







Many arguments for God's existence are best thought of as arguments against simple atheism. Whether they also amount to good arguments for the existence of God then depends in part on how seriously you take quasi-theism. This is something to which we will return.

Let's turn then to our first argument for the existence of God: the first cause argument we find in the reading from Thomas Aquinas. arguments against simple atheism. Whether they also amount to

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particles described?

# Might one defend (8) by saying that this hypothesis is impossible, on the

grounds that there can't be an uncaused cause, like the explosion of



#### 8. If there is a

#### God exists.

### first cause, then

Instead, it seems like Aquinas has to argue that nothing like the Big

have a cause; but things like God don't.

Bang could genuinely be a first cause. Things like the Big Bang have to

# And that is, in a way, exactly what Aquinas tried to do (though of course

which was an uncaused cause would have to have other properties, which

God has, but the Big Bang does not.

# he did not have the Big Bang in mind). He tried to argue that something

Might one defend (8) by saying that this hypothesis is impossible, on the

grounds that there can't be an uncaused cause?

Instead, it seems like a defender of the first cause argument has to argue that

nothing like the Big Bang could genuinely be a first cause. Things like the Big

Bang have to have a cause; but things like God don't. But why?

simple atheism. So it looks as though, if we are to believe (8), we must have

cause, but God does not exist. And it appears to be entirely consistent with

some reason for rejecting the above hypothesis.

# This would appear to be a description of a world in which there is a first

### The Big Bang

The first event in the history of the universe was an explosion of an extremely dense collection of particles, with every particle moving apart from every other particle. This event had no cause - in particular, no being set it into motion - and, further, every subsequent event has been an effect of this event.

Three views universe







cause. Because the universe — including the Big Bang — has a

beginning in time, the universe as a whole — again, including the Big

On this view, everything which begins to exist at some time must have a

and indeed nothing in the universe can be.

Bang — must have a cause. So the Big Bang can't be the first cause —

the universe came to exist at some time, then it follows that the universe

# If one accepts this extra premise, and one accepts the assumption that

was caused to exist by something outside the universe.

must have come to exist at a certain time.

And then there are just two options — that thing must be eternal, or it

If we go with the second option, then it must have had a cause. And

then that thing would have to be eternal, or have come to exist a certain

But let's focus in on one premise:

There are a number of questions one could raise about this argument.

# Aquinas' assumption that if there is a first cause, then that thing must

be God? How do we know that this eternally existing first cause of the

# Could one object to this premise in much the way that we objected to

## universe is God?

Our first topic is the question of whether God exists.









#### chains. causal

### 4. There are no infinite

### (1,2)itself.

## of itself, it would be prior

### cause.

## 8. If there is a first cause,

## 6. Every causal chain must be

## 1. If something were the cause

#### (7,8)C. God exists.

itself.

(i) circular, (ii) infinite,

## 5. At least one thing has a

\_\_\_\_\_\_

or (iii) have a first cause.

#### then God exists.

## 3. Nothing is the cause of

### 7. There is a first cause.

## 2. Nothing is prior to itself.

(3,4,5,6)









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