



Look into Proofs
of G'd

There are a number of arguments which may be grouped together under the family name of Proofs of the Existence of G'd. Some of the arguments are very old. We have detailed evidence of the existence of these arguments over 2,500 years ago. Much has changed since versions of these arguments were first presented, and in order to evaluate their validity it is important to note the relevant changes.

For our purposes, it is convenient to distinguish two mutually exclusive and exhaustive categories of arguments: those which start with some feature of the world and trace a path to G'd, and others which talk solely of some (purportedly) purported feature of G'd.

The first category includes such arguments as the

Teleological Argument, often called the Argument from Purpose or Design. It observes that the world is too highly structured, too magnificently coordinated, and too elegantly elaborate for it to be the consequence of chance combinations. As it is usually presented, this argument claims not the compulsion of logical necessity, but the sweet persuasion of reason. Also included in this group are those demonstrations from the notion of causation, known as Cosmological Arguments. The basis here is the fact that in our experience everything which is, was within the potential of some antecedent cause. Snow falls today because it was precipitated in the atmosphere earlier when that air mass was in some other place. In turn, the air was moist because it had picked up water, and so on. A child is here today because of his parents, who are here in turn because of their parents, and so on. In a strict sense of the term, there are two *logical possibilities* for the state of things: the causal series continues backward infinitely, or it stops at some First Cause. Since we are finite beings with finite, though large and unbounded, mental faculties, we cannot at all imagine the presence of a completed infinite series. To be sure, we can write or speak about it, and even, in modern set theory, elaborate principles which apply to it, but this does not mean we can grasp it mentally.

(This was one of the important stimulants to the intuitionistic approach to logic and mathematics.) One need not understand the referent of a word in order to use that word correctly. On the other hand, though we may not be able to imagine the First Cause if it is something utterly removed from our experience, yet the notion of an unprecedented cause *itself* presents no difficulty. That is to say that the reality (phenomenon) is in both cases inscrutable and the idea (noumenon) which corresponds to the infinite chain is similarly inscrutable, but we can easily grasp the *idea* of a First Cause. The argument merely notes that an infinite causal chain is unimaginable as a natural possibility, leaving a First Cause as the likely reality. Just like the Teleological Argument, this argument is read as showing only that its conclusion is more reasonable than the alternative, but not that it is certain.

The second kind of argument, the major version of which is the Ontological Argument, begins only with certain ideas of being and perfection. In the Ontological Argument, the key observation is that the ideas of perfect existence we already have are such that we cannot talk or think of them without associating some object to them. Put another way, if we would characterize G'd solely and simply by the fact that His existence is not contingent as ours

is, but is necessary, or by saying that His being is not imperfect as ours is but is perfect, then He must "actually" be because that is what perfect being is. It is an oxymoron to say that necessary existence doesn't exist and a verbal tautology to say that perfect being *is*, so to speak. This argument is generally evaluated as if it claimed logical validity.

It is useful to consider the context in which these arguments were proposed before passing any judgment on them. There are two aspects of the whole issue of the existence of G'd that are not properly appreciated. One has to do with the intent of the questioner, the other with the context of the question, to which we will turn first.

It is often said that asking a question properly is important in finding an answer, as the correct question will at least point us in the direction of its answer. This is so at least in part because aspects of the way a question is formulated can place it in a particular field from which we look for our answer. If the words in the question are changed, it might also change the field in which the answer is researched, and it may be that the new field includes the resources for a successful answer while the original field does not.

Logically, Is there a G'd? should be considered the same sort of question as Is there a wine store

at Broadway and 73rd Street? Is there someone in that car over there? and Is there life on the Moon? In philosophy, these questions are known as ontological questions, which is to say, questions about being. As one may suspect from our examples, this kind of question is usually answered through empirical investigation rather than by formal proof, rational argument, or philosophical investigation. The basic way to answer such questions is to go and see by subway, foot, or rocket, though we also often might accept the testimony of some reliable person. There is no way to demonstrate the existence of a wine store (for example) solely through language or thought. Our knowledge of its existence or non-existence must be based on our experience through our senses—empirical observation. If we sense the store in the appropriate place and under appropriate conditions, then we conclude that it exists. If the appropriate sensing conditions are present and we do not experience the store, then we conclude that there is no such store. Such is the "logic" of most ontological questions.

