

Wednesday, May 23, 2012

In Shambles: Nide's Crumbling Worldview

Nide has posted some comments replying to my previous blog entry responding to him here: [Christian Anti-Morality: A Response to Nide](#). While it does not appear that Nide has finished his response to what I stated to him in that blog entry (he left his last comment with an indication that there was yet more to come), I am moving on with a response to what he stated in his reaction to what I wrote. Nide asked:

By the way would you die for your child?

You have to explain what you mean by “die for.” As I understand it, it presumes that someone else can benefit from a person’s death. I know of no reason why my daughter would benefit from my death. So long as there is an alternative to death, I will continue living, thank you. That’s Objectivism: we love *living*. Logically then, anti-Objectivists must not love living. Which are you, Nide?

Nide wrote:

I noticed you ignored that question.

I don’t recall seeing you ask me this question. But in case I missed it earlier, you now how my answer.

I wrote:

Nide, people have been “obeying God” for millennia.

Nide asked:

How do you know?

Well, for one thing, I examined the Christian record to understand what the Christian god teaches and models, and thereby got a solid understanding of what constitutes “obeying God.” Then I looked at the historical record, examining many cultures in which Christianity was the predominant religion, and noted the widespread adherence to Christianity. I found that many people were “obeying God.”

Christians today often cite the work of previous Christians who lived in earlier centuries, going back to the patristic period (i.e., the time of the church “fathers”). Names of individuals like Augustine, Luther, Calvin, Edwards, Butler, Hodge, Kuyper, etc., come to mind. By citing those earlier Christians in a favorable, affirmative manner, today’s Christians are implying that they were good and true Christian believers, which must mean that they were at the very least completely obedient. No? Would you rather we presume that one goes through life professing to be a Christian, even going through the motions of defending it publicly, building churches, adding to the fold, etc., and yet they really weren’t obedient Christians after all? In that case, why should we believe you’re a true and obedient Christian?

I asked:

So why can’t it apply to other entities, like Saddam Hussein?

Nide responded:

Because he didn’t deal with people accordingly.

So how does one determine whether or not a person, especially one acting very much like the Christian god, “didn’t deal with people accordingly,” when in fact the record shows that the individual in question seems to have had all the right fundamentals in place?

Nide continued:

He was a demon.

So, Saddam Hussein was not really a human, but a supernatural being, perhaps even an immaterial being? How does a Christian make this kind of determination? Aren't you relying on your own judgment here? I thought that was verboten. Isn't your god the only one who's supposed to pass judgment on men?

I asked:

If you really think I'm deluded, Nide, why do you continue to come over to my blog? You only succeed in making a bigger fool of yourself each time you do post here. You know that, don't you?

Nide answered:

Because it's part of the program.

In other words, you do it out of obedience, not out of choice. You do it because you're told to do it, not because your heart is really in it. Indeed, that's what does appear to be the case. Perhaps you continue to come here because you recognize that my arguments are indeed quite damaging to the presuppositionalist enterprise, and figure that someone's got to come challenge me. Since no one else is doing that, you feel like you need to step up to the plate, even though you never get to first base. Why don't you think other apologists more skilled than you are challenging me? I don't monitor comments, and I invite all comers. It can't be that my work constitutes no threat, because otherwise you'd not be hanging around here all the time. Or, is it because you get attention here? Nide continued: Another cup of coffee until you repent. Gee, that's motivation never to repent! If I repent, you'll abandon me, just as the Christian god abandoned its own son when its life was being taken out by the trash. By the way, when do I get to enjoy one of these legendary cups of coffee that presuppositionalists continually promise to non-believers, but never seem to deliver? No Christian has ever bought me a cup of coffee.

And when are you going to pay Robert Bumbalough the five hundred bucks you owe him?

I wrote:

The Christian god is portrayed as expecting its worshippers to be ready to kill on command, abandoning its own child when its life is threatened, and sacrificing treasure for the sake of trash.

Nide asked:

How is that you are not delusional?

Again, Nide cannot deal with the topic of the discussion, so uses it as an opportunity to attack me personally. If I were delusional, I'd probably be a life-long Christian, for as a worldview suited towards enabling a person to sustain an entire system of pretenses, Christianity is the most developed. But to answer your question, a person who is delusional will not explicitly hold to the primacy of existence metaphysics, as I consciously do in all my waking life. So that's how I'm not delusional.

Nide also wrote:

Your emotions are irrelevant.

Indeed, I've never stated or implied that they were. This is not about *me*, Nide. It's about the evils of the Christian worldview. Are you disputing what I stated above about the Christian worldview? Examine them again: The Christian god is portrayed as:

- expecting its worshippers to be ready to kill on command (cf. Gen. 22);
- abandoning its own child when its life is threatened (the gospel story of Jesus' crucifixion); and
- sacrificing treasure for the sake of trash (giving up Jesus - the ideal man - for the sake of a world of sinners - i.e., nonideal people)

These are Christianity's own teachings here. What is it about your own worldview that disturbs you so much?

