Trinity. I suspect that with time my faith will grow so that I will come to accept more and more of a traditional Christian theology. But for the time being, I see this as less important, and I find it easier to bracket questions like this as mysteries that may or may not become clearer one day.

Finally, I am struck by Bill Alston's reflections (in this book) on the importance of timing in coming to God. As an adolescent I was surely not sufficiently formed to be ready to become a mature Christian. I do not know that I needed to wait thirty years to take up the task, but perhaps this was necessary. My early religious experience may perhaps be encapsulated in my first memory of having been locked out of the church for having arrived too early. "Not so fast," I can imagine God saying. "You're not ready for this yet."

When I think this way, I cannot but wonder what it all would have meant if perhaps I had not survived long enough to find my way back to God. A little bad luck at a couple of moments in my life, and I would have died outside the Christian faith and without any religious faith at all. What would this have meant? Could that have been God's plan? I have no idea what to say about this except that between faith and reason there is a lot of room for mystery.

Note

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18

THE MIRROR OF EVIL

Eleonore Stump

There are different ways to tell the story of one's own coming to God. Straightforward autobiography has its merits, but, paradoxically, it can leave out the most important parts. I want to tell my story in a roundabout way that will, I hope, show directly what for me is and always has been the heart of the matter.

For reflective people, contemplation of human suffering tends to raise the problem of evil. If there is an omnipotent, omniscient, perfectly good God, how can it be that the world is full of evil? This response to evil is normal and healthy. I have discussed this problem myself in print and tried to find a solution to it. But there is another way to think about evil.

Consider just these examples of human suffering, which I take from my morning newspaper. Although the

Marines are in Somalia, some armed Somalis are still stealing food from their starving neighbors, who are dying by the thousands. Muslim women and girls, some as young as ten years old, are being raped and tortured by Serb soldiers. In India, Hindus went on a rampage that razed a mosque and killed over 1,000 people. In Afghanistan gunmen fired into a crowded bazaar and shot ten people, inncluding two children. Closer to home, the R. J. Reynolds company is trying to defend itself against charges that it is engaged in a campaign to entice adolescents to smoke. The recently defeated candidate for governor in my state, as well as lawyers and doctors employed by the state as advocates for disabled workers, are charged with stealing thousands of dollars from the fund designed for those workers. A high school principal is indicted on charges of molesting elementary and middle school boys over a period of twenty years. A man is being tried for murder in the death of a nine-year old boy; he grabbed the boy to use as a shield in a gunfight. I could go on—racism, rape, assault, murder, greed and exploitation, war and genocide—but this is enough. By the time you read these examples, they will be dated, but you can find others just like them in your newspaper. There is no time, no part of the globe, free from evil. The crust of the earth is soaked with the tears of the suffering.

This evil is a mirror for us. It shows us our world; it also shows us ourselves. How could anyone steal at gunpoint food meant for starving children? How could anyone rape a ten-year-old girl? How could anyone bear to steal money from disabled workers or get rich by selling a product he knows will damage the health of thousands? But people do these things, and much worse things as well. We ourselves—you and I, that is—are members of the species that does such things, and we live in a world where the wrecked victims of this human evil float on the surface of all history, animate suffering flotsam and jetsam. The author of Ecclesiastes says, "I observed all the oppression that goes on under the sun: the tears of the oppressed with none to comfort them; and the power of their oppressors—with none to comfort them. Then I accounted those who died long since more fortunate than those who are still living" (4:1–2).[1]

Some people glance into the mirror of evil and quickly look away. They take note, shake their heads sadly, and go about their business. They work hard, they worry about their children, they help their friends and neighbors, and they look forward to Christmas dinner. I don't want to disparage them in any way. Tolkien's hobbits are people like this. There is health and strength in their ability to forget the evil they have seen. Their good cheer makes them robust.

But not everybody has a hobbit's temperament. Some people look into the mirror of evil and can't shut out the sight. You sit in your warm house with dinner on the table and your children around you, and you know that not far from you the homeless huddle around grates seeking warmth, children go hungry, and every other manner of suffering can be found. Is it human, is it decent, to enjoy your own good fortune and forget their misery? But it's morbid, you might say, to keep thinking about the evils of the world; it's

depressive; it's sick. Even if that were true, how would you close your mind to what you'd seen once you'd looked into the mirror of evil?

