

/* ***** DOMINIC 1-1: ***** */

The reasons and evidence that gods probably don't exist.

First off, I see no need for a "first mover".

I'm assuming gods refer to one or more conscious beings who predate our universe (at least one of whom being its creator), capable of creating something out of nothing with conscious intent. The being(s) necessitated by the cosmological argument (Plato, Aristotle, Aquinas...William Lane Craig, choose whichever version you like, they're all basically the same) something I'm assuming all readers of this are familiar with, so no reason to summarize it.

However, the existence of the supernatural is necessary only by taking it as axiomatically true that cause precedes effect, and therefore space-time is causal and linear.

The majority of our experience confirms these assumptions as self-evidently true, from daily living down to events only quantum physics can describe, thus making the existence of at least one god absolutely necessary. The problem I have with this though, is that there are other experiences which contradict these assumptions, and ironically enough are often relied upon as themselves proof of the supernatural which, from my perspective, they ultimately contradict.

Precognition (the artist formerly known as prophecy).

Exhibit A. Daryl Bem. (see <http://dbem.ws/FeelingFuture.pdf>, a paper recently published in the Journal of Personality and Social Psychology). Technically, the jury is still out on his results, as more rigorous replication must take place first to verify the study. One such paper is found here: http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1715954)

Essentially, Bem demonstrates that the future can affect the past by reversing the order of conventional psychology tests and seeing statistically significant results, the most amusing of which is the ability of subjects to find porn. Subjects are sat down in front of a computer with two selectable regions, and are told to select one, where it is randomly selected by the computer for one of the regions to display a blank wall, but the other will reveal a sexually stimulating image. This test, as opposed to others which displayed less interesting images, deviated significantly enough to warrant suggesting precognition was in fact a possibility. The effect of being rewarded with a sexually stimulating image was leaking back in time often enough to influence its cause, that of selecting a region on the computer screen. Time itself is no obstacle when it comes to finding porn on a computer.

Exhibit B: Mystery butter.

A Christian blogger who goes by the name of "cl", in an ongoing attempt to provide ever stronger arguments in favor of theism at his blog, The Warfare Is Mental, offered up a personal story of his own as part of a series arguing favor of his tripartite model of consciousness, where he relays a story of a time when he clearly remembered an event, right before it happened (<http://thewarfareismental.wordpress.com/2009/11/25/amp-2/>), apparently triggered due to the zen like state one enters when scooping up butter balls.

Exhibit C: Deja Vu.

A phenomenon so common as to have its own term. A feeling of disorientation that comes from the sensation of experiencing the same event... twice, somehow. If time was completely linear in all circumstances, then how is it that people can have two experiences of the same event bump into each other enough to disorient them. While one explanation could be the processing delays in the brain that occur between a literal sensation and the conscious awareness of said event, such that at least two copies of the same sensory stimuli drift through the brain, this is, at best, idle speculation.

Exhibit D: Dreaming the future.

Another phenomenon so common that I feel is safe enough to present as evidence without needing to cite a reference. I even know someone personally who routinely dreams things that happen the next day.

Each exhibit presented here is evidentiary support to dissuade one from automatically accepting that either cause necessarily precedes effect or that time is linear in the strict sense, upon which the cosmological argument and the necessity of gods rests. Time is usually linear and cause almost always precedes effect, but not necessarily, the universe seems to be trickier than that.

Second, the cosmological argument itself is an attempt to eliminate the problem of infinite regress that suffers from infinite regress.

Now, rather than thinking I'm resorting to the "Then what created God? Ha, gotcha!" nonsense, it's better to look at the original structure of the argument first put forth, since the summary version that most people are familiar with is vague enough to define God as an unstable particle. God is more than just a source of energy, since the observation is that everything that has a direction was pushed that way, yet an immediately observable exception to this is the phenomenon of conscious intent as a source of motion. A body, (literally, a human body) can be completely at rest, yet spurred to motion through conscious effort. This led to the conclusion that God, being defined as the unmoved mover, is by necessity a conscious entity who chose to create the universe, since thought itself is the most readily observable phenomenon that bridges the gap between the purely abstract and the material. And the purest thought, then, would be thinking about thinking, the first act that led to the creation of the universe and needs no material source to give it a push. This, however, does not alleviate the problem of infinite regression that was sought to be solved, as it only addresses infinite regress of particle motion. This first thought, the one about thinking... Thinking about what, more thinking? Infinite regress. Do not pass Go, do not collect \$200.

