

Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

An Evaluation of Atheism

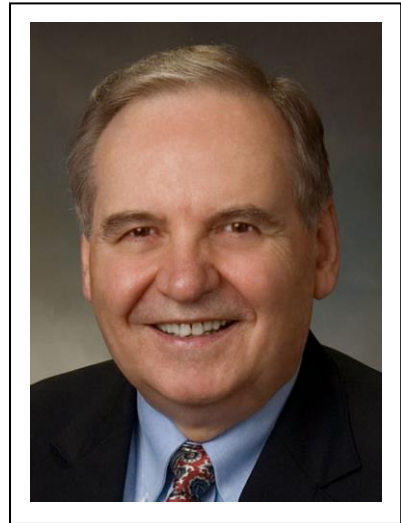
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SOME CONTRIBUTIONS OF ATHEISM

There are two major areas in which atheists have made significant contributions toward building an adequate world view. First, they have helped to eliminate some contradictory concepts of God. Second, they have provided a corrective for some misconceptions of God and his relation to the world.

Criticism of the Principle of Sufficient Reason Is Correct. Atheists have been correct in pointing out that the principle of sufficient reason—that everything needs a cause or explanation—leads to an infinite regress and not to God.²³ If *everything* needs a cause then so does God and so on infinitely. If the principle is all-encompassing, then one



may not special plead that God is the one exception to it. Why make God the exception; why not just start with the world as a whole and say that the universe does not need a cause? Sufficient reason does not lead to an infinite God but to an infinite regress.

A Self-Caused Being Is Impossible. Some theists have tried to avoid the conclusion that an infinite regress is demanded by the principle of sufficient reason by pointing out that the principle makes the qualification, “Everything needs cause *either in another or else in itself.*” On this account the world has its cause in another (viz., God), but God has his cause within himself. But atheists are correct in noting that this leads to a contradictory concept of God. If God has the cause of himself within himself, then God is a self-caused Being. But it is impossible to cause one’s own existence. Causes are ontologically prior to effects, and so God would have to be prior to himself. That which needs to be caused is in a state of potential being, while that which causes is in a state of actuality. Hence, a self-caused being would be simultaneously in a state of potentiality and actuality with regard to being, which is impossible.

²³ Theists too have recognized the harm done to the theistic cause via the principle of sufficient reason. See John E. Gurr, *The Principle of Sufficient Reason in Some Scholastic Systems, 1750–1900*.

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Some Impossible Conceptions About God. Atheists are correct in pointing up the fallacy of understanding omnipotence as the ability to do anything. Even God cannot do what is logically contradictory or what is actually impossible. It is logically impossible for God to make square circles and it is actually impossible for God to sin. A God who could cease being God or cease being good would not be the theistic God. There are many things impossible for a theistic God. He cannot change his nature; he cannot will contradictory things; he cannot be overpowered by a creature; he cannot achieve certain ends without certain means (e.g., he cannot be worshiped unless he creates beings who are free). Atheists are certainly correct in placing some logical restrictions on the notion of omnipotence. God can only do what is *actually possible* to do; the contradictory is not possible for even an omnipotent God.

There are numerous other criticisms of theistic conceptions that atheists have pointed up. There cannot be a time before time; God cannot be properly understood in terms of finite anthropomorphic imagery; a totally static God cannot be dynamically related to the changing world; this is not the best of all possible worlds (there are evils and injustices in it), and so on.

CRITIQUE OF ATHEISM AS A WORLD VIEW

None of the above arguments or contributions of atheism really destroys theism, for most of them turn out to be helpful refinements of theism; the rest are invalid criticisms. It remains for us here to do two things: we must show the invalidity in the arguments for atheism, and we must show the impossibility or at least untenability of the atheistic position.

