Father and the Son will not permit such a chasm.

²¹ Sanders, *The God Who Risks*, 79.

²² Pinnock, *The Openness of God*, 111.

²³ Sanders, *The God Who Risks*, 30.

²⁴ W. D. Davies and Dale Allison, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to Saint Matthew*, Vol. 1 (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1988), 209.

²⁵ Sanders, *The God Who Risks*, 64.

²⁶ John McLeod Campbell, *The Nature of the Atonement* (Edinburgh: The Handsel Press; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996).

20. Sanders is right to emphasize that the love of the Father is not coercive. Love cannot be forced. A genuine relationship of love involves reciprocation.²⁷ Love does not insist on its own way, he cites from 1 Corinthians 13:4.²⁸ But the vicarious humanity of Christ has already provided the “reciprocation,” a reciprocation which comes out of a relationship in God himself.²⁹ The humanity of the Son is that of “the one true Israelite,” in Barth’s words, who perfectly acknowledges that King Yahweh has come among his people.³⁰ He confesses that Yahweh is Lord. Yahweh is different from his creation, but he is no tyrant.³¹

21. Not only does the Son supply the knowledge we lack, but he also fulfills the faith and obedience which the Father deserves and which we need in order to believe in a good and omnipotent God. As Barth reminds us, providence is to be believed, based on a hearing of the word of God.³² We should not be surprised at Ivan’s difficulty. Langdon Gilkey once commented that the doctrine of providence has declined in the modern world because it seems by definition to go beyond that which religion may speak, “the faith relation.”³³ But perhaps it is faith that is the strongest element in terms of reclaiming providence; not primarily our faith, but the faith of Christ, the one who has heard the word of God. Traditional theology has distinguished between the *fides qua creditur* (the faith which believes) and the *fides quae creditur* (the faith which is believed).³⁴ The knowledge of the Father’s providence for the Son consists of both.

22. The Son is the agent who believes (*fides qua creditur*) who has the ability to truly believe, “faith as trust,” in Barth’s words, which believes “in spite of all that contradicts it.”³⁵ Thus, genuine Christian faith is a participation in the prior hearing of the Word of God by Jesus Christ, his faith, obedience, and prayer.³⁶ The content of what Jesus believes is also of essential importance (*fides quae creditur*): Jesus believes in God himself, not in creation.³⁷

23. The faith of Jesus is the kind of faith that is able to live with the ambiguities of our world, rather than to bow to the now outdated gods of modernity that demand certainty. Todd Speidell observes this contrast between the Son who cries from the cross, “My God, my God, why have

²⁷ Sanders, *The God Who Risks*, 37.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 181.

²⁹ Jürgen Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, trans. R. A. Wilson and John Bowden (New York: Harper and Row, 1973), 149.

³⁰ Barth, *CD III/3*, 180.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 103. “The divine and creaturely subjects are not like or similar, but unlike.”

³² *Ibid.*, 15–18.

³³ Langdon Gilkey, “The Concept of Providence in Contemporary Theology,” *Journal of Religion* 43 (July 1963): 184.

³⁴ Heinrich Heppe, ed., *Reformed Dogmatics: Set Out and Illustrated from the Sources*, trans. G. T. Thomson (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1978), 527–528.

³⁵ Karl Barth, *Dogmatics in Outline*, trans. G. T. Thomson (New York: Philosophical Library, 1949), 15.

³⁶ Barth, *CD III/3*, 15–16, 246–253.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 18–19.

you forsaken me?” (Matt. 27:46) (but nonetheless still cries to God!), and themes in the films of Woody Allen, such as in *Hannah and Her Sisters*.³⁸ In *Hannah*, the hypochondriac demands absolute certainty in order to believe in God. I might as well. But Jesus, Speidell contends, does not. His faith on the cross is a genuine faith, *because* of the cry of abandonment. I am not one to claim, however, that I could ever have such faith, even with the comparatively little sufferings I have lived through. We need the faith of Jesus, *fides qua* and *quae*.