G'd, however, does not lend Himself to sensory observation. We cannot specify any appropriate conditions for sensing Him. Thus it would seem that we cannot answer the question of G'd's existence the same way in which we answer all other onto-

logical queries. In recent times, people have considered the question Does G'd exist? to be one for which they expect reason to be the primary tool for providing a good answer, whether that answer is negative or affirmative. This is apparently the result of the observation above, that G'd is an essentially abstract entity, and, in that respect, is similar to logical and mathematical entities such as a number or a set. Since interaction with G'd is more directly through the mind than through the body, it is usually assumed that the way to consider His existence is by using the tools of the mind, namely, formal proof, rational argument, or philosophical investigation. Arguments for His being are invariably interpreted by both sympathetic and unsympathetic critics as if they were arguments about a formal entity, and they then are subjected to a formal analysis. The premises are laid out explicitly, and the arguments are put into syllogistic form. Then the premises are carefully analyzed and evaluated for consistency, missing premises, elegance, and so on.

One of the most important differences between formal questions and the usual ontological questions is the demands they make on the evaluator. It was the goal of a considerable effort among mathematicians and logicians about fifty years ago to develop the tools to enable argumentation in their disciplines

to be mechanized. These arguments have been made objective in the most extreme sense: they can be evaluated by a machine (an object) without any need for human intervention (a subject). Thus the demands that a formal argument makes on an evaluator are quite minimal. All one must do is to put the argument into the machine. In the usual ontological issue, the situation is quite different. Since the "argument" in that case is a set of instructions aimed at promoting an *experience* of the object in question, the evaluator is very much a part of whatever action there is. He must attempt to participate as fully as he possibly can if he is to give the "argument" an honest chance to "prove" itself. If he merely contents himself with evaluating the instructions on their clarity or lack of it, or their redundancy, in short, if he merely *inspects the formal aspect of the instructions*, he is clearly missing the whole point. The point is not the argument itself, as is the case with a formal proof, but the *results* of the instructions: do they lead to an experience of the object in question or not. In the formal case, when one comes to the end of the text he has reached the end of the argument; in the ontological case, when one reaches the end of the text it is only the beginning.

It may be instructive at this point to recall the

radical shift that has taken place over the past hundred years or so in the intention behind the question, Why believe in G'd? A *why question* is always a request for a cause of something. In general, Aristotle was able to distinguish four kinds of *why question* corresponding to the four types of causes: the efficient cause, the final cause, the material cause, and the formal cause. The latter two deal with the form and matter of objects and are thus not applicable to beliefs. We can see the difference in the first two kinds of question by considering the acceptable answers. Often when we ask *why* of someone's beliefs, we expect as a reply some sort of publicly accessible evidence that at least points toward the belief as a conclusion. This is what we call here (perhaps somewhat loosely) asking for the final cause of the belief, since the holder is said to believe what he does because of the objective evidence. Sometimes, however, one who questions a belief might accept an answer that refers to attributes of the holder rather than aspects of the belief (for example, his psychological state, his neurotic needs, or his material benefit). In such a case, one is asking for what we call the efficient cause of the belief, that is, what causes this person to hold this belief, which may be completely independent of any evidence.

