Why There Almost Certainly Is a God

Doubting Dawkins

By: Keith Ward

A brief summary about the book:

Keith Ward is a British philosopher and Protestant theologian, specializing in defense of faith, and is one of the followers of Alan McGrath, the author of the two famous books "Willing to Exist" and "Willing to be God". The book is dedicated to responding to the book "Richard Dawkins" known under the title "Why There Almost Certainly Is a God", and the name of the book was taken from the fourth chapter of Dawkins' book, which was titled "Why There Almost Certainly Is a God", but, he replaced the negation (no) with (a) and this became the title "Why There Almost Certainly Is a God". Thus, he was unable to refute the existence of God in a solid and certain way, and the author wanted to use the same method, but no more.

The main goal of the book is to state the invalidity of the arguments presented by Dawkins in his book "Willing to Exist", especially chapters 2 to 4, in addition to presenting strong arguments for the existence of God, and the book ends with an advisory supplement for other readings.

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...
عقلانية ومنطقية، ويُقدم تفسيرات لظواهر كثيرة، بعكس افتراض عدم وجود إله!

في رأيي الشَّخصي، هذا المنهج لا يُقدِّم دليلاً إيجابياً على وجود الله بقدر ما يُقدِّم بياناً واضحاً لسوء موقف المُلحد

وهناك أكثر من طريقة لتطبيق «فرضية الإله»، بعضها أفضل من بعض، وعلَّا طريقة «كيث» لم تكن أفضلهم!

ويجب الإشارة إلى أنَّ المؤلِّف يُركز كلامه أحياناً كثيرة بدون داعٍ، إلاَّ أنه غالباً ما يُريد من هذا التَّنبيه على الفكرة، كذلك فإنَّ المؤلِّف استفاض كثيراً في الكلام عن «عقل الله» أو «العقل الإلهي» انطلاقاً من عقديته المسيحية، وأرى أنَّ كلّ كلامه هذا لا قيمة له في الحقيقة، سواء في النقاش مع الملاحدة، أو من ناحية أي فائدة مرجُوَّة لقارئ مُسلم!

هناك أكثر من طريقة لتطبيق «لهلإ فرضية ا»، بعضها أفضل من بعض، ولعلّ طريقة «كيث وارد» لم تكن أفضلهم.

وقد نقلتُ بعضاً من تقريراته العجيبة لا لشيء إلاَّ للعظة، وإثبات أنَّ لُزُوم الوحي في مسائل الغيب المطلق أسلم موقف عقلي!

أحب التَّنبيه أيضاً على أنَّ «كيث وارد» ذكر كلاماً غريباً في كتابه هذا عن موقف الإله من المُلحد يوم القيامة، وأنَّ «كيث وارد» يُعرِّف «كونه» بالجهل! وأنَّ الله سيلقاه يوم القيامة بمحبَّة مُطلقة، ولكن الله لا يستطيع أن يُفكِّر في أنَّ إله المحبَّة المُطلقة سيُقدّم إنساناً مباشرةً بأنَّ الله غير موجود! هذا الكلام العجيب ناتج عن فساد العقيدة المسيحية في الله واليوم الآخر، وقمت باقتباسه بغرض بيان الميوعة والانبطاح الزائد عن حدِّه من قِبَل المسيحيين في التعامل مع مثل هذه الانحرافات العقائدية الكُبرى!

من المواضيع التي تطرَّق إليها «كيث» في كتابه: من الذي خلق الإله؟ لماذا الكون على الوضع الذي هو عليه؟ هل نظرية الأكوان المتعددة كافية كتفسير لوجود الكون كما هو عليه؟ هل فعلاً يُلَدج الناس لافتراض وجود الله بسبب جهلهم؟ هل الإيمان بالله عائق للتقدم البحث العلمي؟ الأدلة الخمسة على إثبات وجود الله التي قدَّمها توما الإكويني (وكان عرض المؤلِّف هذه الأدلة في غاية السوء!)، الخشش والخبرة الشخصية كدليل على وجود الله.

الكتاب في النهاية يحتوي على نفائس من العبادات الفلسفية المتَّهَكَّمة والتحليلات الرائعة لأفكار المُخالفين، وبيان الأخطاء العقلية والمنطقية والفلسفية التي وقعوا فيها أثناء طرحهم لأفكارهم الإلخادية، والكتاب في طبيعه دفاعي
Part 1: On Chapter Two of The God Delusion

1 The God Hypothesis

- The title of this book is the title of Chapter 4 of Professor Richard Dawkins’ best-selling The God Delusion, with one little difference. I have changed the word ‘no’ to the word ‘a’, because I think that change reflects the situation more accurately. [Keith Ward: Why There Almost Certainly Is a God (Doubting Dawkins), Lion Hudson plc 2008, p10.]

- Philosophy is a systematic attempt to carry out such a process of informed critical enquiry on all our beliefs. In our world, that will involve an enquiry into the nature of science and the nature of religious belief. Whether he likes philosophy or not, Dawkins is doing philosophy in Chapters 2 to 4 of The God Delusion. [Keith Ward: Why There Almost Certainly Is a God (Doubting Dawkins), Lion Hudson plc 2008, p11.]

- He has put his finger at once on the central point at issue. Is intelligent mind an ultimate and irreducible feature of reality? Indeed, is it the ultimate nature of reality? Or is mind and consciousness an unforeseen and unintended product of basically material processes of evolution? If you look at the history of philosophy, it soon becomes clear that almost all the great classical philosophers took the first of these views. Plato, Aristotle, Anselm, Aquinas, Descartes, Leibniz, Spinoza, Locke, Berkeley, Kant, Hegel – they all argued that the ultimate reality, often hidden under the appearances of the material world of time and space, is mind or Spirit. [Keith Ward: Why There Almost Certainly Is a God (Doubting Dawkins), Lion Hudson plc 2008, p12.]

- Most philosophers in the world have been in some sense idealists – that is, they have thought the ultimate reality is mind. Theists are philosophers who accept this, but add that the physical world does have its own proper reality, which originates from but is different from God, the ultimate mind. [Keith Ward: Why There Almost Certainly Is a God (Doubting Dawkins), Lion Hudson plc 2008, p13.]

