

How to Be a Friendly Skeptical Theist

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ABSTRACT In this paper Skeptical Theism is described, applied and defended. Furthermore, William Rowe's position of Friendly Atheism is described and a version of Friendly Theism suggested. It is shown that Skeptical Theism can be defended against two common arguments and that skeptical theists might be able to adopt the position of Friendly Theism.

KEYWORDS Bergmann, Michael; Friendly Atheism; Friendly Theism; Rowe, William; Skeptical Theism

1. INTRODUCTION

William Rowe has been engaged in advocating several evidential *arguments from evil*, as well as a position known as Friendly Atheism, for about thirty years. One of the most influential and frequently addressed responses to his arguments is that put forward by so called skeptical theists, among them Michael Bergmann¹ and Stephen Wykstra.²

In this paper Skeptical Theism is described, applied and defended. Furthermore, William Rowe's position of Friendly Atheism is described and a version Friendly Theism presented. It is shown that Skeptical Theism can be defended against two common arguments and that skeptical theists might be able to adopt the position of Friendly Theism.

1. Michael Bergmann, "Commonsense Skeptical Theism," in *Reason, Metaphysics, and Mind: New Essays on the Philosophy of Alvin Plantinga*, ed. Kelly James Clark and Michael C. Rea (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012).

2. Stephen John Wykstra, "The Humean Obstacle to Evidential Arguments from Suffering: On Avoiding the Evils of 'Appearance,'" *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 16, no. 2 (1984), doi:10.1007/bf00136567.

Following Rowe,³ Theism is defined in a narrow or restricted sense as including only the belief that there is an omnipotent, omniscient and perfectly good God who created the world. Restricted Atheism includes only the opposite belief: namely, the denial of Restricted Theism. The terms “suffering” and “evil” are used interchangeably to denote mental and physical human and animal suffering and the adjective “horrendous” is used in connection with suffering, to indicate that the suffering *seems* to be utterly pointless.

2. SKEPTICAL THEISM DESCRIBED

Skeptical theists contend that we are cognitively limited beings and cannot access God’s mind to see his reasons for permitting states of affairs such as, for example, (a) suffering, (b) non-belief and (c) religious diversity. These are all states of affairs that might seem to fit poorly with the existence of a theistic God. More specifically, skeptical theists argue not by formulating an explanation that would justify God in permitting (a), (b) and (c), but rather by more modestly claiming that we cannot know that there are no explanations.

According to Michael Bergmann’s formulation, Skeptical Theism is based on the following four skeptical theses (ST):

- ST1: We have no good reason for thinking that the possible goods we know of are representative of the possible goods there are.
- ST2: We have no good reason for thinking that the possible evils we know of are representative of the possible evils there are.
- ST3: We have no good reason for thinking that the entailment relations we know of between possible goods and possible evils are representative of the entailment relations there are between possible goods and possible evils.
- ST4: We have no good reason for thinking that the total moral value or disvalue we perceive in certain complex states of affairs accurately reflects the total moral value or disvalue they really have.⁴

To my mind, it is common sense to regard these skeptical theses as true and I find it difficult to imagine someone claiming the complete opposite—

3. William L. Rowe, “The Problem of Evil and Some Varieties of Atheism,” *American Philosophical Quarterly* 16, no. 4 (1979): 335, doi:10.2307/20009775.

4. Bergmann, “Commonsense Skeptical Theism,” 11–12.

for example, someone claiming that he has reasons for, or perhaps even has knowledge of, all possible goods, possible evils and all logical connections between all possible goods and evils.

However, I will interpret ST1–ST4 as agnostic theses, that is as saying that we simply do not know whether it is likely or unlikely that we have full grasp of all possible goods and evils, all connections between all possible goods and evils and the real value of all possible goods and evils.

Next, a *Rowe-style* argument from evil will be described, Rowe's Friendly Atheism presented, and Skeptical Theism applied as a defense against the Rowe-style argument from evil.

