

## The Moral Argument

By Dan Jensen (2023)

(In order to fully benefit from this essay, I recommend reading through my “works for beginners” first. They can be found on my website.)

### Introduction

In this essay, I wish to discuss and defend the moral argument. It should be noted from the outset, that I do not call this argument *the moral argument for God*. I, as much as possible, try to only use the term *God* to describe the one and only true and living God of the Scriptures. The moral argument alone cannot prove His specific existence. Our opponents rightfully point this out. However, the moral argument does prove the existence of a perfect being. And, as I will demonstrate, we can build on that argument to show that God Himself is that perfect being.

With that made clear, let us look at the moral argument for the existence of the perfect being. The basic argument is extremely simple. It is based on basic common sense. It is necessarily inferred from first principles of knowledge. It cannot be either demonstrated or refuted based upon any empirical data alone. The argument is that objective morality exists, we all know that it exists, and the only way to account for this objective morality is to say that a perfect being exists that is the grounds for that objective morality. The reason we must posit this about the perfect being is because there is no other answer to this basic common sense question: How can any being, entity, or reality, other than that which is intrinsically and absolutely perfect, have any right to tell us what is right and/or wrong? The obvious answer is that none can. Therefore, the perfect being exists. The moral argument for the existence of the perfect being is unassailable. It is not even merely highly, highly probable; it is a full truth of reason.

And what is truly remarkable, is that most Atheist philosophers agree with the basics of the argument. The only point they call into question is the notion of objective morality in the first place. They admit that in order to be consistent, they have to say that morality is subjective. But, this is an abhorrent position to take, and I could not be putting that more mildly. To say that morality is either subjective or relative is to say that murder, rape, child molestation, the Holocaust, etc., were all actions or events that most humans would find repugnant, but we would be forced to say that all of those “evil” actions were not actually and truly inherently evil. They would all go against our own personal moral codes, and they probably even went against the personal moral codes of many of the perpetrators themselves, but we would have to admit that many of those actions were committed by those who truly did not believe them to be wrong and so for that person, these actions were not in fact genuinely evil. This is a sick position to take and no rational person actually believes this. Hence, objective morality does in fact exist, and thus the moral argument is left entirely intact.

At this point, we must now address the many objections that are leveled against this argument. We will look at each of the major ones in turn. I cannot in this essay cover every single objection that has ever been launched against the moral argument. With that said, if there is a lesser known or lesser argument (in the sense of being much weaker than the ones I will be unpacking) that you would still like to know my thoughts on, please email me and I will happily provide those for you.

### Answering Objections

Objection #1: It is wrong for you to bring up the fact that most Atheist philosophers agree with most of the basic points for the moral argument. That constitutes both the appeal to authority logical fallacy and the appeal to the majority fallacy.

Answer: No, it does not. Please see pages 10-11 of my essay on the basics of apologetics. It can be found on my website within the “works for beginners” section.

Objection #2: We don't need to posit a perfect being to account for objective morality. Objective morality is clearly doing whatever is best for all of humanity. As many have said, "The greatest good for the greatest number of people." That should be our goal. That goal is objective and we can account for having this goal within us through the process of evolution. Thus, a perfect being is not actually necessary to account for objective morality.

Answer: This is the primary argument that is used by the few Atheist philosophers who do believe in objective morality. As said earlier, it is highly telling that they are the minority among Atheist philosophers themselves. Most Atheist philosophers fully understand that without an objective standard for morality, there can be no objective morality itself. I will not even be addressing in this essay the vast majority of the plethora of inane explanations out there regarding how to account for objective morality without a perfect being. I was informally debating with one Atheist on my old blog a few years back and he said that the collective consciousness of the universe accounts for objective morality. I have no idea what that means. I did not then either and I made that clear to him and asked him to explain what this means. He could not do so and pretty much admitted that he could not do so. This is why most Atheist philosophers, whether they believe in objective morality or not, mostly only try to defeat the moral argument by appealing to mystery or mounting objections. Most do not even try to offer an alternative explanation for objective morality.

As far as one of the only even mildly reasonable attempts to explain objective morality apart from the perfect being (the objection under review here), it does not wash. Who says that we should all strive for this goal? I agree that most people agree with this, but that proves nothing. That only proves that we evolved this instinct for whatever reason. But, perhaps it was an instinct that served our species well for millennia, and now we need to discard it as the population booms. If it is argued that evolution is always on an upward trajectory and so we evolved this instinct for a reason, hence we cannot discard it, I could say the same thing about religion then. Most of humanity throughout its long history has been insatiably religious. But, I am repeatedly told that humanity is

outgrowing this. So, why is it impossible to suggest that we should maybe outgrow the goal spoken of earlier? Maybe it is time, for the sake of our species, to start getting rid of all of those that are a financial burden on our society. We could even start from infancy. Those that are clearly not going to contribute to society financially in the future should be discarded. Our instincts to protect our young should be put aside for the sake of the evolutionary development of our society.

And what of those that don't show signs of having this instinctual goal? Who is to say they are wrong? Again, maybe they are further evolved than the rest of us. And leaving the question of intellectual wrongness aside, who is to say that their actions are intrinsically evil when they don't have this goal? If, for whatever reason, they did not evolve this goal, then why is it wrong for them to commit actions that are in keeping with their subjective desires and instincts? If they have an overpowering sexual desire to harm little children, why is it morally wrong for them to act upon that desire? If we are nothing more than glorified meat puppet animals, how is it wrong for them to harm these children? No one is saying that this would not matter to the child. Obviously it does. No one is saying that most people would not still be horrified by these actions. That is not the issue or question at hand. The question is why would this action be evil for the perpetrator himself? There can be no answer to this from a purely evolutionary perspective.

Even further, many animals are extremely tribal. Why then is it wrong for a certain human to decide to lie, cheat, and steal in order to better advance his own children? Why is he obligated to do what is better for the bulk of humanity, instead of taking this course of action, if his desire to take this course of action greatly exceeds his desire to help humanity broadly speaking? And this phenomenon is far, far more common than the extreme cases spoken of above. Countless humans feel a far greater loyalty, even to the point of committing acts that most of us would deem immoral, to their own children than they do for the human race as a whole. Why are these people wrong for taking this course when it plainly seems they are only acting upon evolutionary impulses

that are so commonly found in the wild, especially among species that are so often said to be so close to us by evolutionists?

Animals in the wild often do horrible things, both to their own species and to others. Many bugs eat their mates. Many mammals attack their own young or the young of others. Macaques are brutal to orphans within their societies. Many animals are also extremely tribal, as we have discussed. Are these immoral acts? Most would say no precisely because these are animals. And if they are immoral acts, how so? Are not these animals simply operating according to the desires and instincts that they have evolved? Do animals now have the free will to decide between harmful acts and altruistic ones? Of course they do not. We all know they do not. Thus, there can be no rational basis for saying that humans are acting in a truly immoral fashion when they act upon the very desires and instincts that have evolved within them as well.

Objection #3: The above answer is horrible. It is basically saying that people should only do things because of some higher perfect being rather than because it is the right thing to do. You are basically admitting that you are a gross human being that only does what is right to get a reward from your "God."

Answer: None of this follows at all. I am admitting no such thing. If I were not an orthodox Christian, I fully admit that I would do many of the same things. I would also avoid many of the same things. I would still love my children to death. I would still do all I could to help them and protect them, even as adults. I would still love my parents in the same manner. I would still love to watch basketball and would continue to do so. I would still be a friendly and polite person because that is how I was raised and I know no other way. I would still have no desire to murder anyone, or hurt anyone for that matter other than self-defense or the defense of others. Many other examples could be given.<sup>1</sup> I am not saying that most people are bad people from an earthly perspective and

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<sup>1</sup> None of what I say here should be misinterpreted as me in any way discounting the power of the Holy Spirit. There are countless things I would no longer do if I were to cease to be a Christian (which will never happen, I am simply saying this for the sake of argument). I would not pray, study the Bible, go to church, preach the gospel, etc. I would also not give such a strong effort in many places in my life. The Holy Spirit radically changed me so that I now have an intense desire for these things and to be pleasing

only do good actions for religious reasons. I understand that most people are altruistic at heart.

Again, none of this is the issue. I admitted that most of humanity has the basic goal discussed under the previous answer. The question is why we should see this goal as infallible and immutable from an evolutionary perspective, and why we should see the evil acts of the minority of the population that is not altruistic as being objectively evil? There can be no answer to this from within a purely Naturalistic and evolutionary paradigm.

Objection #4: We don't need to posit a perfect being to account for objective morality. It is enough to merely say that objective morality exists and that the grounds for it is a mystery to us.

