

LOVING GOD: EXCLUSIVE LOVE

The doctrine is you love God alone directly and you love others because God is so connected to them and they are so important to him and created by him for that amounts to another way of loving God.

LOVE GOD ALONE!

Jesus Christ was asked what the greatest commandment was in the Old Testament. He said that it was the command to love God with all one's heart and soul and mind and strength. He said the second greatest commandment was to love one's neighbour as oneself.

As God supposedly has to stomach evil for the sake of a greater good, it follows that you might never be happy in this life or the next. So what use is God to you then? Believers would urge to you simply find comfort in the love God has for you. This doctrine teaches that the meaning of life is not to be happy - because not everybody can be okay forever - but to be loved. But you don't need God for that. Jesus' doctrine that we must love God wholly shows no concern for us being loved by God. He did not command, "You must try to settle for the infinite love of God and this is the first and greatest commandment."

God roughly means the supernatural being that is solely entitled to your concern and your love because he is the source of love and goodness and even human goodness really comes from him and no other source.

Does this mean that God should be good or believed to be good?

Actually there is greater heroism in loving a God that is evil than one that is good. If evil is caused by error as religion says then clearly the evil person should get the most love if it has to be him or some good person. If we should love without looking for anything back the only way to be sure is to love a God who does not really give a toss about us.

The Christian faith says that you must love God with all your heart and soul and strength and mind. God and Jesus say that in the Bible.

If you love God passionately you can't see if you love others properly. Love blinds. If you love God with all your heart or more than anything, it would be hard to see if you really love your neighbour. God gets your attention. No wonder those who claim to be extremely holy are often cruel.

The Church may say that love of God and love of neighbour go together. But if I love my child with all my heart and soul and mind that does not necessarily mean I must love others too. I wouldn't even have to love his nurse. The only way to make sense of the Church teaching is to argue that loving God and obeying him go together. He must command me to serve my neighbour. Therefore if you love God you have to obey him by loving your neighbour. Jesus stated that loving God means obeying him. He said that he who loves God will keep the commandments.

The command to love God with all your mind does not mean God approves of your power to think and avoid contradictions. It really means you let God tell you how to reason and think. It forbids you to think for yourself. The Christians have never taught that the more we use our minds the more we can love God. They do not expect all people to be academics.

"Love God by loving your neighbour for it is his will". This command cannot mean you are being asked to care emotionally for God. Indeed it implies a cold obedience is what is asked for.

True love for God means loving him because he is good in himself. To love him because he is pleasant or good for you is to love what you get out of him not him. It is valuing what he does and not what he is. God is not necessarily good for you even if he is good. True love of God means you would love him if he had reason to let you suffer horrendously forever.

Some say the more you love your neighbour the more you love God for he loves them. This mistakes benefiting God for loving him. It is simply wrong. Look at the motive!

The Catholic doctrine that our love for God is measured by how hard we try to keep his commandments is ridiculous. What would we think of a person who said that a wife's love for her husband is measured by her obedience to her husband? We obey the law but does that mean we really love it or trust it?

Laws that consider people not God are against God. No system of law can be perfectly just. Not even God's. Nor is it meant to be. God's law is necessarily only perfect under the circumstances. Every law hurts some innocent no matter how fair the makers of the law tried to make it.

God makes it a duty for you to love. Love should not be an obligation. You cannot obligate anybody to love. Those who say that those who reject love will go to Hell forever for there is no love there are blackmailing those who fail to love. To present people with a God who is love or whose law is love is to oppress them. It accuses people who don't make a bigger effort to love of being partly partial to the everlasting despair and punishment of Hell.

This commandment to love God with all our heart and strength does not tell us to put God first. Rather it tells us that all the loving we do must be for his sake. We love our neighbour to please God and not the neighbour. This love does not really value the neighbour except as a means to please God. If we feel affection for another, we must make sure that it is only allowed for God's benefit. So strictly speaking, you are to love God alone.

If you put God first, that only means you love him and love others but you love him the most. You do not give him all your heart.

SHOULD WE LOVE GOD ALONE!

