

DISGUISED SELF-WORSHIP

The worshippers of God

are really worshipping an idol based on themselves

- they indirectly worship themselves

In other words, it is not God they are interested in but in looking at God like a mirror and seeing their own reflection.

John Calvin, "Daily experience teaches us that flesh is always uneasy until it has obtained some figment like itself in which it may fondly find solace as an image of God. In almost every age since the beginning of the world, men in order that they might obey this blind desire, have set up symbols in which they believe God appeared before their bodily eyes. We must not think the heathen so stupid that they did not understand God to be something other than sticks and stones. For while they change images at pleasure, they always kept the same gods in mind." Institutes of the Christian Religion I, 11.8.

ESSENTIAL POINTS

Every religion claims to have an object of worship. It may be Gods who supposedly live on top of a mountain (when they have magical powers it is hard to see what they are doing there!!) or an Almighty God. We can prove that religion doesn't worship the divine being or beings at all and we are going to do it in the following ways.

#First, even if Kant is wrong to say that when you look at something you will never know it in itself but only the phenomena the mind creates about the tree, he is not wrong when it comes to God. You might know a tree in itself for you can sense it but you have no way of detecting God or when he is at work.

Most people have a definition of God and his characteristics which makes them idolaters for they worship what they think God is - they worship their perception of God. Maimonides and St Thomas Aquinas said that giving God human characteristics and feelings is worse idolatry than what the pagans got up to for its equally dehumanising and is dangerous for its so subtle and harder to treat. Thus the pair said that God should be described by what he is not. Defining him by what he is gets you nowhere. St Clement of Alexandria thought that people invent gods because

- they think there is a supernatural reason why they suffering and that its punishment or correction.
 - they idealise feelings such as say love and anger. They see the gods as models of the emotions.
 - they like to think that virtues such as justice and prudence are somehow divine or god and can be worshipped in the form of a god.

People say they love people. Some say they love God. Even if you are wrong to love man as you think he is at least you are still loving a person and trying to. But with God you don't know if you are having a relationship with a person or something that is in your head. The cruelty of having people love a being who does not exist or a version of God that is not the right one is tremendous considering how religion demands that you must even die for God!

#Second, by showing that when we are naturally selfish (even when we sacrifice for another we are really doing it because we want to and that is the real reason so we are still doing it: to please ourselves) we cannot sincerely adore another being. God is supposed to be perfectly good and the king of the universe who wields authority over us. Even those who do not think, we are naturally always selfish, agree that we prefer to have a God of authority our way than what he really is.

We resent some evils not all. The mother who lets her son put himself in danger for others is praised and not resented. So our hatred for sin is not about it being harmful so much as us not liking it. If we really despised evil because it was evil, it wouldn't matter if it hurt us or not. If it is not really breaches of God's law that bothers us then the God we worship is what we want him to be not what he is. He's idolatry in the robes of morality and holiness - the craftiest and worst kind.

#Third, we prove it from the fact that faith in deity is evil and egotistic so when we worship God each one worships herself or himself. For example, when grave useless suffering exists, believers will not say, "God is so good that if such a thing happens then he does not have the power to stop it. He is not all-powerful." Rather they say, "God is good so somehow he is right to cause this terrible thing by letting it happen." They are interested in maintaining belief in his endless power - that is all that matters. They refuse to see if the evil should be determined as so bad that it refutes the existence of God for it cannot directly or indirectly have any value. You only go that far to believe in an all-powerful God if you think that he will use that power to give you everlasting glory and power. It's about you.

Love is a negative thing in the sense that when you concern yourself about what is best for another your attitude is, "I would hurt you if I needed to but I don't". Love treats others as a means. If we say that God comes first then we are saying we should treat him more like that than anybody else. We are worshipping egoism when we worship God.

Sensible people know they have enough to worry about when they have to care for their family and friends and work colleagues so it is selfish to actually care for God or others. Love can be a form of selfishness. Period.

#Fourth, we prove it from the fact that we choose a God that appeals to us. This is reflected in the Christian doctrine that people do not reject God but a travesty of him for God is all-attractive. We cannot sincerely worship a God who we feel or suspect is despicable. We tend to project what is in our minds and hearts on to others. And we will be better at doing that with God for he cannot bite back. We adore in others and in God what we perceive in them. We adore our perception of them. We perceive in the people we adore the qualities that we adore in ourselves.