With regard to beliefs, the final cause is almost

always of greater interest than the efficient cause. There is only one exceptional case. If one presumes a belief to be false, then he presumes it to have no final cause. This is reinforced by the fact that in the case of a false belief, the efficient cause will usually be much stronger than it is in the case of true belief. In the latter case, the efficient cause may be trivial or not accessible since the final cause does most of the work. For false belief, the final cause is impotent, so the efficient cause must be the active one. Thus, if one wants to go "beyond" any evidence to examine the personal motivation of adherents to a belief (as is often done nowadays for belief in G'd), it is probably because one assumes that the belief is false and so the efficient cause is more interesting. Ever since Marx introduced efficient causation into his socio-economic analysis of religion ("Religion is the opium of the masses"), the efficient causes of belief in G'd have always been part of the discussion, thus importing some presumption of falsehood. In this vein, it is important to observe that one should not make the fallacious inference (affirming the consequent) that if there is a strong efficient cause then the belief is false, for example, even if religion functions as the opium of the masses, that does not imply that it's false.

In the past, arguments for G'd's existence were

largely propounded in other circumstances than those in which they are most often evaluated today. Such arguments were commonly given to clarify and deepen one's ideas and perception of G'd. They could elucidate some aspect of Him or, perhaps, throw light on some part of G'd's relationship to His world. Since, as we have already mentioned, G'd is not perceptible through the senses, one can only acquire further knowledge of Him from activities of the mind. Understanding the way in which G'd is, or at least trying to do so, can contribute importantly to one's knowledge of G'd. This is not to imply that the task of proving the existence of G'd was not considered earlier but only that it had the character of an intellectual exercise rather than the challenge it is today. Even Descartes, who worked formally from the position presumed nowadays, could be confident of an audience sympathetic to his conclusions, rather than the hostile or indifferent one he would face today. Discussions on the nature of G'd were either light or seriously enlightening, and in either case one could count on the eager participation of any audience in evaluating any argument. Rather than argue—as we do in this essay—for the involvement of their audiences, those who earlier would demonstrate G'd's existence could assume such involvement as a matter of course and

argue the issue. In most cases too, they were granted the sympathetic judgment of many succeeding generations. It is only in the past hundred years or so, when the framework of discussion shifted from sympathy to antipathy and, lately, to apathy toward the existence of G'd, that people have become unwilling to "really get involved" in such discussions. Recently, the arguments for G'd's being have all been interpreted in formal terms, a procedure which has had two results: (1) they have come out as formal proof structures, which do not require the involvement of a judge (one of the most important qualities of formal arguments we mentioned above), and (2) they have been weak and unconvincing—to say nothing of their formal failures.

It is not surprising that the arguments have proven failures when cast in formal molds. Considering the question of G'd's existence—and any attempt to answer it—as a formal issue is a mistake. The fact is, G'd's being is a *fact* (or, some would say, a putative fact). This is not to say that it is a contingent or a material issue, but it *is* to say that it is an empirical issue! It is a question which is closer to being a part of zoology (though clearly distinct from it) than mathematics. To resolve it, we must look to observation and experience.

So, how could one attempt to verify that there

is a G'd? It is fairly easy to see that it is impossible to verify conclusively that there isn't G'd, though one might be able to conclude that there is one. This is not because of any of the unique properties of G'd but because of the well-known properties of singular existential statements (that is, statements such as, "There is an X"). One cannot test all of reality for the presence of G'd—which is what would be necessary to decide conclusively that there is no G'd. On the other hand, if one *once* has some appropriate experience it does provide final evidence for the presence of G'd.

Yet, what sort of experience is appropriate? G'd clearly cannot be sensed in any of the usual ways. This does not rule out other kinds of perception, such as "seeing" G'd with one's mind as one "sees" a mathematical proof or an abstract explanation. Noting the zoological connection we mentioned earlier, we could certainly accept a mass "sighting" of G'd as conclusive. However, there have been no reported mass experiences of G'd for several thousand years, so this may have no practical effect.

What is needed is some way each individual could experience G'd. What is wanted is some laboratory, some instrument, some procedure whereby everyone could observe G'd. Of course, it is not essential that everyone actually do so, but only that it be

obvious that they could if they are willing to do what is necessary. To provide such a procedure is, we maintain, the correct way to "prove" that there is a G'd, and attempting to do this, we submit, is precisely what the traditional arguments are all about.