24. Fear of Nestorianism should not keep us, however, from recognizing the importance of the distinctly human will of Jesus, the obedience of the Son to the Father that is part and parcel of his faith. Pannenberg notes that the refusal of Jesus to “be like God” but nonetheless to be “obedient to the point of death—even death on a cross” (Phil. 2:6–8) is a vital reality of God’s trinitarian life, as well as an indication of the distinction between the Creator and the creature.³⁹ Therefore, Richard Rice, of the “risk” school, is right to emphasize the genuine struggles that Jesus went through. He was “one who in every respect has been tested as we are” (Heb. 4:15), “he learned obedience through what he suffered” (Heb. 5:8).⁴⁰ Gethsemane was a reality for the Son. Nonetheless, despite this suffering, by Jesus’ very life of obedience to the Father, he testifies that God is opposed to evil, he is not the source of evil and everything that happens.⁴¹ But the “risk” view still presents a problem. For example, Sanders’ view is that in Gethsemane, the petition to “Abba, Father...remove this cup from me...” (Mark 14:36; Matt. 26:39; Luke 22:42) signifies “he does not believe that everything must have happened according to a predetermined plan.”⁴² Sanders takes pain to distinguish his position from that of process theology, that the future is wholly indeterminate. God only limits some of his power, some of his knowledge.⁴³ True enough, not “everything,” but certainly the cross and resurrection (“the Son of Man *must* suffer many things...” Mark 8:31 et al.) is of the essence of what God has planned and has accomplished, for us! How can the prayer in Gethsemane then be separated from the cross and the resurrection? As Barth puts it, the King of Israel is “both the Planner and the Plan, the Orderer and the Order.”⁴⁴ Not everything is done according to a predetermined plan, but everything concerning *the Son* is. In his vicarious humanity, the Son is that Plan, he is that Order, in the midst of the chaos of Ivan’s world.

Thesis Two: The vicarious humanity of Christ speaks of a finished work, which continues to be finished, of one who has already believed, and continues to believe in the restoration of all things, as our representative and as our substitute.

³⁸ Speidell, “God, Woody Allen, and Job,” 551.

³⁹ Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Christian Spirituality* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1983), 82.

⁴⁰ Richard Rice, “Biblical Support for a New Perspective,” in *The Openness of God*, 44.

⁴¹ Sanders, *The God Who Risks*, 114.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 100.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 161–163.

⁴⁴ Barth, *CD III/3*, 188.

25. Ray Anderson, in his classic essay, “A Theology for Ministry,” writes of a theology of ministry based on Christ’s ministry, not our own agendas, a “ministry which has been accomplished” in the first century, “and which continues to be accomplished through the Holy Spirit, which indwells and actualizes the life of the Church.”⁴⁵ The foundation for this ministry is the vicarious humanity of Christ. But is this not a recipe for a determinism in which everything has been “finished” and our lives are lived only as charades under a deterministic God? Is this not the unilateral covenant of God, as Paul Helm sees it, in which God never surrenders the “superintendence of an act,” so that his knowledge and power is never “compromised”?⁴⁶

26. Through Christ’s vicarious faith, obedience, and prayers, we are not left up to ourselves, even our own desires.⁴⁷ But this is not a mechanistic kind of determinism. The question needs to be asked, Has God *already* loved us? It is hard to find an answer better than that of Karl Barth:

Always and everywhere when the creature works, God is there as the One who has already loved it, who has already undertaken to save and glorify it, who in this sense and to this end has already worked even before the creature itself began to work...⁴⁸

27. And, if so, how deep is that love? The depth of that love is that God realizes our desperate need, our total inability to believe in a loving and just God, or to believe in a world of meaning and purpose, so that, in his Son, he believes for us and in our place.

28. Where, however, is this victory of God? “Jesus is Victor”? Even Donald Bloesch questions Barth on this point. For Bloesch, the devil has not been defeated, only his power has been curtailed.⁴⁹ Given the tragedy of the two schoolgirls found murdered under the ice, it is hard to believe that is even the case.

29. The finished work of Christ should not be viewed apart from the first step, his solidarity, his identification with humanity in the incarnation, the Word who actually became our flesh (John 1:14), not that of a pristine, ideal humanity. In this context, he continues to suffer with us, as contemporary theology from Bonhoeffer to Moltmann has rightly emphasized.⁵⁰ This solidarity may take many forms, but it is particularly profound at the cross, with the cry of abandonment, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” (Matt. 27:46). Apart from the

⁴⁵ Ray S. Anderson, “A Theology of Ministry” in *Theological Foundations for Ministry*, ed. Ray S. Anderson (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979), 17.