Answer: This objection is nothing more than a dogmatic statement that we must all be Naturalists. No other explanations can even be considered. Sorry, not going to play that game. You would not sever any attempts at answering such a crucial question in any other area of life. If objective morality exists, we have to ask what the grounds for it are. If we have no common sense and/or empirical evidence that leads us to an answer, fine. But, to say that we cannot even ask the question or seek to understand things further is special pleading at its worst. And it is not a mystery. We do have a common sense answer to the question. The only way to account for objective morality is to posit the perfect being. As we have seen, this is because it is as clear as the noonday sun that any other being, entity, or reality cannot have the authority to tell us what is right and wrong. Therefore, this perfect being must exist.

Objection #5: We do not need to posit a perfect being in order to believe in objective morality. This is because we often instinctively obey the authority of those that are

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to my Father. I am merely saying that even before I was a Christian, as bad as I was, there were still certain things I would and would not do because of God's common grace in my life and the life of my family.

themselves deeply imperfect beings, imperfect both morally and more broadly from an ontological perspective. We don't seek to account for the grounds by which they have such authority over us.

Answer: Part of our basic moral code is the fact that we understand that authority is often delegated. We all understand that we are not obeying these superiors because they are absolutely perfect, but because they are supposed to be operating according to the basic moral code that we all instinctively have. When they fail to do so, we become very angry precisely because we understand that they are failing to live up to that moral code.

Objection #6: What is absolute perfection anyway? It is nothing more than a term you are using without any real content.

Answer: Nope. The basic definition of absolute perfection is in accord with common sense. Absolute perfection is that which has no flaws or limitations whatsoever. And for those that wish to say that this still does not tell us very much, see the answer to Objection #8 below.

Objection #7: Absolute perfection does not exist. We have countless examples of perfection that do have many limitations or flaws in other senses. For instance, a perfect spelling test is perfect. Yet, a spelling test cannot fly. That is plainly a limitation and could even be called a flaw in a manner of speaking.

Answer: This is to fail to understand the difference between relative perfection and absolute perfection. Relative perfection cannot account for objective morality. That is not the argument. The argument is that absolute perfection is required to account for objective morality. And since objective morality exists, absolute perfection must also exist. For a discussion on relative perfection in distinction from absolute perfection, see my *A False Kind of Christianity* (the section on *perfection* in chapter 5). That work can be found on my website.

Objection #8: Even if we grant the basic argument, it tells us almost nothing about this perfect being other than that it is indeed perfect.

Answer: That is true. But, like all other truths that we have, it is our duty to probe more deeply to see if we can understand more about this reality. Just because the argument itself tells us very little about this perfect being in no way somehow means that all further investigation must be cut off at that point. We don't do this with anything else in life. We are therefore duty bound to look at the evidence to see if this perfect being has revealed more about itself beyond the basics of its own existence.

Objection #9: Even if we grant the basic argument, it does not tell us which "god" is the real "god" or absolute perfection.

Answer: This is basically a rehash of the previous objection, but is often presented as if it is not. As said, we will get to how to prove the true God down the line. For now, it is still very important to prove the existence of the perfect being. Once this is done, it is incumbent upon us to seek out this perfect being. If no evidence exists that it has chosen to reveal itself to us beyond its basic existence, that would be that. But, this evidence does exist and it exists in abundance.

Objection #10: Even if we grant the basic argument, it does not tell us which moral system is the correct one. We could only know that the most heinous acts are evil. For everything else, we would have to go by our own opinions every bit as much as we do within an atheistic framework. Further, the fact that all cultures, now and throughout history, have such different moral codes proves that no one universal code exists.

Answer: Even if the above were fully true, it would still not shake the basic argument in any way. Perhaps the perfect being has only chosen to reveal certain things to us about morality. Perhaps for many things, we do have to decide for ourselves. The key point is that we have to seek out the evidence as to where we should land on that secondary



question. And the evidence decidedly points in the direction that this perfect being has revealed a great deal about itself, especially when it comes to morality. The fact that so many cultures have such different moral codes proves nothing. It only proves that most cultures are not seeking after this perfect being. I agree that we can only instinctively know the most basic of moral principles. However, I also assert that we also instinctively know that we need to seek out the perfect being to fill out our moral codes, and that it will provide this for us. But, I also understand that I cannot prove that philosophically. That does not change the fact that I can prove that if the perfect being exists, and we have seen that it does, then we should look at the evidence to see if it has revealed very much about itself to us.

Objection #11: Even if we grant the basic argument, the true moral code cannot be that of "Christianity," precisely because "Christianity" is so divided. Therefore, that religion does not help us ascertain the full moral code.

Answer: Most of what bills itself as this religion is not. True Christianity must be based on the primary source document for that religion. Everyone agrees that this document is the Bible. And yet most of the groups around the world that claim to be part of this religion blatantly contradict this document. Only orthodox Christianity has been basically in line with this document for 2K years. This is not to suggest that all orthodox Christians have been wholly agreed upon every moral question. That very document makes it clear that true Christians are still sinful and that this sin clouds their judgment. Hence, perfect agreement on any secondary point among all Christians would actually disprove the Bible. The fact that there is and has been such disagreements actually supports the biblical witness. With that made clear, orthodox Christians have been very, very united on all of the essential points of morality that are laid out in the Bible throughout the course of church history.

Objection #12: Even if we grant your previous answer, the full moral code cannot be that of orthodox Christianity because orthodox Christians have done so many bad things down through the centuries.

Answer: Again, the Bible is clear that true Christians are still horrible sinners that never fully live up to God's full moral code for us, either in belief or action. With that said, overall the true church has been an enormous force for good in the world (see pages 166-172 of my *A False Kind of Christianity*). Even further, one of the strongest pieces of evidence for the long term benefits of orthodox Christianity is the fact that the most advanced countries on earth today by far (other than the occasional exception like Japan) are those that were Protestant for centuries. People can argue that this was only because they oppressed others, but then I can make the same argument regarding any alleged benefits from secular states. Many can also argue that most of these countries have long since abandoned their Protestantism and so this argument is not all that weighty in the final analysis. But, most did not fully abandon this heritage until about 100 years ago. That is not that long ago in the larger scheme of history. Furthermore, the Bible is clear that God blesses the descendants of His servants for many generations. Thus, this reality supports the biblical witness.

Objection #13: Atheists are moral people, so why do we need Christianity for morality? Name one moral principle that an Atheist cannot perform?

Answer: This objection is thoroughly confused on a number of points. First of all, no one is saying that all Atheists are immoral people from a baseline earthly perspective. Again, the argument is not that we have to prove objective morality. We all know objective morality exists, we presuppose it as a first principle of knowledge. And countless Atheists operate accordingly. The argument is what accounts for this objective morality.

Further, even Atheists admit, as I said earlier, that our basic moral code can only explain so much. This is why there is so much disagreement on many moral questions among the various cultures of the world. This strongly implies that we need to seek out the perfect being to fill out our full moral code. And when we do this, Biblical Christianity emerges quite clearly as the one true worldview. That worldview makes it clear that we are to serve and worship the one true God far above all else. And Atheists cannot do

that in good conscience. Hence, there are actually a lot of moral principles, core ones, that cannot be performed by an Atheist.

Objection #14: Why are you so worried about subjective or relativistic societies when it comes to morality? There is no evidence that such societies will become chaotic morally.

Answer: Again, this misses the point. I've already said that most people are by nature altruistic. I agree that such a society, given the right circumstances, could be very moral from a baseline earthly perspective. Both of my brothers are Atheists and are wonderful people. One of them is a war hero. The question is are these altruistic desires and the actions that flow from them truly good? Perhaps they were at one time, but now they have become antiquated and need to be dispensed for the sake of the evolutionary movement of our species. And it is not like what I am arguing is some outlandish hypothetical. Many philosophers, most notably Nietzsche, have argued for something similar. Many have said that altruism is weak.

Further, what right does such a society have to punish those who commit heinous acts? Again, this is not some silly hypothetical question only meant to serve the purpose of making a point. Dawkins himself in many venues has said that we should not punish such people. He says that it is like punishing a faulty car. We don't punish faulty cars. That would be absurd. We try to fix them of course. Despite Dawkins being such an insufferable blowhard, who constantly gets things wrong and routinely contradicts himself, he could not be more right about this basic point. We can all appreciate his candor here, a candor that is lacking among the vast majority of Atheists. The problem for Dawkins is who is he to even say that the criminals are the faulty cars? Maybe he is the faulty car and they are living out their true selves. This is indeed the intellectual chaos that results from a purely subjective, Naturalistic, evolutionary account of morality.

Even further, the entire objection here presupposes an objective measure of what is moral and what is not. How can we measure whether or not such a society is in moral

chaos unless we have an objective standard that tells us what is morally good and what is morally evil and thus chaotic? I have repeatedly heard and been confronted with this objection by Atheists, and it never ceases to amaze me how otherwise such intelligent people cannot see the incoherence in it from the outset.