The Invalidity in the Arguments for Atheism. Each argument for atheism is invalid. It is either based on a misconception or else overlooks some possibility that would avoid atheism. We will treat each of the above arguments for atheism in the order presented.

a. Causality Need Not Lead to an Infinite Regress

The criticism “if everything needs a cause, then there must be an infinite regress” is built on a misconception of the principle of causality. Or better, it is a confusion of the principle of existential causality and the principle of sufficient reason. The latter affirms that *everything* needs a cause. This it would seem, as the atheists observe, leads to a contradiction of God being his own cause. But not all theists use this approach. Aquinas, for example, held that *only* finite, changing, dependent beings need a cause. This does not lead to a contradictory self-caused Being but to a noncontradictory un-caused Being. For if only finite beings need a cause then when one arrives at a nonfinite (i.e., infinite) being

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it does not need a cause. Hence, from Aquinas' principle of causality the series would legitimately stop at a *first*, Uncaused Cause of all finite beings.²⁴

b. Causality Does Not Lead to an Impossible Self-Caused Being

The principle of existential causality does not lead, as does the principle of sufficient reason, to a contradictory self-caused Being. Rather, since only finite, dependent beings need a cause, it leads to an infinite and necessary Being that does not need a cause. The principle of causality, then, leads to an un-caused Being, which is not contradictory. But the principle of sufficient reason, by demanding that everything needs a cause, does lead to a contradictory self-caused being. Theists, then, must agree with atheists in rejecting arguments based on the principle of sufficient reason. But if causality is understood as Aquinas understood it, then atheists have lost their argument from causality against the existence of God.

c. The Ontological Disproof of God Is Self-Defeating

One of the premises in the alleged ontological disproof of God is that “no statements about existence are necessary.” If this is true then it would apply also to that very statement itself. So either that very statement, that is, “no statements about existence are necessary,” is necessarily true or else it is not. If it is necessarily true, then it is self-defeating; for in that case it is a necessary statement about existence claiming that no necessary statements about existence can be made. As such it would be self-canceling. On the other hand, if the statement is not a *necessary* statement about existence, then it is *possible* that some necessary statements about existence can be made. And this is precisely what some theists claim, namely, that “God exists” is a necessary statement about what exists. At least the atheists must examine the claim of the theist who offers such a proof. The atheist cannot rule out a priori in advance the possibility of making a necessary statement about existence without making a necessary statement about existence, which would be self-defeating. The alleged ontological disproof backfires by eliminating its own ground for asserting what it purports to be the case, namely, a proof about existence that no proofs about existence can be made. If necessary negative statements can be made about existence such as “God cannot exist,” then why cannot necessary positive statements about existence be made such as “God does exist”?

d. Bayle's Moral Dilemma Is Invalid

The theist might object to Bayle's dilemma by challenging the argument “evil is not defeated.” It assumes at least two challengeable premises: first, it assumes that nothing

²⁴ See Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* I, 2, 3; I, 3, 4.

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has been done to defeat evil up to this point. On the contrary, many Christian theists believe that evil was defeated by Christ on the cross. This is possible and one would at least have to look at the plausibility of the evidence for this claim.²⁵ Second, Bayle assumes that since evil has not been defeated to this point in time it will never be defeated. He offers no real proof for the implied premise that if an all-loving and all-powerful God has not defeated evil *by now* he never will defeat it. A theist may argue, on the contrary, that God *will yet* destroy evil when Christ returns.

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A theist may even turn Bayle's argument around as a proof that evil will be defeated. The theist could argue as follows:²⁶ an all-good God would defeat evil and an all-powerful God can defeat evil. But since evil is not yet completely defeated, it follows from the nature of God that evil *will* one day be defeated. That is, the guarantee that evil will be completely destroyed is the infinitely good and powerful nature of God. A finite God cannot offer such a confident hope; only the God of theism can guarantee the defeat of evil. Hence, rather than evil eliminating the logical possibility of a theistic God, the theist can argue that only a theistic God can guarantee the destruction of evil.

