55 To receive that call, Stephen, said the priest, is the greatest honour that the Almighty God can bestow upon a man. No king or emperor on this earth has the power of the priest of God. No angel or archangel in heaven, no saint, not even the Blessed Virgin herself has the power of a priest of God: the power of the keys, the power to bind and to loose from sin, the power of exorcism, the power to cast out from the creatures of God the evil spirits that have power over them, the power, the authority, to make the great God of Heaven come down upon the altar and take the form of bread and wine. What an awful power, Stephen!

Joyce, *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man,* IV

20.5 | *God*

In the Western tradition, the idea of God has generated a very voluminous discussion. The quotations included here represent, we hope, a judicious selection from that discussion, but many aspects of it, especially intricate subtleties that delight philosophers and theologians, cannot be adequately covered, and some are not even touched on.

The notion of a single deity, or reference to God in the singular, is not confined to books that reflect the Jewish and Christian faiths. Such references are also to be found in the writings of the Greek and Roman poets and philosophers, side by side with references to the Olympian deities or the gods of the Roman pantheon. In fact, the works of Plato and Aristotle contain passages that have come to be looked upon as anticipations of the doctrines about God's nature and attributes and of the demonstration of God's existence that are more fully developed later in the writings of Christian theologians. The other major source upon which the theologians draw is, of course, the Old and the New Testament, the latter especially for the doctrines of the trinity, of the incarnation, and of the resurrection. For theological exegesis, the most remarkable scriptural passage is, perhaps, the one in Exodus, in which God announces himself to Moses in the words: "I am that I am."

A great many of the quotations drawn from the theologians and philosophers deal with the question of God's existence and with the arguments that are claimed to demonstrate it. One argument in particular, the famous ontological argument first proposed by Anselm, is rejected by theologians and philosophers who think that the existence of God must be proved or at least affirmed on some basis other than the conception we entertain of the supreme being.

The positions of the deist and the pantheist, as well as of the agnostic and the atheist, are represented here along with a variety of versions of orthodox theism. As the reader would expect, the reader will find Augustine, Anselm, Aquinas, Luther, Calvin, Descartes, Hobbes, Leibniz, and Locke aligned, in one way or another, against Spinoza, Hume, Voltaire, Kant, Nietzsche, Bertrand Russell, and Freud. Pascal's contribution to the discussion stands out for its emphasis on the mystery of God and on the reasonableness of seeking God even though reason itself affords no assurance of finding him through arguments or proofs.

Other discussions relevant to our knowl-

edge of God will be found in Section 6.4 on ERROR, IGNORANCE, AND THE LIMITS OF HUMAN KNOWLEDGE, Section 6.5 on OPINION, BELIEF, AND FAITH, and Section 17.1 on PHILOSOPHY AND PHILOSOPHERS.

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1 Moses said, I will now turn aside, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt.

And when the Lord saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses. And he said, Here am I.

And he said, Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground.

Moreover he said, I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God.

Exodus 3:3–6

2 God said unto Moses, *I am that I am:* and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, *I am* hath sent me unto you.

And God said moreover unto Moses, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, The Lord God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you: this is my name for ever, and this is my memorial unto all generations.

Exodus 3:14–15

3 Then sang Moses and the children of Israel this song unto the Lord, and spake, saying, I will sing unto the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously: the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea.

The Lord is my strength and song, and he is become my salvation: he is my God, and I will prepare him an habitation; my father's God, and I will exalt him.

The Lord is a man of war: the Lord is his name.

Pharaoh's chariots and his host hath he cast into the sea: his chosen captains also are drowned in the Red sea.

The depths have covered them: they sank into the bottom as a stone.

Thy right hand, O Lord, is become glorious in power: thy right hand, O Lord, hath dashed in pieces the enemy.

And in the greatness of thine excellency thou hast overthrown them that rose up against thee: thou sentest forth thy wrath, which consumed them as stubble.

And with the blast of thy nostrils the waters were gathered together, the floods stood upright as an heap, and the depths were congealed in the heart of the sea.

The enemy said, I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil; my lust shall be satisfied upon them; I will draw my sword, my hand shall destroy them.

Thou didst blow with thy wind, the sea covered them: they sank as lead in the mighty waters.

Who is like unto thee, O Lord, among the gods? who is like thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?

Exodus 15:1–11

4 Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live.

Exodus 33:20

5 The Lord bless thee, and keep thee:

The Lord make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee:

The Lord lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace.

Numbers 6:24–26

6 The Lord thy God is a consuming fire, even a jealous God.

Deuteronomy 4:24

7 And he [the angel of the Lord] said, Go forth, and stand upon the mount before the Lord. And, behold, the Lord passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before the Lord; but the Lord was not in the wind: and after the wind an earthquake; but the Lord was not in the earthquake:

And after the earthquake a fire; but the Lord was not in the fire: and after the fire a still small voice.

I Kings 19:11–12

8 Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him: but I will maintain mine own ways before him.

Job 13:15

9 The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork.

Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge.

There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard.

Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun,

Which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race.

His going forth is from the end of the heaven, and his circuit unto the ends of it: and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof.

The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple.

The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes.

The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.

More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb.

Moreover by them is thy servant warned: and in keeping of them there is great reward.

Who can understand his errors? cleanse thou me from secret faults.

Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression.

Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength, and my redeemer.

Psalm 19:1–14

10 Hear, O my people, and I will speak; O Israel, and I will testify against thee: I am God, even thy God.

I will not reprove thee for thy sacrifices or thy burnt offerings, to have been continually before me.

I will take no bullock out of thy house, nor he goats out of thy folds.

For every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills.

I know all the fowls of the mountains: and the wild beasts of the field are mine.

If I were hungry, I would not tell thee: for the world is mine, and the fulness thereof.

Psalm 50:7–12

11 The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God.

Psalm 53:1

12 O Lord, thou hast searched me, and known me.

Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thought afar off.

Thou compassest my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways.

For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O Lord, thou knowest it altogether.

Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid thine hand upon me.

Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it.

Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence?

If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there.

If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea;

Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me.

If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me.

Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to thee.

Psalm 139:1–12

13 The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain:

And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.

The voice said, Cry. And he said, What shall I cry? All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field:

The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: because the spirit of the Lord bloweth upon it: surely the people is grass.

The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever.

Isaiah 40:3–8

14 And above the firmament that was over their heads was the likeness of a throne, as the appearance of a sapphire stone: and upon the likeness of the throne was the likeness as the appearance of a man above upon it.

And I saw as the colour of amber, as the appearance of fire round about within it, from the appearance of his loins even upward, and from the appearance of his loins even downward, I saw as it were the appearance of fire, and it had brightness round about.

As the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud in the day of rain, so was the appearance of the brightness round about. This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord.

Ezekiel 1:26–28

15 *Diotima.* God mingles not with man; but through Love all the intercourse and converse of god with man, whether awake or asleep, is carried on.

Plato, *Symposium,* 203A

16 *Socrates.* God [is] perfectly simple and true both in word and deed; he changes not; he deceives not, either by sign or word, by dream or waking vision.

Plato, *Republic,* II, 382B

17 There is . . . something which is always moved

with an unceasing motion, which is motion in a circle; and this is plain not in theory only but in fact. Therefore the first heaven must be eternal. There is therefore also something which moves it. And since that which moves and is moved is intermediate, there is something which moves without being moved, being eternal, substance, and actuality. And the object of desire and the object of thought move in this way; they move without being moved. The primary objects of desire and of thought are the same. For the apparent good is the object of appetite, and the real good is the primary object of rational wish. But desire is consequent on opinion rather than opinion on desire; for the thinking is the starting-point. And thought is moved by the object of thought, and one of the two columns of opposites is in itself the object of thought; and in this, substance is first, and in substance, that which is simple and exists actually. (The one and the simple are not the same; for 'one' means a measure, but 'simple' means that the thing itself has a certain nature.) But the beautiful, also, and that which is in itself desirable are in the same column; and the first in any class is always best, or analogous to the best.

That a final cause may exist among unchangeable entities is shown by the distinction of its meanings. For the final cause is (*a*) some being for whose good an action is done, and (*b*) something at which the action aims; and of these the latter exists among unchangeable entities though the former does not. The final cause, then, produces motion as being loved, but all other things move by being moved. Now if something is moved it is capable of being otherwise than as it is. Therefore if its actuality is the primary form of spatial motion, then in so far as it is subject to change, in *this* respect it is capable of being otherwise,—in place, even if not in substance. But since there is something which moves while itself unmoved, existing actually, this can in no way be otherwise than as it is. For motion in space is the first of the kinds of change, and motion in a circle the first kind of spatial motion; and this the first mover *produces*. The first mover, then, exists of necessity; and in so far as it exists by necessity, its mode of being is good, and it is in this sense a first principle. For the necessary has all these senses—that which is necessary perforce because it is contrary to the natural impulse, that without which the good is impossible, and that which cannot be otherwise but can exist only in a single way.

On such a principle, then, depend the heavens and the world of nature. And it is a life such as the best which we enjoy, and enjoy for but a short time (for it is ever in this state, which we cannot be), since its actuality is also pleasure. (And for this reason are waking, perception, and thinking most pleasant, and hopes and memories are so on account of these.) And thinking in itself deals with that which is best in itself, and that which is thinking in the fullest sense with that which is best in the fullest sense. And thought thinks on itself because it shares the nature of the object of thought; for it becomes an object of thought in coming into contact with and thinking its objects, so that thought and object of thought are the same. For that which is *capable* of receiving the object of thought, i.e. the essence, is thought. But it is *active* when it *possesses* this object. Therefore the possession rather than the receptivity is the divine element which thought seems to contain, and the act of contemplation is what is most pleasant and best. If, then, God is always in that good state in which we sometimes are, this compels our wonder; and if in a better this compels it yet more. And God *is* in a better state. And life also belongs to God; for the actuality of thought is life, and God is that actuality; and God's self-dependent actuality is life most good and eternal. We say therefore that God is a living being, eternal, most good, so that life and duration continuous and eternal belong to God; for this *is* God.

Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 1072^{a}20

18 The nature of the divine thought involves certain problems; for while thought is held to be the most divine of things observed by us, the question how it must be situated in order to have that character involves difficulties. For if it thinks of nothing, what is there here of dignity? It is just like one who sleeps. And if it thinks, but this depends on something else, then (since that which is its substance is not the act of thinking, but a potency) it cannot be the best substance; for it is through thinking that its value belongs to it. Further, whether its substance is the faculty of thought or the act of thinking, what does it think of? Either of itself or of something else; and if of something else, either of the same thing always or of something different. Does it matter, then, or not, whether it thinks of the good or of any chance thing? Are there not some things about which it is incredible that it should think? Evidently, then, it thinks of that which is most divine and precious, and it does not change; for change would be change for the worse, and this would be already a movement. First, then, if 'thought' is not the act of thinking but a potency, it would be reasonable to suppose that the continuity of its thinking is wearisome to it. Secondly, there would evidently be something else more precious than thought, viz. that which is thought of. For both thinking and the act of thought will belong even to one who thinks of the worst thing in the world, so that if this ought to be avoided (and it ought, for there are even some things which it is better not to see than to see), the act of thinking cannot be the best of things. Therefore it must be of itself that the divine thought thinks (since it is the most excellent of things), and its thinking is a thinking on thinking.

But evidently knowledge and perception and opinion and understanding have always something else as their object, and themselves only by the way. Further, if thinking and being thought of are different, in respect of which does goodness belong to thought? For to *be* an act of thinking and to *be* an object of thought are not the same thing. We answer that in some cases the knowledge is the object. In the productive sciences it is the substance or essence of the object, matter omitted, and in the theoretical sciences the definition or the act of thinking is the object. Since, then, thought and the object of thought are not different in the case of things that have not matter, the divine thought and its object will be the same, i.e. the thinking will be one with the object of its thought.

A further question is left—whether the object of the divine thought is composite; for if it were, thought would change in passing from part to part of the whole. We answer that everything which has not matter is indivisible—as human thought, or rather the thought of composite beings, is in a certain period of time (for it does not possess the good at this moment or at that, but its best, being something *different* from it, is attained only in a whole period of time), so throughout eternity is the thought which has *itself* for its object.

Aristotle, *Metaphysics,* $1074^{b}15$

19 The activity of God, which surpasses all others in blessedness, must be contemplative; and of human activities, therefore, that which is most akin to this must be most of the nature of happiness.

Aristotle, *Ethics,* $1178^{b}22$

20 *Velleius.* God is completely inactive and unfettered by the need for occupation. He neither toils nor labors, but delights in his own wisdom and virtue. He knows for certain that he will always enjoy perfect and eternal pleasures. This is the God whom we can properly call happy. . . .