I asked:

Can you explain what you mean by "individual" in that case?

Nide answered:

Thinking God's thoughts after him.

The concept 'individual' refers to an entity, an indivisible one at that. I asked what you mean by one, and you cite an activity - one riddled with insuperable epistemological problems (as I will show below). It seems again you're simply trying to hijack a perfectly legitimate non-Christian concept and trying to re-inform it with Christian notions which simply don't suit it. It doesn't work. You can't even get the categories right. It all gives the impression that you're making this all up as you go, trying to see how slippery you can be in the process.

I asked:

And what is the alternative to being an individual? If man is not an individual, what is he?

Nide responded:

A slave.

Of course, none of what Nide is giving us here is in fact biblical, so it seems that he himself has failed to "think God's thoughts after Him" in coming up with his responses. But let's examine this a bit.

A slave is someone who is not allowed to pursue his own line of thinking, but must act and behave in certain manners, as dictated by someone else's will, regardless of what he wants for his life. He has no right to exist for his own sake, and acts under a compulsion to follow someone else's will for his life. A slave, then, seems more appropriate to the "thinking God's thoughts after him" notion than the notion of an individual who seeks his own ends, who thinks his own thoughts, and relies on his own judgments.

Tell us, Nide, do you think your god's thoughts after it? What does that mean? How can we know that you really do this? Do we have no alternative but to take your mere word for this? Or is there some way you can demonstrate this? If your ability to interact and spar in a debate about worldviews is at all indicative of the thinking that you think after your god, I'd say either its source (your god) or its interpreter (you) or both, are a malfunctioning lot.

I wrote:

Then you can go on to explain how human beings are not individuals (if that's what you think), how they were not originally created according to your worldview as individuals (which your above reply indicates - i.e., if they weren't created as individuals, what were they created as?), and how something that is not already an individual can choose to become one.

Nide responded:

See above. They were created as individuals but chose to be slaves.

Now you're directly contradicting several statements you made in some comments you left in [this blog](#). Here, in your comment above, you say that human beings "were created as individuals." But earlier you denied precisely this idea. Check out the record:

Nide (May 20, 2012 8:59 PM): "Sinners don't want to live after him. Fine he let's them be individuals which leads to destruction."

Me (May 20, 2012 10:39 PM): "Well, first of all, if each individual was created by your god, your god created them as individuals. So it's not really a matter of 'letting' them be individuals; he created

them that way according to Christian myth.”

Nide (May 21, 2012 1:16 PM): “No, he didn’t. They chose otherwise.”

Here is what you had affirmed in these comments:

- i) Human beings were not created as individuals;
- ii) Human beings chose to become individuals, presumably against divine wishing;
- iii) The Christian god “let” them become individuals;
- iv) Being an individual “leads to destruction”

Now you’re denying i) which means ii) and iii) do not obtain, while you still have yet to recant iv).

You’re all over the place, man, simply contradicting yourself almost with every breath. Of course pointing this out will likely do nothing, since it’s not the content that concerns you (you’re happy to accept contradictions), it’s the *source* from which the content you accept indiscriminately comes. It needs to come from some authoritarian source, and that’s not going to be an atheist. So anything an atheist says, well ballyhoo, it must be bunk. Deny and affirm the contrary, no matter what the atheist says.

I asked:

How can we know that Mao did not love his neighbor?

Nide stated:

Go read up on some history.

I have. Now, please explain the epistemology of your conclusion about Mao: How do you know that Mao did not love his neighbor? Again, keep in mind what Christianity means by ‘love’: to be consistent with what Christianity teaches *and models* (it teaches a lot more than merely “love God and your neighbor”), “love” as Christianity informs it must include:

- (a) the desire that a person be willing to kill upon command (cf. Abraham and Isaac)
- (b) the willingness to abandon one’s own child when its life is being threatened
- (c) the crass indifference to man’s values exemplified in its “election” policies, natural disasters, foreordination of evil, etc.
- (d) the validity of the notion that there can be such a thing as “a morally sufficient reason” for foreordaining (i.e., building into one’s “plan”) suffering and evil

Given these fundamentals which are in fact entirely bible-based, it’s not clear how anyone can say that Mao did not “love” his neighbor *as Christianity informs the notion ‘love’* through what it teaches and models.

Moreover, by saying “go read up on some history,” it seems that you are, according to presuppositionalism, promoting sin, since if I go “read up on some history,” you’re making full allowance for and encouraging me to indulge in what presuppositionalism calls “autonomous reasoning,” which presuppositionalism treats as the very root of sin.

So again, Nide, it’s clear that you’re not giving any of this very careful thought. But that’s in keeping with the essentials of the Christian devotional program: the believer must sacrifice his mind and simply go along with the party line, regardless of the absurdities he ends up embracing and regurgitating. You’re definitely not unique in this.