- Then there have been common sense philosophers – like Thomas Reid,
Hume’s contemporary, who was much better known than Hume in his day – who tend to think that human reason is not competent to tell us the truth about ultimate reality. So we must rely on common sense beliefs, a sort of consensus that we accept because it works, or is conducive to survival, health and happiness. Most common sense philosophers have assumed that belief in God is a common sense belief, as it happens. [Keith Ward: Why There Almost Certainly Is a God (Doubting Dawkins), Lion Hudson plc 2008, p13.]

- This observation does not settle any arguments. But it puts Dawkins’ ‘alternative hypothesis’ in perspective. He is setting out to defend a very recent, highly contentious, minority philosophical world-view. [Keith Ward: Why There Almost Certainly Is a God (Doubting Dawkins), Lion Hudson plc 2008, p14.]

- Most of us do not want to deny that material things exist. But we are no longer very sure of what ‘matter’ is. Is it quarks, or superstrings, or dark energy, or the result of quantum fluctuations in a vacuum? [Keith Ward: Why There Almost Certainly Is a God (Doubting Dawkins), Lion Hudson plc 2008, p14.]

- Some physicists, such as John Gribbin and Paul Davies, in their book The Matter Myth, argue that matter is a sort of illusion or appearance produced by some mysterious and unknown substratum in interaction with the human mind. [Paul Davies and John Gribbin, The Matter Myth, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1992.] [Keith Ward: Why There Almost Certainly Is a God (Doubting Dawkins), Lion Hudson plc 2008, p14.]

- There is something out there, and it appears to us as a world of fairly solid objects. But modern physics suggests that the nature of reality is very different from what we see, and that it is possibly unimaginable. [Keith Ward: Why There Almost Certainly Is a God (Doubting Dawkins), Lion Hudson plc 2008, p15.]

- What is the point of being a materialist when we are not sure exactly what matter is? It no longer seems to be a set of simple elementary particles. Instead, we have a ‘particle zoo’ of flickering, insubstantial, virtual wave-particles, most of which (like the elements of dark matter) are probably not detectable by us at all. [Keith Ward: Why There Almost Certainly Is a God (Doubting Dawkins), Lion Hudson plc 2008, p15.]
What this means is that materialism no longer has the advantage of giving us a simple explanation of reality. Explanations in physics get more and more complicated and counter-intuitive every year. Any plausible form of materialism will be exceedingly complex and mysterious. It no longer has the alleged benefit of being the simplest explanation of the world. [Keith Ward: *Why There Almost Certainly Is a God (Doubting Dawkins)*, Lion Hudson plc 2008, p15.]

When we come to consciousness, things get much worse. The problem of consciousness is so difficult that no one has any idea of how to begin to tackle it, scientifically. What is that problem? It is basically the problem of how conscious states – thoughts, feelings, sensations and perceptions – can arise from complex physical brainstates. Even if we are sure that they do arise from brains, we do not know the sorts of connections that conscious states (such as ‘seeing a train’) have with brain-states (such as ‘there is electrical activity at point A in the brain’). We do not know if conscious states can have a causal effect on brain-states, or if they are somehow reducible to brain-states in some way we cannot yet explain. [Keith Ward: *Why There Almost Certainly Is a God (Doubting Dawkins)*, Lion Hudson plc 2008, p16.]

The existence of consciousness refutes radical materialism, the theory that nothing exists except physical things in space and time. But emergent materialism, the theory that minds arise from matter, even though they are not just material, is more plausible. However, if you are an emergent materialist, you have already taken the first step towards forming some idea of God. You have said that not everything is a physical object in space. There are non-physical, non-spatial entities – minds, perceptions, thoughts and feelings – that really exist, even if they are, as Dawkins claims, causally dependent on physical brains. [Keith Ward: *Why There Almost Certainly Is a God (Doubting Dawkins)*, Lion Hudson plc 2008, p18.]

Arguments for God do not work like that. They are arguments to show that mind is the ultimate reality, and that materialism is a delusion caused by a misuse of modern science. The arguments do not ‘prove’ that there is one extra pseudo-physical thing in or just outside the universe. They provide good reasons for thinking that the ultimate character of the universe is mind,
and that matter is the appearance or manifestation or creation of cosmic mind. [Keith Ward: *Why There Almost Certainly Is a God (Doubting Dawkins)*, Lion Hudson plc 2008, p20.]

- Yet even Albert Einstein, when he proposed the Theory of Relativity in 1915, thought that the Milky Way, our galaxy of a hundred billion stars, was the whole of the universe. The Hubble Telescope revealed that the Milky Way is just one of a hundred billion galaxies in the visible universe. And now many cosmologists talk of our whole universe being possibly just one out of billions of other universes. [Keith Ward: *Why There Almost Certainly Is a God (Doubting Dawkins)*, Lion Hudson plc 2008, p21.]

- However sophisticated computers get, they are not conscious, they do not understand or reflect on the programs that operate on their hardware, and they do not agonize over what moral decisions to make. [Keith Ward: *Why There Almost Certainly Is a God (Doubting Dawkins)*, Lion Hudson plc 2008, p22.]

- I am not denying that some day we may construct a conscious, thinking artificial intelligence. But we are nowhere near that day, and if it comes, we will simply have found a new way of bringing conscious minds into existence. We will not have reduced minds to computers; we will have transformed computers into real minds. [Keith Ward: *Why There Almost Certainly Is a God (Doubting Dawkins)*, Lion Hudson plc 2008, p22.]

- Scientific explanation, in general, works by referring to some initial state (a ‘cause’) and a general mathematically describable law. That law predicts what regularly follows from the initial state, and it does so without any reference to purpose, value or consciousness. [Keith Ward: *Why There Almost Certainly Is a God (Doubting Dawkins)*, Lion Hudson plc 2008, p22.]