But if the world itself is considered to be God, what could be less restful than to revolve at incredible speed around an axis, without a single moment of respite? Repose is a necessary condition for happiness. But on the other hand, if some god dwells in the world as its ruler and pilot, maintaining the course of the stars, the changes of season, and all the processes of creation, watching over all the interests of man on land and sea, what a bondage to tiresome and laborious business that would be.

Cicero, *De Natura Deorum,* I, 19

21 Nature is nothing else but God and the divine Reason that pervades the whole universe. You may, if you wish, address this creator of the world by different names, such as Jupiter Best and Greatest, the Thunderer, or the Stayer. This last title does not derive from the tale told by historians about the Roman battle-line being stayed from flight in answer to prayers. It simply means that all things are upheld by his benefits. Thus he is called Stayer and Stabilizer. You may also call him Fate; that would be no mistake. For since Fate is only a connected chain of causes, he is the first of the causes on which all succeeding ones depend. Any name that you choose to apply to him will be appropriate if it connotes a power that operates in heaven. His titles are as countless as his benefits.

Seneca, *On Benefits,* IV, 7

22 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

The same was in the beginning with God.

All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.

In him was life; and the life was the light of men.

And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John.

The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe.

He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light.

That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.

He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not.

He came unto his own, and his own received him not.

But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.

John 1:1–12

23 God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.

John 4:24

24 It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

Hebrews 10:31

25 God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.

I John 1:5

26 Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God.

He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.

I John 4:7–8

27 I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was,

and which is to come, the Almighty.

Revelation 1:8

28 God governs the world, not by irresistible force, but persuasive argument and reason, controlling it into compliance with his eternal purposes.

Plutarch, *Phocion*

29 We ought first to learn that there is a God and that he provides for all things; also that it is not possible to conceal from him our acts, or even our intentions and thoughts. The next thing is to learn what is the nature of the Gods; for such as they are discovered to be, he, who would please and obey them, must try with all his power to be like them. If the divine is faithful, man also must be faithful; if it is free, man also must be free; if beneficent, man also must be beneficent; if magnanimous, man also must be magnanimous; as being then an imitator of God, he must do and say everything consistently with this fact.

Epictetus, *Discourses,* II, 14

30 Seeking nothing, possessing nothing, lacking nothing, the One is perfect and, in our metaphor, has overflowed, and its exuberance has produced the new.

Plotinus, *Fifth Ennead,* II, 1

31 What . . . is my God, what but the Lord God? *For Who is Lord but the Lord, or Who is God but our God?* O Thou, the greatest and the best, mightiest, almighty, most merciful and most just, utterly hidden and utterly present, most beautiful and most strong, abiding yet mysterious, suffering no change and changing all things: never new, never old, making all things new, *bringing age upon the proud and they know it not;* ever in action, ever at rest, gathering all things to Thee and needing none; sustaining and fulfilling and protecting, creating and nourishing and making perfect; ever seeking though lacking nothing. Thou lovest without subjection to passion, Thou are jealous but not with fear; Thou canst know repentance but not sorrow, be angry yet unperturbed by anger. Thou canst change the works Thou hast made but Thy mind stands changeless. Thou dost find and receive back what Thou didst never lose; art never in need but dost rejoice in Thy gains, art not greedy but dost exact interest manifold. Men pay Thee more than is of obligation to win return from Thee, yet who has anything that is not already Thine? Thou owest nothing yet dost pay as if in debt to Thy creature, forgivest what is owed to Thee yet dost not lose thereby. And with all this, what have I said, my God and my Life and my sacred Delight? What can anyone say when he speaks of Thee? Yet woe to them that speak not of Thee at all, since those who say most are but dumb.

Augustine, *Confessions,* I, 4

32 Heaven and earth and all that is in them tell me wherever I look that I should love You, and they cease not to tell it to all men, so that there is no excuse for them. For *You will have mercy on whom You will have mercy, and You will show mercy to whom You will show mercy:* otherwise heaven and earth cry their praise of You to deaf ears.

But what is it that I love when I love You? Not the beauty of any bodily thing, nor the order of seasons, not the brightness of light that rejoices the eye, nor the sweet melodies of all songs, nor the sweet fragrance of flowers and ointments and spices: not manna nor honey, not the limbs that carnal love embraces. None of these things do I love in loving my God. Yet in a sense I do love light and melody and fragrance and food and embrace when I love my God—the light and the voice and the fragrance and the food and embrace in the soul, when that light shines upon my soul which no place can contain, that voice sounds which no time can take from me, I breathe that fragrance which no wind scatters, I eat the food which is not lessened by eating, and I lie in the embrace which satiety never comes to sunder. This it is that I love, when I love my God.

Augustine, *Confessions,* X, 6

33 What is . . . God? I asked the earth and it answered: "I am not He"; and all things that are in the earth made the same confession. I asked the sea and the deeps and the creeping things, and they answered: "We are not your God; seek higher." I asked the winds that blow, and the whole air with all that is in it answered: "Anaximenes was wrong; I am not God." I asked the heavens, the sun, the moon, the stars, and they answered: "Neither are we God whom you seek." And I said to all the things that throng about the gateways of the senses: "Tell me of my God, since you are not He. Tell me something of Him." And they cried out in a great voice: "He made us." My question was my gazing upon them, and their answer was their beauty. And I turned to myself and said: "And you, who are you?" And I answered: "A man." Now clearly there is a body and a soul in me, one exterior, one interior. From which of these two should I have enquired of my God? I had already sought Him by my body, from earth to heaven, as far as my eye could send its beams on the quest. But the interior part is the better, seeing that all my body's messengers delivered to it, as ruler and judge, the answers that heaven and earth and all things in them made when they said: "We are not God," and, "He made us." The inner man knows these things through the ministry of the outer man: I the inner man knew them, I, I the soul, through the senses of the body. I asked the whole frame of the universe about my God and it answered me: "I am not He, but He made me."

Augustine, *Confessions,* X, 6

34 We worship that God Who has appointed to the natures created by Him both the beginnings and the end of their existing and moving: Who holds, knows, and disposes the causes of things; Who hath created the virtue of seeds; Who hath given to what creatures He would a rational soul, which is called mind; Who hath bestowed the faculty and use of speech; Who hath imparted the gift of foretelling future things to whatever spirits it seemed to Him good; Who also Himself predicts future things through whom He pleases, and through whom He will remove diseases; Who, when the human race is to be corrected and chastised by wars, regulates also the beginnings, progress, and ends of these wars; Who hath created and governs the most vehement and most violent fire of this world, in due relation and proportion to the other elements of immense nature; Who is the governor of all the waters; Who hath made the sun brightest of all material lights, and hath given him suitable power and motion; Who hath not withdrawn, even from the inhabitants of the nether world. His dominion and power; Who hath appointed to mortal natures their suitable seed and nourishment, dry or liquid; Who establishes and makes fruitful the earth; Who bountifully bestows its fruits on animals and on men; Who knows and ordains, not only principal causes, but also subsequent causes; Who hath determined for the moon her motion; Who affords ways in heaven and on earth for passage from one place to another; Who hath granted also to human minds, which He hath created, the knowledge of the various arts for the help of life and nature; Who hath appointed the union of male and female for the propagation of offspring; Who hath favoured the societies of men with the gift of terrestrial fire for the simplest and most familiar purposes, to burn on the hearth and to give light. These are, then, the things which that most acute and most learned man Varro has laboured to distribute among the select gods, by I know not what physical interpretation, which he has got from other sources and also conjectured for himself. But these things the one true God makes and does, but as *the same* God—that is, as He who is wholly everywhere, included in no space, bound by no chains, mutable in no part of His being, filling heaven and earth with omnipresent power, not with a needy nature. Therefore He governs all things in such a manner as to allow them to perform and exercise their own proper movements. For although they can be nothing without Him, they are not what He is. He does also many things through angels; but only from Himself does He beatify angels. So also, though He send angels to men for certain purposes, He does not for all that beatify men by the good inherent in the angels, but by Himself, as He does the angels themselves.

Augustine, *City of God,* VII, 30

35 God is ever the constant foreknowing overseer, and the everpresent eternity of His sight moves in harmony with the future nature of our actions, as it dispenses rewards to the good, and punishments to the bad. Hopes are not vainly put in God, nor prayers in vain offered: if these are right, they cannot but be answered. Turn therefore from vice: ensue virtue: raise your soul to upright hopes: send up on high your prayers from this earth. If you would be honest, great is the necessity enjoined upon your goodness, since all you do is done before the eyes of an all-seeing Judge.

Boethius, *Consolation of Philosophy,* V

36 Lord, do thou, who dost give understanding to faith, give me, so far as thou knowest it to be profitable, to understand that thou art as we believe; and that thou art that which we believe. And, indeed, we believe that thou art a being than which nothing greater can be conceived. Or is there no such nature, since the fool hath said in his heart, there is no God? But, at any rate, this very fool, when he hears of this being of which I speak—a being than which nothing greater can be conceived—understands what he hears, and what he understands is in his understanding; although he does not understand it to exist.

For, it is one thing for an object to be in the understanding, and another to understand that the object exists. When a painter first conceives of what he will afterwards perform, he has it in his understanding, but he does not yet understand it to be, because he has not yet performed it. But after he has made the painting, he both has it in his understanding, and he understands that it exists, because he has made it.

Hence, even the fool is convinced that something exists in the understanding, at least, than which nothing greater can be conceived. For, when he hears of this, he understands it. And whatever is understood, exists in the understanding. And assuredly that, than which nothing greater can be conceived, cannot exist in the understanding alone. For, suppose it exists in the understanding alone: then it can be conceived to exist in reality; which is greater.

Therefore, if that, than which nothing greater can be conceived, exists in the understanding alone, the very being, than which nothing greater can be conceived, is one, than which a greater can be conceived. But obviously this is impossible. Hence, there is no doubt that there exists a being, than which nothing greater can be conceived, and it exists both in the understanding and in reality.

And it assuredly exists so truly, that it cannot be conceived not to exist. For, it is possible to conceive of a being which cannot be conceived not to exist; and this is greater than one which can be conceived not to exist. Hence, if that, than which nothing greater can be conceived, can be con-

ceived not to exist, it is not that, than which nothing greater can be conceived. But this is an irreconcilable contradiction. There is, then, so truly a being than which nothing greater can be conceived to exist, that it cannot even be conceived not to exist; and this being thou art, O Lord, our God.

So truly, therefore, dost thou exist, O Lord, my God, that thou canst not be conceived not to exist; and rightly. For, if a mind could conceive of a being better than thee, the creature would rise above the Creator; and this is most absurd. And, indeed, whatever else there is, except thee alone, can be conceived not to exist. To thee alone, therefore, it belongs to exist more truly than all other beings, and hence in a higher degree than all others. For, whatever else exists does not exist so truly, and hence in a less degree it belongs to it to exist. Why, then, has the fool said in his heart, there is no God, since it is so evident, to a rational mind, that thou dost exist in the highest degree of all? Why, except that he is dull and a fool?

Anselm of Canterbury, *Proslogium,* II–III

37 But how art thou omnipotent, if thou art not capable of all things? Or, if thou canst not be corrupted, and canst not lie, nor make what is true, false—as, for example, if thou shouldst make what has been done not to have been done, and the like—how art thou capable of all things? Or else to be capable of these things is not power, but impotence. For, he who is capable of these things is capable of what is not for his good, and of what he ought not to do; and the more capable of them he is, the more power have adversity and perversity against him; and the less has he himself against these.

Anselm of Canterbury, *Proslogium,* VII

38 O Lord, our God, the more truly art thou omnipotent, since thou art capable of nothing through impotence, and nothing has power against thee.

Anselm of Canterbury, *Proslogium,* VII

39 Truly, O Lord, this is the unapproachable light in which thou dwellest; for truly there is nothing else which can penetrate this light, that it may see thee there. Truly, I see it not, because it is too bright for me. And yet, whatsoever I see, I see through it, as the weak eye sees what it sees through the light of the sun, which in the sun itself it cannot look upon. My understanding cannot reach that light, for it shines too bright. It does not comprehend it, nor does the eye of my soul endure to gaze upon it long. It is dazzled by the brightness, it is overcome by the greatness, it is overwhelmed by the infinity, it is dazed by the largeness, of the light.

O supreme and unapproachable light! O whole and blessed truth, how far art thou from me, who am so near to thee! How far removed art thou from my vision, though I am so near to thine! Everywhere thou art wholly present, and I see thee not. In thee I move, and in thee I have my being; and I cannot come to thee. Thou art within me, and about me, and I feel thee not.

