in holding that the traditional free-will theodicy is adequate and illuminating. But, as far as I can see, Griffin does not even attempt to address the issue in this manner. And hence I see no reason to grant that he has established the implausibility of this theodicy.

Overall, though, as I stated earlier, I believe that most philosophers will find this book to be a valuable addition to the ongoing discussion of the problem of evil.

Christian Theism and the Problems of Philosophy, edited by **Michael D. Beaty**. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1990. Pp. vii, 380. $34.95 Cloth; $14.95 Paper.

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This is the fifth volume in the *Library of Religious Philosophy* series. It contains a reprint of Alvin Plantinga's "Advice to Christian Philosophers" (*Faith and Philosophy*, July, 1984) followed by thirteen essays which show how to follow part of that advice. The various authors attempt to resolve important philosophical problems by examining them in light of uniquely theistic (and often Christian) assumptions. To the extent that the essays are successful they not only help with the philosophical problems but also reveal the explanatory relevance and usefulness of theistic beliefs. Even when they are not so successful, the essays display clearly the quality of contemporary Christian philosophy. The proposals contained in the articles are focused and readable, and most of all they are *creative*, repeatedly offering interesting new angles on the problems under discussion.

Excluding "Advice to Christian Philosophers," four essays each are devoted to epistemology and ethics, and five concern metaphysics. Four of the essays appeared in volume 4, number 4 of *Faith and Philosophy* (October 1987) and so may already be familiar to readers of this journal; the other nine were written for this volume. The volume also contains a fine introduction to the essays by editor Michael D. Beaty.

The epistemology section contains essays aimed at showing that a theistic perspective yields a better understanding of probability and of epistemic justification, an essay which explores the compatibility of reliabilism and theism, and one which develops a theory of rationality applicable to both scientific and religious belief systems. Two of the metaphysics essays are concerned with counterfactuals. The first focuses on those with impossible antecedents and leads to a proposed extension of "the standard analysis" of counterfactuals. The second argues that "natural laws" are grounded in counterfactuals of freedom. The section also contains interesting articles on the ground of mathematical objects, the mind/body problem, and free will. The

ethics essays are more nearly focused on a single theme. Two of them support the viability of the Divine Command Theory and two argue against it. I cannot, of course, hope to comment on all of the essays. Instead I will try to convey something about the content of the volume by posing some questions about one essay from each of the main sections.

In "What if the Impossible Had Been Actual?" Linda Zagzebski offers "an *a priori* argument that it is possible that there is some proposition which is impossible, but not self-contradictory" (p. 174f). If the argument is sound then we have a reason to suppose that some fine-tuning of the semantics for counterfactuals is in order. Unfortunately the argument is not convincing. Zagzebski does not consider objections to the argument in the essay, but it seems to me that premise 4 (p. 174) is the weak link. It states:

> The proposition 'There is a proposition which is false in all possible worlds but does not entail a contradiction' is not self-contradictory.

This is introduced as an assumption—the only one besides an assumption for reductio—but no defense of the assumption is offered and there is some reason to think it false. We do know that many necessarily false propositions entail contradictions, for example "God is not good" entails "The being who is good is not good" or the like, and we also know that it sometimes takes a bit of work to *derive* an explicit contradiction (as Zagzebski requires, p. 174). So it is far from obvious that we should accept the truth of this premise.

It also seems to me that the intuitions that Zagzebski wants to account for are more easily understood in another way which does not require us to subdivide the "category" of the impossible. She is "strongly inclined" (p. 167) to say that "if God did not exist, then matter would not exist" is non-trivially true and that "if God did not exist, matter would exist" is false, rather than that both are trivially true. I think that the inclination is the result of not keeping the truth (assuming that it is true) that God is a necessary being firmly in view. Clearly, if Melba has children then "if Melba did not exist, her children would not exist" is non-trivially true, but Melba is a contingent being. Anyone really serious about the claim that God exists necessarily must ignore the formal similarity of the sentences involving Melba's and God's nonexistence.

In "Because God Says So" Carlton D. Fisher rejects the divine command theory and argues that doing so does not undermine God's sovereignty. His major reason for rejecting the theory is apparently his belief that it makes claims like the following non-trivially true: If God had commanded us to torture innocents, then it would have been right to do so (p. 360). Note that he here presupposes something like the Zagzebski view questioned above. But if, as he argues, God does not create moral rules by his commands how do they arise, and how is God's sovereignty assured?

Fisher's proposal is that God still controls the content of morality by de-

ciding what sorts of creatures to create (p. 362). God creates us, then *recognizes* what is best for us and proposes commands for us accordingly. Thus he is still sovereign, but the things commanded are not dependent on his will but merely on his epistemic perfection (p. 369). Here it is interesting to compare Fisher's position with that presented in Philip L. Quinn's "An Argument for Divine Command Ethics," also in this volume. Although one defends and one attacks "divine command theory" it looks as though their positions are actually compatible. Quinn presents a persuasive argument for the conclusion that most deontological states of affairs (e.g., telling the truth being obligatory, lying being impermissible) are metaphysically dependent on being willed by God (p. 297f). The dependence he has in view is, roughly, a causal *contribution* of God's willing to the existence of the state of affairs. Quinn's argument leaves open the allowable "mechanisms" of this contribution. Because a range of allowable processes are left open the process described by Fisher can be viewed as an option compatible with Quinn's claims. Fisher tells us that God wills the existence of certain creatures which thereby determines the existence of certain moral rules. Thus even on Fisher's view God's willing makes a causal contribution to the existence of moral rules. As a result, even Fisher's view is a divine command theory in Quinn's sense, although Fisher rejects the name.

Fisher seems to be presupposing that a "divine command theory" requires an act of willing moral rules that is distinct from the willing that brings about the existence of the creatures who are subject to those rules. As a result he does not see his view as a divine command theory. But since there is no compelling reason for theists to adopt the requirement mentioned I am inclined to side with Quinn here and suggest that Fisher's view is, after all, a divine command theory.

Fisher's view that morality is in a sense secondary to creatures like human beings also raises the question of what God's primary aim in creating might be. Maybe it is certain creatures, with a certain morality as a by-product. That is Fisher's view, and perhaps it is the correct view for Christian theists. But there are other options. Maybe God's primary aim is a certain moral order, with certain creatures being the necessary means to that order's existence. Or maybe he aims simultaneously at the existence of both the creatures and the moral order, without priority. So perhaps Fisher's desire to reject divine command theory has also been influenced by a substantive theological assumption about the relative unimportance of morality as compared to (other) creatures. But even that assumption does not entail that morality could not be ultimately the result of God's will.

Plantinga's "Justification and Theism" uses the notion that humans have been designed by God to be in God's image to clarify the notion of epistemic justification. God is a knower, so it is reasonable to suppose that we have

been designed to be knowers as well. Thus, Plantinga argues, a necessary condition for knowing will include the proper functioning of our epistemic faculties—functioning as God designed them to function. A second necessary condition will be that the faculties operate in an environment of the sort God designed them to function in. So Plantinga arrives at these conditions through plausible inferences from central theistic doctrines.

Plantinga then contends that these conditions are not together sufficient. The reason is that we know from *experience* that some beliefs produced by properly functioning faculties in an appropriate environment have more "positive epistemic status" than others. It seems to me that at this point Plantinga's project runs into trouble. For at this point he begins to offer us alleged *details* of God's design plan. For example, he suggests that we can observe that we have a stronger "impulse" to accept beliefs with more positive epistemic status than ones with less. He then immediately concludes that the match between degree of impulse and degree of positive epistemic status is a feature of God's design plan (p. 49). But we have no reason to accept that conclusion even if (as seems doubtful) it is true that such an impulse exists and also bears an "appropriate functional relationship" to degrees of positive epistemic status (p. 49). First, because the notion that that is a feature of the design plan cannot be inferred from any common theistic doctrines. Second, the doctrine of the fall stands in the way of Plantinga's ready assumption that we are so designed. The fall doctrine suggests that we are not functioning properly in a proper environment, but unfortunately does not specify the nature of the breakdown in any detail. At least some schools within Christianity have suggested that the loss of original design perfection extends to our epistemic faculties. So, we cannot simply assume that an observed impulse represents a feature of *proper* functioning. And, more generally, it seems that we must remain agnostic about what the details of the design plan are if they are not spelled out in received theistic doctrines.

Although my brief discussion has mostly taken the form of raising objections I certainly do not want to leave the impression that the volume is not valuable reading. I profited very much from a study of these essays, and I hope that many others working in philosophy and religion will also explore them. The book could also be used for an advanced survey course in philosophy of religion because of the wide variety of topics addressed and the quality of the work. It is another fine addition to this series.