3. SKEPTICAL THEISM APPLIED

Rowe-style arguments from evil are often stated by first presenting Rowe's so called Bambi-case and Bruce Russell's so called Sue-case. We follow the same procedure. Rowe's description of the Bambi-case goes as follows:

Suppose in some distant forest, lightning strikes a dead tree resulting in a forest fire. In the fire a fawn [Bambi] is trapped, horribly burned, and lies in terrible agony for several days before death relieves its suffering.⁵

Russell formulates the Sue-case in the following way:

The Girl's Mother was living with her boyfriend, another man who was unemployed, her two children, and her one-month-old infant fathered by the boyfriend. On New Year's Eve all three adults were drinking at a bar near the woman's home. The boyfriend had been taking drugs and drinking heavily. He was asked to leave the bar at 8:00 p.m. After several reappearances he finally stayed away for good at about 9:30 p.m. The woman and the unemployed man remained at the bar until 2:00 a.m. at which time the woman went home and the man to a party at a neighbor's home. Perhaps out of jealousy, the boyfriend attacked the woman when she walked into the house. Her brother was there and broke up the fight by hitting the boyfriend who passed out and was slumped over a table when the brother left. Later the boyfriend attacked the woman again, this time she knocked him unconscious. After checking the children, she went to bed. Later the woman's 5-year-old girl [Sue] went downstairs to go to the bathroom. The unemployed man returned from the party at 3:45 a.m. and found the 5-year-old dead.

5. Rowe, "The Problem of Evil," 337.

She had been raped, severely beaten over most of her body and strangled to death by the boyfriend.⁶

If we let “E” signify the horrendous evils similar to those illustrated in the Bambi- and Sue-case, we can now formulate the argument like this:

- (1) E is probably pointless.
- (2) No good justifies God permitting pointless Es.
- (3) Therefore: probably God does not exist.

The argument is deductively valid and premise (2) is not only generally thought of as true, but also necessarily true.

In order to present Friendly Atheism, Rowe has offered theists some advice on how to respond to the argument above. He suggests that theists could invert the argument in the following manner:

- (4) Probably God exists.
- (2) No good justifies God permitting pointless Es.
- (5) Therefore: E is probably not pointless.

This argument is also deductively valid and (2) is included here as well. Just as Rowe supports (1) by presenting the Bambi- and Sue-case, theists could try to support (4), that is the denial of (1), by alluding to the classical arguments for God’s existence or religious experience.⁷

Instead of taking on the enormous project of refuting all arguments for the truth of (4) Rowe formulates the following typology of atheistic positions, all of which take different stances regarding whether or not theists are rational in believing in God:

Friendly Atheism: The position of (i) holding Atheism to be true and (ii) holding that some Theists *may* be rational in respect of their belief in God.

Indifferent Atheism: The position of (i) holding Atheism to be true and (ii) being indifferent concerning whether or not theists are rational in respect of their belief in God.

6. Bruce Russell, “The Persistent Problem of Evil,” *Faith and Philosophy* 6, no. 2 (1989): 123.

7. Rowe, “The Problem of Evil,” 340.

Unfriendly Atheism: The position of (i) holding Atheism to be true and (ii) holding that *no* theists are rational in respect of their belief in God.⁸

Since truth is not a necessary condition of rationality, Rowe suggests that atheists endorse Friendly Atheism. Furthermore, he gives two reasons for why theists may be rationally justified:

[T]he atheist may take the view that some theists are rationally justified in holding to theism, but would not be so were they to be acquainted with the grounds for disbelief—those grounds being sufficient to tip the scale in favor of atheism when balanced against the reasons the theist has in support of his belief.

Friendly atheism becomes paradoxical, however, when the atheist contemplates believing that the theist has all grounds for atheism that he, the atheist, has and yet is rationally justified in maintaining his theistic belief. But even so excessively friendly a view as this perhaps can be held by the atheist if he also has some reason to think that the grounds for theism are not as telling as the theist is justified in taking them to be.⁹

In the first section quoted, Rowe argues that the theist (a) may be rational in believing in God because he lacks evidence for Atheism. In the second section, he argues that the theist (b) may be rational because he is mistaken regarding the evidential force of the arguments for Theism.

However, Skeptical Theism can be applied as a defense against the argument from evil just presented. This is the case because the argument has a hidden inference: namely, the inference from “there seem to be no goods that would justify God permitting E” to “E is probably pointless.” This specific piece of inductive argumentation is known as a “noseeum” inference.¹⁰ Noseeum inferences are inferences from “there *seems* to be no X” to “there is no X” or to “there probably is no X.” Skeptical theists, to my mind, correctly claim that even though these sorts of inference are sometimes justified, there are no good reasons to believe that the above noseeum inference belongs to the class of justified noseeum inferences.