Objection #15: Atheistic or secular societies have proven to be more moral than religious ones. Therefore, there must be something wrong with the basic moral argument.

Answer: This is simply not so. The most Atheistic societies in all of history by far were the Communist nations of the 20th century. And they were bloodbaths. Atheists will often reply that this was only because of the Communism. Ok fine. But, then I can say that Christian societies that did not do as well as they should have were only that way because they were trying to force a theocracy that is not advocated by the Bible as a whole. Atheists will often point to nations such as the Scandinavian nations of today. They will talk about how peaceful and advanced such societies are, and that they have become thoroughly secular. But, as I pointed out, these societies are building off of centuries of Protestant blessings. Therefore, this argument is very misleading.

Many will also point to the United States and how it was established as a secular nation. This is also terribly misleading. Yes, the United States put in place a secular government in the sense that it thoroughly repudiated anything that even remotely smacked of theocracy. But, the United States has been the most thoroughgoing Protestant nation in history. Not surprisingly, it has been a beacon to the world. See my book on church history and my essay on the Christian founding of our nation. Both of these works can be found on my website. I would also recommend my essay on Evangelicals worldwide. That can also be found on my website.

Objection #16: Subjective morality is the reality whether we like it or not. And evolution accounts for it. That is that. No other explanations are necessary. This whole, "Without 'God' there would be no morality," is demonstrably false. People are moral creatures.

Saying that people have morals is like saying that people have brains. It is a part of who we are.

Answer: If you want to say that the rape of a child is not intrinsically evil, you can be my guest. As far as I'm concerned, you have refuted yourself with such a statement to the overwhelming vast majority of people the world over, both today and since the dawn of humanity. And I don't believe you actually believe that either.

As far as the mere fact that people have a moral code irrespective of belief in God, or a "god," or anything else for that matter, this again completely misses the point. That is not the argument and it is amazing to me how even some of the top pop-Atheist apologists, like Hitchens, have routinely failed or fail to understand this. We all agree that all people, even the most immoral, all have some very baseline moral code, whether they admit this or not. The issue is whether or not this code is objective or not. If you say that it is subjective as is being done in this objection, then no one is obligated to follow any moral code, including the one that is embedded within them. We could all come to the realization that all of our distinct moral codes are nothing more than a conglomeration of how we evolved and our life circumstances. We could say to ourselves that we no longer need to feel guilty about certain things because of this knowledge. Now, I understand that most people would still avoid most of the really heinous actions of life. But, that would not be true of all people and we would have zero grounds by which to judge their decision on that matter.

The reality of morality is not the issue. We all agree that it is the reality. And everyone should agree that it is objective. If it is objective (as it plainly is), then you have to give a philosophical account for it. There is no accounting for it other than the perfect entity being the perfect standard for our basic baseline objective moral code.

Objection #17: Science has disproved the moral argument. Neurologists have shown that we do not have souls. We are indeed nothing more than Materialistic animals. We may be highly advanced animals, but that is all that we are.

Answer: Science and history are based upon empirical data. Empirical data is ever changing as new data comes in and old data is discarded for either being fabricated or misleadingly presented. No one, especially not me, is advocating for not taking empirical data extremely seriously. I am a historian, and so I am all about data. With that made clear, the tentative conclusions that are reached from this data can never ever have any absolute bearing upon ultimate metaphysical questions. This is not to say that we can never say anything has been proven beyond all doubt empirically speaking. We absolutely can. However, such claims are very, very rare. For instance, we can say without doubt that the Roman Empire existed. We can, as part of that claim, say certain very concrete things about the nature of this Empire. However, beyond that, almost everything we say about it is open to later scrutiny down the line, even the vast majority of what we today think is “fact.” For a further discussion on this point, see my *The Idolatry of Progressive Christianity: A Response to Randal Rauser* (pages 50-52). It can be found on my website. And the current findings of many Naturalistic neurologists do not constitute such undoubted and unchallengeable facts.

When I was living in Hawaii, one of my friends was a brother in Christ, who was also a neurologist. At the time, football was a big point of controversy because of what neurologists were finding. I am a huge football fan, and so I naturally picked his brain about this. He himself was not a football fan at all and so he cannot be accused of bias. He told me that he did not necessarily disagree with many of the findings, but that he did not like how dogmatic many of the interpretations were. He made it clear that many football players, including ones that had very long NFL careers in some of the heaviest hit positions, never had the concerning issues. He also made it clear how complex and vast the intricacies of the human brain are. The idea that we have come even close to fully mapping it out is not true. Therefore, we should be more cautious about some of these same pronouncements of the current neurologists.

And even if you think my entire previous paragraph is irrelevant and that the science is the science, I again have to say that I don't think anyone would say that the evidence

rises to the level of absolute fact that can never be challenged down the line. Hence, we cannot use this science to obliterate basic philosophical principles. Science itself cannot function without a number of unproven (empirically speaking) first principles of knowledge. Science presupposes the basic accuracy of sense perception; the laws of logic; the basic uniformity of nature and scientific laws; and many others. You cannot disparage the common sense basics of philosophy without questioning the entire enterprise of philosophy itself. And as said, science is every bit as dependent on that enterprise as is any other academic field.

If we really are nothing more than the highly evolved meat puppets that these Atheists say we are based on this science, then morality is entirely subjective and is subject to all of the immense problems I have already detailed in this essay.

Objection #18: The Euthyphro dilemma has disproved the moral argument.

Answer: It has done no such thing and has been answered a bazillion times. Something is not good merely because the perfect being wills it or commands it. Might does not make right. The perfect being wills that which is good because its nature is intrinsically and immutably good. The perfect being is love. It cannot be anything else. Therefore, it only desires for us to be loving to each other, as one example. It is not that the perfect being is neutral when it comes to love, arbitrarily commands us to love each other, and then this command becomes good at that point. That is indeed absurd.

It is also not the case that the perfect being is neutral when it comes to love, and only chooses to agree that love is the highest goal because it taps into some glorious standard above itself that says that love is the highest good. Then the perfect being decides to love and to command us to love. In this conception love is inherently good, but it has also rendered the alleged absolutely perfect being not so perfect after all. This is also ridiculous. The perfect being does not need to tap into any higher standard as it is intrinsically and immutably loving and is the grounds and source for all other love. It therefore wills us to love and commands us to do so accordingly because of this fact. It

is because it is intrinsically and immutably loving that it is intrinsically and immutably good. And it is because it is intrinsically and immutably good that it is in itself the standard for our morality.

Objection #19: The problem with apologetics of any sort (whether done in the service of orthodox Christianity or any other religion) is that it starts out with all of the “answers,” and then from there seeks to find evidence in favor of those answers. That is all that is being done with the moral argument. True science suspends judgment and continues to investigate until we find actual empirically verifiable evidence for our conclusions. We may not know what the grounds are for objective morality today, but we will find them out down the line. We do not need to posit any “god” of the gaps in the meantime.

Answer: Defenders of Atheism are apologists every bit as much as anyone else who seeks to defend his or her position in a formal manner. It is nothing but self-congratulatory arrogance to say otherwise. The Outsider Test for Faith that is so wildly popular within Atheist circles applies every bit as much to Atheism as it does to any worldview. Please stop patting yourselves on the back and get about the business of making arguments and counterarguments. It gets so unbelievably old after a while.

Many Atheists will frantically shout back, “No! We don’t have faith! So the test doesn’t apply to us and we are not apologists because we have no agenda to defend. We merely go wherever the evidence leads and let the chips fall where they may.”

Hogwash. I have been debating with Atheists for over 2 decades now and I can say based on a whole lot of experience that this is anything but the case. As one piece of evidence of this, the legion of YT creators that are defending Atheism today routinely have on the most extreme and fringe scholars precisely because they tend to be the most passionate defenders of Atheism within the scholarly world. What does that tell you? These pop-Atheist YT apologists don’t actually need these scholars. They would be far better served by only platforming the mainstream scholars (including plenty of Atheist ones), and pushing back against the fringe characters. That would truly show an unbiased spirit. But, they cannot help themselves and show their true colors. And the



bulk of lay Atheists parrot the drivel that comes from these YT creators that get this drivel from the fringe scholars. So yeah, please spare me.

Even further, many Atheists admit that they are positive Atheists and thus are every bit as obligated to prove their contentions as anyone else. How are those Atheists not apologists for Atheism after making this admission? And even those who say that they are only Atheists for now until we prove the existence of the perfect being, still have to prove why they take that stance. I admit that the burden of proof is on us who are making the positive assertion that this perfect being exists. But, as soon as we make it, and then we very publicly and rigorously defend it, you are now obligated to answer as to why you remain unconvinced. And as soon as you present that answer, you are giving a defense for your position. That is apologetics, plain and simple.

