

Religious Credulity is Dangerous

Are religionists more theologically and philosophically inept than atheists?

Generally speaking, religious people do not know religion as well as atheists/agnostics do. The latter are generally smarter and more thoughtful with such things.

Thoughtful and smart religious people tend to leave religion. The smarter you are the more concerned with analysing data you will be. Some clever religionists just suspect there is something not right with religion and direct their analytical skills elsewhere.

Data-driven and cautious and skilled thinkers tend to be non-conforming. They will probably not be religious just because everybody else in their circle seems to be.

Our thinkers make sense of their world without religion. If you are smart you will not need the superficial answers of religion as regards the meaning of life.

Certain personality types that seek new experiences and which are driven by intellectual curiosity will tend to drift from religion.

Some feel that openness is a trait of being psychotic but this assumes that psychotics are unable to respect legal and social mores and have no feelings of respect for others. So they live for rebellion. The difference between rebelling for what you see as the truth is as far from rebelling because you are ill as you can imagine.

Religionists argue that the intelligence of the atheist is only a veneer for atheism leads to nihilism - eg the notion that it does not matter if anybody lives or dies including you. But the fact is that even if God made the universe and God gives meaning it does not follow that the universe takes it. The doctrine of the fall is about creation breaking with God. Though it is not really cut from him it is allowed to function as it would if it were. Religion and faith are not the answer to the question of meaning. Religion lies about the subject so it is alarming if we think we need a lie and to believe in it in order to have meaning. The good results of making our own meaning and way in life are clearly apparent so nihilism is impossible to live by in practice. It is impossible to really embrace it though some lie that they do.

What if some people's brains can only do so much which means that if they are very smart the emotional side suffers and that if they are too emotional the intelligence side suffers? The suggestion is that with the religionist, he or she is probably too emotional which is why he or she is blind to reason. The suggestion is that the atheist is hard and borders on being autistic. It is not that simple though there are religionists like that and atheists like that. Most religionists and atheists make good coffee buddies.

If you put an atheist and a believer in a room you may listen to them debate and conclude that one is a dogmatic and stubborn and narrow as the other. First if you are not the expert on either person then is it your place to judge? No. Second, if one is stubborn the other who is not will be firm and come across as stubborn. Whichever person is right and rational and the best thinker is the one who is being firm.

Religion and credulity

“When men choose not to believe in God, they do not thereafter believe in nothing, they then become capable of believing in anything”. So says the Catholic writer Chesterton. But let us mine his true meaning. He is saying that if you choose not to believe in a God who commands you to believe in Catholicism you end up believing in any crazy or superstition or religious nonsense.

Believing any religious or supernatural claim on weak evidence is credulity.

The Church understands that religious credulity is dangerous for these reasons:

- # It can lead to you doing dangerous things just because you think God or a religion asks you to.
- # It makes people too easily led astray by someone who could be a possible con-artist.
- # It makes people prefer what they want to believe to the truth.

It causes problems for those who want to find out the truth.

Part of you, the credulous one, knows you are credulous and you try to blind yourself to that knowledge. The repressing and self-deception can lead to hostility and bigotry towards critics of your religion. For example, credulous Catholics will be against credulous Mormons. A weak faith is an insecure faith.

Error gets in the way of doing what is right for people - if you don't know where the landmines are or err about their location you cannot get them to safety and its harder.

The Church says that God is not served by attributing false miracles to him. It pollutes his message and misrepresents him.

If a supernatural claim is untrue then it is superstition. Superstition implies an unworthy view of God and by embracing it one takes a stand against truth. Thus by implication, when one gives any support to the superstition it implies God has done something he has not done. Take for example, say its a miracle that anybody casting salt over their shoulder will get good luck. That is saying the superstition is true. The problem with it is its saying God has done what he hasn't done. So it follows that if you incorrectly say God inspired a Bible or cured little Charlie of cancer it is no better in principle. The only way to tell a superstition apart from a non-superstition is if God did it and you cannot show or prove that he did. The risk is so high of imputing superstition to God when you say something is a miracle that it is impossible to believe that a God who wants our respect would ask us to take the risk.

Finally

The hiding God and his giving of doctrines that are not reasonably certain opens the door for wolves who wish to get the flock to kill in the name of God or faith. If you believe in God you believe in one who kills. Thus you have no right to assume that God has not delegated his right to kill to other people. He may even command members of another faith such as Islam to do it even if it is not the one true faith.