#Fifth, we prove it from the relationship of God to morality. We tend to have a God who agrees with our opinions. If you are in a position to judge God as the perfect role model and object of devotion then you must be even more perfect for you are claiming to be in a position to judge. Your humility is really arrogant self-aggrandizement. The God you adore can be seen in the mirror. Religion says that somehow God is goodness which opposes the view, "Good is good whether there is a god or not." It opposes logic. Even if there were no God, good would still exist. It would be good that there is nothing at all in the sense that there is nothing to endure suffering. Believers feel that love is a person or good is a person. That makes no sense. It is pure feeling. Believers who give evidence for God do not believe because of the evidence. In fact they feel there is a God or are trying to feel there is one. They worship what they feel. You can feel the tree in the garden is a person just as easily. Its idolatry. And even more so when there is so much disagreement about what is good or evil from one person to the next.

#Sixth, the reason we are very contradictory and inconsistent is because we value what we want to do and think more than principles and consistency so we will box up God, if we believe in him, in such a way that he will not impinge much on what we want to do. Human nature is confusingly inconsistent. Christianity finds it hard to get people to live up to what they say they believe. For example, Catholics are supposed to complain to pharmacies if they stock condoms but few do complain. A Catholic might, for example, be happy to let a child be sexually abused by a priest and be outraged if somebody votes for abortion.

Eighth, God is too good to be true and where we see the word God we should replace it with the term wish-fulfilment. Andre Comte Sponville lists the things we need and desire the most. Firstly, not to completely go out of existence in death. Secondly, to meet the departed loved ones again. Thirdly, to see justice and peace conquer injustice and strife and hate. Lastly and most importantly, to be loved. He says religion is too good to be true for it says that God takes care of all four. He will fulfil the desires. He even loves us unimaginably. Sponville argues that God doing this makes belief in God too good to be true. He suspects that faith in God is really a crutch, it is a psychological trick we play on ourselves to fulfil our desires that he lists.

Now both atheists and believers have the feeling that great suffering or death will never happen to them or their loved ones. But feeling that does not make it true. And the danger is that it can make a person unrealistic. The atheist sees the illusion and goes along with it. She forgets its an illusion and enjoys it. The believer also enjoys the illusion but turns it into a motivation to follow God and religion. The believer mistakes the feeling for a sense of divine protection. The believer and the atheist have the same illusion. The believer simply adds a new illusion to it. The believer does not understand himself and his feelings. The feeling has nothing to do with God. It is just part of our programming to help us cope in life. The illusion is the reason an atheist and believer can both feel grateful say that they survived something really bad. If you take belief in God away from the believer, you are only opening their eyes. You are not taking away their crutch for God is only what they think is the crutch. The real crutch is the feeling of invulnerability that deludes us to how vulnerable we are. It will stay there unless the person has clinical depression.

Ninth, there is the inversion theory. Michael Onfray argues that we make God not in our image but in the inversion of our image. For example, we are weak and he is all-strong. We are forgetful and prone to error while he knows all things and cannot err. We may do harm but he does only good. If Onfray is right, then belief in God is based on a desire to cope with the harsh realities of existence. If I realise I cannot fully control the world and my life, I cope with this by cuddling up to and sucking up to a God who is in control. I feel I am in control by giving up the control to God. No wonder the Bible says that when you are weak you are really strong. The believer is as keen on power as the worst dictator. The lust is there but worked out in a different way.

#Tenth, in tests done to see how people work out what they think God wants them to do, a part of their brain lights up when they consider their own view and God's view. But when considering somebody else's view a different part reacts. From the study, it was concluded that people subconsciously worship a God they create themselves in accordance with what they

want him to be (page 29, And Man Created God). Behind the god they adore, there is a wish that is motivating and driving the whole scheme. It is about fulfilment and not God.

#Eleventh, our problem in life is that we are not careful enough to work out what evidence points to and to think rationally. We need to overcome wrong thinking not wrong doing. The doing won't be fixed until the thinking is fixed. It starts with the thinking. Perhaps love is more important to us which is why we want a God to love?

Twelfth, God commands right either because it is right or perhaps things are only right because God commands them - this dilemma proves adoring God is proxy self-worship. If God commands what is right just because it is right then it is still right if there is no God at all. And if something is made right by God commanding it, he can command us to rape babies for no reason but fun and still be good. Christians say that right and wrong are grounded in God's nature. This does not help at all. To say that something is good just because God commands it is to say it is grounded in God's nature. So we are back where we started. Believers can't give a reason as to how good could be real if God makes good good. They merely feel that God is the creator of the laws of real good and real evil. They have to feel God into existence. The God they worship is the product of their feelings. They mean to worship good when they worship God. But good is not God. If you worship good as God then this is projecting what you see as good unto the deity. The idolaters worshipped images because of their beauty and because they symbolised wonderful things such as fertility. You are doing exactly the same thing. The style of the idolatry is different but it is still rank idolatry.