Many Atheists will retort that this is not so. They will say that religious people start out with their religious beliefs and then try to defend them. That is allegedly not what Atheists do. They suspend judgment and then defend their position based on the evidence, all of the evidence. You have to prove that, you don't get to assert it as an unchallengeable fact. Many Atheists will fire back that they have proven this. They will say that most religious people admit that they already believed well before they had ever even heard of apologetics. That is irrelevant. First of all, that is true of many Atheists as well. Many Atheists were raised that way or are such due to cultural reasons.

Second, we often know something is true first, but then seek to prove it true to others who don't know that this something is in fact true. When an innocent person is charged with a crime, he knows that he is innocent before he has proven this in court. He does not have to prove his innocence to himself first. I fully understand the core ethical principle of innocence until proven guilty in a court of law. I entirely adhere to it. But, when the state formally charges someone with a crime, the person charged has to at least demonstrate that the state has not proven its charges. In that sense, he can be said to be proving his innocence to a degree or in a manner of speaking. That is all I

mean here. And when he does so, he is seeking to prove something that he already knows beyond doubt. There is nothing immoral or philosophically unsound about him doing this. If the perfect being wishes to reveal itself to certain people directly, it has every right to do so. Such a person is not obligated to suspend what he knows to be true until he proves that truth to those around him. That is not how many things in life work.

Third, many people have claimed that they first believed in a given religion intellectually based on their search for truth, and only then gave into those beliefs on a personal and emotional level. You can say all you please that such people are full of it (and I agree most are), but until you prove that such a person is known as a regular liar, you are duty bound to deal with his arguments. You don't get to dismiss his testimony merely because you don't like that testimony.

Finally, faith and knowledge are not the polar opposites that so many Atheists make them out to be. They often accuse us of believing in credulity (whether they use that explicit term or not). In fact, this accusation is so common within the world of Atheism, including among many otherwise knowledgeable Atheists, that it has basically become a tautology among them. But, historic Christianity has never defended credulity, and faith and knowledge often heavily overlap. I have much more to say about this point in my essay on faith and reason. It can be found on my website.

Objection #20: Objective morality is dependent upon the notion of free will. And the concept of free will is highly problematic philosophically. How can something make a completely arbitrary choice? Does that not violate the law of causality? Further, how can the perfect being know in advance what choice such a free being will make if that choice is genuinely arbitrary? And if the perfect being does not know this, then it would seem it is not actually absolutely perfect after all. This would be because it would not be omniscient, and would thus have that flaw and limitation.

Answer: This is indeed a very complex topic. I believe there are very good answers to these questions, but they are unfortunately well beyond the scope of this essay. I do plan to write about this topic in-depth down the line. I have also said some things on this in my book defending the doctrines of grace in the first chapter, for those interested. That work can be found on my website in the section on “Reformed theology.” I will also very briefly make some further comments on this issue later in this essay. Beyond all of this, for now, we can say a few things. Free will could never be considered a complete violation of the law of causality as the agent is making this choice. This choice does not entirely arise from nowhere. And the perfect being must have immense power, power beyond what we can fathom. So, if it somehow knows the free actions of humans beforehand, this is not such a stretch even without a more concrete explanation. The rest we will have to leave to mystery for now, even though, as stated above, I do believe a lot more could be said about this topic.

The Atheist will assuredly retort that it is not fair that I get to appeal to mystery, but I lambast them for doing so. I am doing no such thing. We all have to appeal to mystery. There is no worldview or paradigm that does not have to do so. That is not the issue. The issue is that there is no reason to appeal to mystery when the answer to a question is obvious. Mystery and even paradox (rightly defined; see the works of Sproul for this point) are entirely legitimate. Overt contradictions and absurdities are not. A less than perfect being can have no authority to tell us what is right and wrong. That is a common sense principle. Therefore, if objective morality exists, a perfect being exists. There is no mystery over this basic question and to assert mystery here can only be the result of blatant bias.

None of this is the “god” of the gaps either. That fallacy is committed when there is true mystery, but many possibilities are available other than only God or a “god,” and yet the person demands that some “god” must be the explanation anyway. That is not what is being done here. In this case, it is quite clear that there can be no other answer to where objective morality came from other than a perfect being.

Objection #21: Even if we grant you the previous answer, this does not help you as you are a Calvinist. Calvinists deny free will and so you are the one who is being contradictory.

Answer: Most Calvinists do not deny free will across the board. Those that do are being egregiously philosophically unsound in my estimation. I fully agree with you there. Even the Westminster Confession has a qualified doctrine of free will. And it is the most widely recognized authoritative document underneath the Bible across the Reformed or Calvinistic world. It is true that most Calvinists believe that we lost free will after the fall in the sense that we no longer have the ability to make an arbitrary choice. But, most would say that we did have this ability before the fall and this is precisely why we were/are responsible for that action.

Many Atheists argue that it is unethical to punish others for the sin of someone else. The Bible is clear that had we been in the garden, we would have done the same thing and thus are just as guilty. Atheists will argue that if the argument is that animals are not responsible for their actions because they don't have free will, then humans cannot be responsible for their actions after the fall either. This does not follow. When a person knowingly takes illicit drugs that are known for causing people to lose control of their faculties, he or she is still responsible for any and all heinous acts committed while in that state. This is different from a person that is truly mentally incapable of understanding right from wrong at the outset. The self-drugged person is responsible because he fully understood what he was doing when he took the drug. Most Calvinists say that something similar took place with the fall.

The Atheist can argue that this wouldn't make sense because in the very analogy, the self-drugged person did not actually have free will. It is only an analogy and analogies can never be exact. It is true that the self-drugged person does not have free will in the sense that he is acting according to his strongest desire at the moment. And this desire is present because of the fall. However, the analogy is merely pointing to the fact that he does cognitively understand what he is doing and that his action is wrong and could

potentially lead to deep harm to others. Thus, from an earthly civil law perspective, he is guilty in a way that a mentally deficient person is not. In that sense, this is very similar to what took place in the fall. We all know that animals are not moral beings in this sense; at no point do they understand morality.

Finally, a couple more important points should be said. First, myself and many other Calvinists do believe that God left us a qualified free will even after the fall. We may be the minority, but we do exist. Second, even those Calvinists who believe that free will was lost in the fall in the sense of not having the ability of arbitrary choice, still believe that humans know and understand that when they commit evil acts, these acts are in fact evil. That is a huge difference between humans and the animals even post-fall, as stated above.

Objection #22: An absolutely perfect being is not necessary to account for objective morality. We only need to posit a morally perfect entity. This entity could be relatively perfect (not in the sense of moral relativism, but in the sense of not being perfect in all ways) in that sense, and may not even be a conscious being, but could exist and be morally perfect in a manner that we have little understanding of at this time. Such an entity may not be a “god” in any sense, but could be an entity within the universe itself.

Answer: This objection is far, far more cogent than the rest. It is too bad it is not more common among Atheists and Agnostics as it makes far more sense than all that we have covered so far. I will demonstrate below why a being cannot be morally perfect without at the same time being absolutely perfect ontologically. That aside, it is still a huge acknowledgement that such an entity exists beyond the mere evolutionary explanation, which is why most Atheists and Agnostics do not like this solution.

Objection #23: Even if we grant everything you have said thus far, and say that a perfect being must exist, it does not matter that much because this being has clearly not chosen to reveal itself to us. Therefore, we could say that it exists, and then get about

our business of being functional Atheists because we can know so little about this being.

Answer: If the previous objection is the best that the Atheist can offer, despite it rarely being done within that community, this objection may in fact be the worst. It is perhaps the weakest and most lame that it offers, and yet I hear it all the time. I have heard all manner of nonsense in this regard. I have heard that if God exists, He should have His throne in the sky where we can all see Him and He should issue His decrees audibly from there. Or that if God exists, He would never have used such primitive technology to reveal Himself (such as parchment) when He would have known about the technology we have today and could have used mediums more along those lines. Or I will often hear Atheists say, "I personally have no knowledge of this God of yours. So, until I do, I am not going to believe that He exists."

We have no right to tell the perfect being how it should reveal itself to us. If the perfect being wishes to use far more subtle means, and requires us to seek it out, then it is free to do things in this fashion. The unbridled arrogance of some people is truly astounding. And the Bible claims that God has often revealed Himself in far more overt ways and people still refuse to recognize Him. You can dismiss that for now, but I'm merely saying that my worldview explicitly states, and offers a lot of evidence to back up this claim, that God has revealed Himself to many people in ways that are far more similar to what these Atheists demand. That fact aside though, God or the perfect being was not obligated to do so.

Objection #24: We are not going to play these philosophical word games with you. Hume long ago showed that all of the tautologies of the philosophers and theologians are worthless. If you cannot empirically prove something, then we have no reason to believe it.

