

GOD AS PRIMARY AND SECONDARY CAUSE OF EVENTS IN THE UNIVERSE

CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE

Christians hold that God makes all things completely. In other words, all things come from him and nothing else. Without him there would not be anything. Does this mean that all actions in the universe, even the nurse giving you water, are God's? Some say no. The idea is that God supports you to make your own choices. This is the difference between,

I walk and I think I move my legs but it is God who is moving them so God walks.

##God gives me the power to walk myself. I really do move my legs but with his power.

In one God does the work and in the other God does the support.

The point is that this still means that either way you do not own your walking. It is not your power. The power is on loan.

There is no meaningful difference. We need to talk about the same thing in two ways. It is a practical matter. It is a language construct.

When I walk I say I walk though it is true that God walks when I walk.

Here is what somebody says about God supporting you to do things.

QUOTE, God is not, on this view, the sole cause of all worldly events, as has sometimes been claimed. The creatures serve as “secondary causes,” and their causality, though needing to be sustained by God in his conserving activity, is genuine and distinct from that of God himself. Furthermore, God’s causal involvement in worldly events is different for different classes of events. In particular, God’s relation to morally evil actions is not the same as his relation to good actions (see pp. 168–171, 190–1). It is often said in this connection that God “permits” evil actions to occur, but does not cause them to occur. But this language of permission can easily become evasive and misleading. No doubt, on this view, God “permits” evil actions without actively assisting them in the way that he assists good actions through his gracious influence. Nevertheless, the evil actions are the necessary consequence of causes that were deliberately created by God with full knowledge of what their results would be. God’s involvement may be less direct than in the case of good actions, but it is no less decisive. In the end, it is simply incoherent for the no risk view to deny that God is the cause of sin. As Helm states, his view “does not, in the final analysis, attribute certain evils to the human will and certain others to natural causes; rather, all are finally attributed to the divine reason and will” (p. 198).

So human responsibility is never independence of God. The key is that when we do evil God is involved as much as he would be if it were good we were doing. The difference is his approval and disapproval. It is only indirect in the sense that God can say, "I did not tell you to do that or inspire you." It is an attempt to be independent but even then you are only attempting because God is providing you with the power and will to try it.

CATHOLIC DOCTRINE

In Catholic doctrine, as God makes all things and holds them in being there is no such thing as anything being at a distance from him. Though God can cure a heart attack (primary cause) he may use doctors (secondary cause) instead. These are described as primary and secondary causes. They are not direct and indirect causes. They are simply two different ways in which he acts as direct cause.

“The truth that God is at work in all the actions of his creatures is inseparable from faith in God the Creator. God is the first cause who operates in and through secondary causes” (Catechism of the Catholic Church 308).

The Bible frequently ascribes “actions to God without mentioning any secondary causes. This is not a ‘primitive mode of speech,’ but a profound way of recalling God’s primacy and absolute Lordship over history and the world” (CCC 304).

SCIENCE AND THE BRUTE FACT

Science is about how things affect each other – about how one thing relates to another. One domino knocks the other down. That is what it looks like. You cannot start assuming that a ghost you cannot detect is what knocks the other domino down

though it could be that looks are deceiving. Science then by default rejects the idea of supernatural causes. It does not assume that there are complicated laws we know nothing about that create the effect. It is just that one physical thing hits another and knocks it over. It keeps it simple.

The answer to how Christians say, "Science is about the physical and makes no statement as to whether there could be a spiritual power that is creating the physical" is, "Science thinks of nature as acting like brute facts." It has to think of it as just pure natural force for unless you think that what is the point? If you just play along you won't want to do science. You need to think it.

Believers hold that there would be nothing at all if there were no God.

The atheist will say a tree does not prove God. That is to say it fails to prove him for it could be just there. By just there we mean that each component of the tree is just there. We are not saying trees just appear.

The believers will agree with the atheist that the tree is not a strict proof of God. So believers are indicating that they think things could be a mere brute fact that exist for no reason. They will not admit it clearly. Yet they condemn science for being based on the brute fact idea.

Religion says that science cannot do tests to see if God is behind something. It will not admit that this really amounts to saying God cannot be tested in a lab. But there is more to science than those kind of tests. The domino knocking over the other domino is seen as scientific proof that nature explains itself and you cannot say or even SUGGEST that the other domino is not really affected by the one that seems to hit it and thus that it is God that knocks it over. To say that God or no god things will act like they are run by chance and blind force is saying that if there is a God it is not blind force but an imitation! Science cannot accept that. Simulated blind force is not blind force at all. Blind force is about what something is not how it behaves. It behaves that way for it is blind. The idea that God is non-material and undetectable does nothing to make science a distinct and separate thing from God. If we believe religion, then when science tests the random it is testing God for nothing really is random. Religion vehemently denies that.

To prevent science declaring that there is no God or that if there is we should not believe for it is unscientific, God believers attempt to put God outside the reach of science. They argue that science is only about secondary causes not primary. But that will not do. The argument is that unless there is a primary cause you cannot believe in or care about secondary. There cannot be a secondary cause on its own. There has to be a reason why it is secondary. If science does not understand that it is secondary causes it is dealing with then it is a pile of rubbish. Science does not accept that it deals only with secondary causes for that implies science must admit a primary cause, perhaps God.

Strictly speaking because nothing at all exists unless God holds it in existence then there is nothing only primary causes.

God and science are opposed despite religious lies that they fit together.

EVIL AS THE RESULT OF SECONDARY CAUSE (S)

Those who say God made all and is good are saying that evil cannot be a power but must be just when good falls short of what it could be. So evil is really a form of good. The idea that sickness and temptation and evil are not directly caused by God but caused by things he has made meaning he is not the primary cause but the secondary is total rubbish if evil is simply the absence of good. Why? If evil is the mere absence of good then it does not matter if a cause is primary or secondary – it is still evil. Evil that is direct is actually not as strong as evil that is indirect. Evil gets its power from disguising. Evil needs to be indirect if it is parasitic on good. It is essentially indirect.

The primary and secondary cause stuff is window dressing to hide the absurdity of God.

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