This is most clearly seen in the case of the Cosmological Argument. As we interpret it, the possibility of infinite causal regression is not an issue. The Argument asserts that such infinite causal chains *do not* exist, whether or not they might. Furthermore, it says nothing of the general principle of universal causation (though it does presume it) but rather talks about a particular causal chain, though it may be any one we like. The Cosmological Argument guides us along such a chain, which, it promises, is a path to G'd. As we explain it, the Cosmological Argument begins by asking us to take some part of the world. We may take ourselves, our family, a garden, or a city; a scene, a sequence, or history itself. Starting wherever we choose, we are then told to discover the cause of that, and, in turn, the cause of that cause, and the cause of that. If we persist and trace this chain back far enough, we will eventually arrive at the First, Ultimate Cause, which has no prior cause.

The Argument, such as it is, is mainly an exhor-

tation to follow a causal chain back to its source. At the end of our efforts we will find G'd. The argument does not design to show *that* G'd is at the end of all causal chains, but rather to *show* G'd at the end of any such chain. It attempts to point us in the proper direction so that we may ourselves experience G'd.

It is easy to see how all other arguments in the first category are similarly understood. The Teleological Argument finds G'd as the end of the world (its final cause) rather than as the beginning. It invites us to consider the focus and structure of the world, asserting that G'd is behind that, too, for us to experience. This was probably more effective in earlier times when the world in which people lived was so much simpler. Now, we might experience considerable difficulty getting started along this line of thought. Nonetheless, it is clear that G'd may be found in that area. Everyone should grant that if there is a G'd, the structure and purpose of the world is an area in which we would find Him. Whether or not we have sufficient grasp of any such structure to use it toward that end is a separate matter.

These arguments all start at some observation about the material world that is familiar to us, and thereby make up one of the general categories we

originally started with. The other sort of argument has no such familiar beginning. Turning on points made about the necessity and/or perfection of G'd's being, these arguments, we interpret, are attempts merely to elucidate the matters of which they treat and thus to expose G'd (or some important aspect of Him) to our contemplation. When interpreted formally, these arguments are viewed as attempts to characterize some property of G'd or its consequences, but we see them as attempts to explicate an idea.

What G'd is—or is purported to be—is not easy to grasp. He is simple, but so much so that He is quite removed from any other part of our usual experience. Yet he permeates it. It is important to know what G'd is “supposed” to be so that one would be able to recognize an encounter with Him. It is not as easy to do this as one might imagine. In fact, it is the conviction of many—including, we submit, all those who advance this kind of argument—that if one only knew what to look for one would have no trouble finding G'd.

The notion of necessary being is essentially beyond human reach (according to all views on the matter), but progress toward its understanding can always be made. To paraphrase Kenneth Burke: Given the resources of language, what might one say about

Perfect Being, even if Perfect Being is not? The main point can be put succinctly: It is absurd to say that necessary existence doesn't exist. This is the central idea, though it is often developed more carefully. The best known is as follows: As we contemplate the idea of Perfect Being, saying and thinking what we can about it, we find that it certainly contains no contradiction and hence that it has at least a potential actuality. However, turning again to the idea itself of Perfect Being, we are forced to observe that to be actual is better ("more" perfect) than not so. If we are serious about contemplating *Perfect Being*, we must include actual existence under those things we say about it. Hence it is, Q.E.D. This is the end of the text and the beginning of *your work*.

The point here is not so much whether this is an unexceptional piece of reasoning or a linguistic flimflam. Rather, as we interpret it, it is an attempt by those who have some substantive concept of Perfect Being to show those who lack such a recognition what it is they are conceptualizing. It is more statement than argument: Perfect Being *is* that which it is absurd to deny. Anyone who would expend the substantial effort required to construct for himself the required concept of Perfect Being would finally confront G'd.