- Scientific explanation in terms of physical causes and general laws is one sort of explanation. Personal explanation in terms of desires and intentions is another. [Keith Ward: *Why There Almost Certainly Is a God (Doubting Dawkins)*, Lion Hudson plc 2008, p23.]

- Nevertheless, it is only fair to point out that there are things he systematically neglects to mention, but that a great many philosophers, both dead and alive, accept. Two big ones are: the irreducible existence of consciousness, and the
irreducible nature of personal explanation. [Keith Ward: *Why There Almost Certainly Is a God (Doubting Dawkins)*, Lion Hudson plc 2008, p25.]

- The God hypothesis connects personal and scientific explanation by postulating that there is an overarching cosmic personal explanation that explains physical states and laws as means to realizing some envisaged purpose. This, I think, seems a very elegant solution. [Keith Ward: *Why There Almost Certainly Is a God (Doubting Dawkins)*, Lion Hudson plc 2008, p25.]

- For the moment, it is easy to see that the God hypothesis and the materialist hypothesis clash head-on. The debate is not primarily about whether the physical universe needs a designing intelligence to explain why it exists. It is about whether the physical universe really is the ultimate reality, or whether the ultimate reality has the nature of mind or consciousness. [Keith Ward: *Why There Almost Certainly Is a God (Doubting Dawkins)*, Lion Hudson plc 2008, p26.]

- Arguments for God disagree with materialism at the very first step, the step of saying that matter has independent, solid, obvious reality. [Keith Ward: *Why There Almost Certainly Is a God (Doubting Dawkins)*, Lion Hudson plc 2008, p26.]

- [Dawkins] says that ‘the existence of God is a scientific hypothesis like any other’. Of course, he really knows this is not true. He is setting a trap for theists, to try to get them to accept materialism without realizing quite what they are doing. He does that very cleverly, as one would expect. But it is very easy to show that he is wrong. [Richard Dawkins, *The God Delusion*, Bantam Press, 2006, p. 50.] [Keith Ward: *Why There Almost Certainly Is a God (Doubting Dawkins)*, Lion Hudson plc 2008, p26.]

- If a hypothesis cannot be tested under specifiable conditions, it is not a scientific hypothesis. There are lots of hypotheses that are not scientific. For instance, most of the hypotheses made by historians are not scientific. [Keith Ward: *Why There Almost Certainly Is a God (Doubting Dawkins)*, Lion Hudson plc 2008, p27.]

- Can We Establish by Science That God Exists?

- If there are no events at all that could reasonably be taken as revealing the presence of God, then the God hypothesis is less probable. If prayers were
never felt to be answered, the hypothesis that God answers prayer would be much less probable. [Keith Ward: *Why There Almost Certainly Is a God (Doubting Dawkins)*, Lion Hudson plc 2008, p28.]

- As Dawkins rightly says, ‘A universe with a supernaturally intelligent creator is a very different kind of universe from one without.’ However, he also admits that ‘it may not be so easy in practice to distinguish one kind of universe from the other’. [Richard Dawkins, The God Delusion, Bantam Press, 2006, p. 59.] [Ibid., p. 61.] [Keith Ward: *Why There Almost Certainly Is a God (Doubting Dawkins)*, Lion Hudson plc 2008, p28.]

- A universe without God might well be a universe without any general and reliable laws of nature. It would have no purpose and no objective morality or moral goal. It might be without any conscious life, morally responsible agents, or beings that could understand and appreciate the beauty and intelligibility of nature. In such a world there would be no intelligent agents, no miracles, no divine revelation and no providential direction of history. There would be no immortality and no apprehensions of the divine in art, morality, nature, or in contemplative prayer. A theist would add, of course, that without God there would be no universe at all! [Keith Ward: *Why There Almost Certainly Is a God (Doubting Dawkins)*, Lion Hudson plc 2008, p28, 29.]

- Of course it is a question of fact [the resurrection of Jesus], of what actually happened in history. But there is no way of directly confirming that history now by personal experience of it. It is a historical, not a scientific, question. And it concerns the experiences of a group of long-dead people, the disciples of Jesus. The judgment as to whether or not the resurrection happened as recorded in the Bible is likely to depend on whether or not you already believe in God. It is not public evidence for God. It would confirm belief in a God of a certain kind if we also already accepted, or if we were open to the possibility of, a set of beliefs that made such a divine action plausible. [Keith Ward: *Why There Almost Certainly Is a God (Doubting Dawkins)*, Lion Hudson plc 2008, p29, 30.]

- I conclude that the question of God is certainly a factual one, but certainly not a scientific one. It lies at the very deep level of ultimate metaphysical options. So while evidence can be marshalled for or against it, it will never be
conclusively settled, either for or against. [Keith Ward: *Why There Almost Certainly Is a God (Doubting Dawkins)*, Lion Hudson plc 2008, p30.]

**Part 2: On Chapter Four of The God Delusion**

2 Large Aeroplanes and God

- It is difficult to think of a God who creates the universe for a purpose, yet leaves the outcome completely to chance – in which case the divine purpose might never get realized. But it is easy to think that an intelligent God might set up the basic laws of nature so that intelligent life would inevitably result. [Keith Ward: *Why There Almost Certainly Is a God (Doubting Dawkins)*, Lion Hudson plc 2008, p35.]

- It does seem to be immensely improbable that this whole set-up should exist – that is, general laws that cause subatomic particles to assemble into fairly stable atoms, which in turn assemble into long complicated self-replicating molecules, which form codes for assembling proteins into organic bodies that replicate and become, over time, increasingly well adapted to their environment, so that hugely intricate and complex organisms live and reproduce – just as a result of the operation of a few general laws and a set of simple subatomic particles. [Keith Ward: *Why There Almost Certainly Is a God (Doubting Dawkins)*, Lion Hudson plc 2008, p36.]

- What is the moral? The moral is that it takes a very intelligent being to devise a set of laws and a suitable environment (with the right degree of oxygen and nitrogen, the right distance from a star and the right protection from the most destructive cosmic debris) to produce a process that will result in the origin of complex replicating organisms. [Keith Ward: *Why There Almost Certainly Is a God (Doubting Dawkins)*, Lion Hudson plc 2008, p37.]

