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Some Christian philosophers have made the incredible argument that logic, science and morality presuppose the truth of the Christian world view because logic, science and morality depend on the truth of this world view. Advocates call this argument the Transcendental Argument for Existence of God and I will call it TAG for short. In what follows I will not attempt to refute TAG directly. Rather I will show how one can argue exactly the opposite conclusion, namely, that logic, science and morality presuppose the falsehood of the Christian world view or at least the falsehood of the interpretation of his world view presupposed by TAG. I will call this argument the Transcendental Argument for the Non Existence of God or TANG for short.

If TANG is a sound argument, then obviously TAG is not, for it is logically impossible that there be two sound arguments with contradictory conclusions. On the other hand, if TANG is unsound, it does not follow that TAG is sound. After all, both arguments could be unsound. Perhaps, logic, science and objective morality are possible given either a Christian or a nonChristian world view. In any case, the presentation of TANG will provide an indirect challenge to TAG and force its advocates to defend their position. The burden will be on them to refute TANG. Unless they do, TAG is doomed.

How might TANG proceed? Consider logic. Logic presupposes that its principles are necessarily true. However, according to the brand of Christianity assumed by TAG, God created everything, including logic; or at least everything, including logic, is dependent on God. But if something is created by or is dependent on God, it is not necessary — it is contingent on God. And if principles of logic are contingent on God, they are not logically necessary. Moreover, if principles of logic are contingent on God, God could change them. Thus, God could make the law of non-contradiction false; in other words, God could arrange matters so that a proposition and its negation were true at the same time. But this is absurd. How could God arrange matters so that New Zealand is south of China and that New Zealand is not south of it? So, one must conclude that logic is not dependent on God, and, insofar as the Christian world view assumes that logic so dependent, it is false.

Consider science. It presupposes the uniformity of nature: that natural laws govern the world and that there are no violations of such laws. However, Christianity presupposes that there are miracles in which natural laws are violated. Since to make sense of science one must assume that there are no miracles, one must further assume that Christianity is false. To put this in a different way: Miracles by definition are violations of laws of nature that can only be explained by God’s intervention. Yet science assumes that insofar as an event as an explanation at all, it has a scientific explanation — one that does not presuppose God. Thus, doing science assumes that the Christian world view is false.

Consider morality. The type of Christian morality assumed by TAG is some version of the Divine Command Theory, the view that moral obligation is dependent on the will of God. But such a view is incompatible with objective morality. On the one hand, in this view what is moral is a function of the arbitrary will of God; for instance, if God wills that cruelty for its own sake is good, then it is. On the other hand, determining the will of God is impossible since there are different alleged sources of this will (The Bible, the Koran, The Book of Mormon, etc) and different interpretations of what these sources say; moreover, there is no rational way to reconcile these differences. Thus, the existence of an objective morality presupposes the falsehood of the Christian world view assumed by TAG.

There are, of course, ways to avoid the conclusions of TANG. One way is to reject logic, science and objective morality. Another is to maintain belief in God but argue that logic, science and morality are not dependent on God’s existence. However, the first way is self-defeating since Christian apologists use logic to defend their position and the second way presumes that TAG is invalid since it assumes that logic, science, and morality do not assume God’s existence. Finally, one can object to particular aspects of TANG, for example, the claim that there is no rational way to reconcile different interpretations of the Bible. However, this tack would involve a detailed defence of TAG — something that has yet to be provided.

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Notes:
2 This is compatible with the view that certain microevents are undetermined and, thus, have no explanation scientific or otherwise.

4 N.Z. Rationalist and Humanist