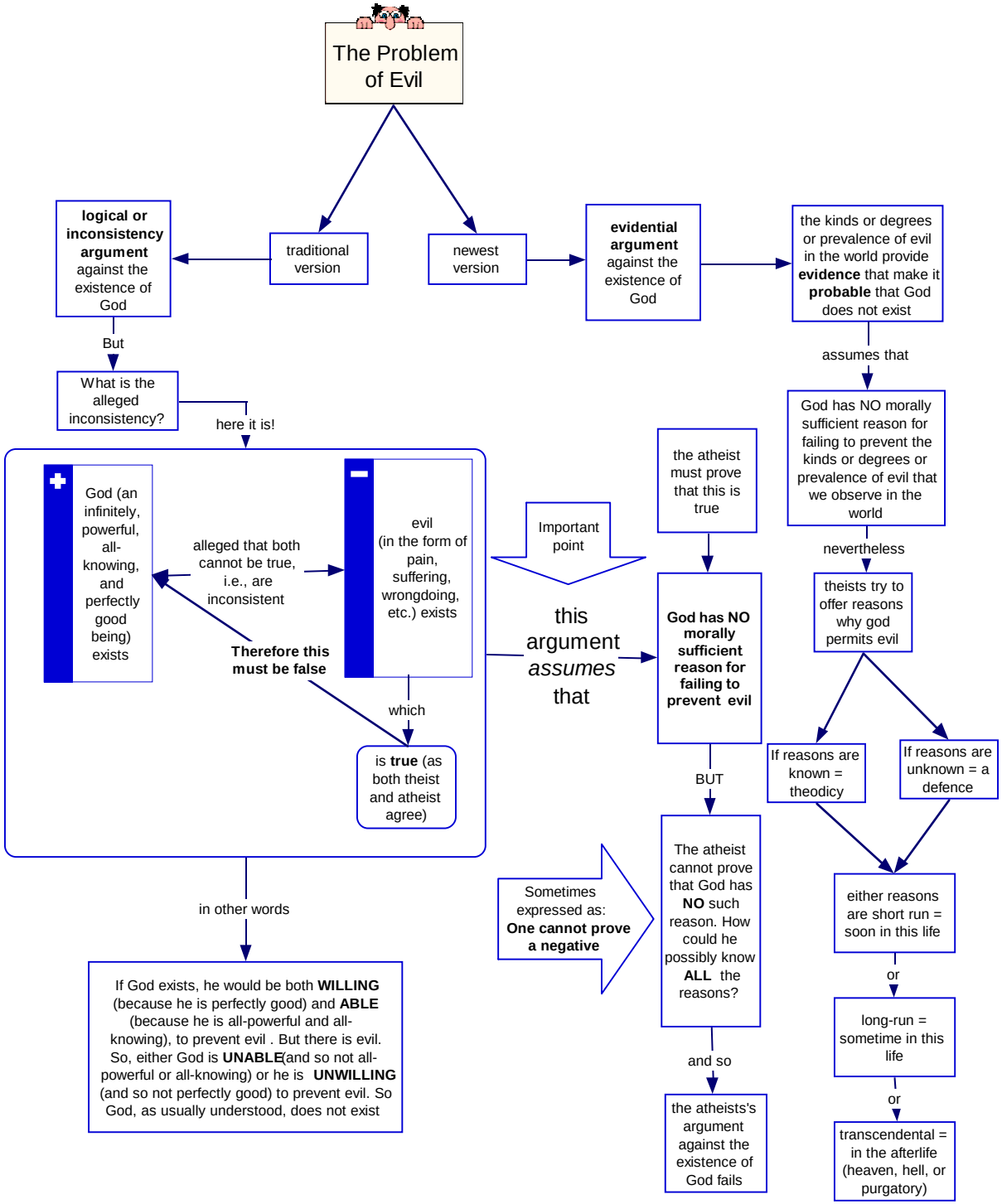
The Problem of Evil
traditional version
newest version
logical or inconsistency argument against the existence of God
But
What is the alleged inconsistency?
here it is!
God (an infinitely, powerful, all-knowing, and perfectly good being) exists
alleged that both cannot be true, i.e., are inconsistent
evil (in the form of pain, suffering, wrongdoing, etc.) exists
Therefore this must be false
which
is true (as both theist and atheist agree)
in other words
If God exists, he would be both WILLING (because he is perfectly good) and ABLE (because he is all-powerful and all-knowing), to prevent evil . But there is evil. So, either God is UNABLE(and so not all-powerful or all-knowing) or he is UNWILLING (and so not perfectly good) to prevent evil. So God, as usually understood, does not exist
evidential argument against the existence of God
the kinds or degrees or prevalence of evil in the world provide evidence that make it probable that God does not exist
assumes that
God has NO morally sufficient reason for failing to prevent the kinds or degrees or prevalence of evil that we observe in the world
nevertheless
theists try to offer reasons why god permits evil
If reasons are known = theodicy
If reasons are unknown = a defence
either reasons are short run = soon in this life
or
long-run = sometime in this life
or
transcendental = in the afterlife (heaven, hell, or purgatory)
Important point
this argument assumes that
the atheist must prove that this is true
God has NO morally sufficient reason for failing to prevent evil
BUT
The atheist cannot prove that God has NO such reason. How could he possibly know ALL the reasons?
Sometimes expressed as: One cannot prove a negative
and so
the atheists's argument against the existence of God fails