Lastly, the statement "truth is stranger than fiction" itself is quite persuasive.

Building on my rejection of the cosmological argument, I'll further contest that gods are not real simply because as an explanation, they are simply too convenient. The truth of the matter, regardless of which great mystery being discussed, is reliably something far stranger than whichever fiction is first proposed.

The most obvious example of this was the painful transition from Newtonian physics to quantum physics. Under the classical model, particles were particles and behaved like particles, motion was consistent, and everything ran its course, and all the mindless matter in the universe was reliably deterministic. A simple explanation that is based on precisely what one would expect of the world given nothing in our experience schizophrenically goes from acting like a particle to acting like a wave, or mysteriously teleports from one location to another. A simple explanation that turned out to be quite wrong.

Or one could go back earlier to the transition from geocentric to heliocentric models of planetary motion. The simple explanation, that of the earth being stationary with the sun rotating around it, turned out to be the fiction whereas the truth was far stranger, namely the planet we sit upon, that doesn't feel like it's moving at all, is in fact spinning around quite fast.

Recognition of an explanation as too simple, too convenient, or too obvious is useful as a predictive tool as well. Healthy skepticism of the theory of evolution by natural selection can be arrived at by recognizing the explanation itself as an entirely self-contained and awfully neat little attempt at summarizing the history of life on this planet. Personally I'd put money on the actual process being something far stranger involving phenomenon that we don't even have words for yet and forces previously thought to have no impact on speciation whatsoever.

This being said, postulating the existence of supernatural beings is abundantly obvious, to me at least, as being a convenient fantasy concocted as a childish and superficial explanation for the origins of any and everything, from the beginning of the universe to the strange bumping one hears in the attic. It's a fiction we've told ourselves for countless generations, and it is my firm belief that the actual truth of the matter, from why or how the

universe began (or just always was) all the way down to experiences some people have communicating with the dead, is something far stranger than any story we tell ourselves about gods and ghosts.

/* ***** VOX 1-1: ***** */

In order to make the case that the weight of the available evidence and logic is more supportive of the existence of gods than of their nonexistence, it is necessary to define the two terms. In making my case for the existence of gods, I am relying upon the definitions of evidence and logic as defined by the Oxford English Dictionary. I am utilizing the term evidence in a sense that encompasses all three of the primary definitions provided.

Evidence:

Available body of facts or information indicating whether a belief or proposition is true or valid.
Information drawn from personal testimony, a document, or a material object, used to establish facts in a legal investigation or admissible as testimony in a law court.
Signs or indications of something.

Logic:

reasoning conducted or assessed according to strict principles of validity

There is a vast quantity of extant documentary and testimonial evidence providing indications that gods exist. This evidence dates from the earliest written records to current testimonials from living individuals. While it is true that the quality of this evidence varies considerably, it cannot simply be dismissed out of hand anymore than one can conclude Gaius Julius Caesar did not exist because one cannot see him on television today. Each and every case demands its own careful examination before it can be dismissed, and such examination has never been done in the overwhelming majority of cases.

For example, there are many documented cases of confirmed fraud in published scientific papers. If we apply the same reasoning to published scientific papers that some wish to apply to documentary evidence of gods, we have no choice but to conclude that all science is fraudulent. But this is absurd, as we know that at least some science is not fraudulent. Therefore, if one is willing to accept the validity of published scientific papers that one has not been able to verify are not fraudulent, one must similarly accept the validity of documentary evidence for the existence of gods that one has not examined and determined to merit dismissal for one reason or another.

Because it is intrinsically testimonial in nature, the documentary evidence for gods has been impugned on the basis of studies concerning the unreliability of eyewitness testimony for various reasons. However, this critical analogy actually demonstrates the precise opposite of what it purports to show. Since eyewitness testimony has been variously determined to be somewhere between 12 percent and 50 percent inaccurate, this means that between 50 percent and 88 percent of the testimonial evidence for gods should be assumed accurate, at least concerning the correctly reported details of the divine encounter. The correct interpretations of the specific details, of course, are a different matter.

One of the core principles of the historical method is that the closer a source is to the event which it purports to describe, the more one can trust it to give an accurate historical description of what actually happened. Blanket rejection of the entire historical record that does not accord with the present materialist consensus with regards to the universe turns this principle on its head to such an extent that it can only be described as ahistorical. Moreover, it is downright illogical given the dynamic nature of the materialist consensus, especially when one takes into account how many times the material rejectionist position can be confirmed to have been wrong whereas the historical record was correct. The cities of Capernaum, Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Nineveh, and the empires of Assyria and the Hittites are but six of many valid examples.

