

Defining and Defending the Faith 3: Arguments For The Existence Of God

- I. Is belief in God rational or irrational?
- II. The Cosmological Argument
 - A. "The mere existence of the world is a fact that requires explanation." (Nash p.121)
 - B. Key principles of the argument.
 - 1. The principle of sufficient reason: There must be some reason why a thing exists rather than not.
 - 2. The notion of contingent being: A contingent being is something that has its sufficient reason or explanation in something other than itself. (i.e. cause and effect.)
 - 3. The idea of necessary being: A necessary being is one that must exist therefore it is eternal and owes its existence to nothing else.
 - C. Formulation of the argument.
 - 1. The universe is the sum total of contingent beings.
 - 2. There must be a sufficient reason why this contingent universe exists rather than not.
 - 3. The sufficient reason for the existence of the universe must by definition be a necessary being.
 - 4. This necessary being is God.
 - D. Conclusion: The existence of a contingent universe can only be explained by postulating the existence of a necessary being who is God. (Gen.1:1)
- III. The Teleological Argument
 - A. What is the cause for the apparent order and design found in the universe?
 - B. Two options
 - 1. The order found in the universe came about by chance.
 - 2. The order found in the universe came about by the design of a first designer.
 - C. Consequences of the options.
 - 1. If the order found in the universe came about by chance then it cannot be relied upon to teach us any truth.
 - 2. If the order found in the universe came about by the design of a first designer then that designer must exist and one can learn truth by studying the order.
 - D. Conclusion: The presence of order and design in the universe warrants belief in a first designer who is God. (Psalm 19)
- IV. The Moral Argument
 - A. Why is there a universal presence of moral "oughtness?"
 - B. Formulation of the argument.
 - 1. People judge behavior by means of some implied objective standard of morality.
 - 2. Moral consciousness can exist only in the mind.
 - 3. For a moral standard to be universally binding it must appear in a mind from which all are minds derive.
 - 4. This first mind is the mind of God.
 - C. Conclusion: The universal presence of moral "oughtness" can only be sufficiently explained by the existence of a moral God. (Rom. 2:1-16)
- V. The Argument From The Idea Of God
 - A. What is the sufficient reason for coming up with the idea of God?
 - B. Formulation of the argument.
 - 1. Humans can have an idea of a perfect being which they call God.
 - 2. Humans cannot come up with the idea of perfection by negating the idea of imperfection.
 - 3. The only sufficient reason for humans to be able to have an idea of a perfect being is the fact that this being exists.
 - C. Key idea: A concept is logically prior to examples of that concept.
 - D. Conclusion: Only the existence of God can provide a sufficient reason why man can have an idea of God. (Rom.1:18-23)
- VI. The Argument From Longing
 - A. Statement of the argument.

1. Every innate natural desire reveals the existence of some reality that corresponds to it and would satisfy it.
 2. There exists in each of us a desire for which earth offers no possible satisfaction.
 3. "These two premises together necessarily yield the conclusion that the object desired in this deepest of all desires exists." (Kreeft "Intellectuals" p.226)
 4. The object of this deepest of all desires is God.
- B. The key to this argument is to appeal to the persons own experiences of this deepest desire.
- C. Key concept is the observation of Augustine that our hearts are always restless until they find their rest in God.

VII. The Ontological Argument

- A. Statement of argument.(As summarized by A.Plantinga pp.87-88)
1. God exists in the understanding but not in reality.
 2. Existence in reality is greater than existence in the understanding alone.(premise)
 3. God's existence in reality is conceivable. (premise)
 4. If God did exist in reality, then He would be greater than He is. (from 1 and 2)
 5. It is conceivable that there is a being greater than God is.(from 3 and 4)
 6. It is conceivable that there be a being greater than the being than which nothing greater can be conceived. (From 5 by the definition of God being "the being than which nothing greater can be conceived") This is a contradictory statement and thus absurd.
 7. It is false that God exists in the understanding but not in reality. Therefore it follows that if God exists in the understanding, which He does, then He must also exist in reality.
- B. The key to this argument lies in demonstrating that the premises found in 2 and 3 are true. If they are then all the other steps are necessarily true.
- C. Conclusion: This argument is both simple and incredibly complex.

VIII. The Argument from the impossibility of the contrary.

- A. One must assume the existence of God in order to rationally argue for His non-existence.
- B. One must assume the existence of God in order to argue for or against anything at all.

Conclusions

- A. Our arguments for God's existence must be valid and true.
- B. The existence of the God of the Bible can be proven beyond a reasonable doubt.
- C. The evidence is so overwhelming that God exists that the Bible declares that "The fool has said in his heart 'there is no God.'" (Ps.14:1)
- D. The unregenerate person suppresses all this knowledge of God in unrighteousness and refuses to acknowledge the evidence.