Answer: This objection has long been debunked even by the most skeptical scholars. It is truly sad that it is still so popular within pop-Atheist circles. Most have never read a

word of Hume and have no idea about the skepticism that he left the world if his gibberish had been true. Most hear the word *skeptic* and automatically think of an Atheist. That is how the word is generally used in that community. They don't understand that Hume was skeptical about almost everything. The entire scientific enterprise that the Atheist community worships is built upon a number of presuppositions that Hume would have called into question every bit as much as he called into question the presuppositions of the philosophers and theologians. The very notion of everything having to be proven empirically cannot be proven empirically itself and is an attempt at an unproven (empirically speaking) basic first principle of knowledge. You do not get to have your first principles as you please, but then turn around and deny to others their first principles based on nothing more than bias. All of us have to recognize the common sense principles we all know to be true and that we use every single day to examine the world around us.

Objection #25: The problem of evil has disproved the moral argument.

Answer: The problem of evil presupposes objective morality and thus must account for it. It is a false inference that an omnibenevolent being would not want to allow any evil. An omnibenevolent being would also be a just being, hating sin. If a being did not hate the sins we commit against each other, then it would not be loving. Hence, such a being must be just. And a just being must desire to punish the sin it hates. That is the essence of justice. Therefore, most of the evil the perfect being allows is as a punishment for the sins of humankind. I understand that it is odd that more sin would be the punishment for sin, but if that is how the perfect being wishes to punish us, it has every right to do so. It actually makes a great deal of sense that if we reject this perfect being, it would largely remove itself from us and allow us to destroy each other. If we tell the perfect being to get lost, why is it obligated at that point to not give us what we have requested?

The Atheist will retort that even granting that point, this still does not explain the first sin of humankind. Why would the perfect being allow that sin in the first place? The answer is not difficult. Having a relationship with the perfect being is no small thing. It would be

unjust for the perfect being to just allow us to have this without earning it. We all understand that merely having everything handed to us is not a just system. All people understand the concept of merit deep down. And there can be no higher reward than a relationship with the perfect being. If we choose to spurn this potential reward, that obviously the perfect being would have made eminently possible for us to achieve, it is no longer obligated to continue to protect us. Justice demands a punishment for so wantonly rejecting the greatest offer in existence. The fact that the perfect being allowed us to fail this test in no way reflects any lack of omnibenevolence or omnipotence, it reflects His justice.

None of this is to say that the perfect being had no other choice but to give us this test. It could have created nothing at all. It could have created a universe with no beings that were capable of having such a relationship with it. It could have chosen to do any number of things that would have reflected its glory. But, it plainly did have the option of creating beings that could have such a relationship with it. And if it chose to do so, then at that point, its justice would have demanded such a test. Many Atheists will fire back that if the perfect being had to do things this way once it had made this choice, it would not truly be omnipotent. This is to confuse voluntarism with the traditional common sense definition of omnipotence. I have had many lay Atheists over the years tell me that I'm trying to create some new definition of the term *omnipotent*. Their ignorance practically drips off of them. Most philosophers, and the overwhelming bulk of the historic church, have always rejected voluntarism for the absurdity that it is. For more information on a correct definition of the term and the concept of voluntarism, see the first chapter to the second book of my "basics" series, and my essay refuting the errors of Tony Jones. Both works can be found on my website.

This is not to make light of the horrific suffering that is experienced by many humans, both today and throughout history. It is indeed awful and we are to have compassion on our fellow human beings. But, it is to say that there is a philosophical explanation for this suffering. It also needs to be said that the vast majority of people throughout history have still experienced an immense amount of good from God in spite of our sin. Most



humans have experienced some love. Most have eaten at least some great food. Most have had sex. Most have seen some of the wondrous beauty of God's creation. Most have participated in the fun and joy of holidays. And of the minority that has experienced very little of these things, God will make things fair in the final analysis. Such people will be punished far less at the final judgment. Further, even those who have underwent torture or severe pain have usually only had to do so for short periods of time. And again, for the very small minority that this has not been the case for, they will be given far less punishments than most at the final judgment.

None of that is to minimize how hard life was for most people before modern times. None of it is to minimize how hard life still is for so much of the world today. But, most people are not tortured or experience severe pain for years on end. That is and has always been very rare. Thus, we still see the goodness, mercy, and grace of God even in the midst of His judgments.

Many Atheists will argue that we should not then be compassionate to our fellow human beings. Would that not only be thwarting God's justice? No. Because of God's omnibenevolence, we would expect Him to also be merciful as He metes out His justice. And that is exactly what we do see. As part of this mercy, God has put it into our hearts to be compassionate in fulfillment of this mercy. To fail to do so is disobedience. God will still enact His justice as He sees fit. Many Atheists will argue that the perpetrator could not be guilty of sinning against his fellow man because he would only be fulfilling God's justice in that instance. This is to confuse God's preceptive will with His sovereign will. Please see the first chapter of my work on the doctrines of grace for this clarification.

Many Atheists will object that none of this can work with so-called orthodox Christianity because of the doctrine that the elect do not earn eternal life. This is not so. Eternal life must still be earned and it has been on our behalf by Jesus Christ. What God could never do is just give us eternal life from the outset without any test. That would be unjust and would deny the principle of merit. But, once we have chosen to fail that test, God has every right to give us mercy through another one who earns eternal life for us.

Finally, many Atheists say that even if they were to grant everything said in this answer thus far, I have still not addressed animal suffering. If God only allows suffering as punishment for sin, and animals are not moral creatures as I have belabored, then why do we also see so much animal suffering? Again, the answer is not difficult. It would be unjust for God to give them such an amazing afterlife based on no merit. Therefore, God allows them to suffer shortly here on earth in exchange for this afterlife. While the animals will never fully understand this, no one will be more happy with this arrangement than they will be in the final scheme of things.

Most animals eat, play, frolick, mate, and explore for much of their lives. I'm not denying the fear, pain, and overall suffering that many of them feel for short times, but again there is a good reason for this. We actually suffer far more due to animal suffering. We experience a far deeper emotional pain because of this suffering than even they do themselves. I am not denying the intense emotional pain that the higher animals do in fact undergo, but it is still not on the level of what we feel watching them suffer. And according to the Bible, this was a core part of our punishment.

I understand that I eventually shifted into talking about God. This is because I had to say how I would answer these questions from an orthodox Christian perspective. But, more generic answers could be given about the hypothetical reasons why the perfect being would act in similar ways.

Objection #26: Even if we granted all that was said in the previous answer, this would still be a terrible reality. Why would the perfect being create a bunch of lesser beings only to punish them?

Answer: Obviously, the perfect being would have a greater purpose in this. The perfect being could choose to show grace and mercy to these failed beings. The perfect being could create other beings (such as other humans or angels or some other rational beings) that it knew would pass the test and would see very clearly the extent to which

they made the right choice. Such a reality would vividly show the justice of the perfect being to these beings.

Objection #27: Even if we granted all that has been said thus far, none of this would make sense as the perfect being must be vexed by all of the sin, imperfections, and suffering of this world. And that would render it imperfect by definition.

Answer: No, the absolutely perfect being must be impassible in order to be absolutely perfect. This is why the overwhelming vast majority of the greatest theologians throughout church history have asserted this very doctrine. As to how this does not then make God or the perfect being into an unfeeling monster, see chapter one of my book on the doctrines of grace.

#### A Brief Word on Subjectivity

Before moving into the next section of this work, it is important for me to touch upon the fact that it may seem like the way I am using the concept of subjectivity in this essay contradicts how I define that concept in my chapter on philosophy in my *A False Kind of Christianity*. I recommend reviewing that chapter if necessary. When I talk about how morality would only be subjective in this essay if the atheistic account of evolution were true, I am not saying that our moral impulses would actually be factually true (in the sense of being immutable moral principles; it is obviously factually true that we have them as I will say momentarily), only subjectively so. I mean it more in the sense that we would strongly feel that a certain principle is objectively true and real, but upon examination (in light of the atheistic version of evolution if that paradigm were true) it would become clear that this is only an impulse and instinct we have evolved. It has no grounding in any higher moral standard. It would still be a subjective truth that we have this instinct and desire to fulfill this apparent moral standard, but it would become clear to us that many others may not have this same instinct and that we could not fault them for not having it.

## The Plurality of the Perfect Being

In this section, we will see that the morally perfect being, entity, or reality, must also be ontologically perfect, which must necessarily include it being one in being or nature, and yet plural in person. The first thing to address in this section is that a morally perfect being is not the same thing as a sinless being. A chair is sinless. That does not make it morally perfect. It is amoral. The same is true of the animals in spite of the fact that they inflict a lot of natural evil upon each other. In Biblical Christianity, the holy angels are sinless. But, this only means that they chose not to sin in their test and now God has made them immutably sinless. However, this is a derived and highly qualified immutability.