⁴⁶ Helm, *The Providence of God*, 100–101.

⁴⁷ Barth, *CD III/3*, 91.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 119.

⁴⁹ Donald Bloesch, *God the Almighty: Power, Wisdom, Holiness, Love* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 1995), 135.

⁵⁰ The *locus classicus* is Dietrich Bonhoeffer’s saying, “Only the suffering God can help,” in *Letters and Papers from Prison*, ed. Eberhard Bethge and trans. Reginald Fuller et al. (New York: Macmillan, 1972), 361; Cf. Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, and Paul S. Fiddes, *The Creative Suffering of God* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1988).

questions this naturally poses for the relationship between the Father and the Son, the cry also suggests an identification of the Son with our suffering, with our cries, with our complaints. With the cry, as Torrance puts it, Jesus takes the questions of humanity and makes “those questions his very own by penetrating into the existence of the questioners, even to the point of their ultimate rejection of God...”⁵¹ Sanders reminds us that the lament tradition in the Scriptures, as expressed in Ps. 22 as quoted by Jesus, is not to be seen as an example of immature faith.⁵² In terms of unspeakable evil, Kenneth Surin suggests, the only response may be that of Elie Wiesel: “Where is God now?...He is hanging here on the gallows.”⁵³ At least God is along for the ride, with us.

30. Like the question concerning the victory of God, is solidarity or representation enough, especially in the light of Auschwitz, as Stacy Johnson argues?⁵⁴ In fact, by itself, does solidarity become a pitiful, cruel joke? John Roth asks, Do we really need such a God?⁵⁵ We can complain very well ourselves, thank you. His point is well taken. But what we do need is for someone to believe for us, *in order to complain*. One cannot lament to a God whom one does not believe in. Why lament to a God of limited power or malevolent will? Jesus’ cry from the cross is a lament which we need in order to represent us.

31. Nonetheless, we do need something more than representation. We need a substitute, not just to pay the penalty for our sins, such as in the penal substitutionary theory of the atonement, but in the entirety of our lives, including our ability to believe in the providence of God.⁵⁶ Pannenberg observes that in the modern world, in a perverse reverse of the atonement, modern people have substituted themselves for God, expelling God from creation and seeking to take responsibility for the social and natural order of the world.⁵⁷ But as Barth suggests, providence is not unrelated to substitutionary atonement, as we see in the substitute of the lamb for Isaac in Genesis 22.⁵⁸ God provides something else. In the Apocalypse, no one is worthy to open the

⁵¹ T. F. Torrance, “Questioning in Christ,” in *Theology in Reconstruction* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965), 122. Cf. Campbell, *The Nature of the Atonement*, 200–212.

⁵² Sanders, *The God Who Risks*, 266.

⁵³ Elie Wiesel, *Night*, trans. Stella Rodway (New York: Bantam, 1982), 61–62; Cf. Kenneth Surin, “The Impassibility of God and the Problem of Evil,” in *The Turnings of Darkness and Light*, 66 and Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, 273–274.

⁵⁴ W. Stacy Johnson, *The Mystery of God: Karl Barth and the Postmodern Foundations of Theology* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1997), 99.

⁵⁵ John Roth, “A Theodicy of Protest” in *Encountering Evil: Live Options in Theodicy: A New Edition*, ed. Stephen Davis (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1981), 15.

⁵⁶ For the penal substitutionary theory, see J. I. Packer, “What Did the Cross Achieve? The Logic of Penal Substitution,” *Tyndale Bulletin* 25 (1974): 3–45. Penalty may be a part of substitution, but what one should not say is that it is the “key,” as Packer does on page 36. Rather, it is a part of the wider vicarious humanity of Christ.

⁵⁷ Pannenberg, *Christian Spirituality*, 74.