e. Moral Law Need Not Be Arbitrary or Superior to God

Russell's dilemma is a false one for theism. The theist may claim that the moral law is neither outside and superior to God nor arbitrary and unworthy of God. Rather than flowing from God's arbitrary will, the moral law may be seen as rooted in God's unchangeably good and loving nature. If morality is based ultimately on God's nature and not on arbitrary will, then the apparent dilemma is resolved. In this case there is no ultimate *beyond* God to which he is subject; he is subject only to the ultimacy of the good *within* his own nature. God cannot be less than absolutely good; his nature demands that he be absolutely good. And in this event, it cannot be said that God is arbitrary, for he cannot will contrary to his nature. God cannot decide to be unloving, nor can he desire that cruelty and injustice be performed. God's will must perform in accordance with his unchangeably good nature.²⁷

f. Theism Is Not Antihumanitarian

Camus' argument is based on a false dichotomy: it assumes a disjunction between fighting the plague and being a believer in God. The theist may very well hold that fighting the plague is working *for* God who is against all evil and suffering. In fact the

²⁵ See Section III of this book for an argument for the plausibility of Christianity.

²⁶ See my *Philosophy of Religion* for a theistic solution to the problem of evil, chaps. 14–17.

²⁷ The voluntaristic tradition in ethics springs from Duns Scotus, but other theists (following Aquinas) argue for an ethic rooted in God's nature.

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theist may claim that the only truly effective way to counteract the plague is by belief in God.

Furthermore, Camus' argument assumes that since God sent the plague, only a humanitarian has a right to fight the plague. But the theist may argue that men have brought the plague on themselves by their rebellion against God and that the only really effective way to correct this is by surrender to God. If this were true, then fighting the plague would mean fighting against man's stubborn self-will, and this fight could very well entail the manifestation of mercy to those in need. Just because someone has made his own bed of thorns does not mean that believers should not help heal the wounds that the person gets from lying on it. The theist may claim that man has brought the plague on himself by rebelling against God, but he need not refuse to help him back to God and wholeness again. On the contrary, one could argue just the opposite. For if God lovingly warns man of the self-initiated consequences of his sin by allowing it to terminate in a disastrous dead-end street, then he would certainly encourage merciful handling that may aid a turnabout resulting in healing and Godward movement. In this way the theist could argue that only theism is truly humanitarian since only theism offers hope of saving man from his self-inflicted plague.

g. Innocent Suffering Does Not Eliminate Theism

It is mistaken for atheists to argue that there is *innocent* suffering and that therefore there cannot be a God. First of all, it is possible that *all* suffering is deserved and that it is God's mercy which saves men from more suffering which they do deserve. Second, what needs to be proved by the atheist is not that there is *innocent* suffering but that there is some *unredeemable* or *unjustifiable* suffering. The theist may argue that some "innocent" suffering is good and that this world is not the final chapter in the story of human suffering. He may contend that this is not the best of all possible *worlds*, but that it is the best of all possible *ways* to obtain the best possible world, which world is yet to come. He may argue that suffering is a necessary precondition for achieving the greatest good. And in view of the fact that the most worthwhile things in life are often achieved only through pain, there is some experiential plausibility to the theist's claim. In this way immediate evil may lead to an ultimate and greater good.

One thing is certain, the atheist cannot press his claim that evil is *ultimately* unjustifiable—which is what he must do to eliminate the existence of God via evil. For if some evil is ultimately unjust in this world, then there must be some ultimate standard of justice beyond this world. All injustice presupposes a standard of justice by which it is judged to be not-just. And an ultimate injustice demands an ultimate standard of justice. But this brings us right back to God, the ultimate standard of justice beyond the world. In short, the only way to disprove God via the problem of evil is to posit God as an ultimate moral

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standard of justice beyond the world. In this event, if atheism were true, it would be false; its argument turns out to be self-defeating.

