to rest later, and a house should never be left unguarded any more than a city, and when anything needs doing it ought not be left undone, whether it be day or night” (1345313-16). So Bradwardine says: “How much more that great *Paterfamilias,* of whose abundance there is no end, and of whose wisdom there is no measure, whose goodness is immense, will govern his whole great house with all it contains, providentially for all time?” (De *causa Dei* I.27, ed. 1618, p. 262). Bradwardine ends his discussion with a reference to Matthew 10:29 and a rejection of Epicurean chance: “Since the Savior says a sparrow does not fall to earth without the will of God... even the most common and humble particles are ruled by divine providence, and not disturbed by fortuitous motions, whose causes we cannot comprehend” (ibid., p. 264).

There are several striking aspects of Bradwardine’s view. Gods providential care for the world is a necessary adjunct of his omniscient intellect and omnipotent will, and at the same time it is a personal loving concern for even the least of creatures. Divine providence is self-evident, all-pervasive, and intimate. But while Bradwardine cites quantities of authorities for his position, including Scripture, the Church Fathers, and Greek and Arabic philosophers, his take on providence is atypical and constitutes part of his strong reaction against the scholastic currents of his day. God’s efficient causality extends to everything, even to the human will. Nothing escapes the necessity his care imposes (III. 1). Of course, this leads directly to questions about human freedom. Free will is not the freedom to enact different outcomes, but rather the “spontaneous rational capacity to choose the good” (11.2, ed. 1618, p. 448), a freedom completely in harmony with Gods effective and efficient necessitation of the wills choice. Bradwardine rejects the idea that the human will could in any way resist the divine will. This view, a minority one in Bradwardine’s own time, foreshadows the stress the Protestant reformers would put on God s providential presence in every aspect of human life."

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[11] See Alexandra Walsham, *Providence in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, lyyy); Michael Winship, *Seen of God: Puritan Ihovidentialistu in the Restoration and Early Enlightenment* (Ualtimorv, Ml): Johns Hopkins University Press, iyyf>)

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THE PROBLEM OF EVIL

ELEONORE STUMP

THE AUGUSTINIAN BACKGROUND

The problem of evil is raised by the combination of certain traditional theistic beliefs and the acknowledgment that there is evil in the world. If, as the major monotheisms claim, there is a perfectly good, omnipotent, omniscient God who creates and governs the world, how can the world such a God created and governs have evil in it? In medieval philosophy in the Latin speaking West, philosophical discussion of evil is informed by Augustine's thought. But even those medieval philosophers not in the Latin-speaking world and not schooled in the thought of Augustine in effect share many of his views. For these reasons, it is helpful to begin an overview of medieval responses to the problem of evil with a brief description of Augustine's position.[1]

Augustine struggled with the question of the metaphysical status of evil; his ultimate conclusion, that evil is a privation of being, was shared by most later medieval philosophers. But 'privation' here is a technical term of medieval logic and indicates one particular kind of opposition; its correlative is 'possession.' A privation is the absence of some characteristic in a thing that naturally possesses that characteristic. So, on Augustine's view, evil is *not* nothing, as he is sometimes believed to have maintained. Rather, it is a lack or deficiency in being in something in which that being is natural. Nothing about this metaphysical position constitutes a solution to the problem of evil; nor did Augustine or any later medieval philosophers suppose it did.[2]

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[1] The literature on Augustine's reflections on goodness is vast; but see, for example, Christopher Kirwaii, (Loudon: Routledge, iy8y), and G. R. Evans, /tryjimitte *on Evil* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, lySa) for helpful introductions. For more recent discussion, see N. Krerztuaim and E. Stump (eds.) 77ic *Cambridge Companion to Augustine* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001). Fora good overview of the problem in the context of medieval philosophical theology, see Ingolf Dalfcrth, *Malum: Tltcologischc Hcrmcneutik ties Bdscn* (Tubingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008).

[1] For a general discussion of this Augustinian position in later medieval philosophy, see, e.g., Scott MacDonald (ed.) *Being and Goodness. The Concept of the Good in* A *Ictaphysics and Philosophical Theolog)*^{1} (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991).