Many do not like the suggestion that they are to love God alone for they want to love themselves. Sadly for them Jesus did not command self-love. Telling us to look after our neighbour as yourself only means he sees you do look after yourself or you would not be alive but does not indicate any approval. What gets the approval is looking after your neighbour. He is only saying we love ourselves not that it is right to or that we should.

Why is it so important to some people that we believe in God and a specific kind of God at that? What is wrong with a vague sense of powers that can help us if we tune into them? Their stance shows more concern for dogma than for human welfare. It shows a level of intolerance.

Do we need a God to love?

We are better to love the living and our dear departed. They are better role models for us. They are practical role models. It does not matter if you worship a poster of Britney Spears as long as you feel happier and keener to do good because of it. Its okay if it is the best for you.

Jesus Christ taught, "Hear O Israel, the Lord your God is one Lord and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind and all your strength. This is the greatest commandment. The second is like it, you shall love your neighbour as yourself."

This law was given by God to Moses according to the Old Testament.

The teaching says that the God of Israel is the only true God. This God revealed himself through the scriptures and the prophets. It is this God that must be loved. Anything else is the wrong God.

So according to the Bible, the main commandment is to love God more than yourself or anything else. That is one element of the commandment. The other is that we are not told to love God with a little of our powers, most of our powers but we are told to love God with all our powers. This means that all we do we must do solely out of love for God. When the next commandment says we must love our neighbour it means we only value our neighbour because God says so and not because our neighbour is to be valued for herself or himself. If you value your neighbour because God says so then it follows that it is God that is really being valued and not your neighbour at all! The commandment certainly condemns humanism – it condemns our knowledge that religion and faith are to be restrained within the limits of human needs alone.

The main commandment implies that those who do not believe in it are evil at worst and morally defective at best.

To say the commandment is the greatest moral law of all is to say that morality is based on authority or on the Bible because these make the rule. The command to love God as if we were sure is not God's commandment but the Bible's. Belief in the commandment is actually a matter of faith in the Bible. The only way one can be sure that one loves God alone is by suffering for him and refusing to think of a reward and the only way one can be sure the thought of the reward isn't encouraging one is to refuse any reward. This infers that extreme asceticism is an essential.

Even if God exists it does not follow that he wants to be loved first of all or with all our hearts either. The teaching, "God made me to love him and to serve him and to enjoy him forever" is not for us. Because this God invites us only to believe in him and belief is not the same as certainty he could not ask us to die for faith in him, wreck our lives for him or suffer for

him. Faith is to be made for us. We will not make the mistake of thinking that we are made for faith. This truth tells us that we get the best out of belief in God or something else without the fanaticism and we reach the best of our human potential. There is no room for condemning those who do not believe in God. God works within all who are sincere. When Jesus taught an unloving doctrine as the centre of his theology how can we believe that God really raised him from the dead? No matter what evidence there is for the resurrection it is annulled by his doctrinal errors for Jesus said God raised him to show that his gospel was true and the resurrection is useless if we can't trust Jesus' teachings.

Why does unhealthy religion want us to love God in a way that technically amounts to loving God alone?

Is it because God is perfectly good?

No. He has all power and has no need of our devotion. Only a being that needs our devotion can have a right to it. Rights are based on needs.

Is it because God has no need of our devotion that he only commands it for our sake not his own? But then why not give us some laws for the sake of regulating society and let us worship as we please?

A God who commands that we love him in the way Jesus required people to love God is a fundamentalist god. He has no right to command it.

It might be thought God hides himself because he wants us to help us love one another. He does not want any special love. In that case we would have to love God as we would love any friend but not above ourselves or others.

Self-love not God-love redeems the world! True self-love is a beautiful kind of love that is eager to reach out to others so that all may evolve into living angels of light. It is in giving that you receive. It is in forgetting yourself to help others that you love yourself in the best and most glorious way possible.

The love of God with all your heart means all your emotions must be drawn only to God and fulfilled by God. I am not allowed to love and respect myself with all my heart. If I did that I would be a happy productive person who others would be drawn to. Instead I am to love God with all my heart. If I do that I will pine for him in great emotional agony.

Loving your neighbour as yourself really assumes that we love ourselves. It does not actually say we should love ourselves. If it did it would read, "Love yourself and your neighbour equally".

