

God is Inert

The God proposed by the Christian hypothesis is not a disembodied, powerless voice whose only means of achieving his desires is speaking to people, teaching them to do what's right. The Christian God is an Almighty Creator, capable of creating or destroying anything, capable of suspending or rewriting the laws of nature, capable of anything we can imagine. He can certainly do any and every moral thing you or I can do, and certainly much more than that, being so much bigger and stronger and better than we are in every way. All this follows necessarily from the definition of even "mere" Christianity, and therefore cannot be denied without denying Christianity itself.

It's a simple fact of direct observation that if I had the means and the power, and could not be harmed for my efforts, I would immediately alleviate all needless suffering in the universe. All guns and bombs would turn to flowers. All garbage dumps would become gardens. There would be adequate resources for everyone. There would be no more children conceived than the community and the environment could support. There would be no need of fatal or debilitating diseases or birth defects, no destructive Acts of God. And whenever men and women seemed near to violence, I would intervene and kindly endeavor to help them peacefully resolve their differences. That's what any loving person would do. Yet I cannot be more loving, more benevolent than the Christian God. Therefore, the fact that the Christian God does none of these things—in fact, nothing of any sort whatsoever—is proof positive that there is no Christian God.

If God at least did something, however much we might still argue about what that action meant about his ability, character, and desires, we would at least have evidence (and therefore reason

to believe) that a God existed, maybe even the Christian God. And there are many things any god could do. He could make all true bibles indestructible, unalterable, and self-translating. He could make miraculous healing or other supernatural powers so common an attribute of the virtuous believer that they would be scientifically studied and confirmed as surely as any other medicine or technology. Hospitals would even have bona fide “faith healing” wings. As I explained in the previous chapter, he could speak to all of us in the same voice, saying the same things. Or he could send angels to appear to us on a regular basis, performing all manner of divine deeds and communications—exactly as the earliest Christians thought he did.

The possible evidences a God could provide are endless, though none might be sufficient to prove we have the Christian God. To prove that, this evident God would have to act as the Christian hypothesis predicts. For example, only those who believe in the true Christian Gospel would be granted the supernatural powers that would be confirmed by science; only true Christian Bibles would be indestructible, unalterable, and self-translating; and the Divine Voice would consistently convey to everyone the will and desires of the Christian message alone. But God does none of these things—nothing at all. A Christian can rightly claim he is unable to predict exactly what things his God would choose to do. But the Christian hypothesis still entails that God would do something. Therefore, the fact that God does nothing is a decisive refutation of the Christian hypothesis. Once again a prediction is made that consistently fails to pan out.

Instead, we observe the exact opposite: a dumb, mechanical universe that blindly treats everyone with the same random fortune and tragedy regardless of merit or purpose. But that’s a fact we’ll examine in a later chapter. For now, it’s enough to note that we do not observe God

doing good deeds, therefore there is no God who can or wants to do good deeds—which means Christianity is false.

Excuses won't fly here, either, because a loving being by definition acts like a loving being. It is a direct contradiction to claim that someone is loving yet never does what a loving person does—because the name refers to the behavior. To be loving literally means to be loving. You can't be heartless and claim to be loving. As Christ himself is supposed to have said, "it is by their fruits that shall ye know them." The only possible exception here is when a loving person is incapable of acting as he desires—either lacking the ability or facing too great a risk to himself or others—but this exception never applies to a God, who is all-powerful and immune to all harm. This exception never even applies to any human so absolutely that she can never act loving. Even the most limited and constrained person there is can at least do something that expresses their loving nature. Indeed, if it were ever truly possible to completely prevent this, a truly loving person would probably prefer death to such a horrible existence. And a loving God would be no different. Failing to act in a loving way would be unbearable for a loving being. There is no escaping the conclusion. From having the desire and the means to act in a loving way, it follows necessarily that God would so act. But he doesn't. Therefore, once again, the Christian God does not exist.

Think about it. A man approaches a school with a loaded assault rifle, intent on mass slaughter. A loving person speaks to him, attempts to help him resolve his problems or to persuade him to stop, and failing that, punches him right in the knicker, and takes away his gun. And a loving person with godlike powers could simply turn his bullets into popcorn as they left the gun, or heal with a touch whatever insanity or madness (or by teaching him cure whatever ignorance)

led the man to contemplate the crime. But God does nothing. Therefore, a loving God does not exist. A tsunami approaches and will soon devastate the lives of millions. A loving person warns them, and tells them how best to protect themselves and their children. And a loving person with godlike powers could simply calm the sea, or grant everyone's bodies the power to resist serious injury, so then the only tragedy they must come together to overcome is temporary pain and the loss of worldly goods. We would have done these things, if we could—and God can. Therefore, either God would have done them, too—or God is worse than us. Far worse. Either way, Christianity is false. The logic of this is again unassailable.

So, Christians feel compelled to contrive more ad hoc excuses to explain away the evidence—more speculations about free will, or “mysterious plans,” or a desire to test us or increase opportunities for us to do good, and a whole line of stuff like that. And yet Christians again have no evidence any of these excuses are actually true. They simply “make them up” in order to explain away the failure of their theory. But just as before, even putting that serious problem aside, these ad hoc elements still fail. For there is no getting around the conjunction of facts entailed by the Christian theory. God cannot possibly struggle under any limitations greater than the limitations upon us (if anything, he must surely have fewer limitations than we do), and God “loves love”—and is therefore a loving being, which means he desires to act like one.

