

- 1) The Doctrine and the Problem of Evil
 - a) The God who created the world cares for it and watches over it. He upholds it with his almighty power and is present to it in his steadfast love. So why is there evil in the world?
 - b) Evil is real and devastating. It is not an illusion as some philosophies claim. There has been evil from the beginning and it will persist until the end (the wheat and the tares).
 - c) The Dark side of Creation (Natural evil). **Why does it exist?**
 - i) Human Finitude...Life is on the one hand strong but on the other hand fragile. We are vulnerable to disease and the ravages of nature. Complex organisms by their very nature are subject to breakdown and failure.
 - ii) Natural Law...without the regularities of nature life would be impossible. Most times these protect us but they can work against us. Gravity is mostly our friend but it can be our enemy. Weather is often beneficial but it can be deadly to us if we are in the wrong place at the wrong time.
 - iii) Human negligence
 - iv) And yet many aspects of natural evil remain a mystery we will never fully comprehend.
 - d) The Power of Darkness (Human Evil).
 - i) Humans commit evil actions and also seem to be in the grip of evil, unable or difficult to resist.
 - (1) We reject the idea of an evil God.
 - (2) Christian theology is not willing to attribute evil to the weaker flesh warring against the mind. Self-control will not eradicate evil.
 - (3) Evil is a power at work in all of us
 - ii) Is the answer that we have free will and we simply at times choose evil for various reasons? Are we really free or is the deck in some way stacked against good?

- iii) What about the notion of Satan as the source of evil?
 - (1) Is the devil real? If we believe that we must remember also that Satan is a creature and not God and therefore cannot defeat God or God's purposes.
 - (2) Is Satan a symbol for the chaos which exists in creation?
 - (3) Still does not answer the problem of evil
 - (4) In the Bible evil is a mystery...Genesis 3. Evil is the Big Lie. Can the Lie be broken?

e) Dealing with evil

- i) The memory of Israel
- ii) The memory of the Church
 - (1) The Resurrection
 - (2) The Cross

f) Wrap up

- i) Evil is real and terrible. God has not prevented it but is with us in it and will bring good out of evil.
- ii) God does not directly will evil
- iii) The memory of the resurrection and the cross give us reason to hope that in the end evil will be overcome.