Anyway you could not possibly be commanded to love yourself! You will do that automatically. Even those who hate themselves in fact love themselves by enjoying their misery.

If you fail to love yourself, you create fears. Fear is the cause of hate. If you create fears for yourself, how then can you avoid being afraid of others? You will lose respect for them. All love starts with loving yourself.

The love of self is truly the most important and most useful love of all.

MORE TO LOVING GOD THAN JUST OBEYING HIM

Jesus said that we must love God as Lord with all our potential - not some of it. This is another way of saying that disobeying the Lord or Boss is the worst sin for it implies a refusal to love him.

Some say Jesus meant that we are to love God by keeping God's commandments. Yes but he meant more than that. There is more to loving someone than just obeying them. He asked us to love the Lord personally and show it by obeying. He asked us to love God as a person. Loving a person's commandments only, means you love something other than the person. It is obviously mistaken to equate loving God with loving his commandments.

Jesus said that we must love the Lord our God with all our being. Obviously, we are to love God as Lord and Boss and Master. We are to approach him as inferiors and not as equals. This is a doctrine of submission to God and whatever he commands just because he commands it. We love God as a person but as an authority person. We have to love God as the one who has the right to give orders to you and you have to see yourself for the underling you are. This is a very negative and discouraging and austere commandment. Jesus said you cannot love two masters - so if you are master and so is God then you do not love one of them. Only you make you your master so its clear you do not love God.

How could Jesus or God give a command that we must obey his commandments? His commandments are supposed to be commandments anyway! A commandment means you have to do something or be punished. The Christian reply is that he is only giving a new commandment to obey his commandments but only saying we must keep the commandments. But

they can't read his mind. I command you to obey my commandments could be read as intended to be a new command. It may be a new attempt to force.

You could speak of loving God's suggestions but it is laughable to say you can love his commandments. Commandments seek to put reins on the free will God has allegedly given you. If you were truly good, you would not need to be commanded. A commandment would be a necessary evil and not something to be revelled in.

The idea of some writers that loving God with all our hearts merely means keeping his commandments is an oversimplification. It is supposed to be that but more. If you love God's commandments, that does not mean you necessarily love God as a person. To love a person's rules is not the same as loving the person.

ONLY GOD ALLOWED TO BE LOVED UNCONDITIONALLY

To say God is to be loved most or first of all is to preach that we should give God most of our unconditional love. That means that the love of humanity is conditional. "I give God the best of my love because he is God and I refuse it to you because you are not."

WHAT IF GOD REALLY ALONE DOES MATTER?

When God is not in your life much or at all evil will rush in and be invited in to fill the void. If that idea is wrong then there is no point in God being important or of supreme importance. Jesus' core teaching that loving God is absolute central is false. God is not a God but just as important as Zeus if he is not that which can give you the ultimate and supreme mutual relationship. These are all reasons why failing in the total love of God is the biggest and most unimaginable sin. And its one we do all the time!

FINALLY

Only God deserves to be enjoyed or loved or served and anything from him such as a friend or a lovely apple is to be considered a gift from God that teaches us about God and is only taken for God's sake not as an end in itself. They are loved for they teach us about God so it is really about God and not them at all. Loving God the way the God belief suggests you should implies that you are suffering from some addiction. You turn away from loving others and yourself to love a concept. What you don't see is put before the people you do see. To serve others while valuing God and not them is to manipulate and fool and trick them. If God does not exist, those who promote God are the lowest of the low even if they do not realise it.

