

Other arguments for the existence of God

Although we have focused on biblical arguments for Christianity, it is important to realize that there are many other reasons for believing in Christianity and the various truth claims upon which it rests, including arguments that have nothing to do with the Bible. Two of the most important of these are an argument from design, and an argument based on the presence of our rational minds.

The argument from design is that the nature of our world implies that there must be a creator God. Even though energy is free to enter the system of our world, there is no mechanism to explain how chaos could have issued in order and complexity unless someone with purpose and intelligence caused it to. For instance, we could put some dynamite under a pile of bricks, and blow it up. Would the result be the Taj-Mahal? The correct building blocks are there, and sufficient energy is there, but more is needed. There must be a way for the energy to be channelled in the very precise way needed in order to produce a very complex design. Of course the more complex the design, the more difficult it is to believe that it happened by accident, and living organisms are much more complex than the Taj-Mahal. Wouldn't it be easier to believe that someone acting with intelligence and purpose has arranged things this way?

Such an argument cannot prove that a personal God exists, but it does make it very probable. However, when combined with another argument, the existence of God becomes very difficult to deny. This argument is sometimes called the presuppositional argument for the existence of God. According to this argument, if we think and act in such a way that we presume a reasonable and even moral or personal basis to the universe, we must admit that we are denying the possibility of a purely chance + chaos origin to the universe.

An illustration may be the easiest way to understand this argument.¹ Suppose that two men are riding in a railway coach and glancing from the window at one of the stops, they see numerous white stones scattered about on a small hillside near the train in a pattern resembling these letters: THE CANADIAN RAILWAYS WELCOMES YOU TO CANADA. One man observes that it took a lot of work to arrange the stones in that pattern, but the other disagrees. The second man argues that there is no actual proof that any work was expended on the arrangement. After all, the stones are clearly present on other parts of the hill, and the fact that they are on a slope means that they might roll down periodically. How can anyone prove that the stones didn't just accidentally fall into this curious arrangement?

At this point, the first man may feel that the second man is being credulous and irrational, but technically speaking he has to admit that there is no actual proof (from where they are sitting) that anyone arranged the rocks this way. He feels that his explanation is easier to believe than that of the second man even though this judgement is somewhat subjective.

(So far, this is an argument from design as described above. Now see that there is a further step we can take in our thinking based on our presuppositions.)

A few minutes later, the second man suggests that they should get out at the station and exchange their U. S. currency for Canadian money. "What makes you think we should do that?" asks the first man. The second man answers, "Can't you read? It says we are entering Canada!" while he points to the rocks on the hill. Now the second man has demonstrated that he too believes that the arrangement of the stones is no accident. The fact that he is drawing conclusions about the world from the arrangement of the stones is inconsistent with his earlier claim that they had fallen into that pattern by accident. He demonstrates that he too believes that the stones were placed in this arrangement by a purposeful being in order to communicate something.

In the same way, any time we use our reasoning ability to draw conclusions, and any time we look at patterns in the universe to discover truth (such as scientific laws) we are affirming by our actions that we already suppose there is a rational basis to the universe. If everything was the result of chance and arose out of chaos, then everything that exists has been chemically determined. Why then would we think our own thought processes (themselves conditioned) could tell us anything about reality? Indeed, the fact that we use our reason to interpret reality, and the fact that we trust these conclusions shows that we believe that there is an orderly and rational basis to the universe. This basis, we argue is none other than the reasoning and personal one who created all, and is himself the ground of all being.

This illustration is adapted from a similar one in by _____ Taylor, cited in John Hick, *Arguments for the Existence of God*. (New York: Herder and Herder, 1971), pp.23,24. See also J. P. Moreland, *Scaling the Secular City...* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1987) pp. 77-103.