Some people labor at obliviousness. They drown their minds in drinking, or they throw themselves into their work. At certain points in his life, Camus seems to have taken this tack. He was at Le Chambon writing feverishly, and obliviously, while the Chambonnais were risking their lives rescuing Jews.[2] Jonathan Swift, whose mordant grasp of evil is evident in his writings, was chronically afflicting with horror at the world around him; he favored violent exercise as an antidote.[3] The success of this sort of strategy, if it ever really does succeed, seems clearly limited.

Some people believe that evil can be eliminated, that Eden on earth is possible. Whatever it is in human behavior or human society that is responsible for the misery around us can be swept away, in their view. They are reformers on a global scale. The moral response to suffering, of course, is the Good Samaritan's: doing what we can to stop the suffering, to help those in need. Global reformers are different from Good Samaritans, though; global reformers mean to remove the human defects that produced the evil in the first place. The failure of the great communist social experiment is a sad example of the problems with this approach to evil. Every good family runs on the principle "from each according to his ability; to each according to his need." The extended human family in Eastern Europe intended to run on this principle and turned it instead into "from each according to his weakness; to each according to his greed." Ecclesiastes sums up the long-term prospects for global reform in this way: "I observed all the happenings beneath the sun, and I found that all is futile and pursuit of wind; a twisted thing that cannot be made straight, a lack that cannot be made good" (1:14–15).

And don't reason and experience suggest that Ecclesiastes has the right of it? The author of Ecclesiastes says, "I set my mind to study and to probe with wisdom all that happens under the sun . . . and I found that all is futile . . . as wisdom grows, vexation grows; to increase learning is to increase heartache" (1:13, 14, 18). This is a view that looks pathological to the hobbits of the world. But whether it *is* pathological depends on whose view of the world is right, doesn't it? A hobbit in a leper colony in a cheerful state of denial, oblivious to the disease in himself and others, wouldn't be mentally healthy either, would he? Ecclesiastes recognizes the goodness of hobbits. The author says over and over again, "eat your bread in gladness, and drink your wine in joy; . . . enjoy happiness with a woman you love all the fleeting days of life that have been granted to you under the sun" (9:7, 9). But the ability to eat, drink, and be merry in this way looks like a gift of God, a sort of blessed irrationality. For himself, Ecclesiastes says, "I loathed life. For I was distressed by all that goes on under the sun, because everything is futile and pursuit of wind" (2:17).

So, some people react with loathing to what they can't help seeing in the mirror of evil—loathing of the world, loathing of themselves. This malaise of spirit is more likely to afflict those living in some prosperity and ease, inhabitants of the court, say, or college students on scholarship. If you've just been

fired or told you have six months to live or have some other large and urgent trouble, you're likely to think that you would be happy and life would be wonderful if only you didn't have *that* particular affliction. Given the attitude of Ecclesiastes, it's not surprising that the book was attributed to Solomon, who was as known for wealth and power as for wisdom.

The misery induced by the mirror of evil is vividly described by Philip Hallie in his book on Le Chambon.[4] Hallie had been studying cruelty for years and was working on a project on the Nazis. His focus was the medical experiments carried out on Jewish children in the death camps. Nazi doctors broke and rebroke "the bones of six- or seven- or eight-year old Jewish children in order, the Nazis said, to study the processes of natural healing in young bodies" (p. 3). "Across all these studies," Hallie says, "the pattern of the strong crushing the weak kept repeating itself and repeating itself, so that when I was not bitterly angry, I was bored at the repetition of the patterns of persecution. . . . My study of evil incarnate had become a prison whose bars were my bitterness toward the violent, and whose walls were my horrified indifference to slow murder. Between the bars and the walls I revolved like a madman. . . . over the years I had dug myself into Hell" (p. 2).