Anselm of Canterbury, *Proslogium,* XVI

40 Assuredly thou art life, thou art wisdom, thou art truth, thou art goodness, thou art blessedness, thou art eternity, and thou art every true good. Many are these attributes: my straitened understanding cannot see so many at one view, that it may be gladdened by all at once. How, then, O Lord, art thou all these things? Are they parts of thee, or is each one of these rather the whole, which thou art? For, whatever is composed of parts is not altogether one, but is in some sort plural, and diverse from itself; and either in fact or in concept is capable of dissolution.

But these things are alien to thee, than whom nothing better can be conceived of. Hence, there are no parts in thee, Lord, nor art thou more than one. But thou art so truly a unitary being, and so identical with thyself, that in no respect art thou unlike thyself; rather thou art unity itself, indivisible by any conception. Therefore, life and wisdom and the rest are not parts of thee, but all are one; and each of these is the whole, which thou art, and which all the rest are.

In this way, then, it appears that thou hast no parts, and that thy eternity, which thou art, is nowhere and never a part of thee or of thy eternity. But everywhere thou art as a whole, and thy eternity exists as a whole forever.

Anselm of Canterbury, *Proslogium,* XVIII

41 To know that God exists in a general and confused way is implanted in us by nature, since God is man's Happiness. For man naturally desires happiness, and what is naturally desired by man must be naturally known to him. This, however, is not to know absolutely that God exists.

Aquinas, *Summa Theologica,* I, 2, 1

42 Perhaps not everyone who hears this word "God" understands it to signify something than which nothing greater can be thought, seeing that some have believed God to be a body. Yet, granted that everyone understands that by this word "God" is signified something than which nothing greater can be thought, nevertheless, it does not therefore follow that he understands that what the word signifies exists actually, but only that it exists in the intellect. Nor can it be argued that it actually exists, unless it be admitted that there actually exists something than which nothing greater can be thought. And this is what is not admitted by those who hold that God does not exist.

Aquinas, *Summa Theologica,* I, 2, 1

43 The existence of God and other like truths about God which can be known by natural reason, are not articles of faith, but are preambles to the articles. For faith presupposes natural knowledge, even as grace presupposes nature, and perfection supposes something that can be perfected. Nevertheless, there is nothing to prevent a man who cannot grasp a proof accepting, as a matter of faith, something which in itself is capable of being known and demonstrated.

Aquinas, *Summa Theologica,* I, 2, 2

44 In the world of sense we find there is an order of efficient causes. There is no case known (nor indeed, is it possible) in which a thing is found to be the efficient cause of itself, because in that case it would be prior to itself, which is impossible. Now in efficient causes it is not possible to go on to infinity, because in all efficient causes following in order, the first is the cause of the intermediate cause, and the intermediate is the cause of the ultimate cause, whether the intermediate cause be several, or one only. Now to take away the cause is to take away the effect. Therefore, if there be no first cause among efficient causes, there will be no ultimate, nor any intermediate cause. But if in efficient causes it is possible to go on to infinity, there will be no first efficient cause, neither will there be an ultimate effect, nor any intermediate efficient causes, all of which is plainly false. Therefore it is necessary to admit a first efficient cause, to which everyone gives the name of God. . . .

We find in nature things that are possible to be and not to be, since they are found to be generated, and to be corrupted, and consequently they are possible to be and not to be. But it is impossible for these always to exist, for that which is possible not to be at some time is not. Therefore, if everything is possible not to be, then at one time there could have been nothing in existence. Now if this were true, even now there would be nothing in existence, because that which does not exist only begins to exist by something already existing. Therefore, if at one time nothing was in existence, it would have been impossible for anything to have begun to exist; and thus even now nothing would be in existence—which is clearly false. Therefore, not all beings are merely possible, but there must exist something the existence of which is necessary. But every necessary thing either has its necessity caused by another, or not. Now it is impossible to go on to infinity in necessary things which have their necessity caused by another, as has been already proved in regard to efficient causes. Therefore we must admit the existence of some being having of itself its own necessity, and not receiving it from another, but rather causing in others their necessity. This all men speak of as God.

Aquinas, *Summa Theologica,* I, 2, 3

45 In some way God is in every place, and this is to be everywhere. First, as He is in all things as giving them being, power, and operation, so He is in every place as giving it being and power to be in a place. Again, things placed are in place in so far as they fill a place: and God fills every place; not, indeed, as a body, for a body is said to fill place in so far as it excludes the presence of another body; but by God being in a place, others are not thereby excluded from it; rather indeed, He Himself fills every place by the very fact that He gives being to the things that fill every place.

Aquinas, *Summa Theologica,* I, 8, 2

46 Eternity is nothing else but God Himself. Hence God is not called eternal as if He were in any way measured, but the notion of measurement is there taken according to the apprehension of our mind alone.

Aquinas, *Summa Theologica,* I, 10, 2

47 God comprehends in Himself the whole perfection of being. If then many gods existed, they would necessarily differ from each other. Something therefore would belong to one which did not belong to another. And if this were a privation, one of them would not be absolutely perfect; but if a perfection, one of them would be without it. So it is impossible for many gods to exist. Hence also the ancient philosophers, constrained as it were by truth itself, when they asserted an infinite principle asserted likewise that there was only one such principle.

Aquinas, *Summa Theologica,* I, 11, 3

48 Oh grace abounding, wherein I presumed to fix
my look on the eternal light so long that I consumed my sight thereon!
Within its depths I saw ingathered, bound by love
in one volume, the scattered leaves of all the universe;
substance and accidents and their relations, as
though together fused, after such fashion that
what I tell of is one simple flame.
The universal form of this complex I think that I
beheld, because more largely, as I say this, I feel
that I rejoice.
A single moment maketh a deeper lethargy for me
than twenty and five centuries have wrought on
the emprise that erst threw Neptune in amaze
at Argo's shadow.
Thus all suspended did my mind gaze fixed, immovable, intent, ever enkindled by its gazing.
Such at that light doth man become that to turn
thence to any other sight could not by possibility be ever yielded.
For the good, which is the object of the will, is
therein wholly gathered, and outside it that
same thing is defective which therein is perfect.
Now shall my speech fall farther short even of
what I can remember than an infant's who still
bathes his tongue at breast.

Not that more than a single semblance was in the living light whereon I looked, which ever is such as it was before;
but by the sight that gathered strength in me one sole appearance even as I changed worked on my gaze.
In the profound and shining being of the deep light appeared to me three circles, of three colours and one magnitude;
one by the second as Iris by Iris seemed reflected, and the third seemed a fire breathed equally from one and from the other.
Oh but how scant the utterance, and how faint, to my conceit! and it, to what I saw, is such that it sufficeth not to call it little.
O Light eternal who only in thyself abidest, only thyself dost understand, and to thyself, self-understood self-understanding, turnest love and smiling!
That circling which appeared in thee to be conceived as a reflected light, by mine eyes scanned some little,
in itself, of its own colour, seemed to be painted with our effigy, and thereat my sight was all committed to it.
As the geometer who all sets himself to measure the circle and who findeth not, think as he may, the principle he lacketh;
such was I at this new seen spectacle; I would perceive how the image consorteth with the circle, and how it settleth there;
but not for this were my proper wings, save that my mind was smitten by a flash wherein its will came to it.
To the high fantasy here power failed; but already my desire and will were rolled—even as a wheel that moveth equally—by the Love that moves the sun and the other stars.

Dante, *Paradiso,* XXXIII, 82

49 I can't understand what must be in a man's mind if he doesn't feel seriously that there is a God when he sees the sun rise. It must at times occur to him that there are eternal things, or else he must push his face into the dirt like a sow. For it's incredible that they [the planets] be observed to move without inquiring whether there isn't somebody who moves them.

Luther, *Table Talk,* 447

50 Though our mind cannot conceive of God, without ascribing some worship to him, it will not be sufficient merely to apprehend that he is the only proper object of universal worship and adoration, unless we are also persuaded that he is the fountain of all good, and seek for none but in him. This I maintain, not only because he sustains the universe, as he once made it, by his infinite power, governs it by his wisdom, preserves it by his goodness, and especially reigns over the human race in righteousness and judgment, exercising a merciful forbearance, and defending them by his protection; but because there cannot be found the least particle of wisdom, light, righteousness, power, rectitude, or sincere truth which does not proceed from him, and claim him for its author.

Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion,* I, 2

51 To represent God as a Creator only for a moment, who entirely finished all his work at once, were frigid and jejune; and in this it behoves us especially to differ from the heathen, that the presence of the Divine power may appear to us no less in the perpetual state of the world than in its first origin.

Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion,* I, 16

52 God, wishing to teach us that the good have something else to hope for, and the wicked something else to fear, than the fortunes and misfortunes of this world, handles and allots these according to his occult disposition, and deprives us of the means of foolishly making our profit of them.

Montaigne, *Essays,* I, 32, We Should Meddle Soberly

53 What is there . . . more vain than to try to divine God by our analogies and conjectures, to regulate him and the world by our capacity and our laws, and to use at the expense of the Deity this little shred of ability that he was pleased to allot to our natural condition? And, because we cannot stretch our vision as far as his glorious throne, to have brought him here below to our corruption and our miseries?

Montaigne, *Essays,* II, 12, Apology for Raymond Sebond

54 It has always seemed to me that for a Christian this sort of talk is full of indiscretion and irreverence: "God cannot die, God cannot go back on his word, God cannot do this or that." I do not think it is good to confine the divine power thus under the laws of our speech. And the probability that appears to us in these propositions should be expressed more reverently and religiously.

Montaigne, *Essays,* II, 12, Apology for Raymond Sebond

55 When we say that the infinity of the centuries both past and to come is to God but an instant, that his goodness, wisdom, power, are the same thing as his essence—our tongues say it, but our intelligence does not apprehend it.

Montaigne, *Essays,* II, 12, Apology for Raymond Sebond

56 He Who is before the ages and on into the ages thus adorned the great things of His wisdom: nothing excessive, nothing defective, no room for any censure. How lovely are his works! All things, in twos, one against one, none lacking its opposite.

He has strengthened the goods—adornment and propriety—of each and every one and established them in the best reasons, and who will be satiated seeing their glory?

Kepler, *Harmonies of the World,* V, 9

57 *Dogberry.* Well, God's a good man.

Shakespeare, *Much Ado About Nothing,* III, v, 39

58 Natural theology . . . is that knowledge or rudiment of knowledge concerning God, which may be obtained by the contemplation of his creatures; which knowledge may be truly termed divine in respect of the object, and natural in respect of the light. The bounds of this knowledge are, that it sufficeth to convince atheism, but not to inform religion: and therefore there was never miracle wrought by God to convert an atheist, because the light of nature might have led him to confess a God: but miracles have been wrought to convert idolaters and the superstitious, because no light of nature extendeth to declare the will and true worship of God. For as all works do show forth the power and skill of the workman, and not his image, so it is of the works of God, which do show the omnipotency and wisdom of the maker, but not his image.

Bacon, *Advancement of Learning,* Bk. II, VI, 1

59 It is at least as certain that God, who is a Being so perfect, is, or exists, as any demonstration of geometry can possibly be.

Descartes, *Discourse on Method,* IV

60 That idea . . . by which I understand a Supreme God, eternal, infinite, [immutable], omniscient, omnipotent, and Creator of all things which are outside of Himself, has certainly more objective reality in itself than those ideas by which finite substances are represented.

Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy,* III

61 From the fact that I cannot conceive a mountain without a valley, it does not follow that there is any mountain or any valley in existence, but only that the mountain and the valley, whether they exist or do not exist, cannot in any way be separated one from the other. While from the fact that I cannot conceive God without existence, it follows that existence is inseparable from Him, and hence that He really exists; not that my thought can bring this to pass, or impose any necessity on things, but, on the contrary, because the necessity which lies in the thing itself, i.e. the necessity of the existence of God determines me to think in this way. For it is not within my power to think of God without existence (that is of a supremely perfect Being devoid of a supreme perfection) though it is in my power to imagine a horse either with wings or without wings.

Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy,* V

62 We have in the notion of God absolute immensity, simplicity, and a unity that embraces all other attributes; and of this idea we find no example in us.

Descartes, *Objections and Replies,* II

63 When God is said to be *unthinkable,* that applies to the thought that grasps him adequately, and does not hold good of that inadequate thought which we possess and which suffices to let us know that he exists.

Descartes, *Objections and Replies,* II

64 Some one must exist in whom are formally or eminently all the perfections of which we have any idea. But we possess the idea of a power so great that by Him and Him alone, in whom this power is found, must heaven and earth be created, and a power such that likewise whatever else is apprehended by me as possible must be created by Him too. Hence concurrently with God's existence we have proved all this likewise about him.