In fact, the material rejectionist position amounts to nothing more than a time-limited appeal to technology. At one time, Man could not detect x-rays, radiation, or distant planets because he lacked the necessary technology. At present, Man cannot detect dark matter, the Higgs boson, other universes, Heaven, Hell, alien life forms, or intelligent supernatural beings. These things may or may not exist, for example, the scientists at CERN have excluded possibility of the Higgs boson particle from masses ranging from 145 to 466 GeV. But science has never managed to exclude the existence of gods from anything, and unless one also rejects the existence of multiple universes and other undetected concepts, one cannot reasonably reject the existence of gods.

Indeed, the acceptance of the possibility of the existence of the multiversal and the rejection of the possibility of the supernatural makes no sense, given that it is entirely conceivable that the two could be identical. It would be as difficult for humanity today to distinguish between a technologically advanced being from a different universe and a superhuman being worshiped as having power over nature or human fortunes, which is how Oxford defines a god.

Science itself lends support to the idea of the material existence of gods in this universe when astronomical evidence taken into account. According to the latest scientific consensus, the universe is 13.75 billion years old, the Sun is 4.6 billion years old, the Earth is 4.54 billion years old, and homo sapiens sapiens reached behavioral modernity 50,000 years ago. As there are a conservatively estimated 200 billion stars in the galaxy and 100 billion galaxies in the universe, this indicates that there has been sufficient time for at least 7,891 billion alien races to appear, evolve, and reach a higher level of technological development than Man given the current ratio of 1.18 planets discovered per star. And to paraphrase Arthur C. Clarke, any sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from godhood.

One could dismiss the numerical argument as a simple appeal to very large numbers, except for the fact of a written historical record which repeatedly describes contact with superhuman beings possessing power over nature and human fortunes. When the mathematical odds indicate that advanced technological aliens exist somewhere in the material universe and contact with superhuman beings has been reported on tens of thousands of occasions, the assumption that gods do not exist begins to look more like outright denial than reasonable skepticism. When seen in this light, the failure of modern science to detect gods in what the scientific consensus presently states is only 0.6 percent of modern Man's existence is analogous to the Aztecs assuming that because no white men were seen during a given 201-day period between 1427 and 1519, Cortés and the conquistadors did not exist. No doubt this would have seemed like a perfectly reasonable conclusion, right up until the day Córdoba arrived in the Yucatán.

So, there is evidence from history, mathematical probability from science, and logic from the combination of the two which support the existence of gods.

However, the most powerful evidence for the existence of not only gods, but the existence of one or more Creator gods, can be materially observed in Man himself. Just as the existence of various phenomena can be correctly deduced through the observation of senses and sensors designed to interact with those phenomena even if a particular phenomenon remains unobserved, the presence of an invisible sound wave can be deduced by the presence of an antenna and the presence of a lawgiver can be deduced by the presence of prison guards. Hence the importance of Man's moral sense.

While some people throughout history have reported experiencing personal contact with God, most have not. However, I am not aware of a single individual who has denied ever experiencing any direct contact with evil. And by evil, I do not mean mere bad fortune, physical pain, or the application of the various principles of physics to suboptimal human action, but rather those self-aware, purposeful, and malicious forces which intend material harm and suffering to others and are capable of inflicting it. We are aware of this force in ourselves and we can observe it in others. As anyone who has witnessed a child lie for the first time knows, human evil not an entirely learned behavior, it is at least partially endogenous.

As a shadow requires the presence of a source of light in order to exist, evil requires the presence of a source of good. What some call God is perhaps better understood as the source of that good through which evil can exist and be observed, by which I do not mean any subjective and experienced good,

but rather the objective and definitive good. But the only entity capable of dictating an objective and definitive good with universal application is either a) the entity that created the universe, or b) an entity given managing responsibility by the creating entity. This is not a case of might makes right, but rather, conception and creation necessitating constants.

Therefore, when we observe and acknowledge material evil, we must correctly conclude the existence of a Creator God.

/* ***** DOMINIC 1-2: ***** */

The opening argument for the positive existence of gods comes from the mountain of eyewitness accounts of having experienced what they can only describe as supernatural. Admittedly, no amount of handwaving theorizing that so many people throughout history have been merely dishonest, crazy, delusional, or suffering from temporal lobe epilepsy can stand up against the sheer volume of accounts made, so dismissal simply is not an option. There is no denying that there is something, possibly of a distinctly external nature, is imposing itself on people throughout history causing them to report visitations from gods, angels, demons. What was left out are the more recent and very similar accounts of space aliens.