These two elements of the hypothesis entail observations, and nothing can explain away the fact that these observations are never made—unless we contradict and therefore reject either of these two essential components of the theory. So the Christian theory is either empirically false, or self-contradictory and therefore logically false. In fact, all the ad hoc excuses for God's total and utter inaction amount to the same thing: claiming that different rules apply to God

than to us. But this is not allowed by the terms of the theory, which hold that God is good—which must necessarily mean that God is “good” in the same sense that God expects us to be good. Otherwise, calling God “good” means something different than calling anyone else “good,” and therefore calling God “good” is essentially meaningless. If God can legitimately be called “good,” this must mean exactly the same thing when you or I are called “good.” And the fact that God is predicted by the Christian theory to “love love and hate hatred” confirms this conclusion, since “loving love and hating hatred” is exactly what it means to call you or I “good.”

To be good is to be loving and not hateful. And that entails a certain behavior. “Love your neighbor as yourself” is universally agreed to mean giving your neighbor what he needs, helping him when he is hurt or in trouble, giving him what he has earned, and taking nothing from him that he has not given you. It means giving water to the thirsty, protecting children from harm, healing infirmities. Jesus himself said so. He did or said all these things, we are told, and the Christian surely must believe this. Therefore, for God to be “good” entails that God must have the desire to do all these things—and there is no possible doubt whether he lacks the means to do all these things. And anyone with the means and the desire to act, will act. Therefore, that God does none of these things entails either that he lacks the means or the desire. Once again, either way, Christianity is false. This conclusion follows because there cannot be any limitation on God greater than the limitations upon us.

So, God must necessarily desire and have the unimpeded means to do everything you and I can do, and therefore the Christian God would at least do everything you and I do. The fact that he doesn’t proves he doesn’t exist. Therefore, all the excuses invented for God simply don’t work.

Because it does not matter what plans God may have, he still could not restrain himself from doing good any more than we can, because that is what it means to be good. He would be moved by his goodness to act, to do what's right, just as we are. God would not make excuses, for nothing could ever thwart his doing what is morally right. Hence anything God would refrain from doing can be no different than what any other good people refrain from. Children must learn, often the hard way. But that never in a million years means letting them get hit by a car so they can learn not to cross the road without looking. People must know struggle, so they feel they have earned and learned what matters. But that never in a million years means letting them be tortured or raped or wracked with debilitating disease so they can appreciate being healthy or living in peace. No loving person could ever bear using such cruel methods of teaching, or ever imagine any purpose justifying them. Indeed, a loving person would suffer miserably if he could do nothing to stop such things...or worse, if he caused them!

Conversely, any excuse that could ever be imagined for God's inaction must necessarily apply to us as well. If there is a good reason for God to do nothing, then it will be just as good a reason for us to do nothing. The same moral rules that are supposed to apply to us must apply to every good person—and that necessarily includes the Christian God. God cannot have more reasons to do nothing than we do—to the contrary, it must be the other way around: only we have limitations on our abilities, creating more legitimate reasons for inaction than can ever apply to God. So if it is good for me to alleviate suffering, it is good for God to do so in those same circumstances. And if it is good for God to refrain from acting, it is good for me to do so in those same circumstances.

Nor can it be argued that God must sit back to give us the chance to do good. For that is not how good people act. Therefore, a “good” God can never have such an excuse. Imagine it. You can heal someone of AIDS. You have the perfect cure sitting in your closet. And you know it. But you do nothing, simply to allow scientists the chance to figure out a cure by themselves—even if it takes so long that billions of people must suffer miserably and die before they get it right. In what world would that ever be the right thing to do? In no world at all. When we have every means safely at our disposal, we can only tolerate sitting back to let others do good when others are doing good. In other words, if misery is already being alleviated, perhaps even at our very urging, then obviously we have nothing left to do ourselves. But it would be unbearable, unconscionable, outright immoral to hide the cure for AIDS just to teach everyone a lesson. That is not how a good person could or ever would behave.

This same conclusion follows in many ways. As a friend, I would think it shameful if I didn’t give clear, honest advice to my friends when asked, or offer comfort when they are in misery or misfortune. I loan them money when they need it, help them move, keep them company when they are lonely, introduce them to new things I think they’ll like, and look out for them. God does none of these things for anyone. Thus, he is a friend to none. A man who calls himself a friend but who never speaks plainly to you and is never around when you need him is no friend at all. And it won’t do to say God’s with “some” people—speaking to, comforting, and helping them out—because this means he doesn’t really love all beings, and is therefore not all-loving. This would make him less decent than even many humans I know.

And it’s sickeningly patronizing to say, in the midst of misery, loneliness, or need, that “God’s with you in spirit,” that he pats you on the head and says “There! There!” (though not even in

so many words as that). A friend who did so little for us, despite having every resource and ability to do more, and nothing to lose by using them, would be ridiculing us with his disdain. Thus, we cannot rescue the idea of God as Friend to All. The evidence flatly refutes the existence of any such creature. It therefore flatly refutes Christianity.

Likewise, as a loving parent, I would think it a horrible failure on my part if I didn't educate my children well, and supervise them kindly, teaching them how to live safe and well, and warning them of unknown or unexpected dangers. If they asked me to butt out I might. But if they didn't, it would be unconscionable to ignore them, to offer them no comfort, protection, or advice. Indeed, society would deem me fit for prison if I did. It would be felony criminal neglect.

Yet that is God: An absentee mom—who lets kids get kidnapped and murdered or run over by cars, who does nothing to teach them what they need to know, who never sits down like a loving parent to have an honest chat with them, and who would let them starve if someone else didn't intervene. As this is unconscionable, almost any idea of a god that fits the actual evidence of the world is unconscionable. And any such deity could never be the Christian God. That leaves no way to escape the conclusion: God's inaction alone refutes Christianity.

Why I Am Not a Christian: Four Conclusive Reasons to Reject the Faith (pp. 18-27). Philosophy Press. Kindle Edition.