Augustine did puzzle over the introduction of evil into a world created by a good God, and his solution has roots in his understanding of the metaphysics of evil. As he sees it, evil is introduced into creation by the misuse of free will. So-called natural evil, suffering not generated by human free will but arising from events in nature, is explained as the natural concomitant to fallen humanity. The primary cause of all suffering in the world is therefore the evil willed by Gods creatures. For Augustine, however, there is *no* cause of a morally wrong act of will, and to that extent there is also no explanation for it. If we want to know the explanation why a good creature of a good creator forms a morally wrong act of will, there is nothing there to know, if the explanation we are seeking is the cause of the evil in that will. A morally wrong, free act of the will is deficient in being, as it is deficient in reason, and there is no efficient cause of this deficiency.

A theodicy is an attempt to show the compatibility of God and evil in the world. Typically, a theodicy tries to provide a morally sufficient reason for an omniscient, omnipotent, perfectly good God to allow evil. Augustine gave varying suggestions for such a reason. One suggested reason is that the suffering permitted by God contributes to the beauty and goodness of the whole universe, just as a dark patch may contribute to the lightness and beauty of a painting.

Another suggested reason ties suffering to the human propensity for wrongdoing and the remedy for that propensity, divine grace. On Augustine's view, the proclivity to moral wrongdoing is universal among human beings, and the remedy for it requires Gods aid. At the end of his life, Augustine was intensely occupied by the Pelagian controversy. On Augustine's fiercely anti-Pelagian position, without the aid of divine grace it is not possible for there to be any good in a human will. Augustine himself felt that lie had failed to find the solution to the philosophical and theological difficulties engendered by this anti-Pelagian position, but he was not on that account inclined to abandon it. For Augustine, there is a bentness in the human will that human beings them selves are unable to cure. Grace is necessary for redemption from it; but, in a way not easy to explain, suffering also somehow works together with grace to effect an antidote to it.[3]

GREGORY THE GREAT

For a large part of the subsequent history' of medieval philosophy, consideration of the problem of evil either is influenced by Augustine's views or is reacting

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[J] For Augustine's views on these issues, see, for example, my "Augustine on Free Will," in N. Kretzmann and E. Stump (eds.) 77*ic CiWibridge Companion to Augustine* {Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001) 124-47.

to metaphysical and theological views analogous to his. Augustine’s suggestion that evil is like a dark patch that contributes to the overall beauty of a picture did not altogether disappear from later medieval discussion, but it is his connection between suffering and redemption from the universal human tendency to wrongdoing that is central to later discussions of the problem of evil.

The typical medieval development of this attitude can be found already in the work of Gregory the Great, in his sixth-century commentary on the biblical book of Job. Like many other commentators on that book, Gregory’ puzzled over the way in which suffering and prosperity are distributed in the world, and he confessed himself mystified about how to square that distribution with the existence of a perfectly good, omnipotent, omniscient God. But Gregory’s puzzle is at the antipodes from that customary’ in the modern period. The ways of providence are often hard to understand, Gregory said, but they are

> still more mysterious when things go well with good people here, and ill with bad people... When things go well with good people here, and ill with bad people, a great uncertainty arises whether good people receive good so that they might be stimulated to grow into something (even) better or whether by a just and secret judgment they see the rewards of their deeds here so that they may be void of the rewards of the life to come... Therefore since the human mind is hemmed in by the thick fog of its uncertainty among the divine judgments, when holy people see the prosperity of this world coming to them, they are troubled with a frightening suspicion. For they are afraid that they might receive the fruits of their labors here; they are afraid that divine justice detects a secret wound in them and, heaping external rewards on them, drives them away from internal ones... Consequently’, holy' people are more fearful of prosperity in this world than of adversity.
>
> (Bk. V, intro.)[4]

In other words, since in Gregorys view it is so difficult to understand how a just and benevolent providence could allow *good* things to happen to *good* people, when good people see there is no adversity in their lives, they cannot help but wonder whether they are not after all to be counted among the wicked. For that reason, prosperity’ is more frightening to them than adversity'.