It would not suffice for an atheist to contend that this moral ground is neither personal (as God) nor able to bring about ultimate justice, for the theist might plausibly argue that the standard for personal (i.e., moral) activity must be personal and that the ground for limited personal activity must be unlimited Personal Act. If so, it would follow that such an all-powerful person could achieve whatever greater good his personal moral nature demanded by way of ultimate good.

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h. Working to Eliminate Suffering Does Not Disprove God

The atheist's argument that working against God's means (suffering) of attaining the end of the greatest good would eliminate theism is wrong for two reasons. First, at best the atheist's *argument* would only eliminate this solution to the problem of evil but it would not eliminate *God*. The theist may agree that God must achieve the greatest good possible. He may also agree that permitting evil is necessary to achieving the greatest good. But it does not follow from this that working against evil would eliminate God. At best this would only mean that in working against evil one is in some sense working against God. It would not prove that there is no God. But even this conclusion does not follow, for it may be that God wills only to *permit* (via human freedom) but not to *promote* suffering as a means to the greatest good. A parent may permit the pain of an operation in order to save the life of his child without really promoting pain for his child.

Here too the atheist's argument is self-defeating. From the atheist's premises one may draw a strong theistic conclusion as follows: If God must work to achieve the greatest good possible in this world and if permitting evil is the means of achieving the greatest good, then it follows that permitting evil is the best way for God to achieve the best world. For if God had done otherwise, it would have been less than his best. And if the atheist desires to back off the premise that God must do his best, then he has lost the force of his argument against God. For if God does not have to do his best, then one has no legitimate grounds for complaining that this world is not the best that God could have done. This is in many ways a good world despite the evil it contains, and this would be compatible with a God who does not have to create the best world but simply a good one. On the other hand, if God must do his best, then permitting evil in order to accomplish his best would seem to be the best way for God to operate. Some virtues (like patience and courage) are not possible without evil and the highest degree of some pleasures and virtues (like forgiveness and reconciliation) are not achievable without some evil or pain. Hence, it would be necessary for God to permit the necessary first order evils in order to achieve the second order and greater goods.

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i. Inability to Do the Impossible Does Not Disprove an Omnipotent God

The fact that an omnipotent God cannot do some things does not disprove his existence; it merely shows that some activities are incompatible with omnipotence. Omnipotence does not mean the ability to do what is impossible; it entails only the ability to do what is actually possible. If it is a “limitation” on God not to be able to do evil or not to be able to go into nonexistence or not to do the contradictory, then God is severely “limited.” Actually this is a misuse of the word *limited*. The only “limits” God has are the unlimited possibilities of his own nature and will. God cannot make a stone heavier than he can handle; that is impossible. For if he can create it, then he can control it. He alone holds it in existence and he alone can snuff it out of existence, and this is an effective control as one could imagine!

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j. Incompatible Perfections in God Do Not Prove Atheism

It is not contradictory to hold that certain things are incompatible with an absolutely and infinitely perfect being. Imperfections, evil, and limitations cannot be affirmed of God. But rather, than disprove God’s existence these would establish his perfection. God cannot be a stone; he cannot have a body. An infinite body or stone is a contradiction in terms, a limited limitless. These words must be understood of God only metaphorically and not metaphysically; they may be informative of what God *does* but are not truly descriptive of what he *is*.

Perfections such as love and justice are not incompatible in God. They are different, but not everything different is incompatible. The radii of a circle are different but they are all compatible at the center. What is different, and sometimes at least seemingly incompatible in this world, is not necessarily incompatible in God. For example, there can be such a thing as just-love or loving-justice. Likewise, God can be all-knowing and all-loving, for his infinite knowledge may be exercised in allowing men the freedom to do evil without coercing them (in accordance with his love) against their will so that through it all he may achieve (by infinite power) the greatest good for all (in accordance with his justice).