- That is why the whole process is still hugely improbable. It is improbable, given the possible range of alternatives – different constants of gravity, different values of the strong and weak nuclear forces, different planetary conditions – that could equally easily have existed. [Keith Ward: *Why There Almost Certainly Is a God (Doubting Dawkins)*, Lion Hudson plc 2008, p38.]

- Darwin does explain (make more probable) the existence of complex organisms by processes of replication, modification and selection operating
on simpler parts. But Darwin does not explain just why those processes and the laws on which they are based are as effective as they are. Darwin’s theory does not make probable the existence of those laws, when there seem to be a great many alternatives to their being as they are. [Keith Ward: *Why There Almost Certainly Is a God (Doubting Dawkins)*, Lion Hudson plc 2008, p38, 39.]


- He writes, ‘We can safely predict that, if we wait another ten million years, a whole new set of species will be as well adapted to their ways of life as today’s species are to theirs.’ But this is a very controversial claim. The earth might have been destroyed long before that. Or strands of DNA may, for some reason, just stop replicating at all, decomposing into pools of chemicals. Or the mutations that occur may fail to produce the stable structures with relatively gentle modifications that are necessary to enable cumulative selection and adaptation to occur. [Richard Dawkins, *The God Delusion*, p. 140.] [Keith Ward: *Why There Almost Certainly Is a God (Doubting Dawkins)*, Lion Hudson plc 2008, p39.]

- There is any number of ways in which the Darwinian process of slow, gradual, cumulative adaptation could fail. This is not an argument for God. But it shows that reliance on the predictability of nature, and on its tendency to produce increasingly complex and adapted organic life-forms, is dependent on a very specific adjustment of physical laws that is itself hugely improbable. [Keith Ward: *Why There Almost Certainly Is a God (Doubting Dawkins)*, Lion Hudson plc 2008, p39.]

- In the rather weaker sense, coming about ‘by chance’ means by a random shuffling of possible states of a physical system. [Keith Ward: *Why There
Almost Certainly Is a God (Doubting Dawkins), Lion Hudson plc 2008, p40, 41.]
• One very good candidate for a final explanation is the existence of God, who could ensure that the laws of nature were just right for the evolution of intelligent life. [Keith Ward: Why There Almost Certainly Is a God (Doubting Dawkins), Lion Hudson plc 2008, p42.]
• God is capable of all possible actions that are compatible with the divine nature. [Keith Ward: Why There Almost Certainly Is a God (Doubting Dawkins), Lion Hudson plc 2008, p48.]
• In traditional religious thought there are three important senses in which God is said to be simple. The first is that God is not complex in the sense of being composed of separate and separable parts. (...) In this sense, God is simple in a way that no physical thing is simple, because physical things are made of smaller, separable parts. [Keith Ward: Why There Almost Certainly Is a God (Doubting Dawkins), Lion Hudson plc 2008, p48.]
• A third sense in which God is simple is that God is the one and only cause of all existence except the divine existence itself, which can have no cause. This is the sense often described as Occam’s Razor – ‘do not multiply entities unnecessarily’. [Keith Ward: Why There Almost Certainly Is a God (Doubting Dawkins), Lion Hudson plc 2008, p49.]

3 Explaining God

• Many people find it hard to understand how God can be the final explanation of everything. For, they say, when you have posited God as the explanation, you still have to face the question, ‘Who made God?’ That question is unanswerable. So your explanation has not really got you anywhere. [Keith Ward: Why There Almost Certainly Is a God (Doubting Dawkins), Lion Hudson plc 2008, p51.]
• The point is made by Paul Davies in a little story that he sometimes tells of the woman who said that the universe rests on the back of a turtle. When asked, ‘What does the turtle rest on?’, she said, ‘You can’t get me there. It’s turtles all the way down.’ So the question is, how can you put an end to the chain of turtles? Is God just one turtle among others, so that God must be explained by a super-God, who must be explained by a hyper-God, and so on without end? [Keith Ward: Why There Almost Certainly Is a God
But if we can think of something being in time, then it follows, by a simple process of negation, that we can also think of something not being in time. Call that an eternal thing. If there is an eternal thing, then it could not be brought into being by anything else, since it could not be brought into being at all. Since it is not in time, there never was a time when it was not, and it could not possibly be brought into being. (...) Presumably, however – and certainly, if there is to be a final explanation – there is at least one eternal thing that does not depend on anything else for its existence. Such an eternal thing has no possible cause. It either is or it is not. But eternal things could be the cause of things in time, and indeed in modern physics time is often said to be caused by a super-temporal reality beyond it (for instance, by the vacuum state posited by some quantum theories).

Notice that a timeless cause is not the first thing in time. It is the cause of everything in time, whether time has a beginning and an end or not.

‘Who made God?’ The answer is that God is eternal, so nothing could possibly make God, cause God, bring God into being, or kill God either. Once you see that God is eternal, you will never again ask the question, ‘Who or what made God?’ You will see that the question does not make sense.

An explanation of the universe is something that makes it more probable that the universe should be as it is. Ideally, the final explanation would make the universe virtually certain. But a truly final explanation would have to explain why the explanation itself is the way it is. It would have to be self-explanatory. Can anyone think of such a thing? The best way to approach this question is to remember why the universe needs explaining in the first place. It needs explaining because it is contingent. The universe could have been different in millions of ways, or it might not have existed at all. It is precisely because there are so many alternative possibilities to the existence
and nature of this universe that we want to explain why this particular possibility was realized. [Keith Ward: *Why There Almost Certainly Is a God (Doubting Dawkins)*, Lion Hudson plc 2008, p53, 54.]

- If the universe has to be the way it is, if there are no alternative possibilities, that will be a final and completely satisfying explanation. The trouble is that we can think of lots of alternative forms the universe could take. It is contingent. So if it has a final explanation, that must lie outside the universe, in some being that is necessary, to which there are no alternatives. [Keith Ward: *Why There Almost Certainly Is a God (Doubting Dawkins)*, Lion Hudson plc 2008, p54.]