THE MEDIEVAL STANDARD OF VALUE

The medieval period certainly does not speak with one voice about the problem of suffering. Nonetheless, the worldview underlying Gregory s lines is common throughout the Middle Ages. To understand the medieval appropriation and development of the Augustinian position as formulated in this quotation from

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[4] Although I have preferred to use my own translation, there is a nineteenth-century translation of the whole work by James Bliss; for this passage see pp. 241-2. (A partial contemporary translation by James O’Donnell is also available online)

Gregory', it is necessary' to recognize that the problem of evil will appear differently' to different thinkers grappling with it depending on the worldview they bring to it.

One important part of any worldview is the standard of value adopted. The problem of suffering challenges religious belief to produce a morally sufficient reason fora perfectly good, omniscient, omnipotent God to allow human beings to suffer. But to ask for such a reason is to ask whether there is any benefit that can defeat suffering.[5] Even to consider this question, then, requires reflecting on standards of value. What is a benefit for human beings, and on what scale could it outweigh suffering? How shall we measure the good for human beings?

On views common to many medieval authors, the genus within which the greatest goods for human beings fall is *personal relationship.* That is because, on these medieval views, it is possible for a human person to be united with God. The greatest good for a human being is to be in personal relationships of love, and the greatest personal relationship of love is union with God. Furthermore, the hallmark of a great good is that it is shareable, that it is not diminished by being distributed. Union with God, which is the greatest of goods for a human being and the best of personal relationships, is therefore also the most shareable. The love of one human being for another is also a shareable good, and human loves can themselves be woven into the shareable love between God and human persons. Heaven, then, is this best thing for human beings made permanent and unending.

If a shared loving personal relationship of this sort with God is the best thing for human beings, the worst thing is its absence. Because a human will is free, it is possible for a human being never to want or to achieve real closeness or love with God or with any human persons. Furthermore, because human beings are permanent and not transitory things, a human being is capable of being in such a condition forever; and this is hell/[1]

This view of the best thing and the worst thing for human beings thus marks out a scale of value on which human suffering and the benefits which might be thought to redeem it can be measured. The scale comes in degrees, because it is possible to have more or less of a loving relationship with any person, or to be more or less distant from a person. But the scale also has limits. The complete

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[s] 'Defeat' is a technical term in this connection. There are different formulations of the notion of defeat, but basically the idea is this. A benefit defeats suffering only if the benefit outweighs the suffering and could not be gotten without the suffering (in some suitable sense of the modality in question).

[6] This view of the best thing and the worst thing for human beings is made graphic and vivid in the *Divine Comedy* of Dante, who was himself an impressive student of medieval philosophy and theology.

and permanent absence of loving personal relationships is an extrinsic limit on one end.[7] The shared and unending loving union with God is the intrinsic limit on the other end.

THE ROLE OF SUFFERING

In varying ways, on typical medieval views, suffering is understood as one important means by which the worst thing for human beings is warded off and the best thing for human beings is achieved. Human proclivities to moral wrongdoing are an obstacle to union with God and can result in permanent separation from God. God’s grace is sufficient to bring everyone to union with him, provided only that a person does not reject that grace. Suffering is a means by which a person can be brought to surrender to the help of grace. And so, on these medieval views, suffering is seen as medicinal. Because it can melt resistance to Gods grace, it can be therapeutic for spiritual health.[8]

Thomas Aquinas

In his commentary' on the biblical book of Job, Aquinas says.

> Someone’s suffering adversity would not be pleasing to God except for the sake of some good coming from the adversity. And so although adversity is in itself bitter and gives rise to sadness, it should nonetheless be... [acceptable to us] when we consider its usefulness, on account of which it is pleasing to God... For in his reason a person rejoices over the taking of bitter medicine because of the hope of health, even though in his senses he is troubled.
>
> (ch. i, secs. 20-1)

In fact, on Aquinas’s view, the better the person, the more likely it is that he will experience suffering. The moral strength and spiritual greatness of a person render him more, rather than less, likely to suffer. That is because strenuous medical regimens are saved for the strongest patients. In the case of a person who is comparatively psychically healthy, the point of the suffering is not so much warding off the worst thing as it is enabling as much as possible of the best thing, the shared union with God, which is the glory of a human being.