⁵⁸ Barth, *CD III/3*, 35.

seals of the book, until the Lion of Judah appears, the Lion who becomes a Lamb (Rev. 5:1–14).⁵⁹ The atonement should not be seen as an act of “naked divine power,” as in some deterministic theologies, Torrance argues, for 2 Corinthians 5:21 speaks of Christ being made “to be sin” for us, one who “actually substitutes himself the Holy One in our place and takes our sin and judgment upon his own heart, and our death into his own divine life, exchanging the poverty of our existence for the riches of his grace....”⁶⁰ So, Jesus asked the question of the cry of abandonment from an ontological depth which we cannot reach, from the depth of the one in unique intimacy with the Father, the one who can also say, “Father, into your hands I commend my spirit” (Luke 23:46). Substitution is that deep, that radical.

32. Furthermore, there is an eschatological substance involved in Jesus’ vicarious faith as well. Isaac is unable to fulfill the sacrifice. We need to acknowledge our inability to believe, that someone needs to take our place in believing that the victory has already been won, that there will be a great judgment in which the wicked will be punished and the righteous rewarded (Matt. 18:23–35).⁶¹ The eschatological hope, a genuine knowledge that enables us to endure, is the object of faith.

Thesis Three: The providence of God is neither the blind acceptance that whatever happens is God’s will, nor God surrendering us to our own devices, but God’s intercession in the vicarious humanity of Christ, providing a space for us to live and come to faith, with the assurance that the Son has heard and has answered the word of our Father in heaven.

33. There is a temptation concerning the providence of God. And with every temptation, it is the temptation to misuse the good, as in the temptation of Jesus by the devil to be fed, to claim the kingdoms of the world, or to depend on the providence of God if he would cast himself down from the pinnacle of the temple (Matt. 4:1–11; Luke 4:1–13). Paul Helm represents those theologians who seemingly succumb to this temptation when he says that providence is a synonym for “whatever happens.”⁶² Calvin also can speak of providence as God regulating “all things that nothing takes place without his deliberation.”⁶³ “Fortune” and “chance” are considered by him to be “pagan” concepts.⁶⁴ According to Zwingli, “the hairs of our head” as “numbered” in Matthew 10:29–30 means “that even the things which we call fortuitous or accidental are not fortuitous or random happenings, but are all effected by the order and

⁵⁹ Sanders, *The God Who Risks*, 115.

⁶⁰ T. F. Torrance, *The Christian Doctrine of God: One Being, Three Persons* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1996), 226; cf. 251.

⁶¹ Dale C. Allison, *Jesus of Nazareth: Millenarian Prophet* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1998), 135.

⁶² Helm, *The Providence of God*, 122.

⁶³ Calvin, *Institutes*, I.16.3.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, I.16.7.

regulation of the Deity.”⁶⁵ Jesus in the desert, however, withstood the temptation of viewing providence in such a mechanistic way, it seems to me. Is a blind acceptance of “fate” necessarily any more Christian than a belief in “fortune” or “chance”? Are Ivan’s children fated to suffer? But what is the alternative?

34. Is there perhaps even a place from a Christian perspective for, if not “fortune” and “chance,” but at least a kind of *independence* of creation, despite the beliefs of many in the tradition? Certainly we are deep into the doctrine of creation here. Gordon Kaufman suggests that “the act of God” be understood as signifying only God’s grand design, his “master act” for the whole of creation, not the parts.⁶⁶ Within such a creation exists the natural physical laws we are so aware of since the Enlightenment, as well as the place of human responsibility.⁶⁷ Few want to be called a deist, but a practical deism is often an attractive possibility. The absurdity of random evil makes it even more attractive. But what does the vicarious humanity of Christ have to say to this?

35. The essence of the Christian faith is the startling proclamation of, in Barth’s words, “the God who Himself became a creature.”⁶⁸ As a creature, he was also a human being a responsive human being, with all the indications of a free will, even to be able to say to the Father, “not what I want but what you want” (Matt. 26:39). The Son proclaims, again in Barth’s words, that “God is not exalted in the suppression of the creature.”⁶⁹ Torrance argues cogently that the doctrine of the *contingent* creation is not only dependent on God, but has also been given its own rationality, so that it has its own relative independence. This is the basis for rationality, so that it has its own relative independence and the basis for scientific investigation.⁷⁰ The Son is also an example of what it truly means to be human: to be free *and* obedient to the Father. In fact he shows how absurd it is to consider freedom apart from obedience, as foreign as that is to our experience. But he is more than just an example of God’s providence. He takes our place. In a world of Ted Bundys and schoolgirls drowned under the ice by twisted ghouls, we see one who believes in God when we have no reason to believe. The contingent nature of creation, as much as it depends on divine origin and sustenance, does not cry everywhere, “God!” It cries more often than not with Hobbes’ characterization of humanity in a state of nature: lives lived that are solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short. “Fortune” and “chance” may not be Christian concepts, but we have to live in their realities at this moment. That may be the price of human freedom, to live in such a universe. The Son’s independence, though, takes the place of our twisted independence, promising that