If the morally perfect being were only morally perfect in the sense of being sinless, and sinless in the sense of never failing to break the moral standard, then there would be a moral standard above this being and we would have to ask where that standard comes from. And if that higher standard were not morally perfect itself, how could it have any authority to impose a moral standard on our alleged morally perfect being? It obviously could not. Thus, it is obvious that when speaking of a morally perfect being, we must mean that it is the grounds for morality. We must, as we have seen, also mean that it is not those grounds in a might makes right manner. It must be intrinsically and immutably (in a non-derived sense) good.

With that laid out, let us now look at why it would be impossible for an absolutely morally perfect being to not be ontologically perfect as well. What authority can such a being have to impose a moral standard on the rest of us? If it does not have omniscience, it cannot know all the contingencies of life. How could it possibly then tell us what is right and wrong when it does not even have all of the facts? It could tell us that something is wrong based upon the vast information it has at this moment, but it could not know that perhaps this moral code of conduct will have disastrous effects upon us down the line as the universe changes. And if this being is not eternal, being outside and above time, how could it know the future? If it does not know the future, then it is not omniscient.

If this being is not omnipotent, then there would be no way for it to know what is going to happen in the future. It would not have control of all things, thus things could in fact happen that would be out of its control and thus out of its purview of knowledge. Thus, it would not be omniscient. If this being were not immutable, it could change its mind about core moral principles as it pleases. This would not be the same thing as this being changing certain principles for us as we change and the world changes around us. That makes perfect sense. No, it would be this moral being changing its mind as it itself evolves and changes. But, this would imply that this being could be correcting itself along the way. And if that is the case, we could not trust this being and the standard it gives us because it could be wrong about its present assessment. All of this proves the omniscience, the omnipotence, the eternality, and immutability of the perfect being. Similar arguments can be made for all of the ontological perfections. The absolutely morally perfect being must also be absolutely ontologically perfect as well.

The absolutely perfect entity, being ontologically perfect, must also be one in being or nature. This is because if we posit multiple perfect beings, we have to distinguish between them somehow concerning essential attributes otherwise these are plainly not multiple beings. If these beings are entirely identical in attributes, then they are not different beings in nature. And if any one of these beings did not have one or more of the ontological perfections, then it would be by definition imperfect in at least one way.

Many objections can be brought against this argument, but none of them hold water. Most are very weak and won't be covered here. However, we will examine one of them now. This objection states that there could in fact be multiple absolutely perfect beings. For example, they point out that as humans we all share the same nature, but are separate beings from each other and each of us are quite unique. Even identical twins have distinct personalities, especially as they get older. It is true that all of us as humans share human nature with each other. But, that is not how the term *nature* is being used in this context philosophically. The term is being used to describe everything that an entity or being is. Even two identical twins have different souls and thus are not identical

in nature. There is nothing wrong with speaking about human nature as a broad category. But, that is not what we mean when talking about the absolutely perfect being. We are not saying that absolute perfection is a general category that many entities fall within. We are describing a specific entity and every attribute that makes this entity what it is. And if multiple entities are identical in every respect, then they are plainly not multiple entities. They would be persons that share the nature of this perfect being.

Many argue that no, there could be many beings that have all of the characteristics of ontological perfection, but still have other unique attributes. There are legions of problems with this notion philosophically. But, let us look at one for now and that will suffice. If all of these beings existed, they would each be dependent upon one another. And if they were all dependent upon one another, this would mean that each of them was imperfect. None of them would be intrinsically perfect in the absolute sense because each of them would be dependent upon the rest. None would be independently perfect in the absolute sense. The reason they would all be dependent upon each other is because they would all have to convene with each other when making decisions. Allow me to elaborate.

Let us say that each of these beings existed before the creation of the universe. In that scenario, one of them could not simply go and create the universe without convening with the rest of the allegedly perfect beings. This is because such an action might go against the wishes of one or more of the other beings. That could lead to conflict and any outer conflict would plainly cause inner displeasure at least to one degree or another. And any inner displeasure within any of these beings would itself constitute imperfection. Let us say that conflict would be impossible for these beings. Let us say, as one of many possible examples, that if one of them decided to up and create the universe, the rest would simply go along with that. That does not change the fact that one of these other beings may have chosen to do things differently. The mere fact that this other being is now constrained to operate under the reality of this now created universe when it had no say in the manner would itself constitute an imperfection.

This is why these beings would have to convene regarding any and all decisions. But, if that is the case, none of them are independently perfect in an absolute sense. Each of them may have to compromise when making any decision. Compromise is a good thing for us mortals because it helps the collective good. But, not always getting our way is something that inevitably produces some degree of frustration and that could never be the case with the perfect being. This is why the absolutely perfect being must have the attribute of aseity. And aseity plainly implies oneness.

Many will retort that anyone who doesn't like to compromise is simply a selfish person. This is not so. I agree that this is often the case, but often a person believes that the best course of action for his loved ones is one that is not thought to be best by the rest of the group. In the end, he capitulates so that the group can move forward. Both his compromise and his original motives in wanting to go with a different course of action were good. None of that changes the fact that he will still be somewhat frustrated because he sincerely thought his desired course of action was what was best for those he loves most and he worries that they will be harmed in some way (however minor) by not choosing his wanted course of action.

Further, we all understand the inherent good of freedom. All humans have always fought for some degree of autonomy and freedom well before these notions were fully front and center in public discourse with the rise of the Enlightenment. We all understand that as mortals, none of us can ever have complete autonomy. However, some autonomy is absolutely necessary in order to be a fulfilled human being. Thus, any absolutely perfect being would not be selfish for needing its own autonomy.

One can argue, "Ok, but why would all of the absolutely perfect beings need complete autonomy?" Think about it: if all of these beings are eternal, then they must exist outside of a moment to moment existence. I am fully aware of the fact that we have discovered that time is a far more complicated reality than we previously thought. That does not change the fact that the basic definition of time is a moment to moment reality or existence. This could not be predicated of the absolutely perfect being, as we have

seen. Therefore, any notion of multiple decisions by these absolutely perfect beings is untenable. Hence, it follows that these beings must have convened to make this decision. And this must have been an eternal decision. There could have been no moments before it or after it. Thus, any idea of one of these beings making a decision and the others rolling with it and then making their own separate decisions about other matters down the line is not a sustainable position. Even if we posit the notion that these beings all jointly compromised instantly (for lack of a better term) and simultaneously, the mere fact that they had to compromise in this their sole decision renders each of them without any autonomy whatsoever. That is plainly an imperfection.

Many would argue that these allegedly absolutely perfect beings would not really need to make a decision at all. They would obviously naturally choose whatever reality was the best reality. First of all, this would strongly seem to suggest that there was nothing really unique about these beings from each other. They would have the same exact attributes, they would all be making only one eternal decision, and this decision would be entirely uniform based upon their knowledge of what was the best reality. In such a conception, what makes each of these beings unique from one another? Leaving that aside, the above does not follow anyway. There can be multiple equally good decisions. For instance, before I had to stop drinking soda, I loved Coke. I mean I really loved Coke. And if I went into a gas station to buy a Coke, I would walk over to the fridge and pick one out from a long row of Cokes. This decision was not entirely arbitrary. I desired a Coke. That was the driving force behind my basic decision. But, no one of these Cokes was better than the rest (at least not as far as I could tell). I had the freedom to choose between all of these equally good options.

The perfect being's eternal choice could never have been entirely arbitrary. It could have only chosen from an infinite number of realities that would have each equally brought it complete contentment. But, it had the freedom to choose between each of these. To say otherwise, is to deny the perfect being freedom and autonomy and that would constitute an imperfection. Now, it may seem like I have made a philosophical error by saying that this perfect being had to make a choice to be fulfilled. If it was not entirely fulfilled before



this decision, then it was not absolutely perfect before this decision. This does not follow though. Again, this is an eternal decision. There is no moment when the perfect being could have been existing without it. There is only logical priority here. The decision was entirely real and necessary, but it was intrinsic to the nature of this perfect being to make this decision and to never be in a state without it. One can argue that if it is intrinsic, then it was not truly a free will decision. The decision itself was not intrinsic, but the fact that the being had to make this eternal decision was intrinsic. There was never a moment when it was without it and was thus not fulfilled.

You may say, "But, if the absolutely perfect being must do certain things, then it is not entirely free. It is under the constraints of these 'musts.'" This does not follow. The perfect being cannot be or do anything other than that which is in accord with its perfect nature. There can be no absurdities or contradictions in this being as those would constitute imperfections. When we say that the absolutely perfect being had to make this choice, we only do so to guard its freedom. But, there is no sense in which the perfect being is vexed by this choice. There is no external force that is imposing this "must" upon it. It rejoices in the need to make this free choice. This free choice is the very essence of the freedom and autonomy of this perfect being. Hence, this "must" is not in any way a flaw or limitation. It guards against any flaws or limitations.