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[7] By speaking of this point as an extrinsic limit on loving relationship, I do not mean to imply that absence of personal relationship with God does not come in degrees. Zero is the extrinsic limit on the continuum of the positive integers, but there is a continuum of integers below zero. On typical medieval views of the sort exemplified by Dante in the *Infcnio,* for example, although there is no mutual loving relationship between God and any persons in hell, some people in hell are more distant from that love than others.

[8] For a detailed exposition of this medieval theodicy and an examination of the underlying worldview m w Inch it is set, see my 11 *hnJcring m Darkness: Sumunv and the PrnMtm of Suffering* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, forthcoming) See also the chapter on providence in my *Aquinas* (London: Ruutledge, 2003)

because Aquinas is Christian, on his view there is a theologically important connection between suffering in its redemptive role and the suffering of Christ. Christs passion and death are the primary means by which divine grace is brought to human beings, and it also provides consolation for human beings who are suffering. But, however important it is in Aquinas's philosophical theology, the connection between Christs suffering and redemptive human suffering is too complicated to be explored adequately in passing here.[9]

Stuuhah Gaon

In all but its specifically Christian respects, Aquinas's account is representative not only of views in the Latin-speaking medieval world but also of attitudes in Jewish thought. Consider, for example, the theodicy given by the tenth-century Jewish thinker Saadiah Gaon.[10] Aquinas and Saadiah share certain basic theological and ethical views. Unlike the fourteenth-centuryjewish philosopher Levi ben Gershom (Gersonides), for example, who seems to think that God's providence does not extend to all individual human beings," Saadiah, like Aquinas, assumes that God knows and cares about every individual human being. Furthermore, like Aquinas, Saadiah also supposes that God is justified in allowing some unwilling innocent to suffer only in case the benefit that justifies the suffering goes primarily to the sufferer. In his commentary on Job, Saadiah says that:

> Gods creating suffering, sickness, and injury in the world is also an act of beneficence and in the interest of humanity.. - What is true of sufferings felt without affecting the

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[w] For some discussion of it, see the chapters on atonement and on faith in my ,-bjininu

[10] For detailed consideration of Saadiah s account of the problem of evil m comparison with that of Aquinas and that of Maimonides, see my "Saadya Gaon and the Problem of Evil." *Ftutli MJ Philosophy* 14 0997) 5=3~49-

[11] See, for example, Levi ben Gershom, *The Wan of the Loni,* Bk. IV ch. 4 (tr. Feldman, p. 174) "It is evident that individual providence must operate in some people but not in others... It is evident that what is more noble and closer to the perfection of the Agent Intellect receives the divine providence to a greater degree and is given by God the proper means for its preservation... Since man exhibits different levels of proximity to and remoteness from the Agent Intellect by virtue of his individual character, those that are more strongly attached to it receive divine providence individually. And since some men never go beyond the disposition with which they are endowed as members of the human species such people are obviously not within the scope of divine providence except in a general way as members of the human species, for they have no individual (perfections! that warrant |individual| providence. Accordingly, divine providence operates individually in some men... and in others it does not appear at all." For helpful discussion of Levi ben Gershom s work, see T. M. Kudavsky, "Gersonides," in E. Zalta (ed.) *Suwford luuyttopetlia of PhilosopU)':* Imp://plato.stanford.edu.

body is true also of those that do affect it: the Creator does not so afflict His servant except in his |the servant*s| own interest and for his own good.