I think this claim is best seen as an agnostic one: that is, the claim is not

8. Ibid.

9. Ibid.

10. The inference was named by Stephen Wykstra. See Stephen John Wykstra, “Rowe’s Noseeum Argument from Evil,” in *The Evidential Argument from Evil*, ed. Daniel Howard-Snyder (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996).

that the noseum inference is unjustified, but rather that we simply cannot know whether it is justified or not. An agnosticism of this sort is consistent with ST1–ST4. For instance, the agnosticism is consistent with ST1 (“We have no good reason for thinking that the possible goods we know of are representative of the possible goods there are”) and ST4 (“We have no good reason for thinking that the total moral value or disvalue we perceive in certain complex states of affairs accurately reflects the total moral value or disvalue they really have”). It could be that there is a good X we do not know of, or an X we know of, or perhaps an X we at least have some grasp of, that *in fact* outweighs horrendous suffering in the world.

Moreover, endorsing ST3 (“We have no good reason for thinking that the entailment relations we know of between possible goods and possible evils are representative of the entailment relations there are between possible goods and possible evils”), horrendous evils in the world might be logically necessary for X to occur.

Straightforwardly, endorsing Skeptical Theism—that is, endorsing ST1–ST4—we cannot make any probability claims concerning God’s existence, if these are to be inferred from God’s perhaps unknown reason(s) for permitting horrendous evils.

4. SKEPTICAL THEISM DEFENDED

There are several arguments against Skeptical Theism and most of them are constructed so as to show that Skeptical Theism entails absurd or “unwelcome” forms of skepticism of one kind or another. Here, I will defend Skeptical Theism against two such arguments.

According to advocates of the first and most common line of arguing against Skeptical Theism, the claim that we cannot know or justifiably say that instances of seemingly horrendous evil lack justification, makes us unable to decide whether we should or should not intervene when such evil occurs. For all we know, and given our cognitive limitations, the evil, or horrendous suffering which we perhaps could stop, could be there to make possible some greater good. Evan Fales writes:

In matters of morals, we seek to know what the *total good and evil* associated with contemplated states of affairs are, for it is this which determines whether those states are to be desired, and whether we should seek to bring them about. But if our knowledge of the moral value of these states is as radically defective as the [skeptical] theist has to claim—states of affairs which are not only common but often within our power to produce or prevent—

then we have indeed lost our grip upon the possibility of using moral judgments as a guide for action. . . .¹¹

Likewise, Mark Piper argues that if we take Skeptical Theism seriously, a person finding himself in a position where he can prevent horrendous suffering, would not know what to do. He would find himself in a state of moral *aporia*:

The general form of such *aporia* can be given in this way: any moral agent who accepts [Skeptical Theism] will, when confronting any moral significant situation in which the agent could prevent innocent suffering, be faced with two moral percepts enjoining opposite courses of action: (A) "One ought to prevent the suffering if doing so will lead to goodness being best served." and (B) "One ought not to prevent the suffering if doing so will lead to goodness being best served." The agnosticism engendered by [Skeptical Theism] will make certain that a consistent skeptical theist will never be able to overcome this *aporia*.¹²

Similarly, Michael Almeida and Graham Oppy argue that Skeptical Theism undermines our usual moral reasoning:

The sceptical theist wants to be able to claim that it is not unlikely that there are unknown goods which would justify a perfect being in not preventing [evil]. Yet, if the consideration to which the sceptical theist appeals can establish this, then they will also suffice to establish that it is not unlikely that there are unknown goods which would justify us in not preventing [evil].¹³

The argument made by Fales, Piper, Almeida, Oppy and others seems to be that a person, when reasoning about how to act, would find himself or herself morally paralyzed.¹⁴ For example, if we again take E to signify horrendous evils similar to those of the Bambi-case and Sue-case, we can formulate a normal case of a person S's moral reasoning as follows:

11. Evan Fales, "Should God Not Have Created Adam?," *Faith and Philosophy* 9, no. 2 (1992): 204.

12. Mark Piper, "Skeptical Theism and the Problem of Moral Aporia," *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 62, no. 2 (2007): 72, doi:10.1007/s11153-007-9128-7.