Many will argue against the very notion of eternality here that I am pressing so strenuously. They will say that perhaps these beings know the future in a manner that we cannot understand. Perhaps they exist in time and have some power by which they know the future that is far beyond our comprehension. This is entirely illogical. For them to know the future in this manner, they would have to tap into some force or power or source of knowledge that was itself outside of time. And that would make them less than omnipotent as they would be dependent upon another being for this knowledge. We have already seen why an absolutely perfect being in the moral sense must be omnipotent. If these beings exist in a moment to moment existence, then there would be no intrinsic way for them to know the future before it happens and before they are even part of that future.

Now this may seem to contradict what I said earlier about the perfect being knowing the somewhat arbitrary choices of human beings in advance. It does not. That knowledge would not come to the perfect being from any source outside of itself. I am not saying that the perfect being must first tap into us human beings somehow in order to know this information, and only then indeed knows it from there. No, the perfect being would know this information based on the fact that it created us. That knowledge would be intrinsic to the perfect being.

This of course makes it seem like we are then not truly free to make this somewhat arbitrary choice. This is not the case though. We could still be free to make this decision, but in some mysterious fashion the perfect being could know how we are going to choose in advance based upon how it created us. I understand that this is indeed extremely mysterious, but it is not impossible. This may sound like the perfect being then created sinners. It created beings it knew would sin. It did not create sinners from the outset. The sin was thus not inevitable. The sin was of course inevitable from the vantage point of the perfect being's knowledge and sovereignty, but it was not inevitable for us.

Thus, we have seen that the concept of multiple absolutely perfect beings is not a philosophically sound position. I understand that there are other possibilities that some may assert, like matter being eternal and these beings interacting with that matter, but all of these alleged possibilities run into a myriad of problems as well. I cannot cover all of these in an essay of this nature without this work becoming a tome, but I am happy to discuss any of these further with you through email. Hopefully, it will be fairly obvious to most by now from all that I've said why such a reality is an impossibility.

Now that we have established that the absolutely perfect being exists, and that it is only one in being or nature, we can move into the discussion on why this one being must be plural in person. Before doing so, I want to readily admit that I am not fully defining all of the important terms here in this essay. Terms such as *being*, *nature*, and *person* are all

not being given systematic treatments. I am trusting the reader to have some idea of what I am driving at after I give some very basic comments on these concepts below, but I refer the interested reader to both of Aquinas' *Summas*, where he spells these concepts out with tremendous care and erudition.

For now, I first recommend reading through the basic definitional comments I provided in my section on the Trinity in the first chapter to the second book of my "basics" series. That should provide you with a solid starting point. When we refer to the being or nature of God, we are primarily referring to the what of God. What God is by nature. When we refer to the persons of the Trinity, we are primarily referring to the who of each person. We are in a sense dealing with one *what*, and three *who's*. Even this is somewhat misleading though. This is because God in His nature is personal. He is not an impersonal *it*. Even when I have been describing the perfect being as *it* throughout this essay, I am only doing so to indicate that the perfect being exists. As we have proceeded throughout this essay, we have seen that this perfect being must also be personal. Thus, the *it* becomes rather misleading. With that said, it is impossible to know if this being wishes to be called *He*, *She*, neither, or both, from a purely philosophical vantage point. With all of that made plain, it is clear that the personal aspect of God or this perfect being can only be actualized in the persons.

Now, it may seem that I have jumped far too quickly to Biblical Christianity. I have not yet proven that it is true. This is correct. I am merely pointing you to Aquinas and myself to get a basic understanding of how the terms *being*, *nature*, and *person*, are being used in this context. At this point, we can say that the perfect being must be one in being or nature, but multiple in person. One what, but multiple who's, while still clarifying that the what of this perfect being must also be personal itself. And that this personal characteristic can only be realized in the multiple who's. We will now go on to prove why this is the case.

The absolutely perfect being must be inherently, eternally, and immutably loving. Anything else cannot account for it being inherently, eternally, and immutably good. And

if it is not good in this sense, it cannot be the grounds for our morality. We have already seen all of the reasons why this is the case. Many will object that this is nothing more than human projection. Just because we cannot fathom goodness without love, this does not necessitate the idea that the perfect being must be loving as well. Perhaps it transcends the attribute of love. This cannot be the case for a number of reasons, and we will examine some of them here.

First, if this were the case, this lack of love would constitute an imperfection. Any being that is without love, even if it has no hate like the inanimate world, is a less than perfect being. This is basic common sense. Second, we would be greater than this being. To have love is certainly greater than to not have love. This is also basic common sense. And if we are greater than this being, it is plainly not absolute perfection and could have no right to impose any moral code upon us. Third, a personal being cannot be without love without at the same time having hate. And hate is plainly an imperfection. Indifference to other rational creatures is not truly neutrality. It is a form of not caring about their welfare. To not care about the welfare of another rational creature is to hate it on some level. We have already seen why the absolutely perfect being must be personal. It must have omniscience, otherwise it could have no right to impose any moral code upon us. And to be omniscient is to be a personal being.

If this perfect being is love as we have seen, then it must exist in a plurality of persons. This is because true love must have an object for the love. A purely self-love is not genuine love. Now, of course, we all know that a reasonable level of self-care is appropriate. This is why I said a *purely* self-love. That type of love is wickedness and we all know it. But, if this being is dependent on a being outside of itself to manifest this love, then this being is imperfect as it is dependent upon another. Its perfection cannot be realized within itself. If we say that this is why the perfect being needed to create the universe, this would then make the perfect being dependent upon the universe. If it is retorted that this would merely be one of those legitimate “musts” I discussed earlier, I would have to reply by saying that this does not follow. All of the “musts” of the perfect being are intrinsic to it. They are all naturally fulfilled within itself. But, as soon as you

assert a “must” outside of the perfect being itself, it is now dependent upon that exterior “must” and is thus not inherently perfect in an absolute sense within itself.

This is why there must be multiple persons that each share the nature of the perfect being and exist with each other in an infinitely, and eternally, and immutably loving bond. Their relationship with each other provides the grounds for the love of this perfect being to be expressed without in any way being dependent upon any other being. This does not preclude this being from freely creating a universe outside of itself, but it does mean that it was also free not to do so. The perfect being could have existed for all eternity as only itself and would have been wholly content because of this infinitely loving bond among the persons.

At this point, a number of objections are put forth, and we will dissect some of them. First, many assert that this still leaves the absolutely perfect being with only a self-love. We are still only dealing with one being here and thus it is still only loving itself at the end of the day. This does not follow. It is true that there is a sense in which the perfect being is loving itself, but again, not in any purely wicked self-love sense. Each of these persons, despite being utterly identical in attributes, is personally distinguished from each other by the relationship that exists between them. As long as relationship exists, true love exists as well. It does not matter that each of the persons are identical in nature. Each person is not merely looking within the way things would have to be if the absolutely perfect being was one in nature and one in person as well. Each person looks outward to the other person or persons and they each share their infinite bond of love because they have a very real and genuine relationship with each other.

The sameness factor here (in nature) does not preclude the relationship. We see this clearly on display with identical twins. Obviously, the analogy is not perfect because even identical twins are not identical in every manner as we have seen. With that said, anyone who has ever been around identical twins that were not separated from birth (a very rare occurrence in history) for any length of time (I was best friends with a pair for a while growing up) knows how similar they are in so many respects. One also cannot

help but be struck by the tightness of the bond that exists between them. Their sameness in so many respects only makes the bond all the tighter. And yet in an almost paradoxical way, we can all see that their bond has nothing to do with self-love. The relationship establishes the bond, and the sameness only makes it all the stronger. This gives us the faintest glimpse of what must go on with the absolutely perfect being.

The next objection here is that only two persons would be required to fulfill my argument. Yet, Biblical Christianity posits three. Therefore, even if all that I have said up to this point were granted, it would disprove orthodox Christianity. This is not so. There is no way for us to know from a purely philosophical vantage point how many persons there are that share the being of the absolutely perfect entity. We all know that sometimes a community is better expressive of love than just two persons. This is why the historic church has always maintained that the full doctrine of the Trinity is a matter of special revelation. And nothing I say in any of my works should ever be interpreted as me saying otherwise. I am only saying that we can prove the basic plurality of the absolutely perfect being from a philosophical standpoint.

The next objection is that if these persons are truly distinct from each other, then they are separate beings and no amount of philosophizing can change that. This is not so. I fully agree that the doctrine of many theologians that argues that the begetting and proceeding of the Trinity are superfluous and unbiblical ideas is terribly problematic. Those provide the grounds for both the unity and the distinctiveness of the persons. We are not saying that there are three persons out there that merely happen to share the being of God. That is atrocious philosophy (and theology for that matter). The being of God is communicated to the Son from the Father, and to the Spirit from the Father and the Son. Never at any time is there any separation between the three persons. I again recommend to you both of the *Summas* from Aquinas, where he thoroughly answers this objection.