I asked:

Which neighbor was he supposed to love, and how do we know that he didn’t love that neighbor?

Maybe Mao did what he did *because* he loved his neighbor.

Nide replied:

His fellow man.

Again, how do we know that Mao was not exhibiting love *as Christianity informs it* (see above) for his “fellow man”? You have not answered this, Nide. What’s the problem?

Nide answers:

See above.

Yes, see above.

Nide went on:

No, Mao hated God and his neighbor.

According to Christianity, what is the functional difference between “love” and “hate” *as Christianity informs these notions*? I’ve already presented some fundamental reasons why we cannot simply brush Mao and his actions aside as disobedience to the command that we “love God and [our] neighbor.” And you haven’t come close to dealing with these points. It seems, in fact, that you’re either unwilling or simply unable to integrate any of this and give the matter some serious thought. I present arguments and inform my premises with as much clarity and support as I can, given my time constraints, and you consistently come back with vacuity and bluster in the form of trite slogans and superficial bromides, none of which address the issues that come up for discussion or show that you are prepared to take any of these issues seriously.

In fact, Nide, your responses are so off-mark and insufficient to the issues discussed that it almost seems like you compose your responses by randomly pulling one of the four books you have on your bookshelf, opening to just any page, closing your eyes and bringing your finger down to some point on the page, and using whatever you see there as your response. It’s almost that bad.

I wrote:

I have to warn you, Nide, that I will keep your worldview’s premises in mind when trying to interpret what you say. I John 4:8 says that ‘God is love’ and throughout the bible this ‘loving God’ is characterized as perversely indifferent to human values.

Nide reacted:

He is also Just.

If this is to have any relevance to the point I’m making, it would need to qualify the claim that “God is love” in some way. But the result will be that the Christian god’s “justice” either conflicts with the belief that “God is love,” or it is wholly consistent with it. In the case of the former, there would be yet another inconsistency within the Christian worldview; in the case of the latter, what you say here, Nide, will only confirm what I stated above. So it’s unclear what you hoped to gain by saying this. Again, it suggests only that you are not prepared to give these matters any careful thought. You’re just reacting, hoping that something sticks, and probably more concerned with settling your own psychological issues than resolving any philosophical difficulties. Indeed, you don’t come close on the latter, and your continued participation in these discussions and reliance on the same mode of operation indicate that you’re not having any success in the former as well.

Nide then wrote:

No God cares about human values.

Right - no god cares about human values. Man is on his own. He cannot count on a god to help him, to look out for him, to protect him, to provide for him, to ensure his welfare. Finally a Christian admits this!

Nide wrote:

It's humans that don't.

Which "humans" do you have in mind? If I'm acting to secure and preserve my own values, how am I not caring for my values? I know many, many, many human beings who do essentially the same thing - they act in their self-interest, in the interest of *their own* values. So they definitely care for "human values." The empirical evidence directly conflicts with your statement. How about you, Nide? Are you human? When you say that "humans don't care about human values," are you including yourself? Or do you automatically exclude yourself from this generality, perhaps because (again) you're confusing yourself with the god you worship? What a piece of work!

Nide continued:

See the 10 commandments.

Again, you must not be paying attention to anything that has been presented. The 10 commandments says nothing about values. It's just a list of "thou shalt" and "thou shalt not." This has nothing to do with values. If you think that the 10 commandments speak of values, please quote one and show me where it speaks of values.

Nide asserted:

You don't have a 'worldview'. You live in God's world.

But earlier you said you had detected "many" internal inconsistencies within my worldview. Now you say that I "don't have a 'worldview'." Can you be consistent about anything?

I wrote:

I thought Mao was a mere mortal human being. Indeed, it seems that Mao was "living after God's character."

Nide responded:

He was. However, he was under satanic influence.

So following the model set forth by the Christian god amounts to being "under satanic influence"? Your worldview waxes more and more absurd with every application.

Nide then wrote:

So, No he was living after Satan's Character.

When "God" (a) desires that a person be willing to kill upon command (cf. Abraham and Isaac); (b) is willing to abandon its own child when it is threatened; (c) exhibits complete indifference to man's values; and (d) supposedly has "a morally sufficient reason" for building evil into its "plan" for human history, what exactly is the difference between "God" and "Satan"? You see, Nide, you really are not prepared to deal with the problem of evil. It keeps coming back to bite you in the arse.

Nide "explained":

No, we reject your individualism which is really subjectivism.

This only tells us that you have no rational understanding of either individualism or subjectivism. If you believe that the world was created by an act of consciousness, that a conscious being "controls whatsoever comes to pass" (Van Til), that your god does whatever it pleases (cf. Ps. 115:3), that revelation is a real means of supernatural communication to humans, that prayer is a real means of communication with the supernatural, that faith is a legitimate means of acquiring knowledge of truth, that miracles are real, etc., etc., then on what basis could you object to any position which is ultimately subjective in nature? Your whole worldview is premised on the underlying belief that the *subject* of consciousness holds metaphysical primacy over its *objects*. That's called SUBJECTIVISM, Nide. Your worldview is CHOKING in subjectivism. And here

you say that the doctrine of individualism “is really subjectivism”? You are one extremely confused individual, Nide. Either that, or you just really enjoying making a fool of yourself for some bizarre, masochistic reason.