- And we have seen that any final explanation for the universe will have to be both necessary and eternal, and so it cannot possibly be caused. [Keith Ward: *Why There Almost Certainly Is a God (Doubting Dawkins)*, Lion Hudson plc 2008, p55.]

- The hypothesis that every possible universe exists is the most extravagant hypothesis anyone could think of, and it breaks Occam’s rule of simplicity with a resounding smash. If the simple is good, then the fewer universes there are the better. [Keith Ward: *Why There Almost Certainly Is a God (Doubting Dawkins)*, Lion Hudson plc 2008, p59, 57.]

- The hypothesis of God is especially attractive, because it does not really look as though the fundamental laws and states of the universe are very simple at all. There is a whole ‘particle zoo’ at the subatomic level. There is dark energy and dark matter. There are many complex equations in quantum theory. [Keith Ward: *Why There Almost Certainly Is a God (Doubting Dawkins)*, Lion Hudson plc 2008, p57.]

- The scientific search for one neat ‘Theory of Everything’, which would somehow embrace all lower-level physical laws, is looking very unlikely to succeed. The hypothesis that such a search will succeed is an article of faith in the power of science. It is not an unreasonable faith; there are good reasons, in the past success of science and the elegance of the laws so far discovered, to hold it. [Keith Ward: *Why There Almost Certainly Is a God (Doubting Dawkins)*, Lion Hudson plc 2008, p57.]

- Are all the possibilities of the universe somehow already implicit in its primordial structure? In other words, are all the laws of nature present at the
Big Bang, or do they change and develop with the developing universe? If all the laws always existed, then perhaps, if we knew all those laws in sufficient detail, we could predict, at least in general, all future possibilities – like, for instance, the emergence of intelligent life. [Keith Ward: *Why There Almost Certainly Is a God (Doubting Dawkins)*, Lion Hudson plc 2008, p58.]

- So it is not obvious, to say the least, that all the laws of nature reduce to a few simple laws. It looks more likely that there are many levels of laws, governing the relations between different kinds of entity at various levels of complexity and emergence. [Keith Ward: *Why There Almost Certainly Is a God (Doubting Dawkins)*, Lion Hudson plc 2008, p59.]

- The laws of this universe could easily have been different. The values of Planck’s constant, the gravitational constant, the strong and weak nuclear forces, and the electromagnetic force could easily have been different. Physicists have shown that if they were, even by a minute degree, it is highly unlikely that carbon-based life-forms like us could ever have existed. [Keith Ward: *Why There Almost Certainly Is a God (Doubting Dawkins)*, Lion Hudson plc 2008, p60.]

- So we do have a probability problem about the laws of nature. The problem is not that the laws are complex. The problem is that they are only one set of possibilities among a whole range of alternatives, and it would be nice to have an explanation of why they are as they are. [Keith Ward: *Why There Almost Certainly Is a God (Doubting Dawkins)*, Lion Hudson plc 2008, p60.]


- Once you introduce God, you have moved outside the realm of science. [Keith Ward: *Why There Almost Certainly Is a God (Doubting Dawkins)*, Lion Hudson plc 2008, p61.]

- Introducing God into a theory is just a label for ignorance – ‘If you don’t understand how something works, never mind: just give up and say God did

Isaac Newton was inspired to search for general laws of motion and mechanics precisely by the thought that the universe was designed by God, in which case its laws would be both intelligible and elegant. The scientific enterprise in its modern sense originated in a theistic culture, and most histories of science agree that belief in a God who created the universe through wisdom (in the Christian case, through logos or intellect) was a direct inspiration to scientific investigation into the causes of things.] [Keith Ward: Why There Almost Certainly Is a God (Doubting Dawkins), Lion Hudson plc 2008, p61.]

- God is not part of a scientific explanation. The reason is quite simple: God is part of a personal explanation, which is not reducible to scientific explanation, and has a different function. [Keith Ward: Why There Almost Certainly Is a God (Doubting Dawkins), Lion Hudson plc 2008, p62.]

4 God and the Multiverse

- God is a fundamental metaphysical hypothesis about the ultimate nature of reality, and God leaves the investigations of science fully intact. [Keith Ward: Why There Almost Certainly Is a God (Doubting Dawkins), Lion Hudson plc 2008, p67.]

- What, then, are the problems of the multiverse? [An informative recent discussion, mostly from a strictly scientific point of view, is: Bernard Carr (ed.), Universe or Multiverse?, Cambridge University Press, 2007.] [Keith Ward: Why There Almost Certainly Is a God (Doubting Dawkins), Lion Hudson plc 2008, p67.]

- The first is the Hugh Everett ‘many-worlds’ interpretation of quantum mechanics. (...) the many-worlds interpretation assumes that the laws and constants of nature remain the same in all the parallel worlds of quantum theory. [Keith Ward: Why There Almost Certainly Is a God (Doubting Dawkins), Lion Hudson plc 2008, p67, 68.]

- The second theory, one mentioned by Dawkins, is the hypothesis that each universe expands and then collapses again into the ‘Big Crunch’. Then a slightly different universe expands, with a slightly different set of laws and constants. As he says, this serial multiverse view is not favoured by
contemporary cosmology, which sees this universe as irreversibly expanding until it finally runs out of energy. [Keith Ward: *Why There Almost Certainly Is a God (Doubting Dawkins)*, Lion Hudson plc 2008, p68.]

- The third theory is the Lee Smolin hypothesis that baby universes are born in black holes by a sort of random mutation process. Those that survive produce more black holes and more babies, and so mutated universes are produced by a hyper-Darwinian cosmic algorithm. Sooner or later one of these babies will produce intelligent life, and this is the one. [Lee Smolin, *The Life of the Cosmos*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1997.] [Keith Ward: *Why There Almost Certainly Is a God (Doubting Dawkins)*, Lion Hudson plc 2008, p68.]