13. Michael J. Almeida and Graham Oppy, "Sceptical Theism and Evidential Arguments from Evil," *Australasian Journal of Philosophy* 81, no. 4 (2003): 507, doi:10.1080/713659758.

14. The words "moral paralysis" are, for example, used in Scott Sehon, "The Problem of Evil: Skeptical Theism Leads to Moral Paralysis," *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 67, no. 2 (2010), doi:10.1007/s11153-009-9213-1.

- (1) E is probably pointless.
- (6) S should prevent pointless Es.
- (7) Therefore: probably S should prevent E.

Just as with the Rowe-style argument from evil, the above line of reasoning is based on a hidden noseum inference, namely an inference from “E seems to be pointless” to “E is probably pointless” and as a consequence, if the *Rowe-style* argument from Evil fails because of the noseum inference present in that argument, the moral reasoning above also fails.

Skeptical theists seem indeed to be in serious trouble, if Skeptical Theism leads to skepticism or agnosticism concerning our moral reasoning. However, I would like to respond by denying a version of what we might call THE CONSEQUENTIALIST CRITERION. This criterion, when considering moral decision making and moral reasoning, can be formulated as follows:

THE CONSEQUENTIALIST CRITERION: A person S’s decision or line of reasoning, regarding an act, is morally appropriate if all possible consequences of the act have been taken into consideration.

Endorsing this criterion would be to set the standard of moral reasoning too high and it is not at all consistent with Skeptical Theism. A better, more apt, criterion would be the following:

THE CONSEQUENTIALIST CRITERION*: A person S’s decision or line of reasoning, regarding an act, is morally appropriate if all possible consequences S can *reasonably* predict have been taken into consideration.

THE CONSEQUENTIALIST CRITERION* is a necessary although perhaps not sufficient criterion. One way to make it more in accord with our human predicament of being limited beings, with limited time at our disposal, might be to qualify it further, as follows:

THE CONSEQUENTIALIST CRITERION**: A person S’s decision or line of reasoning, regarding an act, is morally appropriate if all possible consequences S can *reasonably* predict, during a *reasonable* amount of time, have been taken into consideration.

Of course God would perhaps meet THE CONSEQUENTIALIST CRITERION since he *might* be able to predict all possible outcomes, but given our cognitive limitations THE CONSEQUENTIALIST CRITERION** seems more fitting

for us humans.¹⁵ To put it another way, how high the standards we have are as regards moral reasoning will be a function of our cognitive abilities. For instance, we cannot demand that a child should meet the same standards as an adult, and, by the same line of reasoning, we cannot demand that an adult with limited resources should meet the same standards that God, with far greater resources, should meet. Thus, we do not need noseum inferences in our moral reasoning. We only have to acknowledge that there are different standards of moral reasoning for us and for God. Recognizing this difference we can formulate an example of human moral reasoning, without the noseum inference, as follows:

- (8) E seems pointless.
- (9) S should prevent seemingly pointless Es.
- (10) Therefore: S should prevent E.

Perhaps one should add that S has used his cognitive resources to such an extent that we cannot *reasonably* demand much more of S. What it means to use one's cognitive resources to a reasonable extent is, of course, a pertinent question here.

Nevertheless, my claim here is not that THE CONSEQUENTIALIST CRITERION* is sufficient and in no need of qualification.¹⁶ Rather, it is that if one is arguing against Skeptical Theism by claiming that it entails skepticism or agnosticism regarding our moral decision making and moral reasoning, then one needs to argue that (a) THE CONSEQUENTIALIST CRITERION is one that it is necessary for skeptical theists to hold and, consequently, that (b) THE CONSEQUENTIALIST CRITERION** is not so.

Advocates for a second line of argumentation against Skeptical Theism claim that if we continue to be skeptical about our being able to know what justifies God in permitting horrendous suffering, then we also need to be skeptical about the truth of other theistic beliefs. Rowe writes:

15. One can also qualify THE CONSEQUENTIALIST CRITERION** further by suggesting that humans and God have different moral roles in the same sense as parents and children have different moral roles. See, for example, Nick Trakakis and Yujin Nagasawa, "Skeptical Theism and Moral Skepticism," *Ars Disputandi: The Online Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 4 (2004), <http://www.arsdisputandi.org/publish/articles/000178/article.pdf>; Richard Swinburne, *The Existence of God*, revised ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), 217; or Richard Swinburne, *Providence and the Problem of Evil* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), 224.

