

CHRISTIANS LIE THAT THEY BELIEVE IN FREE WILL DEFENCE

How can a God that is all good stand by and let the innocent suffer? The Christian answer is that he gives us free will and though he doesn't approve of us hurting others he gives us the power to do it because without free will we cannot love. Love is a free thing and God wants us to choose to love so he lets us do harm because if we can't choose to do harm we cannot love either. This idea is called the free will defence for it is meant to help show that it makes sense to believe in a loving God despite the evil in the world. Some say it helps them believe in such a God because of the evil in the world.

CHRISTIANS REJECT IT

If God exists and is perfect love then he can make us sense him and see his perfect love and glory. Christians say that we will see God if we go to Heaven and so does the Bible (1 Corinthians 13:12; John 17:24; Revelation 22:2-5; 1 John 3:2; Matthew 18:10). They call this the Beatific Vision. Human beings can only choose what they think will lead to happiness. If they see God even for a second they will never sin again or they won't be able to bear the risk of losing him (page 119, The Life of All Living). The Bible says man cannot see God and live probably for man will die of love and desire for God at seeing the infinite beauty of God (page 3, 277, Apologetics and Catholic Doctrine, Part 2). It is said that since God is all we want we will not sin if we have him for we only sin on earth because we don't have him and are not perfectly happy which is why we sin. Sin costs us God. We cannot turn away from absolute happiness when we experience it which is why Christians believe that there is no possibility of sinning in Heaven though God forces nobody there (page 81,84, Why Does God?). So we sin because we have no real idea of what we are throwing away by it. God is to blame then for he keeps us in the dark to make sure we do wrong. God should have given us all a peek at him before we committed our first sin which is about six or seven. Then we would freely choose good and never ever sin. This would not be the removal or reduction of free will but free will being fully fulfilled because being with God in Heaven and being happy is what you want and though you will be able to sin in Heaven you never will for you don't want to (page 274, Handbook of Christian Apologetics). If God really cared about our free will, we would have been born in Heaven.

The Bible says only that we will receive the reward we deserve for the way we lived our lives at the Last Judgment so we could receive the Beatific Vision as soon as we die (page 1279, The Teaching of the Catholic Church).

We don't know and experience God directly therefore there is no God. Even if there were a monistic God that is good and evil and neither - a pile of contradictions - he could still save us from doing evil through a universal experience. There is no transcendent or immanent deity.

It is ridiculous to say that there is a place of perfect happiness like Heaven and then to accept the free will defence for another reason too. What is the point of having free will to develop good character here on earth when any virtues we have will be no good to us in Heaven? Where there is no pain, virtue is no good to us. What use are patience and compassion and prudence there? Even loving others is no good for in Heaven we are absorbed in the love of God and it is him that gives the joy. Heaven must be a world like earth where people sin and suffer if it exists.

When God takes baptised babies to Heaven through they never had the chance to sin he could and should have done the same with the rest of us. The Church says that the babies see God when they die and immediately choose to be with him forever. It adds that God is not dishonouring their freedom but respecting it. Babies know what pain is so nobody can say they have been tricked into choosing God when they don't know what evil is.

Tiny unborn babies who were baptised with a syringe and were not capable of feeling pain would still get into Heaven if they die. If we really have to experience evil and reject it these babies wouldn't be getting into Heaven at all.

The Roman Catholic doctrine of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary claims that though she was a creature who had the power to sin she did not use it for she had God's special protection. When God did that for her he could have done it for the rest of us. The Immaculate Conception doctrine contradicts the free will defence for it implies that sin is God's fault for being careless with us and that having free will does not mean you have to sin. The apparitions in the Catholic Church that defend the Immaculate Conception must be trying to get us to adore a God who is really the Devil and who couldn't really be a God.

It is no answer for Catholics to say that the whole thing is a mystery because that is just plain absurd and totally unsatisfactory and lacks conviction. They say that Mary merited the blessings that are hers now but that she couldn't sin. She was free but couldn't sin. We could have been the same. There is no mystery. We will never learn anything if we start calling contradictions mysteries.

Among other things, the Christian theory of original sin tells us that the will is weakened as a result of what Adam did in the Garden of Eden making it biased towards evil. God could have miraculously prevented Adam's sin from affecting us for he made the law that decreed that Adam's sin would harm us and how. To say original sin has anything to do with solving the problem of evil is to say that God is not all-powerful. If original sin is true then the free will defence is untrue for the original sin idea puts the blame for our sins on God and the idea that our misuse of free will is to blame for evil pretends to have exonerated him.

The Church says that the tendency to sin is reduced by baptism. So, God can make you less likely to sin but won't bother if you are not baptised or born of the spirit or whatever! A God who increases the chances of you sinning is the Devil for it is a sin to cause sin. He is a sinner. Yet he says anything is better than sin for it is an act of ingratitude for his infinite love and therefore infinitely cruel. God can never pave the way for sin for a purpose. This teaching is insulting and not least because to tell people that a dip in a pool will cure their sinfulness to a great extent is far worse than telling a person that their cancer will improve if they drink urine at 3pm every day for both make serious claims and have no facts and statistics to back them up. Big claims need big evidence - it's only fair!

The issue of God allowing us to sin though he can make us freely perfect is related to Plato's doctrine that since evil is what is irrational that whoever is fully rational will not commit it. God would have made us wiser if he wanted to give us a fair start in the war against evil.

Richard Swinburne says God tries not to be too evident to us for our own good. If God made his existence too plain to us then we would feel under pressure to be liked by him and obedient to him. But when the Church says we serve God by serving people for we cannot see him this can hardly be correct. If it is correct then it follows that there isn't a lot to be said for helping others for we are pressured a fair bit to do it. People wouldn't like this view for it is inhuman and cold. It wouldn't be very encouraging.