And, finally, we again paraphrase Burke: Given

the limitations of language, how inadequate must all our statements be, if Perfect Being is? Language can only represent and communicate the formal aspect of things (though this is indeterminate). Nonetheless, there are some issues which are too important, too basic, and much too broad to be solved by and with language alone. Though language is our most important tool, there are things to which it is inadequate. We must face our Creator alone.

II

A number of important consequences follow from our reinterpretation of the arguments for G'd. The most important of them has to do with the practical aspects of the compulsion to actually believe in Him and act as He would have one act.

In the past, people either accepted the existence of G'd or not—and most accepted it. Recently it has become fashionable to suspend judgment on the issue. Finding the traditional arguments (in their traditional interpretations) unconvincing, yet finding no arguments against the presence of G'd, many people dignify their doubt by adopting the agnostic "position."

Of great comfort to agnostics in their cautious rejection of proffered arguments for G'd's being is the feeling that theirs is the "safe" position. They reason that they cannot be charged with holding a wrong opinion, and their rejection of the proffered evidence for G'd's presence can at most be an honest mistake, which they found no way to avoid.¹ It is notable that, while emphasizing the distinction between an unintentional error and deliberate wrongdoing, such reasoning tends to obscure the more important distinction between right and wrong.

If there were no G'd, of course, it would matter little if they chose as they did or otherwise. In fact, however, agnostics are likely to find their position to be painfully void of G'd. Certainly the most fundamental fact about G'd (as far as we are concerned and insofar as we can make such distinctions) is His being, and the most basic way in which He relates to us is by His presence in our being. This presence gets no welcome from an agnostic, and that is a serious matter. He fails to fulfill the first commandment of the Decalogue. His only "safety" lies in the fact that he did not violate the second. Though the agnostic's mistake is not as serious as it could have been, it is still woefully distant from the truth.

There are, of course, reasoned justifications for

the agnostic position. It will, however, be shown here, convincingly I believe, that these arguments are clearly insufficient to support such a position.

The simplest one is that which attaches to the simplest position. It is maintained by some that they have made an exhausting (though certainly not exhaustive) attempt to arrive at some conclusion but have been unable to discover any conclusive evidence for or against G'd's existence. Hence they despair of finding any such evidence and throw their hands up in the air (and, subsequently, their lives too). For many of these people, their lives are completed before their investigation.

A second, firmer commitment to doubt is the position which maintains that no conclusive proof exists, either asserting this unreservedly or at least arguing that it is highly probable. This is supported by a sort of inductive argument: The proponent may take any one of the traditional arguments (in its usual interpretation) with which he is familiar and then show it to be ineffective or inconclusive. Thinking that his effort compromises all proofs and arguments for G'd's being, or at least that his past success indicates a trend, he leaps to the conclusion that no final answer on the matter is available to humanity.

Perhaps the strongest position is the "objective"

one. Proponents purport to rise above the arguments on both sides, for or against (against the "for," that is). They claim that at best the arguments for the existence of G'd only lend support to their conclusion, but do not themselves provide complete justification. They then argue that regardless of whether G'd is or not, the lack of a clear and forceful argument for His presence means that one cannot be held accountable for denying it. They claim that there is no proof extant which can make any demand on one who would simply reject it. Such proofs as there are always rest on an unjustified judgment or on self-contained principles and are thus deniable, they maintain, without penalty. Thus, they conclude, they may reject the arguments and fail to conclude that G'd is, without fear of punishment by G'd. Since G'd is just, He could not hold them accountable for their actions if they had no good reason to believe that they acted wrongly in behaving as they did. Their position does appear the strongest but only because it is the most complicated.