Nide asked:

Will not the judge of the earth do what is right?

The answer to such a question would depend on several points:

1) whether or not there is such a thing as a “judge of the earth” - we can certainly *imagine* one, but producing empirically valid evidence is going to be an insurmountable problem for this;

2) suppose one sets himself up as “judge of the earth.” In that case, he or she might find the following useful:

a) something specific to judge (if it is “the earth,” and this judge also “created” it - any condemnation of “the earth” would mean that it created something it later condemned. That’s quite a problem!

b) a set of objective criteria by which it would collect evidence to inform its judgments and on which it would formulate its judgments (Christianity does not provide this - as we saw above, the Christian worldview is riddled with subjectivism).

c) clear and objectively formed definitions of important terms (e.g., “right,” “justice,” etc.), to which the judge would need to adhere consistently in order to formulate sound judgments (Christianity does not provide for any of this).

So again, Nide, you throw random questions into the discussion which, when considered, only confirm the unsuitability of Christianity as a worldview.

Nide wrote:

Mao was not a judge nor God.

How do you know this? How could we know that Mao was not another incarnation of the Christian god, coming back to earth “in glory” and establishing his “kingdom” on earth? That this “kingdom” does not resemble what you have imagined what it should look like, is not an objective basis upon which to dismiss such a possibility.

Nide wrote:

Was God wrong for making Adam the king of the earth?

From my perspective, the beliefs that there is a god and that Adam was the first man are irrational: there is no objective basis for either belief. Also, since I reject the very concept of monarchy on the grounds of its anti-moral implications for man, the very notion of a “king of the earth” is also irrational - it is not compatible with the application of reason to the realm of man’s values.

But we can use rational moral principles to evaluate chosen action, even in the context of fictional characters (like the god of the bible). Chosen action is action that is subject to moral evaluation (regardless of who does the choosing), and since the Christian god is portrayed as *choosing* to create Adam and making him whatever he ended up being, then the Christian god’s actions are indeed subject to moral evaluation.

Now, the Christian god is said to be a *perfect* creator. And yet Adam was not created perfect (as I have argued [here](#)). Also, the Christian god is said to be both omniscient and infallible, so given these claims it must have known that it was creating imperfection. Indeed, it must have known that it was creating something that would turn out to be a huge mess - a mess which it still has not cleaned up (since there is much evil in the world). It tried to correct this with Noah’s flood, but that did not do the trick. Evil still continued. It then sent its own begotten son, and abandoned it with evildoers got a hold of him. So that only created more evil, and did nothing to eradicate evil - evil still goes on.

So, going by the details of the story, the conclusion that the Christian god is the source of evil, is inescapable. Thus the evaluation that the Christian god would be evil if it actually existed, is compelled by the relevant factors considered above.

Nide wrote:

remember satan tried to set himself up as God and ended up in hell.

This is just more of the same tired, outworn king-of-the-hill ethics. It's like Saddam Hussein sending his rivals to the torture chamber. There's no essential difference here.

I wrote:

Since you're essentially agreeing with me, you need to revise this statement to say, 'Yes, to destroy what you call values.' You're not contradicting anything I've said here. In fact, you're confirming it all. It would be amazing if you didn't see this.

Nide reacted:

I don't. Your values are not values at all.

Which is why you would have no qualms with destroying what I value. This is part of the fallout of the collectivist mindset: an individual does not have a right to his values, whatever they might be. Party Chairman Mao had the very same outlook as you do: all those people out there - their values are not values at all. So there's no reason *not* to destroy them. The people are all part of a collective, and they have one neck by which they can be led around or even beheaded, if the Party Chairman so chooses (just like biblegod). The Party Chairman can choose to mete out justice (and send any or all of them to their deaths), or treat them with mercy (and spare their miserable, worthless lives). The people have no right to their own selves, to their own lives, to their own values; they belong to the Party Chairman, and his to dispose of as he pleases (just like Psalm 115:3). This is precisely the orientation which the bible gives to its god in relation to man's values: complete indifference. Destroy at will is its ultimate policy.

I asked:

So you think it is moral to sacrifice treasure for trash?

Nide answered:

No, i think it's merciful.

So, "No," it's *not* moral, BUT, "it's merciful." This can only mean that mercy and morality are opposites. Wow, Nide, you ARE the gift that keeps on giving. Your willingness to just step in it really does make my task easier!

I wrote:

My morality teaches that treasure should NOT be sacrificed for trash, that no one should die for another person's benefit.

Nide asked:

Where's the mercy?