Descartes, *Arguments Demonstrating the Existence of God and the Distinction Between Soul and Body,* Prop. 3, Corol.

65 When you say how strange it is that other men do not think about God in the same way as I do, when He has impressed the idea of Himself on them exactly as on me, it is precisely as if you were to marvel that since all are acquainted with the idea of a triangle, they do not all perceive an equal number of truths about it, and some probably reason about this very figure incorrectly.

Descartes, *Objections and Replies,* V

66 Perpetual fear, always accompanying mankind in the ignorance of causes, as it were in the dark, must needs have for object something. And therefore when there is nothing to be seen, there is nothing to accuse either of their good or evil fortune but some power or agent invisible: in which sense perhaps it was that some of the old poets said that the gods were at first created by human fear: which, spoken of the gods (that is to say, of the many gods of the Gentiles), is very true. But the acknowledging of one God eternal, infinite, and omnipotent may more easily be derived from the desire men have to know the causes of natural bodies, and their several virtues and operations, than from the fear of what was to befall them in time to come. For he that, from any effect he seeth come to pass, should reason to the next and immediate cause thereof, and from thence to the cause of that cause, and plunge himself profoundly in the pursuit of causes, shall at last come to this, that there must be (as even the heathen philosophers confessed) one First Mover; that is, a first and an eternal cause of all things; which is that

which men mean by the name of *God:* and all this without thought of their fortune, the solicitude whereof both inclines to fear and hinders them from the search of the causes of other things; and thereby gives occasion of feigning of as many gods as there be men that feign them.

Hobbes, *Leviathan,* I, 12

67 That we may know what worship of God is taught us by the light of nature, I will begin with His attributes. Where, first, it is manifest, we ought to attribute to Him *existence:* for no man can have the will to honour that which he thinks not to have any being.

Secondly, that those philosophers who said the world, or the soul of the world, was God spake unworthily of Him, and denied His existence: for by *God* is understood the cause of the world; and to say the world is God is to say there is no cause of it, that is, no God.

Thirdly, to say the world was not created, but eternal, seeing that which is eternal has no cause, is to deny there is a God.

Fourthly, that they who, attributing, as they think, ease to God, take from Him the care of mankind, take from Him his honour: for it takes away men's love and fear of Him, which is the root of honour.

Fifthly, in those things that signify greatness and power, to say He is *finite* is not to honour Him: for it is not a sign of the will to honour God to attribute to Him less than we can; and finite is less than we can, because to finite it is easy to add more.

Therefore to attribute *figure* to Him is not honour; for all figure is finite:

Nor to say we conceive, and imagine, or have an idea of Him in our mind; for whatsoever we conceive is finite:

Nor to attribute to Him *parts* or *totality;* which are the attributes only of things finite:

Nor to say He is in this or that *place* . . . nor that He is *moved* or *resteth;* for both these attributes ascribe to Him place:

Nor that there be more gods than one, because it implies them all finite; for there cannot be more than one infinite:

Nor to ascribe to Him (unless metaphorically, meaning not the passion, but the effect) passions that partake of grief; as *repentance, anger, mercy:* or of want; as *appetite, hope, desire;* or of any passive faculty: for passion is power limited by somewhat else.

And therefore when we ascribe to God a *will,* it is not to be understood, as that of man, for a *rational appetite;* but as the power by which He effecteth everything.

Likewise when we attribute to Him *sight,* and other acts of sense; as also *knowledge* and *understanding;* which in us is nothing else but a tumult of the mind, raised by external things that press the organical parts of man's body: for there is no such thing in God, and, being things that depend on natural causes, cannot be attributed to Him.

He that will attribute to God nothing but what is warranted by natural reason must either use such negative attributes as *infinite, eternal, incomprehensible;* or superlatives, as *most high, most great,* and the like; or indefinite, as *good, just, holy, creator;* and in such sense as if He meant not to declare what He is (for that were to circumscribe Him within the limits of our fancy), but how much we admire Him, and how ready we would be to obey Him; which is a sign of humility, and of a will to honour Him as much as we can: for there is but one name to signify our conception of His nature, and that is *I AM;* and but one name of His relation to us, and that is *God,* in which is contained father, king, and lord.

Hobbes, *Leviathan,* II, 31

68 The nature of God is incomprehensible; that is to say, we understand nothing of *what He is,* but only *that He is;* and therefore the attributes we give Him are not to tell one another *what He is,* nor to signify our opinion of His nature, but our desire to honour Him with such names as we conceive most honourable amongst ourselves.

Hobbes, *Leviathan,* III, 34

69 Neither had these or any other ever such advantage of me, as to incline me to any point of Infidelity or desperate positions of Atheism; for I have been these many years of opinion there was never any. Those that held Religion was the difference of Man from Beasts, have spoken probably, and proceed upon a principle as inductive as the other. That doctrine of *Epicurus,* that denied the Providence of God, was no Atheism, but a magnificent and high strained conceit of his Majesty, which he deemed too sublime to mind the trivial Actions of those inferiour Creatures. That fatal Necessity of the Stoicks, is nothing but the immutable Law of his will. Those that heretofore denied the Divinity of the Holy Ghost, have been condemned, but as Hereticks; and those that now deny our Saviour (though more than Hereticks) are not so much as Atheists: for though they deny two persons in the Trinity, they hold as we do, there is but one God.

Sir Thomas Browne, *Religio Medici,* I, 20

70 Not only the zeal of those who seek Him proves God, but also the blindness of those who seek Him not.

Pascal, *Pensées,* III, 200

71 It is incomprehensible that God should exist, and it is incomprehensible that He should not exist; that the soul should be joined to the body, and that we should have no soul; that the world should be created, and that it should not be creat-

ed, etc.; that original sin should be, and that it should not be.

Pascal, *Pensées,* III, 230

72 It is the heart which experiences God, and not the reason. This, then, is faith: God felt by the heart, not by the reason.

Pascal, *Pensées,* IV, 278

73 It is . . . true that everything teaches man his condition, but he must understand this well. For it is not true that all reveals God, and it is not true that all conceals God. But it is at the same time true that He hides Himself from those who tempt Him, and that He reveals Himself to those who seek Him, because men are both unworthy and capable of God; unworthy by their corruption, capable by their original nature.

Pascal, *Pensées,* VIII, 557

74 If the compassion of God is so great that He instructs us to our benefit, even when He hides Himself, what light ought we not to expect from Him when He reveals Himself?

Pascal, *Pensées,* XIII, 848

75 Hail holy light, ofspring of Heav'n first-born,
Or of th' Eternal Coeternal beam
May I express thee unblam'd? since God is light,
And never but in unapproached light
Dwelt from Eternitie, dwelt then in thee,
Bright effluence of bright essence increate.
Or hear'st thou rather pure Ethereal stream,
Whose Fountain who shall tell? before the Sun,
Before the Heavens thou wert, and at the voice
Of God, as with a Mantle didst invest
The rising world of waters dark and deep,
Won from the void and formless infinite.
Thee I re-visit now with bolder wing,
Escap't the *Stygian* Pool, though long detain'd
In that obscure sojourn, while in my flight
Through utter and through middle darkness borne
With other notes then to th' *Orphean* Lyre
I sung of *Chaos* and *Eternal Night,*
Taught by the heav'nly Muse to venture down
The dark descent, and up to reascend,
Though hard and rare: thee I revisit safe,
And feel thy sovran vital Lamp; but thou
Revisit'st not these eyes, that rowle in vain
To find thy piercing ray, and find no dawn;
So thick a drop serene hath quencht thir Orbs,
Or dim suffusion veild.

Milton, *Paradise Lost,* III, 1

76 Thee Father first they [the angel choir] sung Omnipotent,
Immutable, Immortal, Infinite,
Eternal King; thee Author of all being,
Fountain of Light, thy self invisible
Amidst the glorious brightness where thou sit'st
Thron'd inaccessible, but when thou shad'st
The full blaze of thy beams, and through a cloud
Drawn round about thee like a radiant Shrine,
Dark with excessive bright thy skirts appeer,
Yet dazle Heav'n, that brightest Seraphim
Approach not, but with both wings veil thir eyes.

Milton, *Paradise Lost,* III, 372

77 By God, I understand Being absolutely infinite, that is to say, substance consisting of infinite attributes, each one of which expresses eternal and infinite essence.

Spinoza, *Ethics,* I, Def. 6

78 God, or substance consisting of infinite attributes, each one of which expresses eternal and infinite essence, necessarily exists.

If this be denied, conceive, if it be possible, that God does not exist. Then it follows that His essence does not involve existence. But this is absurd. Therefore God necessarily exists.

Spinoza, *Ethics,* I, Prop. 11, Demonst.

79 Neither in God nor outside God is there any cause or reason which can negate His existence, and therefore God necessarily exists.

Spinoza, *Ethics,* I, Prop. 11, Another Proof

80 God and all His attributes are eternal, that is to say, each one of His attributes expresses existence. The same attributes of God, therefore, which manifest the eternal essence of God, at the same time manifest His eternal existence; that is to say, the very same thing which constitutes the essence of God constitutes at the same time His existence, and therefore His existence and His essence are one and the same thing.

Spinoza, *Ethics,* I, Prop. 20

81 God loves no one and hates no one; for God is not affected with any affect of joy or sorrow, and consequently He neither loves nor hates any one.

Spinoza, *Ethics,* V, Prop. 17, Corol.

82 God alone has a distinct knowledge of all, for He is the source of all. It has been very well said that as a centre He is everywhere, but His circumference is nowhere, for everything is immediately present to Him without any distance from this centre.

Leibniz, *Principles of Nature and of Grace,* 13

83 The conception of God which is the most common and the most full of meaning is expressed well enough in the words: God is an absolutely perfect being. The implications, however, of these words fail to receive sufficient consideration. For instance, there are many different kinds of perfection, all of which God possesses, and each one of them pertains to him in the highest degree.

We must also know what perfection is. One

thing which can surely be affirmed about it is that those forms or natures which are not susceptible of it to the highest degree, say the nature of numbers or of figures, do not permit of perfection. This is because the number which is the greatest of all (that is, the sum of all the numbers), and likewise the greatest of all figures, imply contradictions. The greatest knowledge, however, and omnipotence contain no impossibility. Consequently power and knowledge do admit of perfection, and in so far as they pertain to God they have no limits.

Whence it follows that God who possesses supreme and infinite wisdom acts in the most perfect manner not only metaphysically, but also from the moral standpoint. And with respect to our selves it can be said that the more we are enlightened and informed in regard to the works of God the more will we be disposed to find them excellent and conforming entirely to that which we might desire.

Leibniz, *Discourse on Metaphysics,* I

84 God alone (or the Necessary Being) has this prerogative that if he be possible he must necessarily exist, and, as nothing is able to prevent the possibility of that which involves no bounds, no negation, and consequently, no contradiction, this alone is sufficient to establish *a priori* his existence. We have, therefore, proved his existence through the reality of eternal truths. But a little while ago we also proved it *a posteriori,* because contingent beings exist which can have their ultimate and sufficient reason only in the necessary being which, in turn, has the reason for existence in itself.

Leibniz, *Monadology,* 45

85 The first contrivance of those very artificial parts of animals, the eyes, ears, brain, muscles, heart, lungs, midriff, glands, larynx, hands, wings, swimming bladders, natural spectacles, and other organs of sense and motion; and the instinct of brutes and insects can be the effect of nothing else than the wisdom and skill of a powerful, everliving agent, who being in all places, is more able by His will to move the bodies within His boundless uniform sensorium, and thereby to form and reform the parts of the Universe, than we are by our will to move the parts of our own bodies. And yet we are not to consider the world as the body of God, or the several parts thereof as the parts of God. He is a uniform Being, void of organs, members or parts, and they are his creatures subordinate to him, and subservient to His will; and He is no more the soul of them than the soul of man is the soul of the species of things carried through the organs of sense into the place of its sensation, where it perceives them by means of its immediate presence, without the intervention of any third thing. The organs of sense are not for enabling the soul to perceive the species of things in its sensorium, but only for conveying them thither; and God has no need of such organs, He being everywhere present to the things themselves.

Newton, *Optics,* III, 1

86 The visible marks of extraordinary wisdom and power appear so plainly in all the works of the creation, that a rational creature, who will but seriously reflect on them, cannot miss the discovery of a Deity. And the influence that the discovery of such a Being must necessarily have on the minds of all that have but once heard of it is so great, and carries such a weight of thought and communication with it, that it seems stranger to me that a whole nation of men should be anywhere found so brutish as to want the notion of a God, than that they should be without any notion of numbers, or fire.

