

“Faith of that sort [that of Aquinas or Maimonides] – the sort that can stand up at least for a while in a confrontation with reason – is no plainly impossible...One must state plainly. Religion comes from the period of human prehistory where nobody had the smallest idea what was going on...All attempts to reconcile faith with science and reason are consigned to failure and ridicule for precisely these reasons”

“And all this will be further clarified if we are modest and patient enough to understand the building blocks of nature and the lowly stamp of our origins. No divine plan, let alone angelic intervention is, require. Everything works without that assumption...The human invention of god is the problem to begin with. Our evolution has been examined “backwards,” with life temporarily outpacing extinction, and knowledge now at last capable of reviewing and explaining ignorance.”

– Christopher Hitchens “God is Not Great”

“We are all atheists about most of the gods that humanity has ever believed in. Some of us just go one god further.”

“All three of these arguments [Aquinas’ first three arguments] rely upon the idea of a regress and invoke God to terminate it.” Even if “God” is the one that these arguments terminate on...there’s no reason why he must have omnipotence, omniscience, goodness, creativity of design, much less listening to prayers, forgiving sins and reading innermost thoughts.

If God is omniscient, he must already know how he is going to intervene to change the course of history using his omnipotence. But that means he can’t change his mind about his intervention, which means he is not omnipotent.

The Argument from Beauty:

“Obviously Beethoven’s late quartets are sublime. So are Shakespeare’s sonnets. They are sublime if God is there and they are sublime if he isn’t. They do not prove the existence of God; they prove the existence of Beethoven and of Shakespeare...If there is a logical argument linking the existence of great art to the existence of God, it is not spelled out by its proponents.”

Arguments from Scripture:

“In any case, as I said, there is no good historical evidence that he ever thought he was divine...Ever since the 19<sup>th</sup> century, scholarly theologians have made an overwhelming case that the gospels are not reliable accounts of what happened in the history of the real world. All were written long after the death of Jesus, and also after the epistles of Paul, which mention almost none of the alleged facts of Jesus’ life. All were then copied and recopied, through many different ‘Chinese Whispers generations’ by fallible scribes who, in any case, had their own religious agendas.”

Argument from Design:

The Boeing 747 Example: The argument from improbability states that complex things could not have come about by chance. But many people define ‘come about by chance’ as a synonym for ‘come about

in the absence of deliberate design'. After Darwin, we all should feel, deep in our bones, suspicious of the very idea of design. The illusion of design is a trap that has caught us before, and Darwin should have immunized us by raising our consciousness."

-The God Delusion: Richard Dawkins

Some Objections: (taken from "When Skeptics Ask" by Norman Giesler")

1. If everything needs a cause, then what caused God?
  - a. We didn't say that everything needs a cause; we said everything that has a beginning needs a cause. Only finite, contingent things need a cause. God didn't have a beginning; He is infinite and He is necessary. God is the uncaused cause of all finite things.
2. If God created all things, then how did he create himself?
  - a. Again, only finite, contingent beings need causes. Necessary beings don't. We never said that God is a self-caused Being. That would be impossible. However, we can turn this objection into an argument for God. There are only three possible kinds of being: self-caused, caused by another, and uncaused. Which are we? Self-caused is impossible with respect to existence; we can't bring ourselves into existence. Uncaused would mean that we are necessary, eternal, infinite beings, which we are not; so we must be caused by another. If we are caused by another, what kind of being is He? Again, self-caused is impossible; if He were caused by another, that leads to an infinite regress; so He must be uncaused.
3. The Moral Law is either beyond God or arbitrary: Bertrand Russell asked where God derived the moral law. He said that either it is beyond God and He is subject to it (and hence, not the ultimate good), or it is an arbitrary selection of codes that originated in God's will. So either God is not ultimate or He is arbitrary; in either case He is not fit to be worshiped.
  - a. Russell fails to exhaust the possibilities, however, and we can sidestep the horns of his dilemma. Our contention is that the moral law is rooted in God's good and loving nature. This is not an ultimate beyond God, but within Him. And it is impossible for God to will something that is not in accordance with His nature. God is good and cannot will evil arbitrarily. So there is no dilemma.
4. Can God make a mountain so big that he can't move it?
  - a. This is another meaningless question. It asks, "is there something that is more than infinite?" It is logically impossible for anything to be more than infinite, because infinite has no end. The same applies to questions like, "can God make a square circle?" It is just like asking, "What is the smell of blue?" It is a category mistake – colors don't smell and circles can't be square. These are logical impossibilities. They contradict themselves

when we try to think about them. God's omnipotence does not mean that He can do what is impossible, only that He has the power to do anything that is actually possible, even if it is impossible for us. Any mountain that God makes, he can control, put where He wants, and disintegrate if He likes. You can't ask for more power than that.

5. If God has no limits, then he must be both good and evil, existence and nonexistence, strong and weak
  - a. When we say that God is unlimited, we mean that He is unlimited in His perfections. Now evil is not a perfection; it is an imperfection. The same is true of nonexistence, weakness, ignorance, finitude, temporality, and any other characteristic that implies limitation or imperfection. We might say that God is "limited" in that He can't enter into limitations, like time, space, weakness, evil – at least not as God. He is only "limited" by His unlimited perfection.
6. If God knows everything, and his knowledge can't change, then everything is predetermined and there is no free will
  - a. Knowing what men will do with their freedom is not the same as ordaining what they must do against their free choice. God's knowledge is not necessarily incompatible with free will. There is no problem in saying that God created men with free will so that they could return His love, even though He knows that some will not make that decision. God is responsible for the fact of freedom, but men are responsible for the acts of freedom. In His knowledge, God might even persuade men to make certain decisions, but there is no reason to suppose that He coerces any decision so as to destroy freedom. He works persuasively, but not coercively.
7. God is nothing but a psychological crutch, a wish, a projection of what we hope is true.
  - a. This kind of argument makes a serious error. How can men know that God is "nothing but" a projection, unless they have "more than" knowledge? To be sure that man's consciousness is the limit of reality and that there is nothing beyond it, one must go beyond the limits of man's consciousness. But if one can go beyond, then there weren't limits. This objection says that nothing exists outside our minds, but a person must go outside the boundaries of his own mind to say that. If the objection were true, it must be false. It defeats itself.
  - b. It was a long hard climb, but we have a solid argument that the God, not just a God, exists. At this point we are tempted to fold our hands and sit back as if there were no other questions that could possibly be asked. However, we have only established that this God exists; we have not shown that anything that the Bible says He did or said is true. That's what the rest of the book is about. Also, we have not done anything to distinguish this concept of God from any other concept of God.