If mercy and morality are opposites, as your above statement clearly indicates, then mercy is immoral. There is no compromise between the moral and the immoral. Mercy is essentially unearned forgiveness, and as such it is defiance against justice. It is certainly no virtue.

For the Christian god, its "mercy" is simply its willingness to deny justice and reward evil. There is nothing *pro-value* about this, since it explicitly rewards that which destroys values. Just as Jesus says on the cross: "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do" (Lk. 23:34). This can only mean that ignorance of the

law buys you an excuse. So why learn what the law says?

Consider a scenario when one is negligent in the manner in which he drives a forklift, say, and ends up killing a toddler. Well, he didn't know what he was doing, so he is to be forgiven. Besides, human life is but a vapor, as James 4:14 says: "You are *just* a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away." So what's the big deal? The Lord giveth, the Lord taketh away. God is in control of everything, so a policy of complete resignation from life and its attendant indifference to values is the only logical path for the consistently-minded Christian.

I wrote:

In response to what I've been saying, you come across as so double-minded as to be borderline insane: on the one hand you express agreement with my position that 'treasure should not die for trash'. But then when I explain how this is what my morality teaches - that values should not be sacrificed for non-values - you say it's "no morality at all." You come across as extremely confused on the most fundamental of matters.

Nide responded:

To be moral is also to be merciful.

Now you're contradicting yourself again. You probably don't even realize it. Let's review: When I asked you if "you think it is moral to sacrifice treasure for trash," you replied:

Nide:

<< "No, i think it's merciful." >>

So above you admitted that sacrificing treasure for trash is NOT moral, and stated that "it's merciful." So again, by your own words, you admit that morality and mercy are opposites.

Now you say "To be moral is also to be merciful."

So now you're saying that it IS moral to sacrifice treasure for trash. Here's what you should do then, Nide: take everything that is valuable to you (this would include your computer, your clothing, your nice leather shoes, your supply of food, even your skills [if you have any], a car if you have one, etc.) and take yourself out to the nearest city dump, throw all your treasure (your values) away into the dump, and pick up some trash from the dump and bring it back home to live with. Oh, and don't forget to dump your house at the city dump too. So, now where are you going to live?

The point is: if you only *preach* your worldview, while simultaneously refusing to *live by* it, you make yourself into a hypocrite. If you cannot integrate the components of your worldview into a non-contradictory whole (as is clear you cannot), then your worldview is an incoherent hash of disparate teachings. If you have to dispatch your honesty in order to maintain your worldview, then you are at enmity with reality. If your worldview is premised on supernaturalism, faith and self-sacrifice, then it is subjective and your choice to defend it is irrational.

Nide asked:

Is mercy good?

Not if it rewards evil and injustice. Not in my book, anyway. But it's good in your book, *because* it rewards evil and injustice.

I wrote:

The bible commands men to sacrifice their values (cf. Mt. 19:21, Rom. 12:1, et al.), requires them to be willing to kill on command (cf. the story of Abraham and Isaac), portrays its god as totally indifferent to human values (indiscriminately wiping them out with global floods, earthquakes,

famines, hurricanes, typhoons, tsunamis and other disasters) and offers as its formula for redemption a father abandoning its only child when the scum of the earth come to torture and execute it.

Nide answered with a question:

How long does one need to put up with the wicked?

This is a question for you to ask your god, for not only does your god continue to choose to keep “the wicked” in its creation, it also *rewards* them all the time, and has done so, according to Christianity, since the beginning of the world. Remember that your worldview contains the teaching “resist not evil” (Mt. 5:39). Such a worldview would be of no avail for those who found it necessary, for instance, to oppose Hitler. For one thing, on what *Christian* basis could one determine that Hitler was evil? We saw above that the Christian has no philosophically consistent means by which to do this in the case of Mao Tse Tung (unless of course he abandons Christianity). So we should not be surprised if the Christian encounters the same roadblocks in the case of evaluating Hitler.

But suppose the Christian accepts, in spite of what his worldview teaches, that Hitler was indeed evil. Well, then his Christianity gets in the way again, for it commands him to “resist not evil.” So if Hitler is evil, the Christian is prohibited from resisting him.

Good thing the allies of WWII did not base their diplomatic policies on the bible, for if they had, we’d all be speaking German now.

I wrote:

So your claim that ‘deep down inside [I] really have Christian values’ is completely untenable. To say this only indicates that you’re really not aware of what Christianity teaches.

Nide responded:

Actually, I am. It teaches to love God and your neighbor.

This only shows that you have an extremely, indeed *stupefyingly* superficial familiarity with what Christianity teaches and models. And yes, modeling is a means of teaching. Teachers use it all the time. So we cannot ignore what the bible models as well as what it teaches. I just reminded you above that the bible also commands you to “resist not evil.” These are words which the gospel of Matthew put into Jesus’ mouth, and Jesus is hailed by Christians (and even many non-Christians) as the “greatest teacher” who ever lived.