To those who would maintain either of the first two agnostic positions, we recommend a continuing effort. The issue is central to the human condition; it affects the most basic premises on which one leads his life. It burns for an answer. It is difficult to see how anyone could adopt a position which

consists entirely of doubt and questions on an issue as important as the existence of G'd. If someone has not resolved the problem to his satisfaction, he ought to be consumed with the effort to do so. Furthermore, G'd's existence is a fact which is independent of any proof. Any "proof" can only serve to inform one of this fact. It does not establish it. As we will show later on, there is in fact a proof which, if "valid," is necessarily accessible to all too. Thus, ignorance is no excuse.

We may analyze the remaining agnostic position into two assertions: 1) that a clear and forceful proof of G'd's existence does not exist and 2) lacking such a proof, one who fails to acknowledge G'd's existence cannot be held accountable for that failure.

As to the first point, many would say that there are numerous such proofs, among them those given by Maimonides, Descartes, Leibniz, and Newton. In fact, most of the acknowledged great thinkers maintained that everyone should know that G'd exists. Clearly the existence of such a proof is not a settled issue, and one who fails to find one, or who finds the proofs less than convincing, has no grounds for confidence in his conclusion in the face of such distinguished opposition.

Furthermore, the assertion that there are no good proofs of G'd's existence is only a matter of opinion.

The demand for a convincing, clear, or forceful proof has no objective content. It comes down to a demand for an argument which will command assent, with no a priori or objective specifications such a proof must meet. A proof is convincing if it convinces; there is no standard more subjective than that. Everything is left up to each individual. He is free to decide if a particular argument convinces him or not.

Some would ask for a logical proof as an objective standard to be met. We have pointed out that this is not the kind of proof one would expect to find, based on the kind of question we are dealing with, namely, an ontological question.² Furthermore, even such proofs, when they deal with objects (and are not just argument forms) are open to objections; for example, see Lewis Carroll's "What the Tortoise Said to Achilles."³ Even logical arguments require an unsubstantiated assent to the use of certain forms of reasoning. If one refused to accept a logically valid argument, the logic might "take you by the throat, and force you to (accept) it," but such attacks have never been known to be fatal.⁴ Thus it is not clear by what standard one could confidently say that a good proof of G'd has not been proffered.

As to his accountability for failing to accept G'd, we should like to recall that the agnostic's "position"

can in no sense be called the true one. If he will not be punished for denying G'd, neither can he be rewarded for accepting Him. According to the more sophisticated views of the relationship between man and G'd, reward and punishment are not separate consequences but rather locations on a continuum. An agnostic may not find himself at the lower end of the continuum, but he would certainly remain distant from the higher end. It is not what many would see as a safe position.

The nature of the proofs for G'd as we have interpreted them should further erode the complacency of an agnostic. As we have explained them, many proofs demonstrate G'd by suggesting methods whose result is to actually experience Him. Such arguments, when successful, have some remarkable properties.

They are conclusive. If one has direct personal experience of G'd there remain no further questions as to His existence. As well as we know anything, we know that G'd is. Perhaps better. The "perception" on which these proofs rest is basic to all human knowledge. It is prior to sensory perception and is the faculty which we use to evaluate all knowledge—even analytic a priori knowledge. It might be understood as direct intellectual perception (unmediated by the senses). That which is perceived

in this way cannot be doubted because there is no more reliable means to knowledge against which it may be tested. This is all a more or less academic discussion. In practice, one who has such a perception will be at ease about G'd's existence.

The proofs can be honestly denied. It is not hard to believe that someone has not perceived G'd though he made some effort. One whose attempts at perception proved unsuccessful is unfortunate, but perfectly reasonable and understandable. We maintain that anyone who makes a serious, unprejudiced attempt will be successful, though considerable effort may be required. Moreover, some of the arguments themselves are clear and simple and should be accessible to almost anyone. Though the arguments are clear and conclusive, yet an agnostic is within his rights to point out that it didn't work for him. Within his rights maybe, but right he's not.