(tr. Goodman, pp. 124—5)

Saadiah s scale of values by which the good for human beings is measured resembles Aquinas’s as well. To begin with, Saadiah believes that a human life does not end with death but that it continues forever, after death, in a state dependent on its condition at death. In fact, not only does Saadiah hold this belief, but in his view so does every Jew. In his *Book of Beliefs and Convictions* he says:

as far as the resurrection of the dead is concerned... it is a matter upon which our nation is in complete agreement... The reason why Jinan] has been distinguished above all other creatures is that he might serve God, and the reward for this service is life in the world of recompense ... We... do not know of any Jew who would disagree with this belief.

(tr. Rosenblatt, p. 264)

For Saadiah, the standard of value for human beings also is a function of relationship with God. So, for example, in describing the highest good to be expected in the afterlife, Saadiah describes it in terms of being gathered gloriously to God:

God has made us great and liberal promises of the well-being and bliss and greatness and might and glory that He will grant us twofold... for the humiliation and misery' that have been our lot... (WJhat has befallen us has been likened by Scripture to a brief twinkling of the eye, whereas the compensation God will give us in return therefore has been referred to as His great mercy'. For it says: *Fora small moment have I forsaken thee; hut with great compassion* 1 *nil / gather thee.*

(ibid., p. 292)

The worst thing for human beings, as well as the best thing, is what is to come in life after death:

the reward and the punishment... will be everlasting, (and) their extent will vary' according to the act. Thus, for example, the nature of a person s reward will be dependent upon whether he presents one or ten or one hundred or one thousand good deeds, except that it will be eternal in duration... Likewise will the extent of a person’s punishment vary according to whether he presents one or ten or a hundred or a thousand evil deeds, except that, whatever the intensity of the punishment may be, it will be everlasting.

(ibid., pp. 347-8)

For Saadiah, as for Aquinas, suffering has a role to play in warding off the worst thing and providing the best thing for human beings.

On Saadiahs account, which is more explicit and developed in this respect than Aquinas’s is, suffering serves this function in three differing ways. First, there is the sort of suffering which constitutes training and character-building. Saadiah says, “Although these may be painful for human beings, hard, wearying, and troubling of mind, all this is for our own good. Of this the prophet says, *the chastening of the Lord, my son, despise not*” (On *Job,* p. 125). Second, there is “purgation and punishment.” If the first case can be thought of as making a basically good person better, this second case can be thought of as keeping a person who has done something bad from getting worse and/or rectifying his accounts so that he is not in moral debt any more. Third, there is suffering such as Jobs. To explain this sort of suffering, we need yet a third category, on Saadiah’s view. This is the category of trial:

> The third case is that of trial and testing. An upright servant, whose Lord knows that he will bear sufferings loosed upon him and hold steadfast in his uprightness, is subjected to certain sufferings, so that when he steadfastly bears them, his Lord ni3y reward and bless hint. This too is a kind of bounty and beneficence, for it brings the servant to everlasting blessedness.
>
> (ibid., pp. 125-6)

That is why, Saadiah maintains, one kind of goodness that God shows his creatures is “recompense for tribulations... [God] records all to our account in His books. If we were to read these ledgers, we would find all we have suffered made good, and we would be confirmed in our acceptance of His decree” (ibid., p. 127). (See Chapter 33 for further discussion of Saadiah’s views in this area.)

COMPLICATIONS AND VARIATIONS

In the period after Aquinas, an increasing tendency to tie morality to Gods will complicates the attitude toward the problem of evil represented by Saadiah s and Aquinas's theodicies. So, for example, William of Ockham holds that God has no moral obligations but that whatever God does is done justly in virtue of the fact that God does it. In a famous passage, much cited out of context, Ockham claims that if God commanded a person to hate God, then it would be just for that person to hate God, in heaven as well as on earth (see Chapter 51).[12] Although the lineaments remain roughly the same, theodicy and the problem of evil itself will obviously look different on this way of conceiving the standard of value for human beings. There is no need to search for a morally sufficient reason for God to allow evil if whatever God does is done justly in virtue of the fact that God does it. The apparent incompatibility of God and evil in the world is also harder to show if by Gods justice we mean Gods doing whatever he wills.