Hallie shares with the author of Ecclesiastes an inability to look away from the loathsome horrors in the mirror of evil. The torment of this reaction to evil is evident, and it seems the opposite of what we expect from a religious spirit. It's no wonder that some people think Ecclesiastes has no place in the canonical Scriptures. To see why this view of Ecclesiastes is mistaken, we have to think not just about our reactive attitudes toward evil but also about our recognition of evil.

How does Hallie know—how do we know—that the torture of Jewish children by Nazi doctors is evil?

By reason, we might be inclined to answer. But that answer is not entirely right. It's true that our moral principles and our ethical theories rely on reason. But we build those principles and theories, at least in part, by beginning with strong intuitions about individual cases that exemplify wrongdoing, and we construct our ethical theories around those intuitions. We look for what the individual cases of wrongdoing have in common, and we try to codify their common characteristics into principles. Once the principles have been organized into a theory, we may also revise our original intuitions until we reach some point of reflective equilibrium, where our intuitions and theories are in harmony. But our original intuitions retain an essential primacy. If we found that our ethical theory countenanced those Nazi experiments on children, we'd throw away the theory as something evil itself.

But what exactly are these original intuitions? What cognitive faculty produces them? Not reason, apparently, since reason takes them as given and reflects on them. But equally clearly, not memory: We aren't remembering that it is evil to torture children. And not sense perception either. When we say that we just see the wrongness of certain actions, we certainly don't mean that it's visible.

At this stage in our understanding of our own minds and brains, we don't know enough to identify the cognitive faculty that recognizes evil intuitively. But it would be a mistake to infer that there is no such faculty.[5] It's clear that we have many other cognitive faculties that similarly can't be accounted for by the triad of reason, memory, and perception. We have the abilities to tell mood from facial expression, to discern affect from melody of speech. We have the ability to recognize people from seeing their faces. When I see my daughter's face, I know who she is, and not by reason, memory, or perception. There are people who suffer from prosopagnosia. In them, reason functions well, and so do memory and perception; they perform normally on standard tests for all those faculties. Furthermore, the links among reason, memory, and perception also seem intact. Prosopagnosics can remember what they've perceived and thought; they can reason about what they remember and what they're perceiving. Nonetheless, they can't recognize people they know on the basis of visual data acquired by seeing their faces. So it is plain that reason, memory, and perception no more exhaust the list of our cognitive faculties than animal, vegetable, and mineral exhaust the list of material objects in the world. That we have no idea *what* faculty has been damaged or destroyed in prosopagnosia obviously doesn't mean that there is no such faculty. Furthermore, there is no reason for being particularly skeptical about the reliability of such peculiar cognitive faculties. It seems to me that our cognitive faculties come as a set. If we accept some of them—such as reason—as reliable, on what basis would we hold skeptically aloof from any others? So I think it is clear that we have cognitive faculties that we don't understand much about but regularly and appropriately rely on, such as the ability to recognize people from their faces.

Our ability to recognize certain things as evil seems to me like this. We don't understand much about the faculty that produces moral intuitions in us, but we all regularly rely on it anyway.[6] The vaunted cultural relativity of morality doesn't seem to me an objection. The diversity of moral opinions in the world masks a great underlying similarity of view;[7] and perhaps a lot of the diversity is attributable not to moral differences but to differences in beliefs about empirical and metaphysical matters. I think, then, that we have some cognitive faculty for discerning evil in things, and that people in general treat it as they treat their other cognitive faculties: as basically reliable, even if fallible and subject to revision.

It also seems clear that this cognitive faculty can discern differences in kind and degree. For example, there is a great difference between ordinary wrongdoing and real wickedness. A young Muslim mother in Bosnia was repeatedly raped in front of her husband and father, with her baby screaming on the floor beside her. When her tormentors seemed finally tired of her, she begged permission to nurse the child. In response, one of the rapists swiftly decapitated the baby and threw the head in the mother's lap. This evil is different, and we feel it immediately. We don't have to reason about it or think it over. As we read the story, we are filled with grief and distress, shaken with revul-

sion and incomprehension. The taste of real wickedness is sharply different from the taste of garden-variety moral evil, and we discern it directly, with pain.

