

LECTURE 14: Concluding Thoughts

SOLVING THE TRILEMMA & RELATED OBJECTIONS

- I. The original trilemma reviewed:

- II. So the initial question—How can a loving God allow suffering?—should be replaced with the more basic question: Was it just for God to permit sin, as the cause of suffering, in the first place?
 - A. Standard free will defense
 - B. Modified version of it

- III. A new (and logically subsequent) trilemma:
 1. If omniscient, he would know how to eradicate evil.
 2. If omnipotent, he would have the power to eradicate evil
 3. If omnibenevolent, he would have the will to eradicate evil.
 4. Therefore, such a God would have eradicated evil.
 5. But evil has not been eradicated.
 6. Therefore, God is not...

- IV. Why does he tarry so long?

- V. But what about all the purposeless suffering—is that not unbefitting of God?

- VI. But why doesn't he reduce the frequency and intensity of suffering?

- VII. The best possible world objection: If God could have guaranteed a sinless world, by ensuring that Adam past the test, and if a sinless world is *better* than this one, then God could have guaranteed a better world, in which case God *did not do His best*.
- A. Given the character of God, He would allow evil *only if it is a necessary condition for achieving some greater good*.
- B. Objection: God a utilitarian, such that the good ends justify evil means?

THE ULTIMATE REPLY TO THE PROBLEM OF EVIL

- I. First, silence the objector with the following dilemma:
- A. Premise 1) Either suffering is morally wrong or it is not
 - B. Premise 2) If it is not morally wrong, then there is no *moral* problem at all, and so no basis for making an inference to God's nonexistence
 - C. Premise 3) But if it is morally wrong, then ~~there must~~ God must exist as the source and standard of what is good and right
 - D. Conclusion: Therefore, either God exists or else suffering is not a moral problem, and so cannot be used as a disproof of God's existence
- II. Second, provide God's solution to the problem of evil—i.e., the Gospel—and show how it answers the trilemma:

III. Concluding encouragement to Christians: