

According to Forberg, as Gerrish interprets him, "if the way the world goes is calculated to produce the final success of goodness, then there is a moral world government [i.e., the moral world government that, according to Forberg, religion is "a practical belief" in]; otherwise there is not" (*Continuing the Reformation*: 136). But what is meant, exactly, by "the final success of goodness"? Does it mean—as it certainly appears to mean—that the way the world goes is calculated to secure that goodness is finally rewarded even as badness is finally punished? If it does, then Forberg's view is at most verbally different from what I've characterized elsewhere as "the view that moral commitment is meaningless unless the world is such that 'absolute justice' will eventually be done—understanding by 'absolute justice' a state of affairs in which there is an exact proportion between the past deeds of a person, good and bad, and her or his present condition of weal or woe" (Notebooks, May, 1989; rev. 10 October 2003).

But, as I have shown, one great difficulty with any such view is that it is implicitly self-contradictory. Why? Well, because it simultaneously affirms and denies that the situation necessarily presupposed by "a moral world government"—which is to say, a situation constituted by governed-subject-to-governor-government—is a genuinely social situation. By "a genuinely social situation" I mean a situation constituted by a plurality of individuals (1) none of which can completely determine the being and action of another; and (2) each of which is in part determined by the being and action of others. If all individuals are social in this sense, in the sense that each is, in part, self-determined and also, in part, other-determined, by others that themselves are all, in part, self-determined, then there is and must be an irreducible factor of chance in the way things go. What actually happens is always and everywhere due, not to one individual, but to many, none of which—not even one having an influence on all others than which none greater can be conceived—could possibly guarantee the exact proportion between past deeds and present condition that "the final success of goodness," or "the achievement of 'absolute justice'" is supposed to require.

The other great difficulty of any such view, as I have also shown, is that "the final success of goodness," so understood, has nothing whatever to do with

morality. "[M]orality at its heart, as the love of others for their own sake, does not in the least depend on external controls and sanctions, whether generally social or specifically legal. One needs no such external motive to do what one already wishes to do, and to love others as oneself is already to have found one's own happiness in promoting theirs. Consequently, anyone who so loves as to deserve a reward has no need of it; while anyone who needs a reward to love does not deserve it—wherewith the whole classical idea of God as providing the transcendent external sanctions of morality is rendered otiose" ("Theological Perspectives on Punishment": 21).

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