What is perhaps less easy to see is that this faculty also discerns goodness. We recognize acts of generosity, compassion, and kindness, for example, without needing to reflect much or reason it out. And when the goodness takes us by surprise, we are sometimes moved to tears by it. Hallie describes his first acquaintance with the acts of the Chambonnais in this way: "I came across a short article about a little village in the mountains of southern France. . . . I was reading the pages with an attempt at objectivity . . . trying to sort out the forms and elements of cruelty and of resistance to it. . . . About halfway down the third page of the account of this village, I was annoyed by a strange sensation on my cheeks. The story was so simple and so factual that I had found it easy to concentrate upon *it,* not upon my own feelings. And so, still following the story, and thinking about how neatly some of it fit into the old patterns of persecution, I reached up to my cheek to wipe away a bit of dust, and I felt tears upon my fingertips. Not one or two drops; my whole cheek was wet" (p. 3). Those tears, Hallie says, were "an expression of moral praise" (p. 4); and that seems right.

With regard to goodness, too, I think we readily recognize differences in kind and degree. We are deeply moved by the stories of the Chambonnais. People feel the unusual goodness of Mother Teresa and mark it by calling her a living saint. We sense something special in the volunteers who had been in Somalia well before the Marines came, trying to feed the starving. We don't have a single word for the contrary of wickedness, so 'true goodness' will have to do. True goodness tastes as different from ordinary instances of goodness as wickedness does from ordinary wrongdoing; and we discern true goodness, sometimes, with tears.

Why tears, do you suppose? A woman imprisoned for life without parole for killing her husband had her sentence unexpectedly commuted by the governor, and she wept when she heard the news. Why did she cry? Because the news was good, and she had been so used to hearing only bad. But why cry at good news? Perhaps because if most of your news is bad, you need to harden your heart to it. So you become accustomed to bad news, and to one extent or another, you learn to protect yourself against it, maybe by not minding so much. And then good news cracks your heart. It makes it feel keenly again all the evils to which it had become dull. It also opens it up to longing and hope, and hope is painful because what is hoped for is not yet here.[8]

For the same reasons, we sometimes weep when we are surprised by true goodness. The latest tales of horror in the newspaper distress us but don't surprise us. We have all heard so many stories of the same sort already. But true goodness is unexpected and lovely, and its loveliness can be heartbreaking. The stories of the Chambonnais rescuing Jews even on peril of their own imprisonment and death went through him like a spear, Hallie says. Perhaps if he had been less filled with the vision of the mirror of evil, he would have wept less over Le Chambon.

Some people glimpse true goodness by seeing it reflected in other people, as Hallie did. Others approach it more indirectly through beauty, the beauty of nature or mathematics or music. But I have come to believe that ultimately all true goodness of the heartbreaking kind is God's. And I think that it can be found first and most readily in the traces of God left in the Bible.

The biblical stories present God as the glorious creator of all the beauty of heaven and earth, the majestic ruler and judge of the world. But Rebecca feels able to turn to Him when she doesn't understand what's happening in her womb, Hannah brings Him her grief at her childlessness, and Deborah trusts Him for victory in a pitched battle with her people's oppressors. Ezekiel presents Him at his most uncompromisingly angry, filled with righteous fury at human evil. But when God commands the prophet to eat food baked in human excrement as a sign to the people of the coming disasters, the shocked prophet tells Him, "I can't!", and almighty God rescinds His command (Ez.4:12–15). When His people are at their repellent moral worst, God addresses them in this way: "They say if a man put away his wife and she go from him and become another man's, shall he return to her again? . . . you have played the harlot with many lovers; yet return again to me, says the Lord" (Jer. 3:1). And when we won't come to Him, He comes to us, not to rule and command, but to be despised and rejected, to bear our griefs and sorrows, to be stricken for our sake, so that we might be healed by His suffering.

There is something feeble about attempting to describe in a few lines the moving goodness of God that the biblical stories show us; and the attempt itself isn't the sort of procedure the biblical narratives encourage, for the same reason, I think, that the Bible is conspicuously lacking in proofs for the existence of God.[9] Insofar as the Bible presents or embodies any method for comprehending the goodness of God or coming to God, it can be summed up in the Psalmist's invitation to individual listeners and readers: Taste and see that the Lord is good.