Whatever can be shown to be incompatible with the established perfections of God as infinitely just, loving, and so on, does not disprove God; it merely shows that anything involving limitations or whatever is incompatible with his nature as holy-love is properly speaking not a characteristic of God. In this regard, sometimes the *activity* of God is confused with his *attributes*. Wrath, for example, is not something God *is*; it is something he *does* out of consistency with his nature, because of what creatures have freely brought on themselves. The same sun that hardens clay also melts wax. The sun maintains its same consistent impact on the elements, but the receptivity of the object it shines on will

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determine whether the same rays will soften or harden it. So it is with the heart of man, according to theism. God's *attributes do* not change, but his *acts do* change in accordance with the change in human attitudes toward him.

k. Contingent Creation Does Not Eliminate a Necessary God

It is not contradictory to hold that God is necessary while holding at the same time that creation is contingent.²⁸ The only thing a necessary Being must will necessarily and unconditionally is the necessity of his own nature. Everything else may be willed contingently. There is no necessity in creation that demands that God will it to exist. According to theism. God was free to create or not to create. This is perfectly consistent even for an all-loving God. Love does not *demand* that God create; love may simply lead God to *desire* to create. An infinitely loving Being does not have to *do* anything; he simply has to *be* the infinitely loving God that by nature he is. Of course, no one else would know that he is loving unless he performed some loving act. But one does not have to do something in order to be something. One must exist in order to perform, but he need not perform in order to exist. In brief, God must will his own being necessarily but he need not will anything else necessarily; all else may flow freely from his love. In point of fact, the theist may argue just the opposite of this atheistic objection. The theist may contend that it is of the very nature of love to act freely and not under compulsion. Love is exercised freely or not at all. Hence, if creation flows from a loving God then it must flow freely. It is necessary to the very nature of love that it act freely.

l. A Temporal Creation Does Not Disprove a Theistic God

It is wrong to conceive of creation *in* time. This supposes that time is already there as a continuum or reality outside God. It is more proper for theism to speak of the creation *of* time. Time is a concomitant of a created and changing world. Hence, time began when the changing process of this world was caused by God. The only thing "before" time was eternity. There were no temporal "befores" prior to time. "Befores and afters" began with time. The word *prior* or *before* can only be used in a nontemporal way in the phrase "before time began." The atheistic antinomy of time does not disprove God; at best it merely corrects a mistaken way of speaking about time and creation.

m. God Is Not Incompatible with Human Freedom

God's determination and human freedom are not necessarily an either/or situation; they can be a both/and situation. There are a number of ways a theist might reconcile the two. He might contend that God has determined that men be free. He may contend that God

²⁸ This criticism and the following one come also from panentheists. See critique at end of chap. 11.

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controls the world by what he knows men will freely do. Knowing what men *will* do with their freedom is not the same as ordaining what they *must* do against their freedom. The latter would seem to be incompatible with a loving God, but the former would appear to follow naturally from such a God. If love is persuasive but never coercive, then allowing men to freely determine their own destiny would seem to be the loving way to make them. Hence, a theist could argue that the love of God necessitates that if he decides to create creatures that can love him, then they must be free; it is of the very necessary nature of love that other persons be able to respond freely to it.²⁹ In this way both God and man would be responsible for free acts. God would be responsible ultimately because he created the free creatures. Creatures would be responsible immediately because they are not forced to choose what is morally wrong but freely choose to do so. God may cause human free acts *indirectly* by way of his knowledge of what they will freely do; men cause them *directly* by way of what they choose to do. Therefore, freedom does not eliminate God. On the contrary it involves him. The theist may argue that if man is free, then he is responsible; if he has been given freedom, then he is responsible to the One who gave him freedom. In this account God is ultimately responsible for the *fact* of freedom (which is a good thing) but not immediately responsible for the *acts* of freedom (which may be evil). Both God and men take their separate responsibilities for freedom. So rather than disproving God, ultimately freedom may be said to imply God.

n. Man's Unfulfilled Need for God Does Not Disprove God

Sartre argued that man is a useless passion engaged in a futile project to realize God. The for-itself can never attain the in-itself by itself. This, however, by no means disproves God. It may prove that Sartre never found God. But as has been observed, if man has as great a need for God as Sartre claims, then one is cruelly unjust to give up the search as hopeless. Should all hungry and oppressed men stop striving for food and freedom? Should every thirsty wanderer in the desert conclude that there is no water anywhere?