- A fourth multiverse hypothesis, also mentioned by Dawkins, is sometimes called the ‘inflationary’ hypothesis. Each universe is like a bubble; many bubbles are spread out in space and possibly in time; and all universes together form a bubbly multiverse, with different sets of laws in each universe. [Keith Ward: *Why There Almost Certainly Is a God (Doubting Dawkins)*, Lion Hudson plc 2008, p68, 69.]

- We are left with the question that Stephen Hawking asked in *A Brief History of Time*: ‘What is it that breathes fire into the equations and makes a universe for them to describe?’ [Stephen Hawking, *A Brief History of Time*, 10th edition, 1998, p. 190.] [Keith Ward: *Why There Almost Certainly Is a God (Doubting Dawkins)*, Lion Hudson plc 2008, p71.]

- The cosmological search has, in the end, just been put back a stage, so that we now have to ask: what accounts for the hyper-laws of the multiverse? [Keith Ward: *Why There Almost Certainly Is a God (Doubting Dawkins)*, Lion Hudson plc 2008, p72.]

- This is a fifth sort of multiverse, one advocated by Max Tegmark, in which every mathematically possible universe actually exists. [Max Tegmark, ‘The Multiverse Hierarchy’ in *Universe or Multiverse?*] [Keith Ward: *Why There Almost Certainly Is a God (Doubting Dawkins)*, Lion Hudson plc 2008, p73.]

- Tegmark is thinking about purely physical values for the forces and constants of a universe, but I would have thought that among possible universes is one with God as its creator. Why could we not exist in that one? Indeed, as the
American philosopher Alvin Plantinga has argued, if there is a possible universe in which God exists as a necessary being, and if ‘necessary’ means ‘actual in all possible universes’, then if God exists in any actual universe, there will be no possible universe without God. [Alvin Plantinga, The Nature of Necessity, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1974.] [Keith Ward: Why There Almost Certainly Is a God (Doubting Dawkins), Lion Hudson plc 2008, p73.]

- There are other features of the extreme multiverse hypothesis that Dawkins would not like. If every possible state is realized somewhere, a virgin birth is bound to happen sooner or later. Indeed, if every possible physical state and combination of states will exist sooner or later, then in some universe there are miracles of every possible sort continually taking place, and that universe could be ours! [Keith Ward: Why There Almost Certainly Is a God (Doubting Dawkins), Lion Hudson plc 2008, p74.]

- We think the laws of nature will continue to be reliable. This entails a strong faith or commitment, well beyond the evidence, to the rule of law in nature. [Keith Ward: Why There Almost Certainly Is a God (Doubting Dawkins), Lion Hudson plc 2008, p74, 75.]

- So the multiverse hypothesis may increase the probability of this universe existing. But it does not remove the huge improbability of all possible universes existing! [Keith Ward: Why There Almost Certainly Is a God (Doubting Dawkins), Lion Hudson plc 2008, p76.]

- It is vitally important that we do not think of God as some sort of human-like being with lots of fairly arbitrary characteristics. That idea has never been supported by a leading theologian of any major monotheistic tradition. [Keith Ward: Why There Almost Certainly Is a God (Doubting Dawkins), Lion Hudson plc 2008, p78.]

- I propose that consciousness, though in the human case it is a factor that emerges from the physical development of the brain, is an irreducible fact, like energy or matter. A conscious state is not just a physical state. It has its own proper reality, and no account of reality that ignores it can be complete. [Keith Ward: Why There Almost Certainly Is a God (Doubting Dawkins), Lion Hudson plc 2008, p79.]

- Indeed, if there is a final explanation for the universe, it virtually has to be
God! [Keith Ward: *Why There Almost Certainly Is a God (Doubting Dawkins)*, Lion Hudson plc 2008, p81.]

- Far from belief in God being some sort of irrational leap of faith, it is the most rational hypothesis there is; and perhaps it is the only plausible and sure foundation of the rationality of the universe that science presupposes. [Keith Ward: *Why There Almost Certainly Is a God (Doubting Dawkins)*, Lion Hudson plc 2008, p82.]

5 Objections and Replies

- Sometimes people ask, ‘How can such a pure mind, even if it is possible, cause matter to exist?’ But the proper answer to that question is to ask how anything, physical or otherwise, can cause – bring into existence – anything else at all! We simply do not know how anything can cause anything else. For a mental state to produce a physical state does not seem to be any more difficult than for one physical state to produce another, or for a physical state to produce a mental state. All causal relations are a mystery to us. [Keith Ward: *Why There Almost Certainly Is a God (Doubting Dawkins)*, Lion Hudson plc 2008, p85.]

- To put that point the other way around, if the universe is really contingent, and God creates it, then there must be something contingent about God after all – the divine act of creating a contingent universe must itself be contingent. Are we stuck with a contradiction? We are not. But we do need to say that God is both necessary and contingent: necessary in some respects and contingent in others. [Keith Ward: *Why There Almost Certainly Is a God (Doubting Dawkins)*, Lion Hudson plc 2008, p86.]

- Happiness is intrinsically good; a rational being would choose it for its own sake, as long as it did not lead to later harm or evil. So there is at least one intrinsic good. There are many other intrinsic goods. Among them, knowledge, power and creativity (in the sense of ability to do things) are intrinsic goods that every rational being has reason to choose for their own sake. [Keith Ward: *Why There Almost Certainly Is a God (Doubting Dawkins)*, Lion Hudson plc 2008, p89.]

- Thus we might amend Leibniz’s account a little. We could say, not that this is the best of all possible worlds, but that it is the only possible world that would allow us, and the distinctive sorts of values and good things that we can
enjoy, to exist. [Keith Ward: *Why There Almost Certainly Is a God (Doubting Dawkins)*, Lion Hudson plc 2008, p91.]

- This may not be the best of all possible worlds. But it may be the only universe that can actualize the sorts of values that we carbon-based life-forms can actualize. God may well desire such lifeforms. In that case some evils must exist in our world. And the world necessarily carries the possibility of greater evils, if we misuse our freedom. [Keith Ward: *Why There Almost Certainly Is a God (Doubting Dawkins)*, Lion Hudson plc 2008, p93.]