⁶⁵ Ulrich Zwingli, “On the Providence of God” in *On Providence and Other Essays*, ed. S. M. Jackson and W. J. Hinke (Durham, N.C.: Labyrinth, 1987), 136.

⁶⁶ Gordon Kaufman, *God the Problem* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1972), 119–147.

⁶⁷ Keith Ward, *God, Faith, and the New Millennium* (Oxford: One World, 1998), 105.

⁶⁸ Barth, *CD III/3*, 130.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 130.

⁷⁰ Torrance, *Divine and Contingent Order*, 71–72.

one day, his kind of independence will be ours. This is a kind of independence that is neither a slave to our short-sighted selfish agendas, nor is it finally determined by the indifference of nature, but by the resurrection from the dead. Jesus was no fool. He knew what would happen to the sparrows. But the nature of faith is not sight (2 Cor. 5:7). His faith in the Father said that “not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father” (Matt. 10:29). The Father would have the last word. Just as his own fate was to include a cross, so he saw the cross in all of creation. Yet that cross would not be the last word.

36. The freedom of the Son is integrally connected to the freedom of God. God is free to become the creature in order to rescue us from our tragic predicament. Only a free God can create a free creature, in contrast to a panentheism such as represented by Cynthia Rigby that, because it believes in such a connection between God and creation, has to say, “God cannot choose to become human.”⁷¹ Freedom is a tough gig, it’s a tough town to play in, whether it be the freedom of nature or human freedom. But because of God’s freedom, he can take up our debacle, enabling us to participate in the life and destiny of the Son. In Barth’s words, in terms of our cries of despair, “He was human asking,” the One who already did “hallow” the Father’s name, and the One who “is already heard and answered.”⁷²

Thesis Four: Evil and suffering are not to be faced as an inevitable part of God’s will. We know this from Christ’s stance against evil, which is vicarious because only in him do we see the dynamic of a love to God and others which is both free and obedient. This vicarious existence is a critique of “greater good” theodicies in particular, allowing for our laments because of the faith of Jesus.

37. Ivan has returned the ticket, the ticket to a world of “eternal harmony,” because of gratuitous evil, such as the suffering of innocent children. Can we blame him?

38. Some would say, no, there is a “greater good” which comes out of evil. Paul Helm argues convincingly that whether you have a “risk” or a “no-risk” view of providence, it is hard to relieve God of at least the ultimate responsibility for evil.⁷³ Even if God has to allow evil for the sake of loving relationships or free will, it is ultimately God’s responsibility for creating such a world. At this point, interestingly enough, Helm and Sanders agree, although Sanders would not like language of God “causing” evil.⁷⁴ For Helm, however, God is not “guilty of moral evil” because it is questionable what “law” God would have broken. For there might be a “greater good” unknown to us.⁷⁵

⁷¹ Cynthia Rigby, “Free to Be Human: Limits, Possibilities and the Sovereignty of God,” *Theology Today* 53, 1 (1996): 58.

⁷² Barth, *CD III/3*, 274–275.

⁷³ Helm, *The Providence of God*, 177.

⁷⁴ Sanders, *The God Who Risks*, 100–101.

⁷⁵ Helm, *The Providence of God*, 184.

