Thomas Aquinas' Five Ways And Richard Dawkins' Refutation Of Aquinas' Arguments

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Whether God exists or not has been argued for many hundreds of years. Believers diligently argue their views, while sceptics just as diligently refute them. In this article, we touch on five pieces of evidence of the existence of God Thomas Aquinas. We will also be acquainted with examples of Richard Dawkins' refutation in order to clearly understand the strengths and weaknesses of this system (Dawkins, 2006).

On The Evidence Of St. Thomas

St. Thomas Aquinas is a famous Catholic theologian whose works acquired the status of the official doctrine of the Western church, led by the papal throne in Rome. He expounded the above-mentioned five proofs of the existence of the God of Thomas Aquinas in a fundamental work called the "Sum of Theology". In it, the author, among other things, argued that it is possible to prove the existence of the Creator in two ways, namely, with the help of the cause and with the help of the investigation. In other words, we are talking about the arguments from cause to effect and from effect to cause. Five proofs of the existence of God Thomas Aquinas are based on the second approach. The general logic of them is this: since there are obvious consequences of the cause, the reason itself also has a place to be. Thomas says that the existence of God is not obvious to people. Therefore, it is possible to prove its existence if we consider the Creator as the primary cause of the obvious consequences. This statement is based on the holy Thomas Aquinas. Five pieces of evidence of the existence of God, briefly described, of course, will not allow us to fully appreciate the depth of thought of this outstanding theologian but will help to make a general impression of the problem (Aquinas, 1265–1274/2017).

The Proof Is First. From Traffic

Nowadays, Thomas's argument is usually called kinetic. It is based on the assertion that all things are in motion. However, in itself, nothing can move. Therefore, for example, the cart is moved by a horse, the car causes the motor to move, and the sailboat activates the airflow. Molecules, atoms and everything that is in the world move, and all of it gets a boost to action from outside, from something else. Then, in turn, from the third and so on. The result is an endless chain of causes and effects. However, the infinite chain, as Thomas claims, cannot exist; otherwise, there would be no first engine.

In addition, if there is no first, then there is no second, and then the movement would not exist at all. Accordingly, there must be a primary source, which is the cause of the movement of everything else but which itself cannot be influenced by third forces. This prime mover is God.

The Proof Is Second. From The Producing Cause

This argument is based on the assertion that everything and every phenomenon is a consequence of some producing cause. The tree, according to him, grows out of the seed, the living being is born from the mother, and the glass is made from sand and so on. In this case, nothing in the world can be the cause of itself since, in that case, it would be necessary to recognize that it existed before its appearance. In other words, an egg cannot demolish itself, and a house can build itself. In addition, in the end, again, there is a chain of infinite causes and effects which must rest on the source. His existence is not a consequence of the anticipatory cause, but he himself is the cause of everything else. In addition, if not for him at all, there would be no process of producing causes and effects. This source is God.

Proof Of The Third. From Necessity And Accident

Like all five proofs of the existence of God, Thomas Aquinas, this argument is based on the law of cause and effect. However, it is very peculiar. Foma states that in the world, there are random things that can exist or may not exist. Once, they really were, but before that, they were not. In addition, it is impossible to imagine, in Thomas's opinion, that they arose by themselves. Accordingly, there must be a reason for their appearance. Ultimately, this leads us to postulate that the existence of such an entity would be necessary for it and would not have external reasons for being a necessity for all others. This essence of Thomas defines the concept of "God".

Proof Of The Fourth. From The Degree Of Perfection

Thomas Aquinas's five proofs of the existence of God are based on Aristotle's formal logic. One of them says that in all things that are in the world, different degrees of perfection are manifested. This refers to the concepts of goodness, beauty, nobility and form of existence. However, the degree of perfection is known to us only in comparison with anything else. In other words, they are relative. Further, Aquinas concludes that against a background of all relative things, there must be a certain phenomenon endowed with perfection to an absolute degree. For example, you can compare things by beauty, either with respect to the worst or relatively better things. However, there must be an absolute criterion beyond which nothing can be. This is the perfect phenomenon in all respects and is what is called God.

Proof Of The Fifth. From The Leadership Of The World

Like all five proofs of the existence of God, Thomas Aquinas is based on the idea of the root cause. In this case, it is considered in terms of the meaningfulness and expediency that the world and its living creatures possess. The latter tends to something better, that is, consciously or unconsciously pursuing a goal. For example, a continuation of the family, a comfortable existence and so on. Therefore, Thomas concludes that there must be a supreme being that intelligently manages the world and creates its goals for everything. Of course, this creature can only be God.

Five Evidence Of The Existence Of God Thomas Aquinas And Their Criticism

Theoretically, it may turn out that our world is a creation of some kind of super civilization, or a consequence of the action of the undiscovered laws of the universe, or some kind of emanation and so on. In other words, any fantastic conception and theory that does not have anything in common with God, as we imagine it, can be proposed as the root cause. Thus, God as the Creator of the world and the root cause of everything is just one of the likely answers to the questions that Thomas formulated. Accordingly, these arguments cannot serve as evidence in the literal sense of the word. Another counter-trial concerns the fourth proof, in which a certain gradation of the perfection of phenomena in the world is postulated.

References

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