- A perfectly good God would never desire suffering, but might perhaps be able to use suffering for the good of the sufferer as well as for others. I do not mean that suffering would ever be good in itself – that is a horrifying thought. But I do mean that suffering could be used to realize a form of good that otherwise would not have existed. [Keith Ward: *Why There Almost Certainly Is a God (Doubting Dawkins)*, Lion Hudson plc 2008, p93.]

- The creator creates – and perhaps has to create – for the sake of good, but cannot prevent the occurrence of suffering, though the creator never intends it, and never creates it as a means to a good end. You may say the creator still bears responsibility for it. Perhaps the creator shares and experiences that suffering too. But the final and only justification must be that it is indeed unpreventable in any universe in which we exist. [Keith Ward: *Why There Almost Certainly Is a God (Doubting Dawkins)*, Lion Hudson plc 2008, p94.]

- I am suggesting that the suffering need not be pointless; that God could transform it in a greater and wider reality so that it becomes part of a whole life and a wider community that, though tragic, yet realizes undeniable and unique forms of goodness. [Keith Ward: *Why There Almost Certainly Is a God (Doubting Dawkins)*, Lion Hudson plc 2008, p95.]

**Part 3 On Chapter Three of The God Delusion**

6 The Five Ways

- If you are interested in Aquinas’ own formulation, it can be found in his great work the Summa Theologiae. [Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologiae, Part 1a, Question 2, Article 3, ‘Is There a God?’] [Keith Ward: *Why There Almost Certainly Is a God (Doubting Dawkins)*, Lion Hudson plc 2008,
• A valid proof cannot contain more in the conclusion than was implicit in the premises, even though the conclusion may be psychologically surprising or unexpected. If you reject the premises and axioms of a proof, then clearly it will not prove anything to you. It is a matter of thinking whether you really do accept the premises, and then of seeing whether the suggested implications of that acceptance are as the proof says. [Keith Ward: *Why There Almost Certainly Is a God (Doubting Dawkins)*, Lion Hudson plc 2008, p103.]

• The Five Ways only have a hope of working if we accept the unstated first premises that the universe is an intelligible and rational structure, and that the search for a final, ultimately satisfying explanation of that is a rational and proper search. [Keith Ward: *Why There Almost Certainly Is a God (Doubting Dawkins)*, Lion Hudson plc 2008, p103.]

• The ‘Second Way’ amplifies this argument by drawing attention not just to change, but to the origin or coming into being of things. Everything, says Aquinas, that comes into being is brought into being by something else. Modern science is founded on this postulate – that every event has a cause. So though it could be denied, nobody with a scientific inclination would deny it. [Keith Ward: *Why There Almost Certainly Is a God (Doubting Dawkins)*, Lion Hudson plc 2008, p106.]

• Of course, no particular argument for God establishes everything we want to know about God. [Keith Ward: *Why There Almost Certainly Is a God (Doubting Dawkins)*, Lion Hudson plc 2008, p109.]

• Hume is right in thinking that we cannot prove that a necessary being exists just by claiming to conceive or frame the idea of one (for instance, as ‘a being that exists in every possible world’). That is the ontological argument, and most philosophers accept that it does not work. [Keith Ward: *Why There Almost Certainly Is a God (Doubting Dawkins)*, Lion Hudson plc 2008, p110.]

• Then we could say that there are necessary limits on the things God, as an ultimately necessary being, can do. God cannot do absolutely anything. But since we do not know the inner nature of God, we cannot know exactly what the limits of divine necessity are. Presumably God cannot commit suicide, or
do evil for its own sake, or change the past. God is nevertheless omnipotent, because God is the only source of all finite existence, and can do the maximum that any possible being can do. [Keith Ward: *Why There Almost Certainly Is a God (Doubting Dawkins)*, Lion Hudson plc 2008, p113.]

- What God cannot do is laid down by the necessities of the divine nature, which no possible being could evade. That is as much as we could reasonably ask of a definition of omnipotence. [Keith Ward: *Why There Almost Certainly Is a God (Doubting Dawkins)*, Lion Hudson plc 2008, p113.]
- For Aristotle all substances (things) have four sorts of causes: a material cause (what the substance is made of); a formal cause (the essential nature of the substance); an efficient cause (what brings the substance into being); and a final cause (that for the sake of which the substance exists). [Keith Ward: *Why There Almost Certainly Is a God (Doubting Dawkins)*, Lion Hudson plc 2008, p117.]
- The function of the ontological argument, then, is not to prove God, but to remind us of the uniqueness and incomparability of the divine being. It spells out what it is to be a being of supreme perfection. [Keith Ward: *Why There Almost Certainly Is a God (Doubting Dawkins)*, Lion Hudson plc 2008, p122.]

### 7 The Argument from Personal Experience

- We know that there are many fraudulent claims to have seen apparitions. There are many cases of people who hear voices telling them to do terrible things. There are many people who are deluded into thinking they have been abducted by extra-terrestrials or are really Napoleon. So we are wise to be careful. But if there are fraudulent and deluded claims, it is logically possible that there could be genuine claims by people who are not immoral, or who are not in general ‘mad’ (suffering from mental beliefs that make them unable to run their lives effectively or happily). [Keith Ward: *Why There Almost Certainly Is a God (Doubting Dawkins)*, Lion Hudson plc 2008, p127.]
• Again, we have to judge as well as we can whether a person has such a close relationship to God. We will examine their lives for moral heroism, inspired wisdom, spiritual peace and joy, a sense of union with the supreme Spirit, and liberation from self. But it is reasonable to think that some humans will have an especially close and intense knowledge and love of God, or that God will take some human lives and unite them closely to the divine in knowledge and love. They will become the channels of divine revelation of what God is and of what God desires for us and for the world. [Keith Ward: Why There Almost Certainly Is a God (Doubting Dawkins), Lion Hudson plc 2008, p128.]

