

ETERNITY - IS IT ABSURD TO IMAGINE A MOMENT WHICH NEVER PASSES? HOW IT RELATES TO GOD BEING ETERNAL

Brian Davies in *The Reality of God and the Problem of Evil* says that the existence of God is not derived by God from anything. He doesn't need anything to exist. He doesn't depend on anything. God does not cause himself because that would be like God existing before himself to make himself. God does not make himself and nothing causes him to exist because existence is his by nature (page 65, 66, *The Reality of God and the Problem of Evil*). What do we mean by saying existence is God's by nature? We mean that his essence is the same thing as his existence. His nature is his existence. There is no distinction. This is the same thing as simply saying that God is uncaused. Davies says that saying this is not the same as saying God is a necessary being, a being that somehow has to exist. In other words, it just isn't possible for there to have been nothing – there had to be a God. Davies is not rejecting the necessary being thinking but just saying he doesn't need it – the essential is in having a God who is uncreated and causeless.

The argument from necessity cannot be discussed properly without discussing eternity.

There are only two definitions of eternity and one is the opposite of the other.

1) Eternity is like a present moment which didn't have a past or future. So the present there doesn't change and its like a static present moment. That is what it consists of.

This makes eternity necessary. It has to exist. Even if there is nothing it has to exist and is an aspect of nothing. Another word for it is timelessness.

Time then is often seen as unnecessary so it must be created by a necessary being. Is each moment of time happening all at once in the "moment" of eternity? Time proceeds from eternity so it would be. The two have to run together at the one time. Eternity cannot change so it is always there.

2) Eternity is time that had no beginning or no end. It does change.

It could freeze so that there will be no future. It follows that each moment is unnecessary. For example, there doesn't have to be a next moment. So it follows that from start to finish there was no need for any moments at all.

The necessary being or God would have to be eternal in the first sense. Eternity the state of permanence is the right state for him and if time is not a thing but changes then it could happen that God could end up frozen if time stops. He wouldn't be almighty then.

The idea of God being that kind of eternal is so odd that it shows there is something wrong with the concept. Or at best it shows it is such a mystery that you cannot comment on what time or anything is or how things came to be.

WORKS CONSULTED

- A HISTORY OF GOD, Karen Armstrong, Mandarin, London, 1994
- A HISTORY OF PHILOSOPHY, VOL 6, PART II, KANT, Frederick Copleston SJ, Doubleday/Image, New York, 1964
- A PATH FROM ROME, Anthony Kenny Sidgwick & Jackson, London, 1985
- A SUMMARY OF CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE, Louis Berkhof, The Banner of Truth Trust, London, 1971
- AN INTELLIGENT PERSONS GUIDE TO CATHOLICISM, Alban McCoy, Continuum, London and New York, 1997
- AN INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHICAL ANALYSIS, John Hospers, Routledge, London, 1992
- APOLOGETICS AND CATHOLIC DOCTRINE, Part 1, Most Rev M Sheehan DD, MH Gill, & Son, Dublin, 1954
- APOLOGETICS FOR THE PULPIT, Aloysius Roche, Burns Oates & Washbourne LTD, London, 1950
- AQUINAS, FC Copleston, Penguin Books, London, 1991
- ARGUING WITH GOD, Hugh Sylvester, IVP, London, 1971
- ASKING THEM QUESTIONS, Various, Oxford University Press, London, 1936
- BELIEVING IN GOD, PJ McGrath, Wolfhound Press, Dublin, 1995
- CONTROVERSY: THE HUMANIST CHRISTIAN ENCOUNTER, Hector Hawton, Pemberton Books, London, 1971
- CRITIQUES OF GOD, Edited by Peter A Angeles, Prometheus Books, New York, 1995
- DIALOGUES CONCERNING NATURAL RELIGION, David Hume, William Blackwood and Sons, Edinburgh and London, 1907
- DOES GOD EXIST? Brian Davies OP, Catholic Truth Society, London, 1982