Rather than being a disproof of God, one could argue that the deep-seated need for God is a reason for supposing that there is a God.³⁰ Is it not reasonable to assume that what men really need is really available? It is true that some hungry men will never find food and some lonely persons will never find companions, but is it reasonable to conclude from their need that neither food nor friends can be found in this world? Would it not be just as reasonable, in view of the seemingly uneradicable need for God, that man should continue his search on the assumption that God may be found? In short, Sartre's attempted disproof can be reversed into a plausible assumption that there is a God.

²⁹ See C. S. Lewis, *The Problem of Pain*, chap. 8; *The Great Divorce*, chap. 13; *Four Loves*, chap. 6.

³⁰ See Geisler, *Philosophy of Religion*, chap. 4.

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o. God Cannot Be Merely a Human Projection

Feuerbach's arguments for atheism depend for their validity on a premise which is self-defeating. The only way one could know that God is *nothing but* the projection of human imagination, emotion, and so on, is if one knows *more than* these mere projections. For unless man knows more than the contents of his own consciousness there is no way to be sure that man's own consciousness is the limits of reality. The limits cannot be known unless they are transcended, and if they are transcended then they are not the limits. It cannot be known where the wall ends unless one can see beyond it. Hence, the only way Feuerbach's disproof of God would work is if the contents of reality were more than the limits of man's understanding. But if reality is more than man's understanding, then it cannot be true that reality is nothing more than the objectification of man's understanding of himself. In short, if Feuerbach's argument is true, then it is false. It is self-defeating since it entails a premise that it purports explicitly to deny.

p. Chance Does Not Prove Atheism

There are many loopholes in the chance argument for atheism. First, it is *possible* that there is a God and that the world did not happen by chance. For if atheism can be possible and even probable by chance, then so can theism. Second, the immensity of the universe does not help the chance hypothesis; for the mere possibilities within the unknown universe cannot outweigh the probability in the known universe.³¹ When all is told, it may be that the whole universe argues for design. Third, allowing more time for chance occurrence does not help the argument, since the longer the time for evolution the more likely it will be that things will be in their original random position. The longer you scramble eggs, the less *organized* they become. Chance and evolution go in both directions, and the longer the time period the more likely that things will be in the state in which they began.³² Fourth, the odds against a chance explanation of the universe are very great. Even nonbelievers like Julian Huxley have calculated the odds against a purely chance evolution of life at 1 to 1,000 to the millionth power (i.e., one followed by 3 million zeros). Others have calculated the odds at less.³³ The argument seems to have a sharp double edge at least.

In point of fact, the argument for atheism from chance is self-defeating; it presupposes design. There is no meaningful way to speak of a completely random universe. Chance makes sense only on the backdrop of design, as meaninglessness can be understood only

³¹ See F. R. Tennant, *Philosophical Theology*, reprinted in part in John Hick, *The Existence of God*, pp. 120–36.

³² See Julian Huxley, *Evolution in Action*, pp. 45–46.

³³ See Wilder Smith, *Man's Origin, Man's Destiny*, pp. 66 f.

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in the overall context of meaning. Likewise, there is no way to even express the state of complete randomness without implying that there exist such characteristics of design as relatability, or even intelligibility.

