

Contents

PREFACE with ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	x1
I. Faith and Reason	
1. INTRODUCTION	2
<i>What this work is about</i>	2
<i>Faith, reason, and philosophy of religion</i>	6
2. A CHILD LEARNS TO TALK ABOUT GOD	13
<i>Preliminary remarks</i>	13
<i>The example</i>	14
3. THE NECESSITY FOR REASONING TOWARD GOD	19
<i>Introduction</i>	19
<i>Is the existence of God evident?</i>	20
<i>Must the existence of God be accepted on faith?</i>	25
<i>Is every attempt to reason toward God irreligious?</i>	29
<i>Is the reality of God evident to reflection?</i>	32
II. There Is an Uncaused Entity	
4. PROVISIONAL STATEMENT OF THE ARGUMENT	36
<i>Introduction</i>	36
<i>Preliminary clarifications</i>	40
<i>The argument</i>	52

5. DEVELOPMENT OF THE ARGUMENT	59
<i>A self-sufficient set of contingent states of affairs?</i>	59
<i>Must there be an explanation of the contingent?</i>	67
<i>Summary restatement of the argument</i>	82
<i>God, god, and gods</i>	84
 III. Criticism of Alternatives 	
6. THE EMPIRICIST ALTERNATIVE	94
<i>Introduction to part three</i>	94
<i>Hume's criticisms of a cosmological argument</i>	98
<i>The basis of Hume's attack</i>	100
<i>Hume's position as a metaphysical alternative</i>	105
7. CRITICISM OF EMPIRICISM	109
<i>Empiricism and meaning</i>	109
<i>Verificationism falsifies itself</i>	110
<i>Empiricism falsifies itself</i>	116
<i>Causes and explanations</i>	121
<i>How an uncaused entity is a necessary being</i>	129
8. THE ALTERNATIVE OF A CRITIQUE OF KNOWLEDGE	137
<i>Kant's problem and strategy for solving it</i>	137
<i>How Kant attempts to dissolve metaphysics</i>	142
<i>Arguments for the existence of God</i>	147
9. CRITICISM OF CRITIQUE AS METAPHYSICS	152
<i>The inconsistency of Kant's critique</i>	152
<i>Specific arguments concerning God</i>	160
<i>Regulative principles and rationality norms</i>	168
<i>The status of obtaining and self-referential necessity</i>	172
10. THE ABSOLUTE IDEALIST ALTERNATIVE	181
<i>The philosophy of Absolute Spirit</i>	181
<i>Proofs for the existence of God</i>	187
11. CRITICISM OF ABSOLUTE IDEALISM	191
<i>Unlimited reason and negation as a reality</i>	191
<i>The inconsistency of absolute idealism</i>	195
<i>Generalization of the criticism</i>	201

12. RELATIVISM AS A METAPHYSICAL ALTERNATIVE	205
<i>Relativism as a reaction to absolute idealism</i>	205
<i>Description of relativism</i>	209
<i>Some examples of relativism</i>	213

13. CRITICISM OF METAPHYSICAL RELATIVISM	217
<i>Relativism is inconsistent</i>	217
<i>Relativism and other metaphysical alternatives</i>	222
<i>Transition to part four</i>	225

IV. The Meaningfulness of God-Talk

14. LIMITS OF REDUCTIONISM	230
<i>The four orders</i>	230
<i>Relations among the orders</i>	235

15. WHAT THE UNCAUSED ENTITY IS NOT	241
<i>The principle of negation</i>	241
<i>What D is not</i>	244

16. WHAT CAN BE AFFIRMED OF THE UNCAUSED ENTITY	248
<i>An uncaused entity obtains</i>	248
<i>Other affirmations and some comparisons</i>	252

17. RELATIONAL PREDICATIONS ABOUT THE UNCAUSED ENTITY	256
<i>Relational predications about experienced entities</i>	256
<i>How the uncaused entity is said to "cause"</i>	261
<i>Additional relational predications</i>	266
<i>A model for the uncaused cause</i>	268

V. Existential Objections to God

18. HUMAN FREEDOM IS COMPATIBLE WITH CREATURELINESS	274
<i>Two problems distinguished</i>	274
<i>Divine causality and free choice</i>	276
<i>Divine causality and human autonomy</i>	281

19. EVIL IS REAL BUT IS NOT CREATED	286
<i>Introduction</i>	286
<i>Good, evil, and creative causality</i>	290
<i>Evil and the God of faith</i>	297

20. RELIGION NEED NOT CONFLICT WITH HUMANISTIC VALUES	302
<i>The dignity of man</i>	302
<i>Fanaticism and otherworldliness</i>	306
21. DEVELOPING CREATURES AND A PERFECT CREATOR	314
<i>Stability is not prior to change</i>	314
<i>Why is creation in process?</i>	318
<i>Conclusion to part five</i>	323
 VI. The Meaningfulness of Christian Beliefs 	
22. MIRACLES AS SIGNALS FROM THE CREATOR	326
<i>Introduction to this part</i>	326
<i>Hume's critique of miracles</i>	328
<i>Defects in Hume's critique</i>	332
<i>The possibility of miracles</i>	335
23. THE HUMAN PERSON AND THE HUMAN COMMUNITY	343
<i>The human person</i>	343
<i>The human community</i>	353
24. MEANING, REVELATION, AND CHRISTIAN MYSTERIES	357
<i>"The creator speaks to man"</i>	357
<i>The Incarnation</i>	365
<i>The Trinity</i>	370
<i>The Eucharist</i>	373
25. WHY CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE, IF TRUE, IS IMPORTANT	376
<i>Eliminating the negative</i>	376
<i>Accenting the positive</i>	380
NOTES	386
INDEX	408