From space.

Early accounts of UFOs contain vague references to fires in the sky that are wheel-like or circular. Examples of this are the flying Vimanas of the Sanskrit epics, Ezekiel's Wheel (which, from the description, sort of looks more like a V-22 Osprey [landing gear and all] with an extra pair of wings and rockets underneath the tiltrotors, than a flying saucer), the mass sighting at Nuremberg in 1561, and the 'Miracle of the Sun' event in Portugal (1917). Attributing such sightings to actual aliens rather than supernatural manifestations of the classical sense does not occur until after pop culture had introduced alien life into the public imagination.

Aliens seem to first have been introduced as forms of social commentary coupled with an increasingly materialist worldview, from Voltaire's 'Micromegas' (1752) as a vehicle for warning against anthropocentric hubris and a convenient means to lampoon a few people he didn't particularly care for, to H.G. Wells 'War of the Worlds' (1898) as a criticism of gunboat colonialism. Aliens as entertainment took as many different forms as the people who subsequently claim to have actually met them. Detailed descriptions of the aliens themselves, and what subsequently happens to a person after meeting them, were all wildly different, and a more consistent story does not emerge until after science fiction literature and Hollywood have a crack at it, writing the scripts for such experiences before people actually start having them.

The event that really popularized alien abductions and set the stage for the flood of abduction stories that people have reported since is generally considered to be the Betty and Barney Hill abduction (September 19, 1961), where the couple recounts an alien abduction with many of the details pulled straight from an episode of 'The Outer Limits' which aired just 12 days beforehand, and the 1951 film, 'Invaders from Mars'. From here, alien encounters have become increasingly normalized with nearly everyone meeting "Grey" aliens with squat bodies, thin limbs, huge heads and giant black unblinking eyes, the sort that we have been exposed to by Hollywood now as the prototypical 'alien'. Quite different than the furry vagabonds who harassed Colonel H. G. Shaw in 1897. And never mind that the case of Antonio Villas Boas did not occur until 9 years after the publication 'Flash Gordon and the Adventures of the Flying Saucers'.

The evidence suggests that there is a very strong influence of belief and disposition which not only influences how paranormal events are interpreted, but how they are in fact experienced and remembered. Looking now at the eyewitness accounts of visitations by gods and angels, and also of demon possession, the first observation to make is that familiarity with the context is a mandatory prerequisite for having the experience, just as no one remembered being abducted by a Grey alien with giant unblinking eyes until after Hollywood gave us Grey aliens with giant unblinking eyes. Again, this isn't to say that all the experiences are delusional, given the logic that 50 to 88 percent of such accounts can be considered honest accounts by people who are not crazy, simply that the actual explanation, the real source that triggers these experiences, is something quite different, and let's not forget stranger, than what they appear to be to the eyewitness, given the sheer variety of experiences and undeniable influence of pre-existing culture and belief. After all, Barney Hill reported that one of the first things the aliens said to him was to not be afraid. Something that anyone familiar with eyewitness accounts of angelic visitations should recognize. However, Barney wasn't visited by angels bearing halos and white wings, and he did not recognize them as such, he saw space aliens. This is not an 'interpretation' of details, these are entirely different details, one of gods, the other of aliens.

This brings us to the second point, that of the materialist position rejecting such accounts on the basis of the lack of an objective measuring tool which would verify the validity of the accounts of gods made by the eyewitnesses is ahistorical and the intellectual equivalent of burying one's head in the sand. Here, there is no disagreement. Rejecting something's existence based on nothing more than ignorance of similar phenomenon is an unsustainable position.

However, included in this point, is the argument that gods are more likely than not given that our gods could very well be aliens. Ironic, given what all I just wrote, but worthy of being addressed separately. Combining the statistical probability of alien life with the eyewitness accounts of paranormal visitors and the Oxford dictionary's definition of "god" would lead one to believe that the alien visitation explanation concocted over the past 110 years or so (particularly in the last 50) is the more accurate description of real gods, and our religions (with the exception of the Mormons) are clumsy attempts at describing what we now have better tools for understanding, that we're being visited by aliens. Maybe the Mormons are actually right and we should follow Matt Stone and Trey Parker to the promised lands.