The Reality of God and the Problem of Evil refutes this view of Swinburne's on page 135 in saying that we all want God for he is so good and attractive so his being more open to us and revealing would not take away from our freedom but respect it better for he is giving us what we want.

The Reality of God and the Problem of Evil states that the free will defence fails because it contradicts the Christian doctrine that God is creator (page 122). The defence says that it is not God's responsibility if we do wrong. It says we create the evil and we create the evil intention. The book however recognises that God makes my choice if he is creator. He creates the evil I choose. He creates the bad intention. I sin because of him not in spite of him. However, the book says God does not sin when I sin. God is right to allow me to be free so that prevents him from sinning by causing my sin. I am still the one doing wrong though I am not creating the sin but making God create it. I am free not in spite of God but because of him (page 125).

I would argue that if God is right to causally co-operate with me when I sin then what the book is criticising and refuting is not the free will defence itself but only the free will defence when it thinks of God as not causing my sin.

SIN DESTROYS THE DEFENCE

All are sinners according to the Christian faith. We cannot do good works for nobody is perfect according to the Bible (Romans 3). And to do good when you have sins is to mock good and nobody makes enough atonement for all the harm and wrong they do.

Justice is more important than love. It is better to have unloving justice than to have unfair love if we are sinners. So we ask for the justice and therefore it does not degrade. But the unfair love degrades both giver and receiver and despises real love and morality and justice. With unloving justice the love is not deserved. Love cannot exist without justice. But justice can exist without love so justice is more important. Commonsense tells us that God would have made us to see how we would stand with justice not love when it has to be one or the other. God is reportedly fair but he does not love us or care about love or have mercy for mercy is love overriding or bluntly trampling on justice.

God would not make us solely to make choices about justice. This is because justice is only to cause suffering when other people do wrong to pay them back. Justice as in giving a person the good they deserve is not to be considered for God expects good to be done to people whether they deserve it or not. So we would have to inflict punitive justice all the time for though justice demands that we reward we cannot for there is nothing there but sin. And if God made us mainly for justice and secondarily for love it makes no difference for justice is the prime consideration. It wouldn't be love anyway to refuse to give a person the penalty they deserve.

If God wants nobody to do wrong or to cause pain except as a punishment which would mean that we can do all the evil we wish then he has no need to encourage temptation and make us attracted to evil. He therefore must be like a policeman who

loves people doing wrong so that he can make them suffer. He must want us to do wrong. God wants nobody to sin meaning that suffering is no use except you do sin for there is no suffering without sin. Such a lofty idea of God is incompatible with God allowing so much temptation and the encouragement of sin and who wants a lot of sacrifice that makes his ways discouraging. When suffering is useless and God does not care if we sacrifice or not he would have made us as robots.

You can be happy and have pain. People perhaps should have been made able to feel pain but not to feel unhappy which is a different thing. Unhappiness springs from fear and is the root of all evil so a God who makes unhappiness possible is encouraging sin and trying to defend him with the freedom defence is a total waste of energy. Why is the will so geared towards the happiness of the person who wills then if the theory that God wants our reaction to justice and not love is true?

This great God of the Christians is supposed to be love according to the saccharine epistles of John. But if he were really perfectly good he would be justice.

Jesus stressed that we should embrace the cross God asks of us, in the gospels. The free will defence tells me a God of love wants me to accept the crosses he sends to me. So the defence is telling me that though it is my fault that I am a sinner and have not fully overcome the weakness Adam's sin put in me, I should accept the cruel way to overcome my sins and sinful tendencies though they are my own fault for not doing enough to overcome them without suffering. In other words, God wants me to suffer to get rid of self-inflicted faults I won't give up. To do what he wants would be to commit the sin of accepting suffering as a means to overcoming sin and purifying my will of evil when the fact that the evil in my will is sinful and therefore my own fault should show that I can do it without suffering. It is a sin to ask for to be tortured to death when you could die painlessly when you have to die and this is the same principle here. To say that evil has a purpose implies that God is evil. When to say that is evil it is evil to say God is good or to use the free will defence to defend his reputation. The defence is useless when all it is good for is encouraging evil. We prefer most things in this world to God though God being goodness itself should come first. The God concept then encourages cynicism because nearly everything we do is anti-God and therefore not as good as it looks if there is a God or if we believe in God so to suffer to do good for other people in order that they may live holier lives is madness. It would be wiser to put your own enjoyment first when the odds of having much success are so slim. Religion sees reducing sin or stopping it as the supreme good work which is cruelty. To be good to a person who is bad when you believe that person is very unlikely to change is really rewarding that person's sins. Don't hide behind any pretence about trying to change that person for if you really tried to change a person you would have reasonable hope that that person would change. Is a person who looks for a needle in a haystack and says they hope to find it in an hour telling the truth? No for they can't expect to find it. And besides they would be demeaning themselves by trying and wasting their time. It is the same with what the God belief and free will defence suggest we should do.

You are supposed to love the sinner and hate the sin. But to say you hate the sin that a person has created freely is to say you hate the person for the person creates the sin. With all the sin that goes on there is no point in free will being given so that we might love for how can we?

Elsewhere, for example, in *The Gospel According to Atheism*, I show that Christian forgiveness is a sanctimonious and that the alternative offered by Humanism rises above forgiveness like the Ark above Ararat. Without legitimising forgiveness the free will defence is a failure because if it is wrong and we have free will then it follows that we can abuse people to our heart's content if we believe they deserve it.

Conclusion

It is horrible how Christians use the free will defence to show you that God is not to blame for evil while they do not believe it themselves. They then worship a being that is to blame after all!

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