This is also why the doctrine of Grudem and others that seems to be saying that the Son obeyed the will of the Father in the sense that the Father chose what reality was to

be brought about, but it was possible that the Son would have willed something else, is a very dangerous teaching. I am not saying it is heresy because the Bible never fully spells out these matters as it is written for all Christians, and not only for those that are more philosophically minded. However, from a philosophical standpoint, this is an entirely unsupportable stance to take. The being of God made the decision and the three persons were all fully united in this decision for that reason. The reason the Bible often more specifically attributes this decision to the Father is because He is the first in order in the Trinity and He is thus the representative of the Trinity. The Son is our representative, and therefore this language makes sense and is the language that the Bible often uses for this reason.

I understand that I once again moved into Christian language when I have still not fully proven Biblical Christianity yet. This was only because I brought up the poor presentations by some otherwise excellent Christian theologians. But, the basic points I was making would apply to the absolutely perfect being from a purely philosophical standpoint, other than the threeness factor and the titles and roles given to the persons.

The next objection is that the entire idea of the perfect being having the ability to choose from an infinite number of possible worlds is extremely problematic because there can never be an actual infinite number of anything. Infinity is simply a number that is used in math as a hypothetical concept when numbers would theoretically go on forever. But, it can never exist in a concrete fashion. This is true and the perfect being obviously does not know about these potential worlds in a piecemeal fashion. The perfect being must know all infinite possibilities in a simultaneous fashion based upon its innate and intrinsic knowledge of its own omnipotence.

The next objection concerns the arbitrary choice of God. This concept allegedly runs into the same problems as the concept in humans. It would seem that an arbitrary choice violates the law of causality. It does not. The choice does not arise from nothing. The choice comes from God Himself. And the choice is not entirely arbitrary. Going back to my coke analogy, my choice to buy a coke is not arbitrary. It is based on my desire for

a coke. However, which coke I choose out of the many equally good coke options is arbitrary. I understand that this does still leave some difficulty, but there is no abject absurdity here. I will further have more to say about the will (both God's and ours) in a work down the line.

The final objection we will review here is the one that says that the vast majority of what has been said in this essay is too abstract and esoteric. It is often said that these philosophical principles cannot be tested and that can only lead to skepticism of them. Many Atheists have even said that they believe that there are contradictions and absurdities in the universe. They even attempt to point to evidence of this. They say that all of this shows that we should stick to the data instead of trying to understand the highly complex and mysterious universe through initial philosophical principles.

First, it must be said that it is quite amusing to watch so many pop-Fundamentalist Atheist apologists never tire of lambasting us for not being logical and rational enough when they then turn around and talk like this! If the universe is full of contradictions and absurdities, then the entire concepts of reason, rationality, and logic must be thrown out the window. It will not do to say that we should use logic when it suits us, but not when it does not. If that is the case, then anyone can come to any conclusions he or she likes. None of those conclusions could ever be challenged because this person could say that there is indeed a contradiction inherent in the conclusion, but contradictions are sometimes a part of life. There is no possible way to examine the data in the first place if we do not assume the basic principles of reason, rationality, and logic. And as stated earlier, everything said in the previous paragraph from the mouth of the objector is philosophical in nature. None of those statements or sentiments can be proven by the empirical data itself. Thus, this objection is entirely self-defeating.

I have even had many informal debates with Atheists where they assert that reason, rationality, and logic are not absolute categories. They say that these are mere customs that are helpful to us as humanity. Who is being illogical at this point my friends? And if that is the case, then I will simply continue to be an orthodox Christian. My faith



provides me with tremendous fulfillment and joy and so why would you want to take that away from me? As soon as you say that we should go with the truth and not fables (which is usually the response I receive), you have entirely upended all that you have just said about reason, rationality, and logic not being foundational. Who gets to decide what is true in such a scenario? If I wanted to define truth as what brings me fulfillment and joy, how can you judge that decision and definition if you say that reason, rationality, and logic are only conventions? Why do I have to go along with conventions? Plainly I do not. So, I won't, thank you very much.

I have had many very relativistic Atheists respond to me by saying something along the lines of, "Well, I mean yeah, you absolutely can do that. No one is saying you can't. But, the whole point of dialogue is to try to persuade others. And I am trying to persuade you to see that your version of Christianity is not the best option for either you or humanity at large." You're never going to persuade me of that. What you could persuade me to admit is that Christianity cannot be demonstrated philosophically and/or is not in line with the overall empirical evidence. I am happy to have that debate. If that ever happened, I would be honest about this whether people believe that or not. I would proceed forward in the manner I talk about in my essay on faith and reason.

But, in order to prove that to me, you have to first admit that reason, rationality, and logic are absolute. If you do not, all you are doing is projecting onto me your personal preferences. I do not share your personal preferences and I never will. My personal preference will always be my faith in the Jesus of the Bible. You will never talk me out of that. You can take such a statement out of context and say that this proves beyond doubt how biased I am, but I have been equally clear that I am open to saying that perhaps my faith is not philosophically demonstrable and/or is not in keeping with the overall empirical data. And it should be said that the idea of what is best for humanity presupposes that there is an objective standard by which we can measure that. And that would obliterate the relativism being advocated here.

Even further, you have to answer why science is even a good thing in the first place. Even if science does in fact give us true information, why does that make it good or something to which I am obligated to submit? You can say that this is common sense, but that is an abstract philosophical statement and conclusion. As said earlier, maybe my religious delusions are good for humanity and most of us evolved those impulses for a reason. If that is the case, there is no reason for me to give them up in favor of science. I am not here disparaging science, just to be clear. The true Christian should support science as much as possible. I am merely talking about things from the perspective of the relativistic Atheist.

Please go back over each of the common sense points I have made along the way from the very beginning of this essay. At every juncture, you will see that I have not asserted anything that we do not know to be true instinctively, or that cannot be necessarily inferred from these instinctual first principles of knowledge. Hence, nothing I have advocated for is too abstract or esoteric. All of my arguments are based on these common sense points. I am not saying we all initially instinctively know all of my arguments to be true. I am saying that this is the case with every single common sense principle I have put forth, and I have only made necessary inferences from these very principles.

Finally, I understand that there are remaining objections to much of what I have said in this essay. Objections to both the moral argument in general, the plurality of the perfect being in general, and to many of my sub-points along the way. My hope is that I have answered enough of the major objections to prove that I have no fear of addressing any objection out there. If you wish to bring another one to me via email, I will gladly unpack it for you.

The God of Biblical Christianity Must be This Absolutely Perfect Being

Please see all of the works of mine that I list on pages 13-14 of my *All That's Wrong With Jonah*. Please also see all of the other works I list there as well, *especially* the

debate I reference in that section. That work from me above can be found on my website in the subsection on Atheism and Agnosticism. That subsection can be found in the section on the religions of the world. The work is listed as “Response to Jonah Conner.” I also recommend that entire work itself to you. If you have any questions from this essay and/or from any of those works, please do not hesitate to send them my way. That can be done through the email found on my website.

## Appendix

In this appendix I want to briefly discuss my doctrine of the Trinity. Because I have said quite a bit about this all-important doctrine in a number of my works, yet have never at any point presented my full-orbed position on the matter, some mild confusion has resulted. I would like to take this opportunity to clear this up. The first thing I would like to say concerns the doctrine of the social Trinity. I want to be very plain when I say that I do not believe this doctrine to rise to the full level of heresy, but I entirely reject it as very, very unsound. Because I place such a high premium on the relationality of God, both theologically and apologetically, some have come to the mistaken conclusion that my position has, at the very least, an affinity with this doctrine. It does not. My doctrine of the Trinity is basically Thomistic across the board. All orthodox Christians have maintained that there exists an eternal, infinite, and profound loving bond between the members of the Trinity. To say that this must lead to the social Trinity, with the utmost respect, reflects a staggering ignorance of historical theology. To deny this loving bond is to embrace heresy. And I merely believe strongly that this aspect of the Trinity is highly, highly significant, both theologically and apologetically.

The next item I would like to address is the Trinitarian analogy I used on pages 136-138 of my *A False Kind of Christianity*. Some have pointed out that it has Modalistic overtones. I don't deny this. With that said, any analogy we use for the Trinity, if pressed too far, will lead to one of the Trinitarian heresies. This is why so many in the true church advise against using them at all for the Trinity. The problem I have with this is that this is true of any analogy we use for any biblical doctrine. All analogies have

inherent problems with them and all of them can be pressed too far. Yet, every Bible teacher still uses analogies. Therefore, I am not against using Trinitarian analogies as long as we carefully explain that they are just analogies and are not to be pressed too far. I practically bent over backwards to make that clear on those pages above. All I was trying to do was help my readers see that we see things in this world that have both *sameness* and yet *distinction*. I believe that I succeeded in doing that. Anyone seeking to press my words beyond that would be going against the very warning I give on those pages.