• The religious sensibility is the apprehension of a deeper reality known in and through some finite reality, and conveying a sense of overwhelming value and power. Such a sense can be conveyed by the beauties of the natural world, by the elegance and complexity of physical structures, and by great works of art, literature and music. It may be called a ‘sense of transcendence’, of beauty, power and goodness, which communicates an apprehension of a reality underlying the appearance of space, time and sense. [Keith Ward: Why There Almost Certainly Is a God (Doubting Dawkins), Lion Hudson plc 2008, p129.]

• The argument is not that if there is great art there must be a God to account for it; that would indeed be silly. The argument is that if there is a supreme Spirit, it will be known through works of beauty that express part of its nature in a striking and effective way. [Keith Ward: Why There Almost Certainly Is a God (Doubting Dawkins), Lion Hudson plc 2008, p130.]

• Great art does not prove God. It expresses transcendent Spirit, and that is what links art to the existence of God. [Keith Ward: Why There Almost Certainly Is a God (Doubting Dawkins), Lion Hudson plc 2008, p130.]

• Religions exist largely to increase wisdom, compassion and joy, and to liberate humans from self-obsessive desire. But they only partly succeed, and the failures, while very apparent, should not be allowed to obscure the goal. [Keith Ward: Why There Almost Certainly Is a God (Doubting Dawkins), Lion Hudson plc 2008, p133.]

• Yet the sense of absolute and objective obligation is hard to account for in a purely materialist philosophy. [Keith Ward: Why There Almost Certainly Is
I would not suggest that God is necessary for morality. I hope that the practical claims of duty are strong enough to take precedence over any lack of intellectual belief in objective moral truths. But I do suggest that moral experience is an important root of belief in a God, and that, conversely, belief in God adds a particular strength and tone to the experience of obligation. [Keith Ward: *Why There Almost Certainly Is a God (Doubting Dawkins)*, Lion Hudson plc 2008, p134, 135.]

Second, if God is an Ideal of supreme beauty and goodness, then we will not see our duties simply as the commands of some arbitrary power. We will rationally desire to know and love that supreme beauty, so that it may attract us to itself and shape our natures more fully on its own. The motivation for moral action will not just be duty; it will be love of the Good, and desire to be as like it, and to be as closely united with it, as we can. [Keith Ward: *Why There Almost Certainly Is a God (Doubting Dawkins)*, Lion Hudson plc 2008, p135.]

Finally, if there is a God, then moral endeavour will not be in vain. Such endeavour may often entail self-sacrifice or even martyrdom in the cause of justice. A creator God who creates in order that goodness may flourish will ensure that justice will be victorious, and will not be defeated through human failure or death. [Keith Ward: *Why There Almost Certainly Is a God (Doubting Dawkins)*, Lion Hudson plc 2008, p136.]

You can be, and should be, a person of strong moral principle without belief in God. But there is a way of seeing morality that is virtually already a form of belief in transcendent moral goodness. And for many people, a serious commitment to the moral life will lead to that path. For the believer in God, morality and religion are indissolubly tied together, and morality, seen in this way, is itself a journey into God. [Keith Ward: *Why There Almost Certainly Is a God (Doubting Dawkins)*, Lion Hudson plc 2008, p137.]

8 Why There Is a God

As to the question of evidence, I think that is rather like asking why we have to try so hard to discover scientific truth. Why did God not just tell us about quantum physics, and make it all obvious? There is a truth about the physical world, but it is extremely hard to discover. Part of being human is having to
learn for ourselves, after taking many false paths and blind alleys, what the world is like. [Keith Ward: *Why There Almost Certainly Is a God (Doubting Dawkins)*, Lion Hudson plc 2008, p141.]

- In morality, too, we have to learn by experience, through argument and reflection – and even then there is no unanimity of opinion. [Keith Ward: *Why There Almost Certainly Is a God (Doubting Dawkins)*, Lion Hudson plc 2008, p141.]

- So in questions of metaphysics, about the ultimate nature of reality, about human nature, and about the best way to live, we have to learn and argue and follow our own reason as well as we can. [Keith Ward: *Why There Almost Certainly Is a God (Doubting Dawkins)*, Lion Hudson plc 2008, p141.]

- I would absolutely not believe that people like Dawkins are in some way to be ‘eternally punished’ for what seems to me a bout of intellectual myopia. (…) But as a Christian I feel compelled to say that God will meet him [Dawkins] with unlimited love and the offer of unconditional forgiveness. If there is a hell, it is a condition in which persons have knowingly rejected the clearly perceived love of God. (…) I cannot think that a God of supreme love would condemn anyone just for honestly not thinking that God exists. [Keith Ward: *Why There Almost Certainly Is a God (Doubting Dawkins)*, Lion Hudson plc 2008, p143.]

- So, however God comes to be known to atheists, it will be in love and compassion, not in some paroxysm of vindictive glee, as if to say, ‘There, I told you so; you should have believed, shouldn’t you? But now it’s too late. Hee hee.’ Even if there are people who think that is what God is like, that cannot be what a God of supreme goodness is actually like. [Keith Ward: *Why There Almost Certainly Is a God (Doubting Dawkins)*, Lion Hudson plc 2008, p143.]

- Almost certain? Can I really mean that, when so many thousands of people do not believe there is a God, and when Dawkins and others argue so strongly against belief in God? Well, I mean it in the same sense that Dawkins means it when he says that there ‘almost certainly is no God’. [Keith Ward: *Why There Almost Certainly Is a God (Doubting Dawkins)*, Lion Hudson plc 2008, p144, 145.]

- As I have presented the case, there are two main avenues of exploration. One
leads to the search for a final explanation of the cosmos. The other leads to a consideration of various types of personal experience that suggest a sense of transcendent value. [Keith Ward: *Why There Almost Certainly Is a God (Doubting Dawkins)*, Lion Hudson plc 2008, p146.]

- It is not that both theism and atheism are equally reasonable. One of them is reasonable and true, and the other is not. The problem is that we cannot be sure which one is wrong. Rationality and truth are very hard to achieve. [Keith Ward: *Why There Almost Certainly Is a God (Doubting Dawkins)*, Lion Hudson plc 2008, p148.]

الحمد لله الذي بنعمته تتم الصالحات