

2 PROOFS:

Part 1: Proof Chs. 1-4:

Ch.1: Exhortation for the mind to contemplate God:

Come now, insignificant man, fly for a moment from your affairs, escape for a little while from the tumult of your thoughts. Put aside now your weighty cares and leave your wearisome toils. Abandon yourself for a little to God and rest for a little in Him. Enter into the the inner chamber of your soul, shut everything save God and what can be of help in your quest for Him and having locked the door seek Him out [Matt. 6:6]. Speak now, my whole heart, speak now to God: 'I seek your countenance, O Lord, Your countenance I seek' [Psalm 26:8].

"I do not try, Lord, to attain Your lofty heights, because my understanding is in no way equal to it. But I do desire to understand Your truth a little, that truth that my heart believes and loves. For I do not see to understand so that I may believe; but I believe so that I may understand. For I believe this also, that 'unless I believe I shall not understand [Is. 7:9]."

Ch. 2: That God Truly Exists: Immanence: "Than that which nothing greater can be conceived"

"Even the Fool, then, is forced to agree that, something-than-which-a-greater-cannot-be-thought cannot exist in the mind alone. For if it exists solely in the mind even, it can be thought to exist in reality also, which is greater. If then that-than-which-a-greater-cannot-be-thought exists in the mind alone, this same that-than-which a greater cannot be thought is that-than-which-a-greater-can-be-thought. But this is obviously impossible. Therefore, there is absolutely no doubt that something-than-that-which-greater-cannot-be-thought- exists both in the mind and in reality."

1. It is a conceptual truth (or so, to speak) true by definition) that God is a being than which none greater can be imagined (i.e., the greatest possible being that can be imagined).
2. God exists as an idea in the mind.
3. A being that exists in the mind and in reality, is other things being equal, greater than a being that exists as an idea in the mind.
4. Thus, if God exists only as an idea in the mind, then we can imagine something that is greater than God (i.e., a greatest possible being that does exist).
5. But we cannot imagine something that is greater than God (for it is a contradiction to suppose that we can imagine a being greater than the greatest possible that can be imagined).

This argument is powered by 2 ideas: (a) Premise 2: we have a coherent idea of a being that instantiates (that is, represents an abstract example by a concrete or tangible example) all of the perfections; (b) existence is a perfection or great-making property. Conclusion, God is the very concept of a being that instantiates all the perfections implies that it exists.

CH. 3: God Cannot Be Thought Not To Exist: Transcendence: "Something greater than can be thought"

And certainly this being so truly exists that it cannot be even thought not to exist. For something can be thought to exist that cannot be thought not to exist and this is greater than that which can be thought not to exist. Hence if that-than-which-a-greater-cannot-be-thought is not the same as that-than-which-a-greater-cannot-be-thought-, which is absurd. Something-than-which-a-greater-cannot-be-thought exist so truly then, that it cannot be even thought not to exist. And You, Lord our God, are this being. You exist so truly, Lord my God, that You cannot even be thought not to exist.

1. By definition, God is a being than which none greater can be imagined.
2. A being that necessarily exists in reality is greater than a being that does not necessarily exist.
3. Thus, by definition, if God exists as an idea in the mind but does not necessarily exist in reality, then we can imagine something that is greater than God.
4. But we cannot imagine something that is greater than God.
5. Thus, if God exists in the mind as an idea, then God necessarily exists in reality.
6. God exist in the mind as an idea.
7. Therefore, God necessarily exists in reality.

This argument depends on 2 claims: (a) like 1st argument, includes premise that God is a being than which a greater cannot be conceived; (b) unlike first argument that depends on claim that existence is a perfection, it relies on claim that NECESSARY existence is a perfection. In essence, it asserts that a being whose existence is necessary is greater than a being whose existence is not necessary; a being whose non-existence is logically impossible is greater than a being whose non-existence is logically possible.

CH. 4: How 'The Fool Said in His Heart' What Cannot Be Thought: Final Consideration & Conclusion.

Indebted to Kenneth Einar Himma's, "Ontological Argument", Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy.

3 CRITICISMS:

Gaunilo of Marmontier, a contemporary of Anselm & monk criticized Anselm this way: Illegitimately moved from the existence of an idea to the existence of a thing that corresponds to the idea. Anselm simply defines things into existence-& this can't be done. Anselm uses Island example: deduce the existence of a perfect island:

- (1) It is a conceptual truth that Iscondar is an island which none greater can be imagined (i.e., the greatest conceivable island that can be imagined); (2) Iscondar exists as an idea in the mind; (3) Iscondar that exists as an idea in the mind and in reality is greater than an Iscondar that exists only as an idea in the mind; (4) Thus, if Iscondar exists only as an idea in the mind, then we can imagine an island that is greater than Iscondar (i.e., a greatest possible island that does exist); (5) But we cannot imagine an island that is greater than Iscondar; (6) Therefore, Iscondar exists.

Response: Premise 1 is incoherent because the qualities that make up an island that is great are not the sort of qualities that admit of conceptually maximal qualities. No matter how great any island is in some respect, it is always possible to imagine an island greater than that island in that very respect. For ex., if one thinks that coffee is a great-making property for an island, no matter how great a particular might be, it will always be possible to imagine a greater island because there is no intrinsic maximum for coffee-abundance. For this reason, the very concept of Iscondar is incoherent.

Anselm's argument works, if at all, only for concepts that are defined in terms of properties that admit of some for of intrinsic maximum.

But if the properties that are not conceptually essential to the notion of God do not admit of an intrinsic maximum, then Anselm's argument strategy will not work, because, like Iscondar, the relevant conception of God is incoherent. Since God is the sum-total of His infinite Perfections, Anselm seems able to avoid this problem.

Kant: Existence is not a property conceived of as one property among others (e.g., the way orange is a property of an orange). Rather, existence is a presupposition of having any properties whatsoever. The argument hinges on the fact of something with certain properties must have some other property, existence. For ex. imagine a tall & cold root beer float. Imagine shape, size, & colors of drink through the glass. Now stop. Now imagine the very same float but this time add to it the property of existence. No part of content of what you imagined has altered. Existence can't be understood to be a property like shape, temperature, etc. Thus, it is not a great-making property since it is no property at all.

Aquinas criticisms: (1) God's existence is self-evident, not deduced from claims made about God; (2) people have different concepts of God; (3) Anselm's argument only shows that God exists mentally, not actually.