A Post-Theistic Approach to the Problem of Evil

The Theistic view:
God is a single person [unitarianism] or 'something' that comprises three persons [trinitarianism]. In either case, God is treated as a supernatural person or comprising such persons.

A Post-Theistic view: God as love is **personal** because love is personal, but God is not a person. God as Love is neither natural nor supernatural. God is Spirit (not a spirit) i.e., God is a spiritual reality

The negative aspect of post-theism

Argues that God is not a moral agent or belongs with us to a moral community and can be " brought before the bar" for judging by us, i.e., to justify himself.

Argues that God is not a person or that God is a 'supernatural' disembodied being of any kind.

Argues that God is not a person who acts for purposes, and especially purposes regarding evil that require justifying or explaining

The positive aspect of post-theism

God is Love
(sometimes expressed as God is loving)

God's creation

Creation is Love's being by its very nature neither possessive of nor controlling of the physical world or of the realm of free beings.

Creation is a spiritual truth, that love is the absence of possessiveness or of control of the world. It is not a metaphysical or scientific event

further explanation

What happens in the world is the result either of natural causes or of the free choices of persons, That is why there is evil. God, as Love, just lets things be themselves. "Let there be light." Love, in large part, just means letting go.

the worship of God as the "dying or renunciation of the self."

worshipping God is making one's life a sacrifice for God by lovingly accepting life's affronts (e.g., by "turning the other cheek")

the love of God as "the dying or renunciation of the self."

To love God is to do things for others "in the name of God" i.e., without expecting a return of any kind (i.e., loving unconditionally)

further explanation

To love unconditionally is to do for others without expecting a return. It is the renunciation of the expectation of gratitude for good works, of the expectation of apology for injury, even the renunciation of the expectation that good works will serve the purpose intended.

Please take note that I am not presenting these passages as evidence for the views I have expressed. I quote these passages to show that my thoughts are not new and are consistent with insights others have already had.

"Whoever is without love does not know God, for **God is love**." [1 John 4:8]

God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God and God in him." [1 John 4:16]

If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for the ***one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen.***
(1 John 4: 20)

My interpretation: to have a pure love of God is to unconditionally love one's neighbour and, vice versa, to unconditionally love one's neighbour is to have a pure love of God. The only evidence that one unconditionally loves God is that one unconditionally loves one's neighbour, and vice versa.