

Think about it! (9)

A few days ago I read a newspaper cutting which bore the title, "The badness of God". The theory of the article's author was that there's no way of 'saving' God from the charge of being the one to blame for all the suffering in the world, for a number of reasons: (1) mankind didn't ask God to create them; (2) God created all that he created for his own benefit, and not for the benefit of mankind or of any other creature; (3) the so-called free-will of mankind is pure fiction – such free-will doesn't exist – so you can't hold people responsible for their bad deeds; and (4) all the suffering that there is exists because God wants it to exist, and there's no point trying to get round it. Well, a pretty deplorable picture of a self-centred, sadistic God who doesn't deserve to be loved or worshipped by anybody!

But the author of the article gives himself away – he says things like, "If God created mankind..."; "If God gave mankind a nervous system as an alarm system..."; "If such a god really existed..." If the first two of these quotes suggest a doubt in the author's mind as to the existence of God, the third seems virtually conclusive; the author is attacking a 'god' in whose existence he himself doesn't believe! – he's the God of other people, not the author's!

And it's precisely at this point where the atheists' problem lies: they can't write off as 'evil' a being who doesn't exist! – it's as if they were to say, "the God of believers is very evil; but we don't believe that such a God exists anyway." It's surprising the amount of agreement at this point between believers and atheists: both hold to the firm conviction that there is no evil God! Moreover, the atheist, since he can't put the blame for anything on a God in whose existence he doesn't believe, has to explain everything that happens, including all suffering, without referring to God at all. Okay, then, let him do it! – let him explain everything to us! Let him explain to us the badness that can be seen in children, the growing gulf between the rich and the poor, the terrible wars that took place throughout the 20th Century – wars brought about by 'civilized' and 'sophisticated' mankind, the inherent corruption of every kind of political system – in short, 'man's inhumanity to man'! Is the idea of chance, mere coincidence, really convincing? – it seems to be atheistic philosophy's number one candidate!

I'm not saying that believing in God, in the good God of Christianity (among others), makes all of life's unanswered questions disappear – not at all. But, in spite of all those deep questions that seem to have no satisfactory answer, faith – not 'blind faith', but reasoned and reasonable faith – leads the believer to trust in a sovereign Creator God, who created the world and mankind perfect, who allowed the origin of evil without being himself its author, who in some way enters into our suffering and pain, who has provided us with a way out – a 'salvation' – from the pit we've got ourselves into, and who will one day 'de-code' for us the mysteries that still torment us. It seems to me that the believer's good God makes a lot more sense than the atheist's bad God!

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