Locke, *Concerning Human Understanding,* Bk. I, III, 9

87 It is as certain that there is a God, as that the opposite angles made by the intersection of two straight lines are equal. There was never any rational creature that set himself sincerely to examine the truth of these propositions that could fail to assent to them; though yet it be past doubt that there are many men, who, having not applied their thoughts that way, are ignorant both of the one and the other.

Locke, *Concerning Human Understanding,* Bk. I, III, 17

88 If we attentively consider the constant regularity, order, and concatenation of natural things, the surprising magnificence, beauty, and perfection of the larger, and the exquisite contrivance of the smaller parts of creation, together with the exact harmony and correspondence of the whole, but above all the never-enough-admired laws of pain and pleasure, and the instincts or natural inclinations, appetites, and passions of animals; I say if we consider all these things, and at the same time attend to the meaning and import of the attributes One, Eternal, Infinitely Wise, Good, and Perfect, we shall clearly perceive that they belong to the aforesaid Spirit, "who works all in all," and "by whom all things consist."

Berkeley, *Principles of Human Knowledge,* 146

89 A human spirit or person is not perceived by sense, as not being an idea; when therefore we see the colour, size, figure, and motions of a man, we perceive only certain sensations or ideas excited in our own minds; and these being exhibited to our view in sundry distinct collections, serve to mark out unto us the existence of finite and created spirits like ourselves. Hence it is plain we do not see a man—if by *man* is meant that which lives, moves, perceives, and thinks as we do—but only such a certain collection of ideas as directs us to

think there is a distinct principle of thought and motion, like to ourselves, accompanying and represented by it. And after the same manner we see God; all the difference is that, whereas some one finite and narrow assemblage of ideas denotes a particular human mind, whithersoever we direct our view, we do at all times and in all places perceive manifest tokens of the Divinity: everything we see, hear, feel, or anywise perceive by sense, being a sign or effect of the power of God; as is our perception of those very motions which are produced by men.

Berkeley, *Principles of Human Knowledge,* 148

90 It argues surely more power in the Deity to delegate a certain degree of power to inferior creatures than to produce every thing by his own immediate volition. It argues more wisdom to contrive at first the fabric of the world with such perfect foresight that, of itself, and by its proper operation, it may serve all the purposes of providence, than if the great Creator were obliged every moment to adjust its parts, and animate by his breath all the wheels of that stupendous machine.

Hume, *Concerning Human Understanding,* VII, 56

91 God is related to the universe, as Creator and Preserver; the laws by which He created all things are those by which He preserves them. He acts according to these rules, because He knows them; He knows them, because He made them; and He made them, because they are in relation to His wisdom and power.

Montesquieu, *Spirit of Laws,* I, 1

92 The theist is a man firmly persuaded of the existence of a Supreme Being as good as He is powerful, who has formed all beings with extension, vegetating, sentient and reflecting; who perpetuates their species, who punishes crimes without cruelty, and rewards virtuous actions with kindness.

The theist does not know how God punishes, how he protects, how he pardons, for he is not reckless enough to flatter himself that he knows how God acts, but he knows that God acts and that He is just. Difficulties against Providence do not shake him in his faith, because they are merely great difficulties, and not proofs. He submits to this Providence, although he perceives but a few effects and few signs of this Providence: and, judging of the things he does not see by the things he sees, he considers that this Providence reaches all places and all centuries.

Reconciled in this principle with the rest of the universe, he does not embrace any of the sects, all of which contradict each other; his religion is the most ancient and the most widespread; for the simple worship of a God has preceded all the systems of the world. He speaks a language that all peoples understand, while they do not understand one another. He has brothers from Pekin to Cayenne, and he counts all wise men as his brethren. He believes that religion does not consist either in the opinions of an unintelligible metaphysic, or in vain display, but in worship and justice. The doing of good, there is his service; being submissive to God, there is his doctrine. The Mahometan cries to him—"Have a care if you do not make the pilgrimage to Mecca!" "Woe unto you," says a Recollet, "if you do not make a journey to Notre-Dame de Lorette!" He laughs at Lorette and at Mecca; but he succours the needy and defends the oppressed.

Voltaire, *Philosophical Dictionary:* Theist

93 If God did not exist it would be necessary to invent him.

Voltaire, *Épître à l'Auteur du Livre des Trois Imposteurs (Nov. 10, 1770)*

94 While all the ambitious attempts of reason to penetrate beyond the limits of experience end in disappointment, there is still enough left to satisfy us in a practical point of view. No one, it is true, will be able to boast that he knows that there is a God and a future life; for, if he knows this, he is just the man whom I have long wished to find. All knowledge, regarding an object of mere reason, can be communicated; and I should thus be enabled to hope that my own knowledge would receive this wonderful extension, through the instrumentality of his instruction. No, my conviction is not *logical,* but *moral* certainty; and since it rests on subjective grounds (of the moral sentiment), I must not even say: *It is* morally certain that there is a God, etc., but: *I am* morally certain, that is, my belief in God and in another world is so interwoven with my moral nature that I am under as little apprehension of having the former torn from me as of losing the latter.

Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason,* Transcendental Method

95 Whence have we the conception of God as the supreme good? Simply from the *idea* of moral perfection, which reason frames *a priori* and connects inseparably with the notion of a free will.

Kant, *Fundamental Principles of the Metaphysic of Morals,* II

96 It is morally necessary to assume the existence of God.

Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason,* Pt. I, II, 2

97 While *fear* doubtless in the first instance may have been able to produce *gods,* that is demons, it is only *reason* by its moral principles that has been able to produce the conception of *God*—and it has been able to do so despite the great ignorance that

has prevailed in what concerns the teleology of nature, or the considerable doubt that arises from the difficulty of reconciling by a sufficiently established principle the mutually conflicting phenomena that nature presents.

Kant, *Critique of Teleological Judgement,* 86

98 *Faust.* Who dare name Him?
And who avow:
"I believe in Him"?
Who feels and would
Have hardihood
To say: "I don't believe in Him"?
The All-Enfolder,
The All-Upholder,
Enfolds, upholds He not
You, me, Himself?
Do not the heavens over-arch us yonder?
Does not the earth lie firm beneath?
Do not eternal stars rise friendly
Looking down upon us?
Look I not, eye in eye, on you,
And do not all things throng
Toward your head and heart,
Weaving in mystery eternal,
Invisible, visible, near to you?
Fill up your heart with it, great though it is,
And when you're wholly in the feeling, in its bliss,
Name it then as you will,
Name it Happiness! Heart! Love! God!
I have no name for that!
Feeling is all in all;
Name is but sound and smoke,
Beclouding Heaven's glow.

Goethe, *Faust,* I, 3432

99 —Brook and road
Were fellow-travellers in this gloomy Pass,
And with them did we journey several hours
At a slow step. The immeasurable height
Of woods decaying, never to be decayed,
The stationary blasts of waterfalls,
And in the narrow rent, at every turn,
Winds thwarting winds bewildered and forlorn,
The torrents shooting from the clear blue sky,
The rocks that muttered close upon our ears,
Black drizzling crags that spake by the wayside
As if a voice were in them, the sick sight
And giddy prospect of the raving stream,
The unfettered clouds and region of the heavens,
Tumult and peace, the darkness and the light—
Were all the workings of one mind, the features
Of the same face, blossoms upon one tree,
Characters of the great Apocalypse,
The types and symbols of Eternity,
Of first, and last, and midst, and without end.

Wordsworth, *The Simplon Pass*

100 That the history of the world, with all the changing scenes which its annals present, is this process of development and the realization of spirit—this is the true *Theodicaea,* the justification of God in history. Only *this* insight can reconcile spirit with the history of the world—*viz.,* that what has happened, and is happening every day, is not only not "without God," but is essentially His work.

Hegel, *Philosophy of History,* Pt. IV, III, 3

101 What is this unknown something with which the Reason collides when inspired by its paradoxical passion, with the result of unsettling even man's knowledge of himself? It is the Unknown. It is not a human being, in so far as we know what man is; nor is it any other known thing. So let us call this unknown something: *God.* It is nothing more than a name we assign to it. The idea of demonstrating that this unknown something (God) exists, could scarcely suggest itself to the Reason. For if God does not exist it would of course be impossible to prove it; and if he does exist it would be folly to attempt it.

Kierkegaard, *Philosophical Fragments,* III

102 O, yet we trust that somehow good
Will be the final goal of ill,
To pangs of nature, sins of will,
Defects of doubt, and taints of blood;

That nothing walks with aimless feet;
That not one life shall be destroy'd,
Or cast as rubbish to the void,
When God hath made the pile complete;

That not a worm is cloven in vain;
That not a moth with vain desire
Is shrivell'd in a fruitless fire,
Or but subserves another's gain.

Behold, we know not anything;
I can but trust that good shall fall
At last—far off—at last, to all,
And every winter change to spring.

So runs my dream; but what am I?
An infant crying in the night;
An infant crying for the light,
And with no language but a cry.

Tennyson, *In Memoriam,* LIV

103 For tho' from out our bourne of Time and Place
The flood may bear me far,
I hope to see my Pilot face to face
When I have crost the bar.

Tennyson, *Crossing the Bar*

104 The belief in God has often been advanced as not only the greatest, but the most complete of all the distinctions between man and the lower animals. It is however impossible, as we have seen, to maintain that this belief is innate or instinctive in man. On the other hand a belief in all-pervading spiritual agencies seems to be universal; and apparently follows from a considerable advance in man's reason, and from a still greater advance in his

faculties of imagination, curiosity and wonder. I am aware that the assumed instinctive belief in God has been used by many persons as an argument for His existence. But this is a rash argument, as we should thus be compelled to believe in the existence of many cruel and malignant spirits, only a little more powerful than man; for the belief in them is far more general than in a beneficent Deity. The idea of a universal and beneficent Creator does not seem to arise in the mind of man, until he has been elevated by long-continued culture.

Darwin, *Descent of Man,* III, 21

105 Men are growing to be seriously alive to the fact that the historical evolution of humanity, which is generally, and I venture to think not unreasonably, regarded as progress, has been, and is being, accompanied by a co-ordinate elimination of the supernatural from its originally large occupation of men's thoughts.

T. H. Huxley, *Science and Christian Tradition,* Prologue

106 To whom turn I but to thee, the ineffable
Name?
Builder and maker, thou, of houses not made
with hands!
What, have fear of change from thee who art ever
the same?
Doubt that thy power can fill the heart that thy
power expands?
There shall never be one lost good! What was,
shall live as before;
The evil is null, is naught, is silence implying
sound;
What was good shall be good, with, for evil, so
much good more;
On the earth the broken arcs; in the heaven a
perfect round.

Browning, *Abt Vogler*

107 But I need, now as then, [in youth]
Thee, God, who mouldest men;
And since, not even while the whirl was worst,
Did I—to the wheel of life
With shapes and colors rife,
Bound dizzily—mistake my end, to slake thy
thirst:

So, take and use thy work:
Amend what flaws may lurk,
What strain o' the stuff, what warpings past the
aim!
My times be in thy hand!
Perfect the cup as planned!
Let age approve of youth, and death complete the
same!

Browning, *Rabbi Ben Ezra*

108 The word "God" is used in most cases as by no means a term of science or exact knowledge, but a term of poetry and eloquence, a term *thrown out,* so to speak, at a not fully grasped object of the speaker's consciousness, a *literary* term, in short; and mankind mean different things by it as their consciousness differs.

Arnold, *Literature and Dogma,* I

109 No one will say, that it is admittedly certain and verifiable, that there is a personal first cause, the moral and intelligent governor of the universe, whom we may call *God* if we will. But that all things seem to us to have what we call a law of their being, and to tend to fulfil it, is certain and admitted; though whether we will call this *God* or not, is a matter of choice. Suppose, however, we call it *God,* we then give the name of *God* to a certain and admitted reality; this, at least, is an advantage.

Arnold, *Literature and Dogma,* I

110 *Ivan.* There was an old sinner in the eighteenth century who declared that, if there were no God, he would have to be invented. . . . And man has actually invented God. And what's strange, what would be marvellous, is not that God should really exist; the marvel is that such an idea, the idea of the necessity of God, could enter the head of such a savage, vicious beast as man. So holy it is, so touching, so wise and so great a credit it does to man.

Dostoevsky, *Brothers Karamazov,* Pt. II, V, 3

111 *Ivan.* If God exists and if He really did create the world, then, as we all know, He created it according to the geometry of Euclid and the human mind with the conception of only three dimensions in space. Yet there have been and still are geometricians and philosophers, and even some of the most distinguished, who doubt whether the whole universe, or to speak more widely, the whole of being, was only created in Euclid's geometry; they even dare to dream that two parallel lines, which according to Euclid can never meet on earth, may meet somewhere in infinity. I have come to the conclusion that, since I can't understand even that, I can't expect to understand about God. I acknowledge humbly that I have no faculty for settling such questions, I have a Euclidian earthly mind, and how could I solve problems that are not of this world? And I advise you never to think about it either, my dear Alyosha, especially about God, whether He exists or not. All such questions are utterly inappropriate for a mind created with an idea of only three dimensions.

