

CHAPTER THREE THE EXISTENCE OF GOD

With this chapter we come to the first pillar in our positive case for the truth of the Christian faith. It is so important that you may want to invest more time in the study of the next two chapters than others.

I. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

1. Describe the revolution which has been going on in Anglo-American philosophy since the late 1960s. (77-78)
2. What are some of the basic types of arguments in favor of God's existence? (78-90) Be able to identify each one with a sentence or two.
3. Did you notice that the roll of defenders of these arguments sounds like a Who's Who of the great minds of Western intellectual history? What does that tell you about your heritage?

II. ASSESSMENT

1. Give from memory the five steps of the Leibnizian cosmological argument.
2. Why is the first premiss not susceptible to the objection that some truths may have no explanation for their truth?
3. What defense might you give on behalf of the first premiss of the argument?
4. Explain why the typical atheist is himself committed to the truth of the second premiss.
5. Why is the second premiss quite plausible in its own right?
6. What response can be made to someone who claims that perhaps the universe exists by a necessity of its own nature?
7. How does the kalam cosmological argument reinforce the Leibnizian cosmological argument?
8. Give from memory the three steps of the kalam cosmological argument. (92)
9. What three reasons can be given in defense of the first premiss of the argument? (92-93)
10. What should you say to someone who, like Mackie, says that it makes more sense that the universe came into being uncaused than that God caused the universe to come into being? (94)

11. How might you respond to critics who claim that premiss (1) is true only for things in the universe, but it is not true of the universe itself?
12. What can you say in response to persons who claim that quantum physics furnishes an exception to the causal principle?
13. State in a sentence the four lines of evidence marshaled in support of the second premiss of the kalam cosmological argument.
14. Give from memory the three steps of both of the philosophical arguments for the beginning of the universe. (94, 98)
15. Explain the difference between an actual and a potential infinite. (95)
16. Why is it a mistake to claim that the use of the actual infinite in mathematics proves that an actually infinite number of things can exist?
17. Illustrate the absurdity of an actually infinite number of things. (96) Invent your own illustration.
18. How should you respond to someone who says, “These absurdities result because our finite minds cannot comprehend the infinite”? (96-97)
19. How should you respond to someone who says, “If an actually infinite number of things could exist, then these allegedly absurd situations are exactly what we should expect”?
20. What should you say to someone who says, “If an actual infinite cannot exist, then God must not be infinite”? (328 note 24)
21. Explain the difference between the so-called A-Theory of time and the B-Theory of time. How does the A-Theory underlie the second philosophical argument for the beginning of the universe?
22. Illustrate the impossibility of forming an actually infinite collection by adding one member at a time. (98-99)
23. How should you respond to someone who says, “But from every point in the infinite past, there is only a finite distance until today. Therefore, there is no problem in traversing an infinite past”? (100)
24. Explain how the standard Big Bang model implies an absolute beginning of the universe. (100-102)

25. What should you say to someone who says, “Maybe there was some physical reality prior to the Big Bang which caused it”? (101-102)
26. What are the weaknesses of the Steady State model? (102-103)
27. What problems does the oscillating model face? (103-106)
28. What is the fatal flaw of vacuum fluctuation models? (106-7)
29. What does the Borde-Guth-Vilenkin theorem imply for inflationary models of the universe?
30. Explain how quantum gravity models support the beginning of the universe. (108-13)
31. What fatal flaw afflicts pre-Big Bang scenarios featuring an infinite past?
32. Why does the Cyclic Ekpyrotic Model fail to avert the absolute beginning of the universe?
33. How does thermodynamics imply a beginning of the universe? (113-5)
34. Explain Boltzmann’s Many Worlds Hypothesis and why it was deficient..
35. What implications does thermodynamics have for the oscillating model? (115-6)
36. Why is the conjecture that our universe was birthed by a mother universe via black hole tunneling untenable?
37. What problems face the inflationary multiverse as a means of avoiding the beginning of the universe?
38. What attributes of the First Cause may be deduced from the kalam cosmological argument? (119)
39. Why must the cause of the universe be personal? (117-8)
40. What should you say to someone who asks, “If everything has a cause, what is God’s cause?” (121)
41. What should you say to someone who says, “The beginning of the universe cannot have a cause because causes must exist before their effects, but there was no time before the Big Bang”? (121)