#Thirteenth, if we worship God we will want to be with him hopefully for all eternity. That is called Heaven. Much religion says we are not all going to Heaven and if we will all get there in the end then why be moral? The worship of God is really selfish if it is engaged in by a person who will not do right just because it is right regardless of whether there is heavenly happiness or not. Those who say some or many will be barred from Heaven argue that if there is always another chance to repent there is no risk. They say that God lets us be tempted to sin to try us out but that there is no temptation at all if we will have endless chances to do better. That is nonsense. It would imply that temptation to sin is not temptation if you are a young person with 80 years ahead of you.

#Fourteenth, Geoffery Berg in the Six Ways of Atheism says we would recognise that a cruel and nasty being could not be God (page 57). The trouble is, once you say a good God is forced to allow evil for he needs it for a good and justifiable reason, God could try to come across and evil and nasty but we would never be able to tell if he really is evil and nasty. There is no way to tell when it is Satan or God. Instead of recognising this God as good, believers trust. This kind of trust is telling yourself he is good. How could that please him for it is not about seeing and celebrating his goodness?

The problem of evil is worse than Christians let on. It forces them to develop artificial worship of God. Religion is about them and they use God to cover that up.

#Fifteenth, God believers say that truth cannot contradict truth. When something comes up that refutes the existence of God, they reason "Truth cannot contradict truth. There is some way to resolve this contradiction. We just don't know what it is or maybe never will." God by definition is seen as being the truth meaning that believers in God will have that attitude more than believers in anything else will. All the argument is, is a rationalisation or excuse for refusing to let the truth sink in. Whoever is against truth is making the God he worships.

#Sixteenth, it is not true that it is the goodness in others that attracts us. Not all goodness attracts us. The very moral person usually isn't liked. The rascal with charm will be liked better. We cherry-pick what we like out of good and bad. Thus we do not like goodness for its own sake. It is what we want good to be that we like. It is not goodness as such. So we are never attracted by the goodness in others or in God. Even if there is a God, he will not expect any worship from us for he will not get it. What will get it is the image we create of him in our hearts and minds which is made to suit us. We like challenges to different degrees in life. We need challenges. That is why we may not make our image of God a perfect match for the good we want him to be. We give him faults but even then it is about suiting ourselves. It follows that God is still matching what we want goodness to be but in a different way. When he is contrary for us, it is still good for we want it. Paganism with its invented gods never disappeared. It only changed style. Today we are inventing a God. To adore what you have made up is to adore the deity you invent to please yourself. This is about you not the god. The god is only a cover. To adore what you have chosen to believe in, is to worship yourself indirectly for your belief is your creation. You are always better and more powerful than your belief.

#Seventeenth, the Protestant theologian Cornelius Van Til said that if we work out there is a God by thinking about it and by feeling that there is one we are using human criteria to find God. He stated that we will only make a God in our own image. He said we need divinely authorised criteria. But that solution solves nothing and makes the problem worse. If I decide the Bible or the Koran reveal God to me, what happens is I end up thinking, "The Bible shows me that God exists and God exists because the Bible is right". John Calvin argued that as God is unimaginable he has to reveal himself in "baby talk" in the Bible . He shows himself as changing his mind and having hands and a heart and so on. But that forces people to depend on images of God not God. Van Til had no answer at all to the problem.

Eighteenth, Love and hate - vindictiveness - are two sides of the same coin. If you love a person, you must hate on some level anything that can hurt them. You cannot want your loved one to live unless you hate the possibility that they can die. Good needs evil. To love good you need to embrace the evil of hating evil. God is said to be perfect love. Love cannot be perfect so God cannot be love. The attraction to God then is based on wishful thinking, "I want perfect love to exist though it cannot. I want there to be a God of perfect love therefore there is one." This is not a God based on truth but on what you would like him to be. He is your idol.

Nineteenth, You can fool yourself by yourself so you are hardly fit to judge if you know God and if he is with you. Your thoughts are part of your mind and of you. Yet you can pretend that you are spectator not a participant with regard to your thoughts. This feels and seems so real but it cannot be. It proves our minds are capable of experiencing God and this experience can be totally false and delusional. When you can feel that something so unreal as you being a spectator of your own mind is real imagine how good you could be at deluding yourself that God is in you? You cannot even get your own mind right with its internal stuff never mind external stuff such as God!

God is wish-fulfilment. You have created the idol out of your own wants and called it God. You worship yourself in your own creation. CASE CLOSED.

Conclusion

Worshipping God is really the sublimated worship of yourself!

See devotion to God for what it is.

It is creating a god in your mind and worshipping your creation. Even if there is a God that closely resembles the one you have in your head the fact remains that it is still an imitation.

And Man Created God - Google Books

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