To address this, I would argue in turn this application of the Oxford definition actually makes one group of men gods over others. For example, John Frum, a recipient of his own cult, possessed, along with the rest of the American military, the superhuman ability to bestow gifts of divine cargo upon the residents of the island of Tanna. Squint at bit the word "superhuman", or just take it in context of the situation, and the military service men whose actions led to the creation of such cargo cults were, technically, gods.

Somehow, I doubt that proving other people exist, though, is the purpose of this discussion. Further, if we're saying that technologically advanced aliens are as god-like as anything in the universe, we should probably just stop now.

But then we'd miss out on what I see as the actual argument, and what I predict will be the real thrust from here on out. The final argument, that a real creator God (big 'G') is necessary given the existence real objective evil in the world.

Objective measurement is one where the point of reference does not move. Here I believe we can all be in agreement that objective evil, as defined as a self-aware, purposeful, and malicious force which intends material harm and suffering to others and is capable of inflicting it, is quite real. It would be an impossible task to actually prove that people have never or do not act with self-aware, purposeful, and malicious intent to cause material harm and suffering to others and are capable of inflicting it. This metric for evil is universally recognized and it does not change. Some people go so far as to do it for its own sake because it pleases them.

The logical chain that results in demonstrating a Creator God who is necessary to establish the metric by which evil can exist and can be recognized begins with the following statement:

"As a shadow requires the presence of a source of light in order to exist, evil requires the presence of a source of good."

This statement is always taken at face value as axiomatically true, and is always phrased as a light/dark dichotomy for illustration. I also happen to disagree with it.

Objectively real evil is something we intuitively recognize by its qualities, and I don't see how any of the qualities that defines evil requires a source of goodness to either enable or define it. Evil is a phenomenon that is recognized through positive (or should I say, tangible?) action, not

through negatives, as opposed to the metaphor of evil being a shadow, a region where light (the Good) doesn't hit. Evil is always unpleasant for someone, that's what makes it objective, but leaping to the conclusion that it couldn't exist without the objective and definitive Good strikes me as awfully non-sequiter, knocking the base out of the argument that our ability to recognize evil necessitates the existence of a custodian of the Good. Besides, calling Good and Evil laws requiring a lawgiver is not only assumption, but in light of my opening arguments, just too convenient as well.

I wouldn't be at all surprised if our objective recognition of evil could be completely redefined to be merely experiencing the color blue if all of humanity were converted to a diet consisting exclusively of shellfish and Mellow Yellow. After everyone is done scratching their heads, let me explain.

Right now, it is indisputable that our perceptions and attitudes are heavily influenced, possibly even dictated, by what finds its way into our bloodstream. High doses of anabolic steroids increase aggression, THC improves one's mood, psilocybin makes you see things that aren't there, and alcohol can significantly affect what the imbiber considers to be proper behavior at her best friend's wedding.

The nutrients we derive from food fall under the same few categories: fat, protein, carbohydrates, vitamins, and minerals. We all eat roughly the same things due to the fact we all need the same kinds of dietary input to survive due to the similarity of our bodies (which is also why it's safe to say we all see colors in roughly the same way, philosophers and their "what if my blue is your red?" be damned). Sugar is sweet, 50 degree Fahrenheit water is cold, and someone who steals from someone else for purely personal gain is evil. The first two are readily accepted facts across the board (thus objective, the only thing subjective is "how sweet" or "how cold") as being a consequence of our common biology, yet the third gets a free pass as a universal law that we know through our moral intuition, that would hold true even without us around. This makes no sense.

I'm not saying that our common biology is the definitive answer as to why we all perceive and recognize flavor, temperature, and evil, but it is just as good an explanation, if not better, than jumping to the conclusion that our recognition of evil is a window into some absolute moral law, much less saying that the very act of recognizing it requires some corresponding Goodness. We know that what we consume can and does affect our minds, personalities, and perceptions (such as steroids, marijuana, mushrooms, and tequila), and for the most part we all consume roughly the same categories of nutrients to survive (regular food, from sweet potato to squid), so it's unsurprising that we have some experiences and attitudes that are common across the board.

So the existence of objective evil is not itself a definitive proof of a lawgiver, it could just as easily be a secondary consequence of our biological reliance on vitamin C or something equally unexpected. Given the theme of human progress I highlighted in my own opening arguments, I would not be at all surprised if our perception of evil ultimately is explained as a combination of our diet, the wavelengths of the radiation that hit us from the sun, coupled with a surprising discovery by someone who finally figures out why yawns are contagious but sneezing isn't.