39. A different version of the “greater good” theodicy has been recently provided by the philosopher Marilyn McCord Adams.⁷⁶ Adams rightfully includes yet goes beyond Ivan Karamazov’s protest of injustice to extend “horrendous evils” to such nonnegligent accidents such as a father’s vehicle running over a son.⁷⁷ These are acts that are so pernicious that they have “life-ruining potential.” Her response is to argue for God’s goodness over the entirety of an individual’s life.⁷⁸ On the whole, the goods provided by God will “overbalance evils by a wide margin.”⁷⁹ This is a “defeat” of horrendous evils by the goodness of God.⁸⁰ She offers this as an alternative to the traditional quest of theodicy to answer the question, “Why?”⁸¹ Adams’ desire to see the evils “defeated” and not merely “balanced off” puts her squarely in the “greater good” camp.⁸²

40. Adams, along with Stephen Davis, cites what they see as the biblical perspective that suffering is “not worthy compared to the glory about to be revealed to us” (Rom.8:18).⁸³ In fact, Adams claims, in the eschaton, victims “will be amazed and comforted by Divine resourcefulness, not only to engulf and defeat, but to force the horrors to make positive contributions to God’s redemptive plan.”⁸⁴ This will be so wonderful that one will retrospectively not wish the evil away. For Davis, God will “redeem” all evil by showing that it was all inconsequential compared to the divine glory. Just as a junior high school embarrassment seems to be more amusing than painful to an adult, so also will we view present day evils in the eschaton.

41. John Roth is right in protesting at this point. To utter such words in the presence of the Holocaust’s burning children would be “incredible,” if not “obscene.”⁸⁵ But what should one do with Romans 8:18? Is a Christian view of providence inevitably pressed towards a “greater good” theodicy?

42. Furthermore, can the “greater good” theodicy be avoided in terms of the apparent educative value of suffering?

43. True, life teaches us that wisdom can come from adversity, “the awful paradox,” as Reynolds Price remarks.⁸⁶ Of course, the needless suffering of children would not be answered by this (despite Helm’s incredible belief that they will ultimately see the reason for their suffering).⁸⁷

⁷⁶ Marilyn McCord Adams, *Horrendous Evils and the Goodness of God* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1999).

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 26–27.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 130, 143.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 149.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 155.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 156.

⁸² Marilyn McCord Adams, “Afterword” in Davis, *Encountering Evil*, 197.

⁸³ Adams, *Horrendous Evils*, 167; Adams, “Afterword,” 197 and Stephen T. Davis, “Free Will and Evil,” in Davis, *Encountering Evil*, 83–85.

⁸⁴ Adams, *Horrendous Evils*, 167.

⁸⁵ John K. Roth, “Rejoinder” in Davis, *Encountering Evil*, 33.

⁸⁶ Reynolds Price, *Letters to a Man in the Fire: Does God Exist and Does He Care?* (New York: Scribner’s, 1999), 64.

⁸⁷ Helm, *The Providence of God*, 204.

Diogenes Allen notices the benefit of acknowledging that we are finite, material beings that suffering brings.⁸⁸ This can create a consequent humility within us. In fact, only the combination of such humility with belief in God as a loving Father can enable one to experience God's love in a world of suffering.

44. But, as D. Z. Phillips observes, what is more evident than that suffering is not always beneficial? The "soul-making" theodicy of John Hick would also be vulnerable at this point.⁸⁹ Kenneth Surin's point is well taken: Ivan does not think that the "greater good," perhaps including "soul-making," creating a kind of spiritual musclemen, is worth the untold suffering of the innocents.⁹⁰ Adams adds that soul-making can be irrevocably thwarted by the tremendous damage that an horrendous evil may bring.⁹¹ Recent reports on continual emotional trauma brought on by the events of 9–11 come readily to mind. And, most damning, as many such as James McClendon have pointed out, those theodicies end up attempting to make evil tolerable, and even respectable.⁹²

45. The cross of Christ, however, may be the most powerful argument for a "greater good" theodicy. Is not the cross the reality of the "defeat" of evil, that Adams claims speaks loudly for the goodness of God? Did not God use the evil perpetrated through the cross for the glory of salvation? Through the cross, Adams argues, "God has nullified the power of horrendous evils to degrade."⁹³

46. Atonement is significant here, but does Adams make the mistake of so many by emphasizing the God's *solidarity* or *identification* with humanity in Christ at the expense of *substitution* viewed in a radical and total, not exclusively penal, sense?⁹⁴ We are not far here from the vicarious humanity of Christ.

