

SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY



LAST TIME

➤ Attributes- Love

NATURAL THEOLOGY

- We have been looking at “revealed theology.”
- Nature and attributes of God as revealed through Scripture.
- We now are going to turn to “natural theology.”
- Evidence of God through data of human experience.

GOOD ARGUMENTS

- Arguments does not mean quarrel or fight.
- A series of statements, or premises, which logically lead to a conclusion.
 1. Must obey the rules of logic.
 2. Premises need to be true.
 3. The premises must be more plausibly true than false

COSMOLOGICAL ARGUMENT

- Sometimes called the Argument From Contingency.
- Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz- 17th century.
 - “Why is there something rather than nothing?”

LEIBNIZ' CONTINGENCY ARGUMENT

- Every existing thing has an explanation of its existence.
- If the universe has an explanation of its existence, that explanation is God.
- The universe is an existing thing.
- Therefore, the explanation of the existence of the universe is God.

REMEMBER...

- If the premises are true, then the conclusion has to be true.
- Whether or not you like the conclusion is irrelevant.

NECESSITY AND CONTINGENCY

- If everything has to have an explanation of its existence, then what about God?
- God, as the greatest being, exists necessarily and therefore has, nor needs, an explanation.

WHAT IS AN "EXPLANATION?"

- 2 kinds of things:
 - Things that exist necessarily.
 - Things that are produced by external cause.

THINGS THAT EXIST NECESSARILY

- Exist by a necessity of their own nature.
- It is impossible for them not to exist.
- Numbers and mathematical objects.

THINGS THAT ARE CAUSED TO EXIST

- They do not have to exist.
- They could not exist just as easily as they exist.
- Chairs, people, plants, and galaxies...

WITH THAT IN MIND...

- Let us reword the first premise more precisely...
- Every existing thing has an explanation of its existence, either in the necessity of its own nature or in an external cause.

This argument is essentially an argument for the existence of God as a necessary, uncaused being.

DEFENSE OF PREMISE (1)

- If you found a ball in the woods, you would question where it came from.
- The size of the ball would not have any bearing on the question of its explanation of existence.

OBJECTION: UNIVERSE HAS NO EXPLANATION

- The premise is true of everything inside the universe, but not the universe itself.
- Taxi Cab Fallacy
 - You cannot simply dismiss a principle once you arrive where you want it to be.
 - It is arbitrary to stop with the universe.

OBJECTION: UNIVERSE HAS NO EXPLANATION

- Modern cosmology is devoted to finding the explanation for the existence of the universe.
- Denying Premise (1) actually cripples modern science.
- Premise (1) is not a physical principle but rather metaphysical. Applies to its being, not its attributes.

NEXT TIME

➤ Read:

➤ Excursus- Natural Theology- Contingency pp. 17-41

QUESTIONS?