16. Indeed S could deliberate on all outcomes they can reasonably predict, and yet still end up with the conclusion that murder is appropriate in a particular situation.

Skeptical theists choose to ride the trolley car of skepticism concerning the goods that God would know so as to undercut the evidential argument from evil. But once on that trolley car it may not be easy to prevent that skepticism from also undercutting any reason they may suppose they may have for thinking that God will provide them and the worshipping faithful with life everlasting in his presence.¹⁷

Similarly, in a recent article, Erik Wielenberg writes:

[s]kepticism is a tricky weapon, and I believe that skeptical theists are subject to a kind of philosophical blowback. *If* their brand of skepticism defuses the threat posed by the noseem inference, *then* it also threatens their claim to knowledge of God's purposes and intentions. . . . The problem posed for skeptical theists . . . is that it is not reasonable for them to take God at His word.¹⁸

To put it simply, if we cannot tap into God's *mind* in order to get hold of the goods that might or might not justify Him permitting horrendous suffering, we cannot reasonably believe that we can tap into his mind and see, for instance, that he is not lying when promising an afterlife for believers. To illustrate this, we may formulate a plausible instance of the theist's line of reasoning with respect to God's promises as follows:

- (11) Probably it is pointless for God to lie.
- (12) No good justifies God to lie pointlessly.
- (13) Therefore: Probably God does not lie.

Just as with the Rowe-style argument from evil, the above line of reasoning is based on a hidden noseem inference: namely, an inference from "it seems pointless for God to lie" to "probably it is pointless for God to lie", and as a consequence, if ST1–ST4 defeats the inference present in the argument from evil, then the above line of reasoning also fails.

The above argument—even though this might go without saying—is not that God does not exist, and is not even that there are no reasons to believe that he does, but is rather that there are no reasons to believe that God will, for example, keep his promise of eternal life for theists. The argument is

17. William L. Rowe, "Friendly Atheism, Skeptical Theism, and the Problem of Evil," *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 59, no. 2 (2006): 91, doi:10.1007/s11153-005-6178-6.

18. Erik J. Wielenberg, "Sceptical Theism and Divine Lies," *Religious Studies* 46, no. 4 (2010): 520, doi:10.1017/S0034412510000247.

also, to my mind, best interpreted as an agnostic one: that is, as a skeptical theist you have no reason to believe that God is lying when promising an afterlife, and you have no reason to believe that he is not.

However, I am not sure that anything important follows from the argument. Why would a skeptical theist need reasons to believe in God's promise of an afterlife? Perhaps it is enough to trust God with respect to his promises and you need not necessarily demand reasons in order to trust someone. Indeed, we often trust people without demanding reasons for why we should. Moreover, there are some scriptural bases supporting the suggestion of trusting God.¹⁹

However, one way to interpret the argument is that without reasons skeptical theists cannot be rational when believing or trusting God. If this is the case, then one way for skeptical theists to respond is by denying at least one version of what we might call THE EVIDENTIAL CRITERION. This criterion can be formulated as follows:

THE EVIDENTIAL CRITERION: A person S's belief p is rational to hold for S only if S has reasons (evidence) supporting p.

Skeptical theists can deny the formulation of the criterion above by claiming that we only need good reasons for non-basic beliefs, that is non-inferential beliefs can be rational to hold without a person having good reasons to hold these beliefs as true. The criterion can then be reformulated as follows:

THE EVIDENTIAL CRITERION*: S's inferential belief p is rational to hold for S only if S has reasons (evidence) supporting p.

The skeptical theist can then, in a *Plantigian* manner, go on to argue that many theists hold their beliefs concerning God's promises as non-inferential and properly basic ones: i.e. as basic and as properly so.²⁰ This "proper basicness" might be supported using Alvin Plantinga's famous analogy-argument: i.e. by claiming that many theistic beliefs are just as non-inferential as the belief that (i) "I ate lunch this noon" or (ii) "there

19. See, for example, Hebrews 11:11 or Romans 4:16-18.

20. See, for example, Alvin Plantinga, "Reason and Belief in God," in *Faith and Rationality: Reason and Belief in God*, ed. Nicholas Wolterstorff (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1983).

are other minds than my own present in the world.”²¹ The skeptical theist might add that (i) and (ii) are as rational to hold as theistic non-inferential beliefs concerning (say) God’s promise of an afterlife.