Dostoevsky, *Brothers Karamazov,* Pt. II, V, 3

112 "I ought to tell you that I do not believe . . . do not believe in God," said Pierre, regretfully and

with an effort, feeling it essential to speak the whole truth.

The Mason looked intently at Pierre and smiled as a rich man with millions in hand might smile at a poor fellow who told him that he, poor man, had not the five rubles that would make him happy.

"Yes, you do not know Him, my dear sir," said the Mason. "You cannot know Him. You do not know Him and that is why you are unhappy."

"Yes, yes, I am unhappy," assented Pierre. "But what am I to do?"

"You know Him not, my dear sir, and so you are very unhappy. You do not know Him, but He is here, He is in me, He is in my words, He is in thee, and even in those blasphemous words thou hast just uttered!" pronounced the Mason in a stern and tremulous voice.

He paused and sighed, evidently trying to calm himself.

"If He were not," he said quietly, "you and I would not be speaking of Him, my dear sir. Of what, of whom, are we speaking? Whom hast thou denied?" he suddenly asked with exulting austerity and authority in his voice. "Who invented Him, if He did not exist? Whence came thy conception of the existence of such an incomprehensible Being? Why didst thou, and why did the whole world, conceive the idea of the existence of such an incomprehensible Being, a Being all-powerful, eternal, and infinite in all His attributes? . . ."

He stopped and remained silent for a long time.

Pierre could not and did not wish to break this silence.

"He exists, but to understand Him is hard," the Mason began again, looking not at Pierre but straight before him, and turning the leaves of his book with his old hands which from excitement he could not keep still. "If it were a man whose existence thou didst doubt I could bring him to thee, could take him by the hand and show him to thee. But how can I, an insignificant mortal, show His omnipotence, His infinity, and all His mercy to one who is blind, or who shuts his eyes that he may not see or understand Him and may not see or understand his own vileness and sinfulness?" He paused again. "Who art thou? Thou dreamest that thou art wise because thou couldst utter those blasphemous words," he went on, with a somber and scornful smile. "And thou art more foolish and unreasonable than a little child, who, playing with the parts of a skillfully made watch, dares to say that, as he does not understand its use, he does not believe in the master who made it. To know Him is hard. . . . For ages, from our forefather Adam to our own day, we labor to attain that knowledge and are still infinitely far from our aim; but in our lack of understanding we see only our weakness and His greatness. . . ."

Tolstoy, *War and Peace,* V, 2

113 Glory be to God for dappled things—
For skies of couple-colour as a brinded cow;
For rose-moles all in stipple upon trout that swim;

Fresh-firecoal chestnut-falls; finches' wings;
Landscape plotted and pieced—fold, fallow, and plough;
And áll trádes, their gear and tackle and trim.

All things counter, original, spare, strange;
Whatever is fickle, freckled (who knows how?)
With swift, slow; sweet, sour; adazzle, dim;
He fathers-forth whose beauty is past change:
Praise him.

G. M. Hopkins, *Pied Beauty*

114 The world is charged with the grandeur of God.
It will flame out, like shining from shook foil;
It gathers to a greatness, like the ooze of oil
Crushed. Why do men then now not reck his rod?
Generations have trod, have trod, have trod;
And all is seared with trade; bleared, smeared with toil;
And wears man's smudge and shares man's smell; the soil
Is bare now, nor can foot feel, being shod.

And for all this, nature is never spent;
There lives the dearest freshness deep down things;
And though the last lights off the black West went
Oh, morning, at the brown brink eastward, springs—
Because the Holy Ghost over the bent
World broods with warm breast and ah! bright wings.

G. M. Hopkins, *God's Grandeur*

115 Thus spake the devil unto me, once on a time:
"Ever God hath his hell: it is his love for man."
And lately did I hear him say these words:
"God is dead: of his pity for man hath God died."

Nietzsche, *Thus Spake Zarathustra,* IV, Introduction

116 A people which still believes in itself still also has its own God. In him it venerates the conditions through which it has prospered, its virtues—it projects its joy in itself, its feeling of power on to a being whom one can thank for them. He who is rich wants to bestow; a proud people needs a God in order to *sacrifice.* . . . Within the bounds of such presuppositions religion is a form of gratitude. One is grateful for oneself: for that one needs a God.—Such a God must be able to be both useful and harmful, both friend and foe—he is admired in good and bad alike. The *anti-natural* castration of a God into a God of the merely good would be totally undesirable here. One has as much need of the evil God as of the good God: for

one does not owe one's existence to philanthropy or tolerance precisely. . . . Of what consequence would a God be who knew nothing of anger, revengefulness, envy, mockery, cunning, acts of violence? to whom even the rapturous *ardeurs* of victory and destruction were unknown? One would not understand such a God: why should one have him?—To be sure: when a people is perishing; when it feels its faith in the future, its hope of freedom vanish completely; when it becomes conscious that the most profitable thing of all is submissiveness and that the virtues of submissiveness are a condition of its survival, then its God *has* to alter too. He now becomes a dissembler, timid, modest, counsels 'peace of soul', no more hatred, forbearance, 'love' even towards friend and foe. He is continually moralizing, he creeps into the cave of every private virtue, becomes a God for everybody, becomes a private man, becomes a cosmopolitan. . . . Formerly he represented a people, the strength of a people, everything aggressive and thirsting for power in the soul of a people: now he is merely the good God.

Nietzsche, *Antichrist,* XVI

117 The Christian conception of God—God as God of the sick, God as spider, God as spirit—is one of the most corrupt conceptions of God arrived at on earth: perhaps it even represents the low-water mark in the descending development of the God type.

Nietzsche, *Antichrist,* XVIII

118 Even the slightest trace of piety in us ought to make us feel that a God who cures a headcold at the right moment or tells us to get into a coach just as a downpour is about to start is so absurd a God he would have to be abolished even if he existed. A God as a domestic servant, as a postman, as an almanac-maker—at bottom a word for the stupidest kind of accidental occurrence.

Nietzsche, *Antichrist,* LII

119 If but some vengeful god would call to me
From up the sky, and laugh: "Thou suffering thing,
Know that thy sorrow is my ecstasy,
That thy love's loss is my hate's profiting!"

Then would I bear it, clench myself, and die,
Steeled by the sense of ire unmerited;
Half-eased in that a Powerfuller than I
Had willed and meted me the tears I shed.

But not so. How arrives it joy lies slain,
And why unblooms the best hope ever sown?
—Crass Casualty obstructs the sun and rain,
And dicing Time for gladness casts a moan. . . .
These purblind Doomsters had as readily strown
Blisses about my pilgrimage as pain.

Hardy, *Hap*

120 God is the ultimate limitation, and His existence is the ultimate irrationality. For no reason can be given for just that limitation which it stands in His nature to impose. God is not concrete, but He is the ground for concrete actuality. No reason can be given for the nature of God, because that nature is the ground of rationality.

Whitehead, *Science and the Modern World,* XI

121 I do not pretend to be able to prove that there is no God. I equally cannot prove that Satan is a fiction. The Christian God may exist; so may the Gods of Olympus, or of ancient Egypt, or of Babylon. But no one of these hypotheses is more probable than any other: they lie outside the region of even probable knowledge, and therefore there is no reason to consider any of them.

Russell, *What I Believe,* I

122 The same father . . . who gave the child his life and preserved it from the dangers which that life involves, also taught it what it may or may not do, made it accept certain limitations of its instinctual wishes, and told it what consideration it would be expected to show towards its parents and brothers and sisters, if it wanted to be tolerated and liked as a member of the family circle, and later on of more extensive groups. The child is brought up to know its social duties by means of a system of love-rewards and punishments, and in this way it is taught that its security in life depends on its parents (and, subsequently, other people) loving it and being able to believe in its love for them. This whole state of affairs is carried over by the grown man unaltered into his religion. The prohibitions and commands of his parents live on in his breast as his moral conscience; God rules the world of men with the help of the same system of rewards and punishments, and the degree of protection and happiness which each individual enjoys, depends on his fulfilment of the demands of morality; the feeling of security, with which he fortifies himself against the dangers both of the external world and of his human environment, is founded on his love of God and the consciousness of God's love for him. Finally, he has in prayer a direct influence on the divine will, and in that way insures for himself a share in the divine omnipotence.

Freud, *New Introductory Lectures on Psycho-Analysis,* XXXV

123 The last contribution to the criticism of the religious *Weltanschauung* has been made by psychoanalysis, which has traced the origin of religion to the helplessness of childhood, and its content to the persistence of the wishes and needs of childhood into maturity. This does not precisely imply a refutation of religion, but it is a necessary rounding off of our knowledge about it, and, at least on one point, it actually contradicts it, for

religion lays claim to a divine origin. This claim, to be sure, is not false if our interpretation of God is accepted.

Freud, *New Introductory Lectures on Psycho-Analysis,* XXXV

124 Obvious considerations like these furnish the proof of God's existence, not as philosophers have tried to express it after the fact and in relation to mythical conceptions of God nady current, but as mankind originally perceived it, and (where religion is spontaneous) perceives it still. There is such an order in experience that we find our desires doubly dependent on something which, because it disregards our will, we call an external power. Sometimes it overwhelms us with scourges and wonders, so that we must marvel at it and fear; sometimes it removes, or after removing restores, a support necessary to our existence and happiness, so that we must cling to it, hope for it, and love it. Whatever is serious in religion, whatever is bound up with morality and fate, is contained in those plain experiences of dependence and of affinity to that on which we depend. The rest is poetry, or mythical philosophy, in which definitions not warranted in the end by experience are given to that power which experience reveals. To reject such arbitrary definitions is called atheism by those who frame them; but a man who studies for himself the ominous and the friendly aspects of reality and gives them the truest and most adequate expression he can is repeating what the founders of religion did in the beginning. He is their companion and follower more truly than are the apologists for second-hand conceptions which these apologists themselves have never compared with the facts, and which they prize chiefly for misrepresenting actual experience and giving it imaginary extensions.

Santayana, *Life of Reason,* III, 3

125 He Who Himself begot, middler the Holy Ghost, and Himself sent Himself, Agenbuyer, between Himself and others, Who, put upon by His fiends, stripped and whipped, was nailed like bat to barndoor, starved on crosstree, Who let Him bury, stood up, harrowed hell, fared into heaven and there these nineteen hundred years sitteth on the right hand of His Own Self but yet shall come in the latter day to doom the quick and dead when all the quick shall be dead already.

Joyce, *Ulysses*

20.6 | *Gods and Goddesses*

One striking difference between the quotations in this section and the quotations in Section 20.5 on GOD is that here the poets and the historians hold forth most eloquently and vividly whereas there the philosophers and theologians heap argument upon argument. Another difference, of course, is the contrast between the colorful anthropomorphic personality of each particular god and goddess and the abstract metaphysical characterization of a supernatural being.

The tragic and epic poets of antiquity, as well as the historians, give us a familiarity with the dwellers on Mt. Olympus, or their Roman counterparts, that enhances our appreciation of the later literature in which allusion to these deities is so frequently made. Their stories about the adventures and misadventures of the capricious or wayward divinities led Plato to call for the exclusion of the poets from the ideal state, in order to prevent immoral actions from being imitated or misleading lessons from being learned. The reader will find that famous passage from the *Republic* in Section 13.2 on FREEDOM OF THOUGHT AND EXPRESSION: CENSORSHIP.

The pagan philosophers manifest a certain detachment in their comments on the deities worshipped in the polytheistic religions of antiquity, often dealing with the popular beliefs about the gods in terms of their own more abstract consideration of

God. In the materialistic cosmology of the ancient atomists, Epicurus and Lucretius, the gods are exiled to a place of pleasure without power. No harm is done in admitting their existence if they are deprived of any power to intervene in the order of nature or to control man by the distribution of rewards and punishments.

As might be expected, adverse criticisms of pagan polytheism are expressed by Christian theologians and by philosophers who profess a commitment to Christian beliefs. This raises, of course, the problem of the line that divides authentic religion from mythology and superstition, in connection with which the reader is referred to Section 20.12 on SUPERSTITION. It is also suggested that the reader compare Gibbon's remarks on Christianity in Section 20.3 with his comments here on pagan religious beliefs.