The Psalmist's mixed metaphor seems right. Whether we find it in the Chambonnais or in the melange of narrative, prayer, poetry, chronicle, and epistle that constitute the Bible, the taste of true goodness calls to us, wakes us up, opens our hearts. If we respond with surprise, with tears, with gratitude, with determination not to lose the taste, with commitment not to betray it, that tasting leads eventually to seeing, to some sight of or insight into God.

Hallie left his college office and his family and went seeking the villagers of Le Chambon. He concluded his study of the Chambonnais years later this way:

> We are living in a time, perhaps like every other time, when there are many who, in the words of the prophet Amos, "turn judgment to wormwood." Many are not content to live with the simplicities of the prophet of the ethical plumbline, Amos, when he says in the fifth chapter of his Book: "Seek good, and not evil, that ye may live: and so the Lord, the God of Hosts, shall be

> with you." . . . We are afraid to be "taken in," afraid to be credulous, and we are not afraid of the darkness of unbelief about important matters. . . . But perplexity is a luxury in which I cannot indulge. . . . For me, as for my family, there is the same *kind* of urgency as far as making ethical judgments about Le Chambon is concerned as there was for the Chambonnais when they were making their ethical judgments upon the laws of Vichy and the Nazis. . . . For me [the] awareness [of the standards of goodness] is my awareness of God. I live with the same sentence in my mind that many of the victims of the concentration camps uttered as they walked to their deaths: *Shema Israel, Adonoi Elohenu, Adonoi Echod.* (pp. 291–293)

So, in an odd sort of way, the mirror of evil can also lead us to God. A loathing focus on the evils of our world and ourselves prepares us to be the more startled by the taste of true goodness when we find it and the more determined to follow that taste until we see where it leads. And where it leads is to the truest goodness of all—not to the boss of the universe whose word is moral law or to sovereignty that must not be dishonored, but to the sort of goodness of which the Chambonnais's goodness is only a tepid aftertaste. The mirror of evil becomes translucent, and we can see through it to the goodness of God. There are some people, then, and I count myself among them, for whom focus on evil constitutes a way to God. For people like this, Ecclesiastes is not depressing but deeply comforting.

If we taste and see the goodness of God, then the vision of our world that we see in the mirror of evil will look different, too. Start just with the fact of evil in the world, and the problem of evil presents itself forcefully to you. But start with a view of evil and a deep taste of the goodness of God, and you will know that there must be a morally sufficient reason for God to allow evil—not some legal and ultimately unsatisfying sort of reason, but the sort of reason that the Chambonnais would recognize and approve of, a reason in which true goodness is manifest. People are accustomed to say that Job got no answer to his anguished demand to know why God had afflicted him. But they forget that in the end Job says to God, "now I see you." If you could see the loving face of a truly good God, you would have an answer to the question why God had afflicted you. When you see the deep love in the face of a person you suppose has betrayed you, you know you were wrong. Whatever happened was done out of love for you by a heart that would never betray you and a mind bent on your good.[10] To answer a mistaken charge of betrayal, someone who loves you can explain the misunderstanding or he can show his face. Sometimes showing his face heals the hurt much faster.

If a truly good God rules the world, then the world has a good mother, and life is under the mothering guidance of God. Even the most loathsome evils and the most horrendous suffering are in the hand of a God who is truly good. All these things have a season, as Ecclesiastes says, and all of them

work together for good for those who love God—for those who are finding their way to the love of God, too, we might add.[11]

Nothing in this thought makes evil less evil. Suffering remains painful; violence and greed are still execrable. We still have an obligation to lessen the misery of others, and our own troubles retain their power to torment us. But it makes a great difference to suppose that the sufferers of evil, maybe ourselves included, are in the arms of a mothering God.

Although, as Ecclesiastes is fond of saying, we often cannot understand the details of the reason why God does what He does in the world, when we seen through the mirror of evil and taste the goodness of the Lord, we do understand the general reason, just as Job must have done when he said, "now I see you." Like a woman in childbirth, then, as Paul says, we feel our pains of the moment, but they are encircled by an understanding that brings peace and joy.