The Untenability of the Atheistic Position. Strangely enough, atheists have provided some of the most convincing arguments against atheism. Many of their arguments boomerang into a disproof of atheism or else entail a plausible assumption that there is a God.

a. One Must Assume God in Order to Disprove God

The above analysis has shown in several ways that one must assume God in order to disprove God. For example, to disprove God via evil one must assume the equivalent of God by way of an ultimate standard of justice beyond this world. Likewise the ontological disproof of God entails making a necessary statement about existence which claims that necessary statements cannot be made about existence. The same kind of self-defeating consequence follows from any kind of absolute denial about reality. One cannot meaningfully affirm that reality has no ultimate meaning (as in God) without thereby making the claim that his statement is ultimately meaningful about reality. Most informed atheists are sophisticated enough to recognize this. But in qualifying and backing off from the universality and absoluteness of their claim they thereby dilute the strength of their argument to something far short of a proof. It would take absolute knowledge to absolutely eliminate God. But absolute knowledge can only be derived from God. Hence, to be an atheist in the absolute sense, one would have to assume God in order to disprove God.

b. Atheistic Arguments Are Reversible into Reasons for God

Even in the weaker, less universal form of the arguments for atheism, two points can be made. First, not only are many of the atheist's arguments self-defeating, but they entail premises from which one could plausibly conclude the existence of God. So rather than supporting the probability of atheism these arguments actually do the reverse. The arguments from evil, freedom, and human need all call out *for* God, rather than *against* him. Second, the argument from causality turns out to be reversible into the cosmological argument for the existence of God; for if every contingent, finite, or dependent being needs a cause, then it would seem to follow that there must be an Infinite, Necessary and Independent Cause of the existence of every other thing that exists. The detailed elaboration of this argument will be the subject of the next chapter.

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c. Atheism Has No Adequate Explanation for Basic Metaphysical Questions

As a world view, atheism provides an insufficient explanation for several very significant questions about reality. An atheist must assume the following meaningless or untenable positions. (1) He must assume that the personal arose from the impersonal, that matter plus time and chance gave rise to mind. It seems more reasonable to hold that Mind formed matter than that matter gave rise to mind. (2) Atheism asserts that the potential gives rise to the actual, that all the world's achievements were latent in the eternal random swirling of tiny atoms. But it seems much more reasonable to believe that something actualized the potential of the universe than to believe that the potentiality actualized itself. Potentials do not actualize themselves any more than steel forms itself into skyscrapers. Potentials must be actualized by some actualizer, and the theist claims that world potentials must be actualized by some World-Actualizer (viz.. God). This claim seems eminently more reasonable than the claim of atheism. (3) Atheism has no adequate answer to the question, "Why is there something rather than nothing at all?" It does not suffice to say that the world is just "there" or "given." How did it get there when it did not have to be there? Who gave it when it did not have to be given? The nonexistence of the whole—even the universe as a whole—is actually possible. If not, then it is an eternal necessary Being which is more than (i.e., transcending) all the parts and changing relationships. But this is precisely what the theists call God, namely, an eternal necessary Being that transcends all the changing parts and relationships in the universe. If, on the other hand, the universe is not necessary, then it follows that it might *not be*. In this case there is no explanation in atheism as to why the universe *is* rather than *is not*. In the final analysis atheism must hold the absurd conclusion that something comes from nothing, that is, that non-being is the ground upon which being rests. This seems highly unreasonable.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Atheism provides some valuable correctives to and modifications of theism. Many of its arguments either correct misconceptions some theists have of God or of his relation to the world or else they expose contradictory theistic concepts. Atheists have been active as well in contributing to humanistic causes and earnest in scientific endeavors.

However, as a total world view atheism does not measure up. First, its arguments are invalid and often self-defeating. Second, many atheistic arguments are really reversible into reasons for believing in God. Finally, atheism provides no solution to basic metaphysical questions regarding the existence of the universe or the origin of personality and the actualization of the world process. Atheists must believe that something comes from nothing, that potentials actualize themselves, and that matter

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generated mind. It seems much more reasonable to believe in a God who made something where there was nothing, who actualized the potentials that could not actualize themselves, and whose Mind formed matter. The arguments to support this belief will be provided in the next chapter.³⁴

³⁴ Geisler, N. L. (1976). *Christian apologetics* (pp. 223–235). Baker Book House.