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1 *Dione.* That man who fights the immortals lives for no long time,
his children do not gather to his knees to welcome their father
when he returns home after the fighting and the bitter warfare.

Homer, *Iliad,* V, 407

2 *Zeus.* Come, you gods, make this endeavour, that you all may learn this.
Let down out of the sky a cord of gold; lay hold of it
all you who are gods and all who are goddesses, yet not
even so can you drag down Zeus from the sky to the ground, not
Zeus the high lord of counsel, though you try until you grow weary.
Yet whenever I might strongly be minded to pull you,
I could drag you up, earth and all and sea and all with you,
then fetch the golden rope about the horn of Olympos
and make it fast, so that all once more should dangle in mid air.
So much stronger am I than the gods, and stronger than mortals.

Homer, *Iliad,* VIII, 18

3 *Zeus.* My word, how mortals take the gods to task!
All their afflictions come from us, we hear.
And what of their own failings? Greed and folly
double the suffering in the lot of man.

Homer, *Odyssey,* I, 30

4 *Meneláos.* Young friends, no mortal man can vie with Zeus.
His home and all his treasures are for ever.

Homer, *Odyssey,* IV, 79

5 *A Suitor.* They go in foreign guise, the gods do,
looking like strangers, turning up
in towns and settlements to keep an eye
on manners, good or bad.

Homer, *Odyssey,* XVII, 486

6 Invisible the gods are ever nigh,
Pass through the midst and bend th' all-seeing eye:
Who heed not heaven's revenge, but wrest the right,
And grind the poor, are naked to their sight.

Hesiod, *Works and Days*

7 Children of Jove, all hail! but deign to give
Th' enchanting song! record the sacred race
Of ever-living gods; who sprang from earth,
From the starr'd heaven, and from the murky night,
And whom the salt deep nourish'd into life.
Declare how first the gods and earth became;
The rivers and th' immeasurable sea
Raging in foamy swell; the glittering stars,
And the wide heaven above; and who from these
Of deities arose, dispensing good;
Say how their treasures, how their honours each
Allotted shared; how first they fix'd abode
Amidst Olympus' many-winding vales.

Hesiod, *Theogony*

8 The Persians . . . have no images of the gods, no temples nor altars, and consider the use of them a sign of folly. This comes, I think, from their not believing the gods to have the same nature with men, as the Greeks imagine.

Herodotus, *History,* I, 131

9 *Heracles.* I do not believe the gods commit adultery, or bind each other in chains.
I never did believe it; I never shall;
nor that one god is tyrant of the rest.
If god is truly god, he is perfect,
lacking nothing.

Euripides, *Heracles,* 1341

10 *Talthybius.* Do we, holding that the gods exist,
deceive ourselves with unsubstantial dreams
and lies, while random careless chance and change
alone control the world?

Euripides, *Hecuba,* 489

11 *Hecuba.* I am a slave, I know,
and slaves are weak. But the gods are strong, and over them
there stands some absolute, some moral order
or principle of law more final still.
Upon this moral law the world depends;
through it the gods exist; by it we live,
defining good and evil.

Euripides, *Hecuba,* 798

12 *Polymestor.* The inconsistent gods make chaos of our lives,
pitching us about with such savagery of change
that we, out of our anguish and uncertainty,
may turn to them.

Euripides, *Hecuba,* 958

13 *Creusa.* O you who give the seven-toned lyre
A voice which rings out of the lifeless,
Rustic horn the lovely sound
Of the Muses' hymns,
On you, Latona's son, here
In daylight I will lay blame.
You came with hair flashing
Gold, as I gathered
Into my cloak flowers ablaze
With their golden light.
Clinging to my pale wrists
As I cried for my mother's help
You led me to bed in a cave,
A god and my lover,
With no shame,
Submitting to the Cyprian's will.
In misery I bore you
A son, whom in fear of my mother
I placed in that bed
Where you cruelly forced me.
Ah! He is lost now,
Snatched as food for birds,
My son and yours; O lost!
But you play the lyre,
Chanting your paeans.

O hear me, son of Latona,
Who assign your prophecies
From the golden throne
And the temple at earth's center,
I will proclaim my words in your ears:
You are an evil lover;
Though you owed no debt
To my husband, you have
Set a son in his house.
But my son, yes and yours, hard-hearted,
Is lost, carried away by birds,
The clothes his mother put on him abandoned.
Delos hates you and the young
Laurel which grows by the palm
With its delicate leaves, where Latona
Bore you, a holy child, fruit of Zeus.

Euripides, *Ion,* 881

14 *Chorus.* —You on the streets!
—You on the roads!
—Make way!
—Let every mouth be hushed. Let no ill-omened words profane your tongues.
—Make way! Fall back!
—Hush.
—For now I raise the old, old hymn to Dionysus.

—Blessèd, blessèd are those who know the mysteries of god.
—Blessèd is he who hallows his life in the worship of god,
he whom the spirit of god possesseth, who is one
with those who belong to the holy body of god.
—Blessèd are the dancers and those who are purified,
who dance on the hill in the holy dance of god.
—Blessèd are they who keep the rite of Cybele the Mother.
—Blessèd are the thyrsus-bearers, those who wield in their hands
the holy wand of god.
—Blessèd are those who wear the crown of the ivy of god.
—Blessèd, blessèd are they: Dionysus is their God!

Euripides, *Bacchae,* 68

15 *Chorus.* —He is sweet upon the mountains. He drops to the earth from the running packs.
He wears the holy fawn-skin. He hunts the wild goat and kills it.
He delights in the raw flesh.
He runs to the mountains of Phrygia, to the mountains of Lydia he runs!
He is Bromius who leads us! *Evohé!*

—With milk the earth flows! It flows with wine!
It runs with the nectar of bees!

—Like frankincense in its fragrance
is the blaze of the torch he bears.
Flames float out from his trailing wand
as he runs, as he dances,
kindling the stragglers,
spurring with cries,
and his long curls stream to the wind!

—And he cries, as they cry, *Evohé!*—
On, Bacchae!
On, Bacchae!
Follow, glory of golden Tmolus,
hymning god
with a rumble of drums,

with a cry, *Evohé!* to the Evian god,
with a cry of Phrygian cries,
when the holy flute like honey plays
the sacred song of those who go
to the mountain!
to the mountain!

—Then, in ecstasy, like a colt by its grazing mother, the Bacchante runs with flying feet, she leaps!

Euripides, *Bacchae,* 135

16 *Chorus.*—Slow but unmistakable
the might of the gods moves on.
It punishes that man,
infatuate of soul
and hardened in his pride,
who disregards the gods.
The gods are crafty:
they lie in ambush
a long step of time
to hunt the unholy.
Beyond the old beliefs,
no thought, no act shall go.
Small, small is the cost
to believe in this:
whatever is god is strong;
whatever long time has sanctioned,
that is a law forever;
the law tradition makes
is the law of nature.

Euripides, *Bacchae,* 882

17 *Agathon.* Love set in order the empire of the gods—the love of beauty, as is evident, for with deformity Love has no concern. In the days of old, as I began by saying, dreadful deeds were done among the gods, for they were ruled by Necessity; but now since the birth of Love, and from the Love of the beautiful, has sprung every good in heaven and earth.

Plato, *Symposium,* 197A

18 *Socrates.* Did ever man, Meletus, believe in the existence of human things, and not of human beings? . . . I wish, men of Athens, that he would answer, and not be always trying to get up an interruption. Did ever any man believe in horsemanship, and not in horses? or in flute-playing, and not in flute-players? No, my friend; I will answer to you and to the court, as you refuse to answer for yourself. There is no man who ever did. But now please to answer the next question: Can a man believe in spiritual and divine agencies, and not in spirits or demigods?

Meletus. He cannot.

How lucky I am to have extracted that answer, by the assistance of the court! But then you swear in the indictment that I teach and believe in divine or spiritual agencies (new or old, no matter for that); at any rate, I believe in spiritual agencies,—so you say and swear in the affidavit; and yet if I believe in divine beings, how can I help believing in spirits or demigods;—must I not? To be sure I must; and therefore I may assume that your silence gives consent. Now what are spirits or demigods? are they not either gods or the sons of gods?

Certainly they are.

But this is what I call the facetious riddle invented by you: the demigods or spirits are gods, and you say first that I do not believe in gods, and then again that I do believe in gods; that is, if I believe in demigods. For if the demigods are the illegitimate sons of gods, whether by the nymphs or by any other mothers, of whom they are said to be the sons—what human being will ever believe that there are no gods if they are the sons of gods? You might as well affirm the existence of mules, and deny that of horses and asses. Such nonsense, Meletus, could only have been intended by you to make trial of me. You have put this into the indictment because you had nothing real of which to accuse me. But no one who has a particle of understanding will ever be convinced by you that the same men can believe in divine and superhuman things, and yet not believe that there are gods and demigods and heroes.

Plato, *Apology,* 27A

19 *Athenian Stranger.* Of the stars too, and of the moon, and of the years and months and seasons, must we not say in like manner, that since a soul or souls having every sort of excellence are the causes of all of them, those souls are Gods, whether they are living beings and reside in bodies, and in this way order the whole heaven, or whatever be the place and mode of their existence;—and will any one who admits all this venture to deny that all things are full of Gods?

Cleinias. No one, Stranger, would be such a madman.

Plato, *Laws,* X, 899A

20 One difficulty which is as great as any has been neglected both by modern philosophers and by their predecessors—whether the principles of perishable and those of imperishable things are the same or different. If they are the same, how are some things perishable and others imperishable, and for what reason? The school of Hesiod and all the theologians thought only of what was plausible to themselves, and had no regard to us. For, asserting the first principles to be gods and born of gods, they say that the beings which did not taste of nectar and ambrosia became mortal; and clearly they are using words which are familiar to themselves, yet what they have said about the very application of these causes is above our comprehension. For if the gods taste of nectar and ambrosia for their pleasure, these are in no wise

the causes of their existence; and if they taste them to maintain their existence, how can gods who need food be eternal?—But into the subtleties of the mythologists it is not worth our while to inquire seriously.

Aristotle, *Metaphysics,* 1000[a]5

21 We assume the gods to be above all other beings blessed and happy; but what sort of actions must we assign to them? Acts of justice? Will not the gods seem absurd if they make contracts and return deposits, and so on? Acts of a brave man, then, confronting dangers and running risks because it is noble to do so? Or liberal acts? To whom will they give? It will be strange if they are really to have money or anything of the kind. And what would their temperate acts be? Is not such praise tasteless, since they have no bad appetites? If we were to run through them all, the circumstances of action would be found trivial and unworthy of gods. Still, every one supposes that they *live* and therefore that they are active; we cannot suppose them to sleep like Endymion. Now if you take away from a living being action, and still more production, what is left but contemplation? Therefore the activity of God, which surpasses all others in blessedness, must be contemplative; and of human activities, therefore, that which is most akin to this must be most of the nature of happiness.

Aristotle, *Ethics,* 1178[b]9

22 If you well apprehend and keep in mind these things, nature free at once and rid of her haughty lords is seen to do all things spontaneously of herself without the meddling of the gods. For I appeal to the holy breasts of the gods who in tranquil peace pass a calm time and an unruffled existence, who can rule the sum, who hold in his hand with controlling force the strong reins, of the immeasurable deep? who can at once make all the different heavens to roll and warm with ethereal fires all the fruitful earths, or be present in all places at all times, to bring darkness with clouds and shake with noise the heaven's serene expanse, to hurl lightnings and often throw down his own temples, and withdrawing into the deserts there to spend his rage in practising his bolt which often passes the guilty by and strikes dead the innocent and unoffending?

Lucretius, *Nature of Things,* II

23 For soon as thy philosophy issuing from a godlike intellect has begun with loud voice to proclaim the nature of things, the terrors of the mind are dispelled, the walls of the world part asunder, I see things in operation throughout the whole void: the divinity of the gods is revealed and their tranquil abodes which neither winds do shake nor clouds drench with rains nor snow congealed by sharp frosts harms with hoary fall: an ever cloudless ether o'ercanopies them, and they laugh with light shed largely round. Nature too supplies all their wants and nothing ever impairs their peace of mind.

Lucretius, *Nature of Things,* III

24 This too you may not possibly believe, that the holy seats of the gods exist in any parts of the world: the fine nature of the gods far withdrawn from our senses is hardly seen by the thought of the mind; and since it has ever eluded the touch and stroke of the hands, it must touch nothing which is tangible for us; for that cannot touch which does not admit of being touched in turn. And therefore their seats as well must be unlike our seats, fine, even as their bodies are fine.

