

Aquinas' and st. anselm's proofs of the existence of god

[Profession](#), [Philosophers](#)



It is generally understood that people that are nonbelievers in God would never believe in the philosophies of the believers with regard to His existence. Nevertheless, there have been a number of important philosophers who have sought to prove the existence of the Almighty by thought alone. According to these philosophers, the presence of God may be understood by reason. Throughout the ages of humanity, believers have claimed to have felt the presence of God. All the same, there is no room for personal proofs in the philosophy of religion. St. Thomas Aquinas was a believer in God, who proposed five ways to know God.

The first way of proving God's existence, according to the philosopher, is by means of observing motion; that is, everything in movement throughout the universe should prove to us that there is a Prime Mover of all things. This way of proving God's existence is similar to the argument of the creationists who assert that everything that we observe must have a Creator, just as all things that are man-made have originators. On a similar note, the second way of knowing God according to St. Thomas Aquinas is by understanding that all effects have causes; and so, there must be a First Cause of everything.

The third way of proving the existence of God is by observing that everything in the universe is "possible to be and not to be;" so therefore, there must be an Essential Existence without which the existence and nonexistence of other things are meaningless (The Summa Theologica of St. Thomas Aquinas, 1920). This proof is intricately tied to the earlier proofs, including the current argument of the creationists. St. Thomas Aquinas describes it

thus: The third way is taken from possibility and necessity, and runs thus.

We find in nature things that are possible to be and not to be, since they are found to be generated, and to corrupt, and consequently, they are possible to be and not to be. But it is impossible for these always to exist, for that which is possible not to be at some time is not.

Therefore, if everything is possible not to be, then at one time there could have been nothing in existence. Now if this were true, even now there would be nothing in existence, because that which does not exist only begins to exist by something already existing. Therefore, if at one time nothing was in existence, it would have been impossible for anything to have begun to exist; and thus even now nothing would be in existence — which is absurd. Therefore, not all beings are merely possible, but there must exist something the existence of which is necessary... This all men speak of as God (The Summa Theologica of St. Thomas Aquinas). St. Thomas Aquinas also writes that everything that is necessary must have been made necessary by something else.

However, there must be something that is necessary in and of itself.

Furthermore, this entity of necessity must cause other entities to believe in its necessity. This is the meaning of God, according to the philosopher (The Summa Theologica of St. Thomas Aquinas). The fourth proof proffered by St. Thomas Aquinas is similar to Plato's concept of Forms. The philosopher believes that there is a ranking in place throughout the universe ("Thomas Aquinas and the Five Ways," 2000). One person may be better than the others. Given that we compare attributes of people and things to rank them

reveals that there must be “ something which is truest, something best, something noblest and, consequently, something which is uttermost being;” in short, something that is Supreme in comparison with the rest (The Summa Theologica of St. Thomas Aquinas).

The fifth way of proving the existence of God is exactly the same as the argument of creationists in our times. St. Thomas Aquinas discussed intelligent design with the philosophy that everything in the universe serves a special, intelligent purpose that has been designed by the Creator. This proof is based on the assumption that everything around us is essentially unintelligent – except God, of course (The Summa Theologica of St. Thomas Aquinas). In fact, all five proofs of God's existence proffered by St. Thomas Aquinas may be said to revolve around the intelligent design argument.

St. Anselm was another believer like St. Thomas Aquinas who proved the existence of God by reason alone. Yet, the ontological argument proffered by St. Anselm is the simplest. Instead of five proofs of God's existence, St. Anselm offered only one, that is, God is that beyond which there is no greatness that we can conceive of (“ St. Anselm's Ontological Argument,” 2008). But, St. Anselm's argument also rests on five logical points. The following is the argument with its corollaries: (1) God is that than which no greater can be conceived; 2) If God is that than which no greater can be conceived then there is nothing greater than God that can be imagined; Therefore: (3) There is nothing greater than God that can be imagined; (4)

If God does not exist then there is something greater than God that can be imagined. ; Therefore: (5) God exists (“ St. Anselm’s Ontological Argument”). The gist of the above argument is the very definition of God’s existence, according to St. Anselm. This definition – “ God is that than which no greater can be conceived” – is different from all proofs of St. Thomas Aquinas (“ St. Anselm’s Ontological Argument”). Moreover, it is a reasonable proof, similar to St. Thomas Aquinas’ statements about God’s existence. After all, it is easy to suppose that God must be that beyond which we can conceive of no greatness. Besides, nobody in the history of humanity has ever claimed to be greater than God. Even if someone were to claim that he or she is greater than God, it would be impossible for the majority of humans to believe in the claim, seeing that God would not compete with the claimer as in a debate.

With our limited perceptions, we are unable to see God, and neither could we imagine something or somebody that must be greater than God. If we cannot find anything that is greater than God, the Almighty must be Real, according to St. Anselm. Even so, the essential argument of the philosopher does not answer the beliefs of the atheists that perhaps there is no greatness in the universe, as everything is equal. Similarly, St. Thomas Aquinas’ arguments are refuted by the atheists who proffer proofs of the evolution theory of Charles Darwin to contradict the existence of God. According to the atheists, the proofs of St.

Thomas Aquinas and the ontological argument of St. Anselm could be refuted because they are based on basic beliefs of the people rather than universal facts. The truth that St. Thomas Aquinas believes in the First Cause

of everything means nothing for the disbelievers in God, who might claim that there is nothing to precede anything except in the evolutionary cycle that everything must go through, that is, things evolve one from another without a Prime Mover or First Cause. As a matter of fact, there is no argument to bridge the gap between the claims of believers and disbelievers in God.

For as long as we know the difference between truth and falsehood, there would be arguments. The claims of each group are refuted by those of the other. It may very well be that these arguments and refutations would continue for as long as there is humanity on our planet. Seeing that God cannot be seen, and neither does He support the believing philosophers by speaking out aloud to all the rest that these philosophers are correct in their belief systems – it is possible to refute the godly thoughts of St. Thomas Aquinas and St. Anselm until the end of time.

Conversely, those who believe in their philosophies and do not doubt could be ones that have felt the presence of God beyond reason. In fact, believers in God may suppose that it is impossible to know God by reason alone. Given that truth cannot be turned into falsehood by argument alone, there must be a singular truth about the existence of God nevertheless. What is the truth? – In the discipline of philosophy, it is the fact that everything in the universe is not known to be confined to the realm of reason. For the believing philosophers, therefore, God is a Reason beyond reason.