DOES GOD EXIST? Herbert W Armstrong, Worldwide Church of God, Pasadena, California, 1972
 DOING AWAY WITH GOD? Russell Stannard, Marshall Pickering, London, 1993
 GOD A GUIDE FOR THE PERPLEXED Keith Ward, OneWorld, Oxford, 2003
 GOD AND PHILOSOPHY, Antony Flew, Hutchinson, London, 1966
 GOD AND THE HUMAN CONDITION, F J Sheed, Sheed & Ward, London 1967
 GOD AND THE NEW PHYSICS, Paul Davies, Penguin Books, London, 1990
 GOD IS NOT GREAT, THE CASE AGAINST RELIGION, Christopher Hitchens, Atlantic Books, London, 2007
 GOD THE PROBLEM, Gordon D Kaufman, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1973
 HANDBOOK OF CHRISTIAN APOLOGETICS, Peter Kreeft and Ronald Tacelli, Monarch, East Sussex, 1995
 HISTORY OF PHILOSOPHY, VOL 2, Frederick Copleston SJ Westminster, Maryland, Newman, 1962
 HONEST TO GOD, John AT Robinson, SCM Press, London, 1963
 IN DEFENCE OF THE FAITH, Dave Hunt, Harvest House, Eugene Oregon, 1996
 IN SEARCH OF CERTAINTY, John Guest Regal Books, Ventura, California, 1983
 JESUS HYPOTHESES, V. Messori, St Paul Publications, Slough, 1977
 NEW CATHOLIC ENCYCLOPEDIA, The Catholic University of America and the McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., Washington, District of Columbia, 1967
 ON THE TRUTH OF THE CATHOLIC FAITH, BOOK ONE, GOD, St Thomas Aquinas, Image Doubleday and Co, New York, 1961
 OXFORD DICTIONARY OF PHILOSOPHY, Simon Blackburn, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1996
 PHILOSOPHY AND THE CHRISTIAN FAITH, Colin Brown, IVP, London, 1973
 RADIO REPLIES, Vol 1, Frs Rumble and Carty, Radio Replies Press, St Paul, Minnesota, 1938
 RADIO REPLIES, Vol 2, Frs Rumble and Carty, Radio Replies Press, St Paul, Minnesota, 1940
 RADIO REPLIES, Vol 3, Frs Rumble and Carty, Radio Replies Press, St Paul, Minnesota, 1942
 REASON AND RELIGION, Anthony Kenny, Basil Blackwell Ltd, Oxford, 1987
 SALVIFICI DOLORIS, Pope John Paul II, Catholic Truth Society, London, 1984
 TAKING LEAVE OF GOD, Don Cupitt, SCM Press, London, 1980
 The Cambridge Companion to Atheism, Edited by Michael Martin, Cambridge University Press, New York, 2007
 THE BIG QUESTIONS, Simon Blackburn, Quercus Books, London, 2009
 THE CASE AGAINST GOD, Gerald Priestland, Collins, Fount Paperbacks, London, 1984
 THE CONCEPT OF GOD, Ronald H Nash, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1983
 THE HONEST TO GOD DEBATE Edited by David L Edwards, Westminster Press, Philadelphia, 1963
 THE KINDNESS OF GOD, EJ Cuskelly MSC, Mercier Press, Cork, 1965
 THE LANGUAGE OF BELIEF, A SCIENTIST PRESENTS EVIDENCE FOR BELIEF, Francis S Collins, Free Press, New York ,2006
 THE PUZZLE OF GOD, Peter Vardy, Collins, London, 1990
 THE REALITY OF GOD AND THE PROBLEM OF EVIL, Brian Davies, Continuum, London-New York, 2006
 THE RECONSTRUCTION OF BELIEF, Charles Gore DD, John Murray, London, 1930
 THE TRUTH OF CHRISTIANITY, WH Turton, Wells Gardner, Darton & Co Ltd, London, 1905
 UNBLIND FAITH, Michael J Langford, SCM, London, 1982
 WHAT DO EXISTENTIALISTS BELIEVE? Richard Appignanesi, Granta Books, London, 2006
 WHAT I BELIEVE by Anthony Kenny, Continuum, London – New York, 2006
 WHAT IS FAITH? Anthony Kenny, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1992
 WHY DOES GOD? Domenico Grasso, St Paul, Bucks, 1970
 Why I Became an Atheist, John Loftus, Prometheus Books, New York, 2008