And so in an Alice-through-the-looking-glass way, the mirror of evil brings us around to the hobbit's way of seeing things at the end. "Go," says Ecclesiastes, "eat your bread in gladness and drink your wine in joy; for your action was long ago approved by God" (9:7). If God is mothering the earth and if its evils are in His hands, then you may be at peace with yourself and your world. You can be grateful for the good that comes your way without always contrasting it with the ghastliness elsewhere. This road to quiet cheerfulness is the long way to the goal, but perhaps for some people it is also the only way there.

Nothing in this view, of course, is incompatible with a robust program of social action. "Send your bread forth upon the waters; for after many days you will find it," Ecclesiastes says. "Distribute portions to seven or even to eight, for you cannot know what misfortune may occur on earth" (11:1–2). If you are moved by goodness, then you will want to ally yourself with it, to diminish evils in the world, to alleviate suffering. Those who love God will hate evil, the psalmist says (97:10). There is no love of God, I John says, in those without compassion for the world's needy (3:17). A good part of true religion, James says, is just visiting "the fatherless and the widows in their affliction" (1:27).

The spirit with which you respond to the evil around you will be different, though, if you see through it to the goodness of God on the other side. Someone asked Mother Teresa if she wasn't often frustrated because all the people she helped in Calcutta died. "Frustrated?" she said, "no—God has called me to be faithful, not successful." If God is the world's mother, then Mother Teresa doesn't have to be. Quiet cheer and enjoyment of the small pleasures of the world are compatible with succouring the dying in Calcutta in case the suffering ones are in the hands of a God who is truly good. Maybe that's why the Psalmist follows his line "Taste and see that the Lord is good" with "blessed is the man that trusts in him."

Even our own evils—our moral evils, our decay and death—lose their power to crush us if we see the goodness of God. The ultimate end of our lives is this, Ecclesiastes says: "the dust returns to the ground as it was, and the lifebreath returns to God who bestowed it" (12:7)—to God who loves us as a good mother loves her children. In the unending joy of that union, the suffering and sorrow of this short life will look smaller to us, as Paul says (Rom. 8:18).

Nothing in this view of our relation to God makes *joie de vivre* seem any less crazy; sin and death are still real evils. But tasting the goodness of God makes seeing the world's evils and our own compatible with joy in the Lord.

I think the Psalmist is speaking for people who take this long way round to peace and cheer when he says, "I have taught myself to be contented like a weaned child with its mother; like a weaned child am I in my mind" (131:2).[12] How can a child who is being weaned understand the evil of the weaning? What he wants is right there; there is nothing bad about his having it—it costs his mother nothing to satisfy him; the pain of doing without it is sharp and urgent. And so, for a while, the child will be overwhelmed by the evil of his situation. But sooner or later in his thrashing he will also see his mother, and that makes all the difference. His desire for what she will not give him is still urgent, and the pain of the deprivation remains sharp. But in seeing her, he feels her love of him. He senses her goodness, and he comes to trust her. As Isaiah puts it, he sucks consolation to the full in another way (66:11). That is how he can be both weaned and also resting peacefully by her side.

And doesn't it seem likely that he comes to see his mother as he does just because he finds the evil of weaning intolerable? How much did he see her when his focus was himself and what he wanted, the comfort of the breast and the taste of the milk? The evil of the weaning, which seems to separate him from her, in fact drives him toward recognizing her as a person, and a person who loves him.

For Hallie, for the author of Ecclesiastes, and for me, too, the ghastly vision in the mirror of evil becomes a means to finding the goodness of God, and with it peace and joy. I don't know any better way to sum it up than Habakkuk's. Habukkuk has the Ecclesiastes temperament. He begins his book this way: "How long, O lord, shall I cry out and You not listen, shall I shout to You, 'Violence!' and You not save? Why do You make me see iniquity, why do You look upon wrong? Raiding and violence are before me, Strife continues and contention goes on. That is why decision fails and justice never emerges" (1:1–4). But he ends his book this way. He presents the agricultural equivalent of nuclear holocaust: the worst sufferings imaginable to him, the greatest disaster for himself and his people. And he says this: "Though the fig tree does not bud, and no yield is on the vine, though the olive crop has failed, and the fields produce no grain, though sheep have vanished from the fold, and no cattle are in the pen, yet will I rejoice in the Lord, exult in the God who delivers me. My Lord God is my strength" (3:17–19).