Lucretius, *Nature of Things,* V

25 We are told that there is no race in the world so uncivilized or barbarous but that it has some intimation of a belief in the gods. It is certain that many men entertain wrong ideas about the gods. This results from a corrupt nature. Nevertheless, all men hold to some divine power and a divine nature, and this is not because of some human agreement or convention. Nor is it a belief established by rules or statutes. It is commonly accepted that such a unanimity among the world's races is according to natural law.

Cicero, *Disputations,* I, 13

26 The gods have been portrayed by the poets as angry and lustful. They have described for us the gods' wars, battles, squabbles, and wounds; their hatreds, enmities, quarrels; their births and deaths; their complaints and sorrows; their unbridled passions; their adulteries and imprisonments; their unions with humans and the birth of mortal progeny from an immortal parent. These errors of the poets may be classed with the monstrous teachings of the astrologers and the insane mythology of Egypt, as well as with popular theology, which is a mass of inconsistency derived from ignorance. Anyone who thinks about the unfounded and irrational nature of these doctrines should regard Epicurus with reverence and rank him among the gods about whom we are inquiring. He alone perceived that the gods exist because nature herself has imprinted a conception of them on the minds of men.

Cicero, *De Natura Deorum,* I, 16

27 *Velleius.* We agree that the gods are supremely happy. Since no one is happy without virtue, and virtue does not exist apart from reason, and reason is only found in human form, we must also assume that the gods possess the form of men.

Cicero, *De Natura Deorum,* I, 18

28 *Lucillius.* If some people interpret the will of certain beings, naturally those beings themselves

must exist. There are people who interpret the will of the gods. Therefore we must admit that the gods exist. But someone may argue that not all prophecies come true. Not all sick persons get well either, but that doesn't disqualify the practice of medicine. Omens of future events are revealed by the gods. Men may not understand these omens, but the fault is with the human powers of inference, not with the nature of the gods.

Cicero, *De Natura Deorum,* II, 4

29 Gods are convenient to have, so let us concede their existence,
Bring to their obsolete shrine plenty of incense and wine.
Nor are they careless, aloof, calm in the semblance of slumber:
Live an innocent life; godhead is certainly near.
Keep true faith, and return whatever is placed in your keeping;
Keep your hands clean of blood; never indulge in a fraud.

Ovid, *Art of Love,* I, 637

30 Pythagoras . . . conceived of the first principle of being as transcending sense and passion, invisible and incorrupt, and only to be apprehended by abstract intelligence. So Numa forbade the Romans to represent God in the form of man or beast, nor was there any painted or graven image of a diety admitted amongst them for the space of the first hundred and seventy years, all which time their temples and chapels were kept free and pure from images; to such baser objects they deemed it impious to liken the highest, and all access to God impossible, except by the pure act of the intellect. His sacrifices, also, had great similitude to the ceremonial of Pythagoras, for they were not celebrated with effusion of blood, but consisted of flour, wine, and the least costly offerings.

Plutarch, *Numa Pompilius*

31 So dispassionate a temper [as Pericles'], a life so pure and unblemished, in the height of power and place, might well be called Olympian, in accordance with our conceptions of the divine beings, to whom, as the natural authors of all good and of nothing evil, we ascribe the rule and government of the world. Not as the poets represent, who, while confounding us with their ignorant fancies, are themselves confuted by their own poems and fictions, and call the place, indeed, where they say the gods make their abode, a secure and quiet seat, free from all hazards and commotions, untroubled with winds or with clouds, and equally through all time illumined with a soft serenity and a pure light as though such were a home most agreeable for a blessed and immortal nature; and yet, in the meanwhile, affirm that the gods themselves are full of trouble and enmity and anger and other passions, which no way become or belong to even men that have any understanding.

Plutarch, *Pericles*

32 We cannot suppose that the divine beings actually and literally turn our bodies and direct our hands and our feet this way or that, to do what is right: it is obvious that they must actuate the practical and elective element of our nature, by certain initial occasions, by images presented to the imagination, and thoughts suggested to the mind, such either as to excite it to, or avert and withhold it from, any particular course.

Plutarch, *Coriolanus*

33 The Gods take no thought for our happiness, but only for our punishment.

Tacitus, *Histories,* I, 3

34 In truth [gods] do exist, and they do care for human things, and they have put all the means in man's power to enable him not to fall into real evils.

Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations,* II, 11

35 The least-known things are the fittest to be deified; wherefore to make gods of ourselves, like antiquity, passes the utmost bounds of feeble-mindedness. I would even rather have followed those who worshiped the serpent, the dog, and the ox; inasmuch as their nature and being is less known to us, and we have more chance to imagine what we please about those animals and attribute extraordinary faculties to them. But to have made gods of our condition, the imperfection of which we should know; to have attributed to them desire, anger, vengeances, marriages, generation, kinships, love and jealousy, our limbs and our bones, our fevers and our pleasures, our deaths, our burials—this must have come from a marvelous intoxication of the human intelligence.

Montaigne, *Essays,* II, 12, Apology for Raymond Sebond

36 *Gloucester.* As flies to wanton boys, are we to the gods,
They kill us for their sport.

Shakespeare, *Lear,* IV, i, 38

37 *Florizel.* The gods themselves,
Humbling their deities to love, have taken
The shapes of beasts upon them. Jupiter
Became a bull, and bellow'd; the green Neptune
A ram, and bleated; and the fire-robed god,
Golden Apollo, a poor humble swain.

Shakespeare, *Winter's Tale,* IV, iv, 25

38 And for that part of religion which consisteth in opinions concerning the nature of powers invisible, there is almost nothing that has a name that has not been esteemed amongst the Gentiles, in

one place or another, a god or devil; or by their poets feigned to be animated, inhabited, or possessed by some spirit or other.

The unformed matter of the world was a god by the name of Chaos.

The heaven, the ocean, the planets, the fire, the earth, the winds, were so many gods.

Men, women, a bird, a crocodile, a calf, a dog, a snake, an onion, a leek, were deified. Besides that, they filled almost all places with spirits called *demons:* the plains, with Pan and Panises, or Satyrs; the woods, with Fauns and Nymphs; the sea, with Tritons and other Nymphs; every river and fountain, with a ghost of his name and with Nymphs; every house, with its *Lares,* or familiars; every man, with his *Genius;* Hell, with ghosts and spiritual officers, as Charon, Cerberus, and the Furies; and in the night time, all places with *larvae, lemures,* ghosts of men deceased, and a whole kingdom of fairies and bugbears. They have also ascribed divinity, and built temples, to mere accidents and qualities; such as are time, night, day, peace, concord, love, contention, virtue, honour, health, rust, fever, and the like; which when they prayed for, or against, they prayed to as if there were ghosts of those names hanging over their heads, and letting fall or withholding that good, or evil, for or against which they prayed. They invoked also their own wit, by the name of Muses; their own ignorance, by the name of Fortune; their own lust, by the name of Cupid; their own rage, by the name Furies; their own privy members by the name of Priapus; and attributed their pollutions to *incubi* and *succubae:* insomuch as there was nothing which a poet could introduce as a person in his poem which they did not make either a god or a devil.

Hobbes, *Leviathan,* I, 12

39 What true or tolerable notion of a Deity could they have, who acknowledged and worshipped hundreds? Every deity that they owned above one was an infallible evidence of their ignorance of Him, and a proof that they had no true notion of God, where unity, infinity, and externity were excluded. To which, if we add their gross conceptions of corporeity, expressed in their images and representations of their deities; the amours, marriages, copulations, lusts, quarrels, and other mean qualities attributed by them to their gods; we shall have little reason to think that the heathen world, i.e. the greatest part of mankind, had such ideas of God in their minds as he himself, out of care that they should not be mistaken about him, was author of.

Locke, *Concerning Human Understanding,* Bk. I, III, 15

40 If they say that the variety of deities worshipped by the heathen world were but figurative ways of expressing the several attributes of that incomprehensible Being, or several parts of his providence, I answer: what they might be in the original I will not here inquire; but that they were so in the thoughts of the vulgar I think nobody will affirm.

Locke, *Concerning Human Understanding,* Bk. I, III, 15

41 You find certain phenomena in nature. You seek a cause or author. You imagine that you have found him. You afterwards become so enamoured of this offspring of your brain, that you imagine it impossible, but he must produce something greater and more perfect than the present scene of things, which is so full of ill and disorder. You forget, that this superlative intelligence and benevolence are entirely imaginary, or at least, without any foundation in reason; and that you have no ground to ascribe to him any qualities, but what you see he has actually exerted and displayed in his productions. Let your gods, therefore, O philosophers, be suited to the present appearances of nature: and presume not to alter these appearances by arbitrary suppositions, in order to suit them to the attributes, which you so fondly ascribe to your deities.

Hume, *Concerning Human Understanding,* XI, 106

42 The devout polytheist, though fondly attached to his national rites, admitted with implicit faith the different religions of the earth. Fear, gratitude, and curiosity, a dream or an omen, a singular disorder, or a distant journey, perpetually disposed him to multiply the articles of his belief, and to enlarge the list of his protectors. The thin texture of the Pagan mythology was interwoven with various but not discordant materials. As soon as it was allowed that sages and heroes, who had lived, or who had died for the benefit of their country, were exalted to a state of power and immortality, it was universally confessed that they deserved, if not the adoration, at least the reverence of all mankind. The deities of a thousand groves and a thousand streams possessed, in peace, their local and respective influence; nor could the Roman who deprecated the wrath of the Tiber, deride the Egyptian who presented his offering to the beneficent genius of the Nile. The visible powers of Nature, the planets, and the elements, were the same throughout the universe. The invisible governors of the moral world were inevitably cast in a similar mould of fiction and allegory. Every virtue, and even vice, acquired its divine representative; every art and profession its patron, whose attributes, in the most distant ages and countries, were uniformly derived from the character of their peculiar votaries. A republic of gods of such opposite tempers and interest required, in every system, the moderating hand of a supreme magistrate, who, by the progress of knowledge and flattery, was gradually invested with the sublime per-

fections of an Eternal Parent, and an Omnipotent Monarch. Such was the mild spirit of antiquity, that the nations were less attentive to the difference than to the resemblance of their religious worship. The Greek, the Roman, and the Barbarian, as they met before their respective altars, easily persuaded themselves, that under various names, and with various ceremonies, they adored the same deities.

Gibbon, *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire,* II

43 The deities of Olympus, as they are painted by the immortal bard, imprint themselves on the minds which are the least addicted to superstitious credulity. Our familiar knowledge of their names and characters, their forms and attributes, *seems* to bestow on those airy beings a real and substantial existence; and the pleasing enchantment produces an imperfect and momentary assent of the imagination to those fables which are the most repugnant to our reason and experience.

Gibbon, *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire,* XXIII

44 The weakness of polytheism was, in some measure, excused by the moderation of its claims; and the devotion of the Pagans was not incompatible with the most licentious scepticism.

Gibbon, *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire,* XXIII

45 I am not sure but I should betake myself in extremities to the liberal divinities of Greece, rather than to my country's God. Jehovah, though with us he has acquired new attributes, is more absolute and unapproachable, but hardly more divine, than Jove. He is not so much of a gentleman, not so gracious and catholic, he does not exert so intimate and genial an influence on nature, as many a god of the Greeks. I should fear the infinite power and inflexible justice of the almighty mortal hardly as yet apotheosized, so wholly masculine, with no sister Juno, no Apollo, no Venus, nor Minerva, to intercede for me. . . . The Grecian are youthful and erring and fallen gods, with the vices of men, but in many important respects essentially of the divine race. In my Pantheon, Pan still reigns in his pristine glory, with his ruddy face, his flowing beard, and his shaggy body, his pipe and his crook, his nymph Echo, and his chosen daughter Iambe; for the great god Pan is not dead, as was rumored. No god ever dies. Perhaps of all the gods of New England and of ancient Greece, I am most constant at his shrine.

Thoreau, *A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers (Sunday)*

46 That fear first created the gods is perhaps as true as anything so brief could be on so great a subject.

Santayana, *Life of Reason,* III, 3

20.7 | *Angels and Devils*

Superhuman in the sense that they are superior to man but not supernatural because, like man, they have natures created by God, the angels (the bad angels, the devils or demons, as well as the good) occupy a special place in the Judeo-Christian cosmology that has only a faint analogy with the role played by the demigods in other religions. In their most frequent appearance in the Old Testament and the New, they perform the function of messengers or emissaries of the Lord; but, as other passages indicate, that is by no means their only raison d'être. They comprise, on the one hand, the heavenly host, the celestial hierarchy, engaged in the adoration of God; and, on the other, they are the damned as well as the ministers of damnation in the nether regions below.

We know, both from Scripture and from the poets, the proper names of only a small number of the angels and demons. The name most familiar to us is that of the fallen