Phil Religion: Moral Arguments (Adams)

The “Metaethical” Argument

1. If the divine command theory is true, then God exists.
2. The divine command theory is true.
3. So God exists.

• Objection 1: “Morally right” doesn’t mean “commanded by a loving God”.
• Objection 2: (a) If God had commanded us to inflict suffering, it still wouldn’t be right. (b) If there were no God, some actions would still be morally right or wrong.
• Objection 3 (Euthyphro—Adams doesn’t explicitly consider this!): God commands what is right because it is right, so rightness does not consist in being commanded by God.

The Kantian (Theoretical) Argument

1. We ought (morally) to promote the realization of the highest good.
2. What we ought to do must be possible for us to do.
3. It is not possible for us to promote the realization of the highest good unless there exists a God who makes the realization possible.
4. Therefore, there exists such a God.

The “Demoralization” (Practical) Argument

“Demoralization.” Weakening or deterioration of moral motivation.

1. It would be demoralizing not to believe there is a moral order of the universe, for then we would have to regard it as very likely that the history of the universe will not be good on the whole, no matter what we do.
2. Demoralization is morally undesirable.
3. Therefore, there is moral advantage in believing that there is a moral order of the universe.
4. Theism provides the most adequate theory of a moral order of the universe.
5. Therefore, there is a moral advantage in accepting theism.