

## Handout

### Class One: Natural Theology—Does God Exist?

#### Natural Theology

Gott = God

Theo = God    logos = study of/reason

Vatican I, *Dei Filius*: “If anyone shall say that the One True God, our Creator and Lord, cannot be certainly known by the natural light of human reason through created things; let him be anathema.”

- Saint Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274)
- What do we mean by proof?
- Aquinas’s Five Ways are Proofs
- St. Thomas Aquinas’s Five Ways:
  1. Argument of Motion/First Mover
    - a. Some things are in motion. Whatever is put in motion, is put in motion by another;
    - b. There cannot be an infinite number of preceding movers, because then there would be no first mover (infinite regress), and, consequently, no other mover;
    - c. Therefore, it is necessary to arrive at a first mover, put in motion by no other; and this everyone understands to be God.
  2. Argument of Causality (Efficient Causality)
    - a. We find that there is an order of efficient causes
    - b. In the order of efficient causes, we cannot go back to infinity (infinite regress);
    - c. Therefore, it is necessary to admit a first efficient cause, to which everyone gives the name of God.
  3. Contingency vs. Necessity (Contingent Being vs. Necessary Being)
    - a. We find in nature things that are possible to be and not to be (contingent beings). It is impossible for these always to exist as they rely on others for their existence;
    - b. There cannot be an infinite number of contingent beings in an infinite regress;
    - c. Therefore, there must be one cause from which all contingent beings come. This is a necessary being. This necessary being we call God.
  4. Argument of Gradations/Perfections
    - a. There is a gradation to be found in things: some are better (hotter, colder, etc.) than others.
    - b. Things are X in proportion to how closely they resemble that which is most X.
    - c. It follows that if anything is good, there must be something that is most good.
    - d. "Therefore there must also be something which is to all beings the cause of their being, goodness, and every other perfection; and this we call God" (420).
  5. Argument of Design/Order
    - a. We observe that natural bodies act toward ends.
    - b. Anything that acts toward an end either acts out of knowledge, or under the direction of something with knowledge, "as the arrow is directed by the archer."

- c. But many natural beings lack knowledge.
- d. "Therefore some intelligent being exists by whom all natural things are directed to their end; and this being we call God" (420).

The Divine Perfections:

1. **Simple:** God has no parts. He is not composed of body and soul or of essence (what/how a thing is) and existence (that a thing is).
2. **Spiritual/Immaterial**
  - a. Since God has no body, He is strictly spiritual. Being a strictly spiritual being, this also means that He never changes, or moves from one thing to another (e.g. sickness to health)
3. **Infinite:** refers to the fact that God is in no way limited. He is being itself.
  - a. "I am the beginning and the end, the Alpha and the Omega"
4. **One/Unity:** there is no disharmony in God. But this also means that there is no potency in God. He is perfectly in act/has existence.
5. **Omnipotence:** meaning that He can do all things.
  - a. **Omni = all    potens = power**
6. **Omnipresent:** God is everywhere. He is not restrained by a body and He exists outside of time, so He is present to all times and places all at once.
7. **All-Good:** Goodness and Being are convertible terms. This means that if something exists, it is good. If it is good, it also exists.
  - a. Goodness is an analogical term. We use it in different ways for different terms that are analogous to each other.
  - b. The dog is good, the cat is good, Ohio State is good, God is good.
8. **Perfect in All Things**
  - a. God lacks nothing. If He were to lack in any thing, He would not be God as some other being would have a perfection that He does not.
9. **Eternal:** Has no beginning or end.
  - a. The human person, as well as angels, is everlasting. We have a beginning, but no end.