This is the best I can do to tell my story.[13]

Notes

1. I am quoting from the new Jewish Publications Society's translation. With the exception of quotations from Jeremiah 3 and Psalm 34, all quotations from the Hebrew Bible will be from this translation. The suffering of the Jews during the Holocaust reflects all the worst misery and all the deepest wickedness in the world,

and so it seemed appropriate to use the Jewish translation of the Hebrew Bible in an essay on suffering.

2. One of the first things Camus wrote in his diary on arriving in Le Panelier, the village on the outskirts of Le Chambon, was "This is oblivion" (quoted in Herbert R. Lottman, *Albert Camus* [Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1979], p.276). During his stay in Le Chambon, he was writing *The Plague* and his play *Le Malentendu*, as well as making notes for *The Rebel*. Apparently, several of the names in *The Plague* are borrowed from the people of Le Chambon (Lottman, op. cit., p. 290).

3. This included not only strenuous riding and walking but also "hedging and ditching"; See David Nokes, *Jonathan Swift. A Hypocrite Reversed* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), p. 341.

4. Philip Hallie, *Lest Innocent Blood Be Shed* (Philadelphia: Harper and Row, 1979).

5. By talk of a faculty here, I don't mean to suggest that there is one neurobiological structure or even one neurobiological system that constitutes the faculty in question. There may be many subsystems that work together to produce the ability I am calling a cognitive faculty. Vision seems to be like this. It is entirely appropriate to speak of the faculty of vision, but many different neural subsystems have to work together properly in order for a person to be able to see. It may also be the case that some of the subsystems that constitute a faculty have multiple uses and function to constitute more than one faculty. This seems to be the case with vision, too. Our ability to see apparently requires the operation of some subsystem of associated memory, and this subsystem is also employed in other faculties, such as our ability to hear. The wild boy of Aveyronne, whose subsystem of associated memory was no use for dealing with urban sounds, was originally believed to be deaf and was brought to an institute for the deaf in Paris.

6. In claiming that we have a faculty that recognizes moral characteristics, I am not claiming that nurture and environment play no role in shaping our moral intuitions. It is difficult to make a principled distinction between what is innate and what has an environmental component, as philosophers of biology have helped us to see. And there are clear examples of characteristics that most of us strongly believe to be genetically determined but that nonetheless require the right environmental or cultural conditions to emerge. The human capacity for language is such a case. It seems clearly innate and genetically determined. And yet, as the few well-documented cases of feral children show, without human society and nurture at the right ages, a person will be permanently unable to acquire a language.

7. Perhaps this isn't the best case to illustrate the point, but it is one of my favorites. In his public remarks during the period when he was rector, Heidegger tended to make statements of this sort: "Do not let principles and 'ideas' be the rules of your existence. The Fuehrer himself, and he alone, is the German reality of today, and of the future, and of its law." Cited in Victor Farias, *Heidegger and Nazism*, trans. Paul Burrell [Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1989], p. 118. After Germany lost World War II, when the French moved into his town and confiscated his property because he was on their list as a known Nazi, he wrote an indignant letter to the commander of the French forces in his area. It begins this way: "What justice there is in treating me in this unheard of way is inconceivable to me" ("Mit welchem Rechtsgrund ich mit einem solchen unerhoerten Vorgehen betroffen werde, ist mir unerfindlich"). Cited in Hugo Ott, *Martin Heidegger. Unterwegs zu seiner Biographie* (Frankfurt: Campus Verlag, 1988), p. 296.