The claim here, then, is not that one should reject THE EVIDENTIAL CRITERION and endorse THE EVIDENTIAL CRITERION*, but rather that, if arguing against skeptical theism by claiming that it makes theists irrational in believing or trusting God’s promises, one also needs to argue that either (a) THE EVIDENTIAL CRITERION is correct or (b) THE EVIDENTIAL CRITERION* is correct, but theistic beliefs regarding God’s promises are inferential beliefs—i.e. neither non-inferential nor properly basic.

5. FRIENDLY THEISM

Let us—at least for the fun of it—think of rationality in an evidential sense, in accordance with the unqualified EVIDENTIAL CRITERION above.²² Can skeptical theists rationally believe that God exists? In other words, perhaps it is enough to trust God with respect to his promises, but does not endorsing ST1–ST4 make it impossible to rationally believe that God exists? Well, I cannot see how this could be so. Perhaps there are goods that justify God lying to us, but I cannot see how one could formulate an argument showing that it is possible for God to lie with respect to his existence. As long as this has not been shown I think we may conclude that if one has reason to believe that God exists one may also be rational in believing that he does. Following Rowe’s advice to theists, we may try one of the classical arguments for God’s existence or arguments from religious experience.

Moreover, on condition that the evidential criterion is met, a skeptical theist could actually adopt the position of Friendly Theism. A typology covering different theisms, analogous to Rowe’s typology of atheisms, might be formulated as follows:

Friendly Theism: The position of (i) holding Theism to be true and (ii) holding that some Atheists *may* be rational in respect of their Atheism.

Indifferent Theism: The position of (i) holding Theism to be true and (ii) being indifferent concerning whether or not atheists are rational in respect of their Atheism.

21. See, for example, *ibid.*, 59; and Alvin Plantinga, *God and Other Minds: A Study of the Rational Justification of Belief in God* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1967), 187–211.

22. Adopting this way of thinking does not necessarily mean that we are irrational when trusting God. Perhaps we are neither rational nor irrational when trusting God.

Unfriendly Theism: The position of (i) holding Theism to be true and (ii) holding that atheists are not rational in respect of their Atheism.

This is not the place to show how the evidential criterion can be met (and, as I have claimed, I am not convinced that one needs to meet it). The claim is rather that endorsing Skeptical Theism does not make it impossible to meet it, and that if it is met then one may adopt the position of Friendly Theism.

Furthermore, let us recall Rowe's reasons for why a theist might be rational. He argued (a) that a theist may be rational in believing in God because he lacks evidence for Atheism and (b) that he may be rational because he is mistaken regarding the evidential force of the arguments for Theism. A theist can now bring these same reasons to bear on Atheism itself, and claim that the atheist may be rational either because he lacks evidence for Theism or because he is mistaken regarding the evidential force of the arguments for Atheism. In fact, as we have seen, if the atheist bases his Atheism on a Rowe-style argument from evil then he is actually mistaken regarding the evidential force of the argument.

Before summing up, we might in all friendliness give *Roweian* atheists some advice by suggesting a reasonable Rowe-style argument formulated without a noseum inference as follows:

- (8) E seems pointless.
- (2) No good justifies God permitting pointless Es.
- (14) Therefore: God does not seem to exist.

If THE EVIDENTIAL CRITERION* is adopted, then it will also be open to the atheist to suggest that the belief that God does not exist is non-inferential and properly basic.

To sum up, Skeptical Theism can be applied as a defense against Rowe-style arguments from evil. Moreover, Skeptical Theism can be defended against the claim that the position leads to one being unable to decide whether or not one should intervene when horrendous evil occurs. Also, Skeptical Theism can be defended against the claim that the position leads to one's not having reasons to believe God's promises, and thus to one's being in a position where one cannot be rational in believing God's promises. Furthermore, it turns out that skeptical theists could, perhaps, adopt the position of Friendly Theism.

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