I have pointed out the importance of understanding what the bible teaches in light of what it says about its god and what it models. So while it’s true that the bible “teaches to love God and your neighbor,” we have to understand what the bible must mean by “love” in order to understand this teaching. The bible teaches that “God is love” (I John 4:8), so any actions which this god does must consistently model what Christianity means by “love.” That’s pretty basic. Now I’ve already given a list of points taken from the bible which it attributes to the Christian god, and which therefore must be inherent to what the bible means by “love,” by virtue of its god modeling such behaviors. Here’s the list again in case you forgot:

- (a) the desire that a person be willing to kill upon command (cf. Abraham and Isaac)
- (b) the willingness to abandon one’s own child when its life is being threatened
- (c) the crass indifference to man’s values exemplified in its “election” policies, natural disasters, foreordination of evil, etc.
- (d) the validity of the notion that there can be such a thing as “a morally sufficient reason” for foreordaining (i.e., building into one’s “plan”) suffering and evil

So when we look at the bible’s teaching that we “love our neighbor,” we need to interpret this commandment in light of what the bible means by “love,” and that is why I took the actions attributed to the Christian god itself as relevant factors in understanding this, since it explicitly teaches that “God is love” (I John 4:8).

Thus, the commandment to “love thy neighbor” means that we should expect our neighbor to be willing to kill on command, we should be willing to abandon our neighbor when his life is being threatened (since the Christian god “loved” its son, right?), we should be indifferent to our neighbor’s values (just as Nide has expressed indifference to my values - I’m Nide’s neighbor, aren’t I?), and we should grant validity to the notion that there is such a thing as “a morally sufficient reason” for building suffering and evil into one’s plan.

So, it’s true that the bible teaches “love God and thy neighbor,” but we need to understand what this means in the context of what the bible itself teaches and models. So there you have it. You can have it if you want it. I don’t.

I wrote:

Actually, I don’t know how a believer can distinguish his god from the demons, devils and unclean spirits portrayed in the biblical storybook. On every fundamental they share essentials. The differences are almost non-existent, and not available to human reason. So this is a most perplexing epistemological conundrum which Christianity cannot overcome.

Nide responded:

Just like you aren’t sure if Satan is tricking you.

Here, Nide, whether you realize it or not, your attempt to discredit me backfires. You think you’re discrediting me, but you’re actually agreeing with the point I make above, namely the fact that you really have no way of distinguishing one supernatural being from another. Once you grant validity to the notion of supernatural beings, you have already surrendered any objectivity by which you can make crucial distinctions, such as the distinction between what is real and what is imaginary, what is fact and what is fantasy, what is real and what is fictional, what is actual and what is mere wishing. The lack of any reliable means of making fundamental distinctions like this, can only mean that you lack any reliable means of distinguishing between different supernatural agents, all of which you merely imagine anyway. Now to the extent that you say you *can* distinguish between various supernatural agents, you are admitting that they really are merely imaginary, for any distinctive features which they may have are something that you choose to put into place when you imagine them (for imagination is an application of volitional consciousness).

Meanwhile, I know that there’s no “Satan” tricking me because I know that the primacy of existence is true. It absolutely rules out all supernaturalism. So the problem is yours, even though you want to say it’s mine as well as yours.

I wrote:

You need to try something else, for this is a philosophical dead-end.

Nide asserted:

Dawson, you don’t know anything.

This is typical of Christians: when you show them they’re wrong, they don’t acknowledge their wrong, they don’t show any gratitude for the correction (a fool hates correction, right?), they don’t express any willingness to consider what has been explained to them. Rather, they seek to redirect the conversation in order to make it personal, and resort to belittling the non-Christian. I took down an argument that Nide borrowed from Van Til and showed precisely why it fails, so much that it is self-negating. And for this, Nide simply says, “Dawson, you don’t know anything.” If I know my name, I know something. I know my name. It’s Dawson Bethrick. Nide knows that I know this, for I sign my posts and my comments with it all the time. If I didn’t know my name, how could I sign my posts and my comments? I also keep a blog, and I know this. Nide knows that I know this. I also write in English, and I know this. Nide knows that I know this. So when he says “Dawson, you don’t know anything,” he knows it’s not true, and yet he chooses to say it anyway, which means he’s deliberately and blatantly lying. He is bearing false witness, which means he’s violating one of the 10 commandments. This puts him at enmity with the Christian god. Nice work, pal.

I wrote:

What you apparently don't understand is the fact that the only alternative to individualism is some form of collectivism.

Nide asked:

How do you know? did you check?

Yes, I did check, and I've presented my findings which support what I've stated above. If you think there is some third alternative which is neither individualistic nor collectivistic, which does not reduce to the one or the other, please present it. If not, then it's time you learn how to stand up and be a man and accept facts for what they are.

I wrote:

There aren't different kinds of individualism: either man has the right to exist for his own sake, or he doesn't.