47. What is Jesus' place in all of this? There is no gratuitous evil, Helm claims, because of the cross. It had a purpose, so every evil has a purpose.⁹⁵ But against this, I contend, nowhere is the vicarious humanity of Christ more relevant. If Christ were only a moral example, Helm would be right. But Christ is more than that. His life, death, and resurrection are unique, and uniquely

⁸⁸ Diogenes Allen, "Natural Evil and the Love of God" in Marilyn McCord Adams and Robert M. Adams, eds., *The Problem of Evil* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 190–197.

⁸⁹ John Hick, *Evil and the God of Love*, rev. ed. (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1977), 253–271.

⁹⁰ Surin, *The Turnings of Darkness into Light*, 64–65.

⁹¹ Adams, *Horrendous Evils*, 53.

⁹² James McClendon, *Doctrine*, vol. 2 of *Systematic Theology* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1994), 172. Cf. Otto Weber, *Foundations of Dogmatics*, trans. Darrell L. Guder, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1981), 507; and Terrence W. Tilley, *The Evils of Theodicy* (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 1990).

⁹³ Adams, *Horrendous Evils*, 127.

⁹⁴ Note John McLeod Campbell: "The faith of the atonement presupposes the faith of the incarnation," *The Nature of the Atonement*, 19. Cf. T. F. Torrance, *The Trinitarian Faith: The Evangelical Theology of the Ancient Catholic Church* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1988), 155.

⁹⁵ Helm, *The Providence of God*, 223.

vicarious, done for us and in our place. As such, the vicarious humanity of Christ is a critique of reading into natural and moral evil all sorts of divine purposes. Adams prefers to see God as a kind of modern artist, who takes the disparate shapes of life and turns them into Picasso's *Guernica*.⁹⁶ Yet, Ivan remains unanswered. Is the *Guernica* worth the burning children of the Holocaust?

48. Adams and others seek to sustain a divine order in the midst of horrendous evil. She agrees with Ivan's protest that the virtues of the "higher harmonies" such as a world with the "bilious green in Monet's depiction of Rouen cathedral" are not worth the suffering of innocents.⁹⁷ Yet her appeal to a platonic Divine Beauty, sustained by what appears to be only the *quantity* of goods in an individual's life, seems to betray a similar rest in "higher harmonies."⁹⁸ Perhaps this is substituting the "higher harmonies" for an abundance of goods that creates a "Higher Harmony." Such an appeal to a platonic Divine Beauty is immediately suspect because of the usual criticism of platonic ideas, beginning with Aristotle. A platonic idea may be quite disconnected from the world in which Ivan and the providence of God work. It seems to me that Ivan's protest remains. Arguing that a quantity of goods outweighs the horrors of this world does not create an order that the suffering of innocents would justify. Overabundance is not the virtue that supersedes all others. If that were so, there would be no desire for the brisk sales of the "Ultra Slim Fast" diet drink!

49. Yes, suffering may bring some "good," but only *de facto*, by fact, by coincidence, but not *de jure*, by law, for the law of God's purpose of humanity is found in Jesus Christ. For Christ's faith, obedience, and prayer for us presents us the true order by which we recognize evil for what is: absurd, opposed to God, and therefore something we are to fight against.⁹⁹ Ivan is right to look with suspicion at an argument that seeks to harmonize a cosmic order with the suffering of innocents. The providence of God in such a world is difficult, if not impossible, to believe. John Hick's belief that we have "a basic Godward bias" that will inevitably bring us to faith and God is all too romantic, it seems to me.¹⁰⁰ We need someone to believe for us when we are unable to believe, particularly when it comes to the providence of God in a world of evil and suffering.

50. Christ's faith, obedience and prayer for us is trust that God is good and all-powerful and can work his purposes "in spite of" the absurdity of evil and suffering. This is not belief in a "harmony," but belief in a loving Father. Such a quest for a divine order can reflect a sort of rationalism in which, in Adams' case, despite her opposition to the "Why?" question of theodicy, still manifests itself in her desire "to credit God with superlative imagination needed to make sense

⁹⁶ Adams, *Horrendous Evils*, 149.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 147.

