

III. THE RATIONAL ARGUMENTS FOR THE EXISTENCE OF GOD

A. INDIVIDUAL ANALYSIS OF THE RATIONAL ARGUMENTS

The traditional (or classical) rational arguments for the existence of God attempt to prove His existence by means of (usually) deductive reasoning. Five basic arguments have been discussed over the centuries, with many variations:

- (1) The Cosmological Argument
- (2) The Teleological Argument
- (3) The Ontological Argument
- (4) The Anthropological (Moral) Argument
- (5) The Ethnological (Religious) Argument

We consider each of these in turn.

1. The Cosmological Argument

This is the most basic of the Rational Arguments. Several of the others depend upon it in one way or another.

a. Statements of the Cosmological Argument

- (1) Four Versions by Thomas Aquinas
(four of his "Five Ways")

- (a) Motion presupposes an original mover. This unmoved First Mover everyone understands to be God.
- (b) An infinite series of causes is impossible to conceive. Therefore, there must be a First Cause, to which everyone gives the name of God.
- (c) The conditional demands that which is absolute. This absolute, necessary being all men speak of as God.
- (d) That which is imperfect implies that which is perfect as its cause. This cause we call God.

- (2) Version of Charles Hodge

"Every effect must have an adequate cause. The world is an effect. Therefore, the world must have had a cause outside of itself and adequate to account for its existence."

b. Proponents of the Cosmological Argument

This argument has been propounded by the philosophers Plato, Aristotle, Anselm, Aquinas, George Berkeley, Rene Descartes, and by a number of theologians.