Nide asked:

How do you know?

By application of the law of the excluded middle to the relevant facts, such as the one I noted in my statement.

I wrote:

Your worldview explicitly denies man just this right, as I have shown in my blog entry above, and it won't change simply because you start inventing arbitrary subcategories for the concept.

Nide responded:

No, my worldview accepts that man has rights. see the 10 commandments.

I did see the 10 commandments. Just as it does not hinge any of its commandments on the objective theory of values, it does not make any mention of man's individual rights.

Nide, I seriously recommend you figure out what your worldview is and what it teaches before you enter into discussions like this. It's clear that you're just "winging it" here, hoping that you'll be able to say that you've answered me. But look at the miserable quality of your responses? Is that really the best way to answer non-believing critics of Christianity and defend your worldview?

Nide also stated:

You could only live for your own sake through God's sake.

Again, Nide exposes the fact that he just doesn't understand the issues up for discussion. He's essentially trying to assimilate components of my worldview and say they're possible only if his god is real. He doesn't care about the nature of the features of the worldview he seeks to assimilate; all that matters is that he assimilates them if he cannot defeat them. If it's undefeatable, then he wants to grab it and retrofit it with his theistic presumptions. But what he doesn't understand is that these things he's trying to hijack from non-believing worldviews are explicitly incompatible with theism. That's why historically theists have opposed and condemned them, and have tried to shame them out of existence. But man continues being man, regardless of the mystics' resentment of man.

Nide quoted me only in part, where I wrote:

then you will always have to face the possibility that you could be getting something wrong whenever you attempt to "think God's thoughts after him."

In response to this, Nide asked the question which presuppositionalists usually pose when they can't interact with the point being discussed.

He asked:

How do you know?

I'm happy to address this question, but before doing so, let me quote the full statement from my blog entry above which Nide had selectively clipped and censored:

There's also the issue of human fallibility; unless you claim that you yourself are infallible (in which case you would be "God" and wouldn't need to "think" someone else's thoughts "after him"), then you will always have to face the possibility that you could be getting something wrong whenever you attempt to "think God's thoughts after him."

Notice that Nide deliberately left out my pointing to his fallibility, the presence of which can only mean that what he thinks, believes, affirms and recites is not automatically true, but that in fact he can be in error. In fact, it is because we can commit errors in our thinking, judgments and estimations that we need reason in the first place. But this is all lost on Nide, and he resents being called to acknowledge his fallibility.

So really I had already answered Nide's question before he asked it, and if he actually read what I had written and *thought about it honestly*, it seems he should acknowledge his own fallibility and confess that he might be making a mistake when he claims to "think God's thoughts after Him." In the same paragraph from which Nide selectively excised only a portion of my statement, I had also stated the following about this notion of "thinking God's thoughts after Him":

It could only mean reading some divine mind, in which case I'd really like to know how the believer who attempts to practice it can reliably distinguish what he thinks are his "God's thoughts" from other things, such as his own imagination or suggestions from unclean spirits.

Of course, Nide does not address this concern: he does not explain how the believer can reliably grab hold of his god's thoughts, in order to think them after his god, while not mistakenly or accidentally grabbing hold of the thoughts of some other supernatural being that happened to be passing by, or a malicious unclean spirit seeking to deceive "God's elect."

This is really a fundamental epistemological question which believers need to address, since they are constantly pointing to "revelation" as the means by which they allegedly know what they claim to know and expect non-believers to accept as knowledge. Since we all know that we can make mistakes when seeking to identify things in the "here and now" - i.e., in the empirical realm of concretes - then we know that we can make mistakes in general and that is why we need an epistemological methodology suited to the nature of our consciousness, such as it is, in order to guide us towards truth and steer us clear from error. But reason, which takes the material provided by the senses and identifies and integrates that material by means of conceptualization, is suited only for the realm of concretes. It doesn't work in the supernatural realm, since the senses do not give us awareness of supernatural beings. Indeed, theists have yet to identify, in any clear terms, the mode by which they allegedly have awareness of the supernatural. So that's an issue. But supposing they have some means of acquiring awareness of supernatural things. Does that mean they're out of the woods on this question? We have a mode of awareness - in fact *five* modes of acquiring awareness - of the realm of concretes (the natural realm), but that alone does not alleviate our need for an epistemological methodology by means of which we can acquire non-contradictory knowledge. So merely having a mode of awareness as such does not mean we're out of the woods. Why would it be any different for the theist, especially since the realm of his worldview - the "supernatural" realm - is full of nefarious entities out to deceive "the elect" and have powers beyond the believer's own puny mortal abilities? Of course, theists never address these questions, and that's really because they can't. They cannot point to any legitimate mode by which they have awareness of "the supernatural"; they just claim to. And they rest on faith, which is essentially the willingness to act as if something were true, even though one really doesn't believe it's true.