BOOKS CONSULTED

A CATECHISM OF CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE, CTS, London, 1985

A HISTORY OF PHILOSOPHY, VOL 6, PART II, KANT, Frederick Copleston SJ, Doubleday/Image, New York 1964

AQUINAS, FC Copleston, Penguin Books, London, 1991

BEYOND GOOD AND EVIL, Friedrich Nietzsche, Penguin, London, 1990

BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER, Association for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge, Dublin, 1960

CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH, Veritas, London, 1995

CHARITY, MEDITATIONS FOR A MONTH, Richard F Clarke SJ, Catholic Truth Society, London, 1973

CHRISTIANITY FOR THE TOUGH-MINDED, Edited by John Warwick Montgomery, Bethany Fellowship, Minnesota, 1973

CRISIS OF MORAL AUTHORITY, Don Cupitt, SCM Press, London, 1995

EVIDENCE THAT DEMANDS A VERDICT, VOL 1, Josh McDowell, Alpha, Scripture Press Foundation, Bucks, 1995

ECUMENICAL JIHAD, Peter Kreeft, Ignatius Press, San Francisco, 1996

GOD IS NOT GREAT, THE CASE AGAINST RELIGION, Christopher Hitchens, Atlantic Books, London, 2007

THE GREAT MEANS OF SALVATION AND OF PERFECTION, St Alphonsus De Ligouri, Redemptorist Fathers, Brooklyn, 1988

HANDBOOK OF CHRISTIAN APOLOGETICS, Peter Kreeft and Ronald Tacelli, Monarch, East Sussex, 1995

HONEST TO GOD, John AT Robinson, SCM, London, 1963

HOW DOES GOD LOVE ME? Radio Bible Class, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1986

IN DEFENCE OF THE FAITH, Dave Hunt, Harvest House, Eugene, Oregon, 1996

MADAME GUYON, MARTYR OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, Phyllis Thompson, Hodder & Stoughton, London, 1986

MORAL PHILOSOPHY, Joseph Rickaby SJ, Stonyhurst Philosophy Series, Longmans Green and Co, London, 1912

OXFORD DICTIONARY OF PHILOSOPHY, Simon Blackburn, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1996

PRACTICAL ETHICS, Peter Singer, Cambridge University Press, England, 1994

PSYCHOLOGY, George A Miller, Penguin, London, 1991

RADIO REPLIES, 1, Frs Rumble & Carty, Radio Replies Press, St Paul, Minnesota, 1938
RADIO REPLIES, 2, Frs Rumble & Carty, Radio Replies Press, St Paul, Minnesota, 1940
RADIO REPLIES, 3, Frs Rumble & Carty, Radio Replies Press, St Paul, Minnesota, 1942
REASON AND BELIEF, Brand Blanshard, George Allen and Unwin Ltd, 1974
REASONS FOR HOPE, Ed Jeffrey A Mirus, Christendom College Press, Virginia, 1982
THE ATONEMENT: MYSTERY OF RECONCILIATION, Kevin McNamara, Archbishop of Dublin, Veritas, Dublin, 1987
SINNERS IN THE HANDS OF AN ANGRY GOD, Jonathan Edwards, Sword of the Lord, Murfreesboro, Tennessee, undated
THE BIBLE TELLS US SO, R B Kuiper, The Banner of Truth Trust, Edinburgh, 1978
THE BRIEF OF ST ANTHONY OF PADUA (Vol 44, No 4)
THE GOOD, THE BAD & THE MORAL DILEMMA, G R Evans, Lion Books, Oxford, 2007
THE GREAT MEANS OF SALVATION AND OF PERFECTION, St Alphonsus De Ligouri, Redemptorist Fathers, Brooklyn, 1988
THE IMITATION OF CHRIST, Thomas A Kempis, Translated by Ronald Knox and Michael Oakley, Universe, Burns & Oates, London, 1963
THE LIFE OF ALL LIVING, Fulton J Sheen, Image Books, New York, 1979
THE NEW WALK, Captain Reginald Wallis, The Christian Press, Pembridge Villas, England, undated
THE PRACTICE OF THE PRESENCE OF GOD, Brother Lawrence, Hodder & Stoughton, London, 1981
THE PROBLEM OF PAIN, CS Lewis, Fontana, London, 1972
THE PUZZLE OF GOD, Peter Vardy, Collins, London, 1990
THE SATANIC BIBLE, Anton Szandor LaVey, Avon Books, New York, 1969
THE SPIRITUAL GUIDE, Michael Molinos, Christian Books, Gardiner Maine, 1982
THE STUDENT'S CATHOLIC DOCTRINE, Rev Charles Hart BA, Burns & Oates, London, 1961
UNBLIND FAITH, Michael J Langford, SCM, London, 1982