8. Alvin Plantinga has suggested to me that not all tears have to do with suffering;

there are also tears of joy, at the beauty of music or of nature, for example. But I am inclined to think that even tears of joy of that sort have to do with suffering. As C. S. Lewis maintained in *The Pilgrim's Regress,* and as Plantinga also recognizes, the vision of certain sorts of beauty fills us with an acute if inchoate longing for something—the source of the beauty perhaps—and a painful sense that we don't possess it, aren't part of it, now.

9. Arguments for God's existence certainly have their place, but for most people that place is after, not before, coming to God. I have explained and defended this attitude toward arguments for God's existence in "Aquinas on Faith and Goodness," in *Being and Goodness,* ed. Scott MacDonald (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1991), pp. 179–207.

10. Answers to the question of why God permits innocents to suffer admit of varying degrees of specificity. Theodicies typically provide fairly general answers. So, for example, Richard Swinburne's explanation of God's permitting natural evil is that the experience of natural evil gives people knowledge about how suffering is caused and so gives them the options necessary for the significant use of their free will. Although I don't share Swinburne's view, I think that his account does constitute an answer to the question of why God permits innocents to suffer from natural evil. It tells us that God will allow one person S to suffer in order to provide a benefit for a set of persons that may or may not include S, and that the benefit is the significant use of free will, brought about by knowledge of how to cause suffering. Nonetheless, Swinburne's account omits a great many details; it doesn't tell us, for instance, exactly what sort of knowledge is produced or precisely how the suffering conduces to the knowledge in question. And it obviously has nothing to say about the suffering of particular individuals; that is, it doesn't tell us what individuals were benefited and how they were benefited by the suffering of this or that individual innocent. Similarly, in seeing the face of a loving God, Job has an answer to his question about why God has afflicted him; but like the account of evil theodicies give, it is only a general answer. It lets Job see that God allows his suffering for his own spiritual or psychological good, out of love for him; but it doesn't tell him precisely what the nature of that spiritual good is or how it is connected to Job's suffering.

11. In other work, I have argued that God uses suffering to further the redemption of the sufferer. Some people find this claim highly implausible. So, for example, in a recent article, "Victimization and the Problem of Evil: A Response to Ivan Karamazov" (*Faith and Philosophy* 9 '1992], pp. 301–319), Thomas Tracy notes "the stunning counterintuitiveness" of this claim (p. 308). His own preferred view is this: While God does want His creatures to be intimately related to Him, God sometimes lets an innnocent person suffer not for some good accruing to her but rather just for the common good, or for the good of the system. I find it hard to understand in what sense the claim that suffering conduces to the redemption of the sufferer is supposed to be counterintuitive, since most of us have few if any intuitions about the redemption of other people and what conduces to it. On the other hand, if Tracy's line is meant just to suggest that this way of looking at suffering seems to stand our ordinary views on their head, then his line seems right but unworrisome; what would be surprising is if a Christian solution to the problem of evil didn't turn our ordinary views upside down. What seems to me truly counterintuitive is Tracy's suggestion that we could have a relationship of deep trust and love with a person who, we believed, had the power to alleviate our suffering but was nonetheless willing to let us suffer undeservedly and involuntarily in the interest of the common good. For a vivid illustration of the deep distress and resentment people feel toward those who respond to their trust in this

way, see, for example, the description of communist marriage in China in Jung Chang, *Wild Swans. Three Daughters of China* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1991), esp. pp. 145–146, 176, 298.

12. The pastor of the South Bend, Indiana, Christian Reformed Church, Len vander Zee, whose sermons are so full of wit, wisdom, and learning that they are more worth publishing and reading than much that appears in the journals in the field, preached an insightful sermon on this passage and the problem of evil in 1992. If that sermon were published, it would be a foolish oversight not to cite it here; as it is, the closest I can come to citing it is to say that his sermons are available from his church office.

13. I am grateful to my husband, Donald Stump, and to my friends William Alston, Alvin Plantinga, and Peter van Inwagen for helpful suggestions on an earlier draft of this essay. I am also deeply indebted to my two teachers: John Crossett, whose efforts on my behalf made this essay possible, and Norman Kretzmann, whose thoughtful collaboration has made all my work, this essay included, much better than it would have been otherwise.