/* ***** VOX 1-2: ***** */

I feel that I must begin by congratulating my opponent for not only producing a far more intriguing piece than I had reason to expect, but concocting one that I suspect makes my case for the existence of gods look downright sane by comparison. If nothing else, Dominic has produced a genuinely original case for atheism.

I begin by correcting his assumption that gods must predate our universe or be capable of creating something out of nothing. While at least one god must be assumed to be the creator god that fits this definition if the universe was indeed created, the vast majority of gods are not the creator and need not be capable of creating anything out of nothing, much less predate the universe. I note that the greater part of the gods described in the historical record do not fit Dominic's description here. By the definition he assumes, neither Zeus nor Athena would qualify as gods, much less Baal, or Chemosh, or other gods known to have been worshipped in the course of human history.

The attack on the potential existence of the supernatural by denying cause and effect is certainly an unexpected one. However, the assertion that the existence of the supernatural depends upon the axiom that cause precedes effect or that space-time is causal and linear is both incorrect and unsupported. While there is plenty of reason to criticize both his self-evident assumptions and the refutations of those assumptions, it is not necessary to do either because his logic is flawed. It does not matter if the self-evidence of his assumptions are correct or not, just as it does not matter if his subsequent case against those assumptions are sufficient to reject them or not, because he has failed to do more than nakedly assert a link between those assumptions and the existence of the supernatural, much less the existence of gods.

So, although I find them intriguing, I have nothing to say here about the existence or non-existence of precognition, mystery butter, deja vu, or dreaming the future, because none of them are relevant to this debate given the nonexistent logical link between those four things and the existence of gods.

With regards to the second point, the problem of infinite regress as it relates to consciousness rather than to particles, the problem was solved long ago by Aristotle in Posterior Analytics. To summarize, the concept of infinite regress depends upon an assumption that there is no way of knowing other than by demonstration. But not all knowledge is demonstrative, because knowledge of the immediate premises depends upon indemonstrable truths. Thus there is no regress and the argument is defeated. Furthermore, Dominic's specific formulation contains two additional flaws. First, even if we accept his definition of the purest thought, there is no rational requirement that the first thought need be the purest one, therefore that first thought need not be thinking about thinking, much less thinking about thinking about thinking. Second, there is obviously no need for the first thought about thinking to concern more thinking, as is evidenced by Descartes's famous statement, I think, therefore I am, because in the Cartesian formulation the first thinking about thinking does not concern more thinking, but rather the existence of mind. The regress ends and the appeal to the problem of infinite regress is once more defeated.

As to the third point, I entirely agree that truth is stranger than fiction. I also agree that turning to divine action to explain every unknown is too convenient to be convincing, (to say nothing of lazy), and I wholeheartedly concur that the true explanation for the existence of life on Earth will almost surely be far stranger than any of us presently imagine.

Nevertheless, convenience is not a serious argument against existence. 7-11 indubitably exists. Starbucks seemingly exists on every corner. Few things could possibly be considered more convenient than Internet porn, which is available 24-7 around the entire planet, and yet it too can be confirmed to exist. Convenience is not convincing, but it should not be taken as negating either. Ockham's Razor is certainly not a proof, but it is a useful rule of thumb and parsimony is usually considered to be a scientific positive when the relative likelihood of two competing theories is being compared.

While I can hardly question what is or is not obvious to Dominic, I can certainly point out that obviousness to Dominic is not an objective metric that is relevant in any way to anyone else. Had I argued that gods exist because their existence is obvious to me, I would have expected his rebuttal to consist of little more than pointing and laughing, because that is all that would have been needed to dismiss such a feeble appeal to personal sensibilities. And since I have already shown that his rejection of the cosmological argument is based on a false foundation, it is obvious that his subsequent arguments are invalid to the extent that they rely upon it.

However, his cited examples from the history of science are important, because they underline a point that I made in my initial argument concerning the dynamic nature of the materialist consensus and the limits which technology places upon it. With the continued advance of technology and the concomitant changes in Man's future understanding of the universe that will come from that advance, it is entirely possible that a belief in the material limits of the universe which rejects the supernatural may well one day look as ignorant and crazy as a belief in Newtonian physics which rejects quantum physics.

Now, it is always possible that the strange bumping in the attic is nothing but the wind. And it may be convenient to say that what we see and what we hear is seen and heard because it is actually there. But most of the time, that simple explanation is true and our senses are observing things because those things are real. The converse, on the other hand, is not necessarily true. Sometimes we don't see anything because they are not there. But often, we don't see anything because our eyes are closed.