⁹⁹ Torrance, *Divine and Contingent Order*, 114–125; cf. T. F. Torrance, *The Christian Frame of Mind: Reason, Order, and Openness in Theology and Natural Science* (Colorado Springs: Helmers and Howard, 1989), 19–24.

¹⁰⁰ John Hick, "An Irenaean Theodicy" in Davis, *Encountering Evil*, 52.

of horrors that stump us ...”¹⁰¹ Does the goal have to be that it “makes sense?” Such a rationalism is expressed in the eschatological desire that those in the eschaton will no longer retrospectively wish for their horrors to be erased from their life stories.¹⁰² The unspeakableness of horrendous evil is effectively forgotten. A better goal is being able to trust in God as a loving Father.

51. The question remains, however, *How* can we believe in a loving Father in such a world? The difficulty is in believing in the goodness of the kind of God Adams presents. John Roth presents the alternative of belief in a “partially” good God, a God who is “everlastingly guilty,” along with human beings.¹⁰³ But is it not just as difficult to believe in a partially good God, whose capriciousness makes one nervous?¹⁰⁴ The challenge of the ministry of the church is, in Ray Anderson’s words, “to expand the reality of God’s love and the reality of human suffering without breaking the two apart.”¹⁰⁵

52. Still, believing in a loving Father is a problem. Does trust in God have to mean believing that God has good reasons for allowing evils? Again, an “evangelical rationalism” rears its head. Yes, it is true that for many Christians, they expect that in the eschaton God’s good reasons will be known. But we are not left to our own ability to have faith. We may seek those “good reasons” if we were left with only our own faith. If our faith is based, however, on the vicarious faith of Christ, then our resting is not on those “good reasons,” but on the faith of the Son. The uniqueness of the vicarious faith of Christ is strategic here. “He is the only one who does what He does.”¹⁰⁶ What Christ does, Barth continues, is to *intercede* for us, in every way. Our analogies fail us at this point. This is the problem with all forms of rationalism. Viewing sufferings of the present time as “not worth comparing with glory about to be revealed to us” (Rom. 8:18) should not be divorced from “the Spirit of Christ” (Rom. 8:9) who “intercedes” for us when we are unable to pray, that is, unable to believe. “Evangelical rationalism” can also include both the “risk” and “no risk” schools of thought on providence. God makes himself known only in the knowing and response of the human Jesus, done for our sake and in our place. So there is properly a genuine “repenting” on God’s behalf that is not just symbolic (*contra* Paul Helm), for example, yet it is not identical with our understanding of repenting.¹⁰⁷ There is no place for “evangelical rationalism” here. We can, however, embrace God’s uniquely providential care in the midst of a world of horrors, by “looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith” (Heb.

¹⁰¹ Adams, *Horrendous Evils*, 82.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 203.

¹⁰³ John K. Roth, “A Theodicy of Protest” in Davis, *Encountering Evil*, 7.

¹⁰⁴ Stephen T. Davis, “Critique [of John K. Roth]” in Davis, *Encountering Evil*, 22.

¹⁰⁵ Ray S. Anderson, “Reading T. F. Torrance as a Practical Theologian,” in *The Promise of Trinitarian Theology: Theologians in Dialogue with T. F. Torrance*, ed. Elmer M. Colyer (Lanham, Md.: Rowman and Littlefield, 2001), 174.

¹⁰⁶ Barth, *CD I/2*, 382.

¹⁰⁷ Torrance, *The Christian Doctrine of God*, 100.

12:2). This is how God's control is uniquely practiced, in contrast to an aesthetic justification along the lines of Adams' use of *Guernica*. The world is still in a mess. "What we will be has not yet been revealed" (1 John 3:2). Faith may include, despite our modern creed of certainty, the ability to be uncertain.¹⁰⁸ Here is where the Son believes, not just in solidarity with us, but in our place, as our substitute. Only he can take back Ivan's ticket, for us.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁸ Frederick Sontag, "A Divine Response" in Davis, *Encountering Evil*, 207.

¹⁰⁹ An earlier form of this essay was read at the annual meeting of the Christian Theological Research Fellowship in Nashville, Tenn., Nov. 2000. Todd Speidell and Charles Hughes also read an earlier version and provided invaluable comments.

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