

Evil & THE GOD OF LOVE

LIVE Event for students of
Philosophy of Religion and Ethics
for AS/A Level Religious Studies
With Dr Peter Vardy

Dates for 2024-25

- Worcester (Cathedral) 19th November 2024
- London (Bloomsbury Baptist Church) 22nd November 2024
- Coventry (Cathedral) 3rd March 2025
- Manchester (Methodist Central Hall) 12th March 2025
- London (Bloomsbury Baptist Church) 21st March 2025





Dr. Peter Vardy was Vice Principal of Heythrop College, University of London (1999-2011); he is internationally well-known as a leader in the fields of Religious Studies, Philosophy and Ethics and Values Education. Peter's many books – including the best-selling "Puzzle of" series for HarperCollins – demonstrate his ability to communicate complex ideas with clarity, accuracy and humour. For more than three decades schools and colleges have looked to Peter to provide outstanding conferences, resources and CPD / INSET, both to support their work in RS and Philosophy and more broadly.

Did you know? Peter was awarded an honorary doctorate for his work in promoting Religious Studies in schools by the University of Chichester in 2021.



"Dr Vardy and Charlotte never disappoint, both deliver content with passion and are the experts in the field. Students found the conference to be intellectually challenging and important to their A Level studies." Teacher

"They are really excellent conferences- clear, coherent and extending talks upon all subjects linked with courses. A must for aspirational sixth formers." Save RE Facebook Comment

Building on the success of "God & the Good" in 2023-24, Candle Conferences presents an all-new LIVE event for students of the Philosophy of Religion and Ethics for AS / A Level Religious Studies. "Evil & the God of Love" will explore content specified by ALL ENGLISH EXAMINATION BOARDS, focusing on the compulsory Philosophy of Religion paper. The event aims to get students really excited about the subject, enriching and extending their knowledge and understanding as well as supporting them in analysing, evaluating and making informed, well-reasoned academic judgements.

Sessions include...

1. What is Evil?

This opening session will explore and clarify the nature of evil. Dr Vardy will put Christian discussions about the Problem of Evil in context, considering how they have been influenced by very different conceptions of evil, from ancient religions on one hand, and from classical Greece on the other. Is evil a real force that possesses people, things and even places, competing with the good, or is it a lack of goodness which causes people and things to fall short of what they could be? [This session will end with an activity.](#)

2. Does Evil disprove God's existence?

In the next session, Dr Vardy will explore the philosophical problem of evil in both its logical and evidential forms. Bearing in mind the types and scale of suffering evident in the world - documented by writers from Dostoevsky to Primo Levi to Gregory S Paul - were Hume and Mackie right to claim that evil makes faith in the Christian God illogical... and did William Rowe actually succeed in using it to disprove God? Alternatively, is it illogical to suppose that we are in a position to judge God... as God reminded Job and as Wykstra, Hick and Swinburne have reiterated. [This session will end with a discussion and Q&A.](#)

3. The Augustinian Theodicy

Next, Dr Vardy will outline and evaluate St Augustine's multi-layered and sophisticated attempt to resolve the problem of evil. Even if evil is "privatio boni", is God - being both omniscient and omnibenevolent - justified in having created anything at all? How did St Augustine redefine God's attributes as well as evil to dilute the challenge of evil? Is St Augustine guilty of putting undue weight on a literalist interpretation of Genesis 2-3? How can he rely on the free-will defence, while also arguing that God chooses who to save by grace (and without reference to anything we have done) rendering our lives theologically determined? Is Alvin Plantinga's free will defence a more credible solution to the problem of evil? [This session will conclude with an activity.](#)

4. Evil & the God of Love

Finally, Dr Vardy will explore and evaluate John Hick's attempt to develop a "theodicy for today" in response to the horrors of the mid-20th Century through "Evil & the God of Love"(1966). Is Hick right to reject defining evil as "privatio boni"? To what extent was Hick actually influenced by St Irenaeus? Does his suggestion that God created humans as animals with only the potential to develop towards a full spiritual life through experiencing a "vale of soul making" really defend God's omnipotence? What sort of an afterlife would be necessary to make up for inequalities in suffering and opportunities to develop? Can this approach ever account for animal suffering? [This session will conclude with a debate, giving students the opportunity to develop and deliver their own contributions as well as to vote on the motion "This house believes that evil shows that an omnipotent, omnibenevolent God cannot exist!"](#)

To Book

Student tickets to attend the "Evil and the God of Love" event cost £20

- We offer a 10% discount if you book 10+ tickets together online (e-mail for your ACCESS CODE)
- You can buy a COMBINED ticket to both of our A Level events for just £30, when booked online and subject to t&cs.
- We offer one free teacher-place per 10 students, otherwise accompanying teachers cost £20. Teachers attending alone for CPD purposes cost £100
- Trainee teachers and extra adults supporting individual students to access the event attend for free.

With Candle you get:

- Up-to-date scholarly content made engaging and tailored to the real needs of A Level students.
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- Easy, secure online bookings

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