

## Bertrand Russel, Why I Am Not a Theist

86-89

Reid Blackman

### The first cause argument

1. If there are things that exist then there must be a first cause.
2. The first cause caused itself to exist.
3. God is the first cause.

**Objection to inferring (3) from (2):** Why not say instead that the universe caused itself to exist? Why not think it has self-causation powers?

**Objection to (1):** Why not suppose there's no first cause? Perhaps it has always existed (87).

### The natural law argument:

1. The universe obeys laws.
2. If there are laws there must be a lawgiver.
3. Therefore, there is a lawgiver.

#### **Objection #1:**

1. The laws humans create are about what someone *should* do, not about what they in fact do.
2. The laws of nature are not recommendations or commands, but rather descriptions of the way the world works.
3. If a law is about something someone should do, there must be a lawgiver.
4. If a law is just a description of the way the world works, it does not need a lawgiver.
5. The natural law argument is talking about how the world works.
6. Thus, there is no need to infer a lawgiver.

**Objection #2:** Let us ask, why God created the laws he did and not some others?

**Possible response #1:** God “had a reason for giving those laws rather than others – the reason, of course, being to create the best universe.”

**Reply:** If there was a reason he created these rather than those laws, then God himself was following laws in creating the universe. But then, there are laws that are independent of God, and hence laws without a lawgiver.

**Possible response #2:** “[H]e did it simply from his own good pleasure, and without any reason” (87).

**Reply:** “If you say that he did it simply from his own good pleasure, and without any reason, you then find that there is something which is not subject to law, and so your train of natural law is interrupted” (87).

### The Argument from Design

1. The world must be in very particular ways to support our existence.
2. If there were no intelligence creating the world for us, it wouldn't have formed to support us.
3. We exist.
4. Thus, there must have been an intelligence behind it.

**Objection #1:** we have a better explanation for the compatibility of the world and our particular needs: “It is not that their [creatures on earth] environment was made to be suitable to them but that they grew to be suitable to it, and that is the basis of adaptation.

**Objection #2:**

1. If a supreme being made the world, he would have made it perfectly.
2. The world is imperfect.
  - The earth is slowly deteriorating; everything will eventually die.
  - The presence of the KKK and Fascism.
3. Thus, a supreme being didn't make the world.

**Moral Argument For God**

1. If right and wrong exists there must be a god.
2. Right and wrong exist.
3. Thus, there is a God.

**Objection:**

1. Suppose there is right and wrong.
2. Right and wrong is either founded on God's fiat (arbitrarily) or it is not.
3. If it is not, then "you must then say that right and wrong have some meaning which is independent of God's fiat, because God's fiats are good and not bad independently of the mere fact that he made them."
4. If it is, "then for God himself there is no difference between right and wrong, and it is no longer a significant statement to say that God is good."

**Argument for the Remedying of Injustice**

1. There is much injustice in the world.
2. God is needed to restore the balance.
3. Thus, there's a God.

**Objection:** There is no reason to think that the world must be "balanced"; it just might be that injustice outweighs justice.

**Concluding skepticism:** Most people believe in god because they want to believe he exists, not because there is any evidence (89).