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[12] See, e.g., Ockham, *Scut.* II.3-4 (O/mtj M. V: 59) and **Soil.** II.15 (Opera *thcol.* V; 343). For a discussion of these issues in Ockhams work, see, for example, Lucan Freppcrr, *The &isis of* A *locality Acton]ini’* In *W illiam Ockham* (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1988)

In addition, changing attitudes toward Gods relationship to time and God's foreknowledge of things in time also make a difference to the role assigned to suffering in the process of redemption and thus also to its place in theodicy. John Duns Scotus's doctrine of predestination shows the point at issue here. According to Scotus, although God predestines human beings to salvation prior to foreknowing their actions, he does not destine human beings to damnation prior to foreknowing their actions. Rather, on the basis of foreknowledge of the bad actions of those not saved, God relegates them to damnation. In defense of this view and to explain why Gods failing to destine some human beings to salvation does not constitute Gods destining them to damnation, Scotus looks for a position which is Augustinian in its anti-Pelagian character but which nonetheless relegates some control over good actions to human beings. As Scotus explains this position, although on anti-Pelagian views a human being cannot merit divine grace, it is still open to a human being to merit the restoration of grace after a fall into sin. That is because the restoration of grace can be merited by suffering, in the doing of penance. Suffering that is penance can thus contribute to redemption. God is therefore justified in allowing suffering that is penitential and redemptive.

On this account, then, suffering still has a role to play in salvation, although in its details this is significantly different from Saadiahs or Aquinas's account.[13]

AN ALTERNATIVE ACCOUNT: MAIMON1DES

The general attitude toward suffering represented by the medieval accounts sketched so far would need considerably more discussion in order for them to seem anything other than alien to contemporary sensibilities. Even so, this brief presentation is enough to clarify the development of the Augustinian view expressed by Gregory the Great in the quotation above, which is central to the theodicies of Saadiah and Aquinas. Gregory finds it perplexing when good things happen to good people, because Gregory thinks that if these people were in fact morally healthy (relatively speaking), then God would bless them with the medicine of suffering to move them forward to even further spiritual health. The absence of suffering in the lives of such people is therefore mysterious to Gregory. Medicinal regimes are withheld from people only in case they are so ill that the therapy cannot do them any good. And so when *good* things happen to good people, Gregory' finds the ways of providence hard to understand.

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[13] For a discussion of these issues in the work of Duns Scotus, see, for example, Richard Cross, *Dims Scotus* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, lyyy) Cross (p. 106) cites in this connection *Oniinatio* 1.2.2.1—4, nn. 233, 235

The theodicies offered by Saadiah and Aquinas are at home in this sort of attitude. There are also, however, medieval accounts of suffering that are not. In addition to the account of Levi ben Gershom alluded to above, the position of Moses Maimonides is a good example here. Maimonides knows Saadiahs theodicy, and he particularly dislikes Saadiah's view of sufferings as trials. Maimonides thinks that this view is common, vulgar, stupid, and impious. He says:

> What is generally accepted among people regarding the subject of *trial* is this: God sends down calamities upon an individual without their having been preceded by a sin, in order that his reward be increased. However, this principle is not at all mentioned in the *Timlt* in an explicit text... The principle of the Law that runs counter to this opinion, is that contained in His dictum, may He be exalted: *A God offaithjiihicss and without iniquity.* Nor do all the *Styes* profess this opinion of the multitude, for they say sometimes: *There* is *no death without sin and no sufferings without transgression.* And this [the quoted view of the Sages) is the opinion that ought to be believed by every adherent of the Law who is endowed with intellect, for he should not ascribe injustice to God, may He be exalted above this, so that he believes that Zayd is innocent of sin and is perfect and that he does not deserve what befell him.
>
> *(Guide of the Perplexed,* tr. Pines, pp. 497-8)

If it is represented accurately in this passage, it is hard to see Maimonidess own account of suffering as more palatable than the view of Saadiah which Maimonides is attacking, since Maimonidess account apparently claims that there is no suffering without preceding transgression. It is not always easy to know what Maimonidess own opinions are, however, given the commitment to caution and secrecy evinced in the *Guide,* perhaps Maimonides here means to be presenting only religious views suitable for the unlearned. But there are certainly passages in which Maimonides appears to be arguing explicitly for the view that every sufferer deserves exactly what he suffers. So, for example, he says:

> It is likewise one of the fundamental principles of the Law of *Moses* our *Master* that 11) it is in no way possible that he, may he be exalted, should be unjust, and that (2] all the calamities that befall men and the good things that come to men, be it a single individual or a group, are all of them determined according to the deserts of the men concerned through equitable judgment in which there is no injustice whatever. Thus if some individual were wounded in the hand by a thorn, which he would take

> out immediately, this would be a punishment for him, and if he received the slightest pleasure, this would be a reward for him - all this being according to his deserts. Thus he, may he be exalted, says: *For oil his troys ore judgment.*
>
> (ibid., p. 469)

As a palliative for what seems to be the manifest mistakenness of his position, Maimonides adds that human judgment of the moral state of others is often wrong, for "we are ignorant of the various modes of deserts" (ibid.).[14] On this position, there is nothing perplexing about God allowing good things to happen to good people.

THE END OF THE MEDIEVAL PERIOD

Even Maimonides s position has this much in common with that of Saadiah and Aquinas: Maimonides takes himself to have a satisfactory theodicy, and he supposes that suffering can be understood in terms of its connection to or effects on the person who suffers. Even as punishment, suffering is somehow — directly or indirectly — good for the person who suffers, and it is allowed by God for just that reason. In marked contrast to this attitude, however, is the one expressed by an adherent to the *derotio moderna,* a religious movement important in the Netherlands in the fifteenth century Commenting on the death of a recently appointed principal of a school for religious instruction, an anonymous adherent of the *derotio moderna* raises the problem of evil in a way that is quite devout but that has an almost contemporary' sound to it:

> Permit me to take 3 moment here to allude to the wondrous and secret judgments of our Lord God, not as if scrutinizing them in a reproachful way but rather as humbly venerating the inscrutable. It is quite amazing that our fathers and brothers had set out with a single will and labored at their own expense, to the honor of God and for the salvation of souls, to erect a school here in Emmerich to do exercises with boys and clerics... And now after much care and trouble, everything had been brought to a good state: we had a learned and suitable man for rector, the venerable Master Arnold of Hildesheim ... Then, behold ... our Lord God, as if totally unconcerned with all that we had in hand, which had just begun to flower, suddenly and unexpectedly threw it all into confusion and decline, nearly reducing it to nothing. For just as the sheep are dispersed when the shepherd is struck dowm, so when our beloved brother [Master Arnold) died the whole school was throw'll into confusion. The youths left in swarms... not, it is to be feared, without some danger to their souls... Nonetheless, to

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[14] David Shatz has pointed out to me the need for caution with regard to Maimonidess position on deserts. It is complicated by Maimonidess unusual account of providence, which makes an individual's intellectual development a primary value for divine providence.

[him) be the honor and the glory now and through the ages, to him whose judgments, though hidden, are yet never unjust.

Here we find an attitude towards the problem of evil that is not difficult for us, even with our current sensibilities, to understand. This pious author, dealing just with the establishment of a school for children, finds adversity fundamentally inexplicable, not only as regards the application of the theory' of a theodicy to this particular instance of evil but even within the theological theory of theodicy. It certainly does not occur to him to tie the suffering of the loss of the school to the spiritual condition of those who suffer. However religiously committed this fifteenth-century author may be, the worldview with which he approaches the problem of evil is no longer medieval. He is focused on goods of this world, and he is not inclined to see suffering as instrumental to otherworldly goods, such as spiritual well-being; consequently, he finds an acceptable theodicy hard to imagine. His response to suffering in the world thus has more in common with modern views than with those in the medieval period.

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[15] John van Engcn (tr.) *Dctvtio MoJenuv. &isic* nVifiMip (Now York: Paulist I'ress, ty88) **p.** 151**.** I am grateful to Van Engctt for calling my attention to the intriguing material in this book.

APPENDICES