But I'm reminded of a case in point, admitted by none other than presuppositional apologist Chris Bolt, when he confided that one can be directed by the "sensus divinitatis" and *still get the message wrong*. Remember

when Joshua Whipps (aka “RazorsKiss” of the [Choosing Hats](#) crowd) engaged in [a debate with Mitch LeBlanc](#) back in 2009? Well, I do. I even wrote up a lengthy series analyzing Whipps’ side of the debate (see [here](#)). In that debate, Whipps announced:

I am going to argue that God is not only the ordainer, but creator of the logical laws we use - and that He transcends them...

The notion, expressed here by Whipps, that the laws of logic were “created,” can only imply that the agent which allegedly created them, created them without the guidance of logic. So if one’s worldview holds that the laws of logic were created, there would be nothing genuinely logical to recommend them, since they were created without the benefits of logical laws as their creator’s guide, and therefore could be quite faulty indeed.

But even though Whipps is a presuppositionalist, his fellow hat-chooser Chris Bolt sought to distance himself from Whipps’ position on logic when [I questioned him about it](#). In our exchange, I quoted what Whipps had stated in his debate and asked Bolt if he agrees that the Christian god is the “creator of the logical laws we use.”

Bolt replied, saying:

The problem brought up here is a restatement of the Euthyphro Dilemma (See Plato’s “Euthyphro”). It may apply to RK’s position. I have not been able to speak with him much about it. *So far as I understand him I do not hold the same position.* (Emphasis added)

So Bolt disagrees with not only a fellow presuppositionalist, but also a *fellow blogger*, on a very fundamental point about the nature of the laws of logic - whether or not the Christian god *created* them. I found this profound inconsistency between two published Christian apologists on something so basic as this, to be rather startling, especially given Bolt’s own endorsement of claiming to know something on the basis of the “sensus divinitatis” and Whipps’ own characterization of the same as being

the equivalent of having the author of the book standing over your shoulder, and correcting your faulty understandings, and continually adjusting your noetic “issues” as He also works to sanctify you in obedience to that revealed Word. (Question and Answer section of the [Whipps-LeBlanc Debate](#))

I asked Bolt, since I had audience with him, whether or not it could be the case that his god “communicates with believers through the ‘sensus divinitat[i]s,’ and believers still get it wrong.”

In response to this, Bolt dryly replied:

Yes, this is the case.

So there you have it: it has been admitted by a leading online presuppositionalist that having the “sensus divinitatis” does not reliably award the certainty which believers might claim for their beliefs.

So, that’s how I know.

When I asked Nide:

Why not simply be honest about your humanity, the nature of your consciousness, and recognize that reason is the only faculty which meets man’s epistemological needs?

he responded:

No fear in God.

This tells us that Nide has *no intention* of conducting himself honestly, for if he had this intention, he would not respond in this manner, which does not in any way address my question to him. It’s as though he felt the need to give some kind of response, so that he could settle in his mind that he’s answered me, but he gives no thought to the quality or appropriateness of his response. It’s a response for the sake of merely responding, and suggests also that he’s just not really reading what he’s responding to, since his responses

often simply bear no relevance to the matter being discussed. That's presuppositional apologetics for you.

I wrote:

Besides, I don't think I've ever seen in the bible a commandment to the effect of "thou shalt help your neighbor." So again you seem to have misunderstood something in your own worldview.

Nide responded:

If you love your neighbor, you will help him.

Of course, this goes right back to the point I had made earlier, that we need to understand what the bible teaches in context of other things it teaches and the models it provides of what it considers "right behavior."

On my worldview, since love is inherently tied to one's own (i.e., *selfish*) values, then sure: if one loves his neighbor, he will help him if he can and has the opportunity to do so. Note that in such a case he would not be helping his neighbor *because he's commanded to do so* - he helps him out of his own selfish evaluation of the worth of his neighbor.

But on the Christian worldview, one cannot say this is the case. We again have to go back to what the bible must mean by "love," and that brings back the four points I had cited earlier, namely that "love" as modeled by the god which "is love" according to I John 4:8, involves:

- (a) the desire that a person be willing to kill upon command (cf. Abraham and Isaac)
- (b) the willingness to abandon one's own child when its life is being threatened
- (c) the crass indifference to man's values exemplified in its "election" policies, natural disasters, foreordination of evil, etc.
- (d) the validity of the notion that there can be such a thing as "a morally sufficient reason" for foreordaining (i.e., building into one's "plan") suffering and evil

So on the context of meaning supplied by the Christian worldview, there's really no basis to suppose that following the commandment "love thy neighbor" will lead to *helping* him, for that's not what "love" means according to what the bible illustrates about the god which "is love." Indeed, look at all the billions of people on this earth which the Christian god does *not* help. To the extent that any human beings survive on this planet, it is due to their efforts to live, not due to help from some supernatural source.

by Dawson Bethrick

Labels: [Christian Psychopathy](#), [Morality](#), [Presuppositional Gimmickry](#), [problem of evil](#)

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