They are universally accessible. Some may find one particular argument easier to work with than another, yet the basic idea must be accessible to all. G'd is life; He permeates Creation. One would suspect that it is not difficult to perceive Him, and some effort, if it's in the right direction, would confirm those suspicions. It must be remembered that everyone (including those who follow G'd's precepts

but have not yet had conclusive experience of His being) has a very strong vested interest in avoiding this perception. Confrontation with one's creator is an intensely humbling experience. It makes one nakedly aware of his or her most fundamental limitations. Overcoming this entrenched prejudice against meeting the Creator, even if one is convinced that He is around, is the source of much of the effort required to meet Him. Another difficulty may be in seeing the unfamiliar, G'dly aspects of so much which is so thoroughly familiar in other aspects. Nonetheless, all this has its *origin* in the human psyche and as such may be controlled by *us*.

If we would meet Him, we will.

Appendix

On the Objections Raised by I. Kant to the Ontological Proof

The ontological proof, with many variations, has been used by many philosophers. Among those who seemed to have accepted it were Descartes, Spinoza, and Leibniz. Others have accused it of

circularity, but none as thoroughly and carefully as Immanuel Kant in his *Critique of Pure Reason*. Since his analysis, it is often thought that the ontological proof has been finally exposed as a *petitio principii*.

Kant's objection is summarized popularly with the slogan, "Existence is not a predicate." The proof in its strongest form asserts that existence is essential to the nature of G'd, hence we cannot deny His existence without contradiction. Kant answers this with a very careful discussion of the difference between existence and other predicates (such as color, or height, or omnipotence). Existence, he points out, is not something which at all determines the nature of a thing. If we give a full definition of something, and then we say that it exists, we have added nothing by this last assertion. Although many things do exist, this condition is not a part of their definition.

He argues that a hundred real coins are no more than a hundred possible coins. The only difference between real and possible coins is the presence of the object in the case of the real coins. But these coin objects which are added to the concept of the coins already present when the coins are just possible must be completely separate from the idea of the coins itself. It is what makes the coins real, but it is not what makes them coins. Furthermore, if the

real thing were in any way different from the concept of its possibility, we would not say that that possible thing really is. The fact that we consider the possible thing to be realized shows that they are the same, that what was added to the idea to produce the real object is not part of the idea itself but something separate from it. As people commonly say, "Just because we can think of a thing doesn't mean that it also exists." This is the gist of Kant's argument.

Kant's analysis is very forceful and very clearly articulates the unease felt by most upon hearing the ontological proof. In general his remarks are, of course, correct. However, there is one case (and one case only—the case of the One) in which his analysis breaks down. G'd's existence is of a wholly different kind than ours and all with which we are familiar. His existence is necessary and essential; ours, contingent and accidental. Kant's analysis amounts to the assertion that existence is accidental. For us and the material objects which populate our lives, this is true. For G'd this is false.

In fact, this distinction constitutes the heart of the proof. Acceptance of the proof is dependent on understanding that G'd exists necessarily, not accidentally. G'd is the one being whose reality is a part of His essence. The existence which is attributed to Him by those who advance the ontological proof

is not the same kind as that which we "attribute" to other objects. The latter sort of existence is not in fact a predicate of its objects. To use it as such is a true confusion of a logical and a real predicate, as Kant complained. However, when we say G'd is, we mean He is necessarily and essentially—and it is a contradiction to deny such being. To be sure, this sort of being is not familiar and the concept is extremely difficult to grasp, but it most definitely is. To paraphrase Maimonides: He, may His name be elevated, and His existence are one. Man's mind cannot grasp this completely. Just as man lacks the ability to grasp and understand G'd's mind, as it were, so man lacks the ability to grasp and understand the truth of the Creator (Himself).

¹ It is definitely a mistake, since, at the least, they judged the proposition that the world could have come about by chance to be true, when it turns out to be false.

² Note: This should not be taken to imply that there is no such argument, unexpected though it may be.

³ Newman, James R., *The World of Mathematics*, vol. IV (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1956), pp. 2402–2405.

⁴ *Ibid*, p. 2404.